

MdSNA Is On The Web



Home About News Members Industry Convention Education Legislation Resources

Calling All Interested Historians: CNP Through the Decades

As we continue to look at the evolution and history of the Child Nutrition Programs, we see that it finally became clear in 1946 that it was time for the federal government to get more involved. The federal government's beginning entry into school feeding was in 1935 by means of the donated foods program for those districts willing to accept them. It was random and different in various locations if it happened at all. There was a growing interest in the program as more communities tried to set up systems that weren't sustainable financially plus the need in schools and communities grew right after the end of World War II. We saw in prior articles how European countries set the precedent for our country to prioritize the feeding of school children. Many cities and states followed the European example and implemented communal feeding programs supported financially by parents, faith based organizations, women's groups, and eventually local government support until they couldn't do it anymore. The 79th Congress

took up the issue in 1946 via legislation to authorize and appropriate funds to the new federally funded program. Legislation was introduced to give the program permanent status and to authorize the necessary appropriations for it. Following hearings on the proposed legislation, the House Committee on Agriculture said "the need for a permanent legislative basis for a school lunch program, rather than operating it on a year to year basis, or one solely based on agricultural surpluses that for a child may be nutritionally unbalanced or nutritionally unattractive has now become apparent. The program has been hampered by lack of basic legislation. If there is an assurance of basic continuity over a period of years, the encouragement of State contribution and participation in the school lunch program will be of great advantage in expanding the program."

The legislation was identified as the "National School Lunch Act". Section 2 defines its purposes: "It is hereby

Article continued on page 42.

declared to be the policy of Congress, as a measure of national security to safeguard the health and well being of the Nation's children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious commodities and other food by assisting the states, through grants in-aid and other means, in providing an adequate supply of food and other facilities for the establishment, maintenance, operation and expansion of non-profit school lunch programs".

The Act spelled out very clearly how the funds were to be apportioned among the states based on two factors; the number of school children between ages 5 and 17 in each state from census data collected every 10 years and based on state per capita income. The states with the lower per capita income would receive a greater proportion of the federal funds than those with the higher per capita income.

Section 5 provided \$10 million of the total appropriation for equipment assistance to be appropriated on the same basis.

Section 6 allowed 8.5 percent of the appropriation for administrative expenses. Any funds leftover were allowed to be used by USDA for direct purchases of food to be distributed to the schools. Schools participating in the program were required to execute agreements with the state educational agency. These agreements provided that the sponsoring agency for the school would do the following:

1. Serve lunches meeting the minimum requirements prescribed by USDA.
2. Serve meals without cost or at a reduced rate to children determined by local school authorities to be unable to pay the full cost of the lunch and not to segregate or discriminate against such children in any way.
3. Operate the program on a non-profit basis.
4. Utilize as much as possible, the commodities

declared by USDA to be in abundance (surplus).

5. Maintain proper records of all receipts and expenditures and submit reports to the state agency as required.

Doesn't this sound familiar 73 years later? The rules are still the same but will get some additions later on in the series.

Section 9 of the Act provided that "Lunches served by schools participating in the school lunch program under this Act shall meet minimal nutritional requirements prescribed by the Secretary (of USDA) on the basis of tested nutritional research". Three types of lunches would be acceptable Type A, Type B and Type C.

Type A	A	B
Milk, whole	1/2 pint	1/2 pint
Protein-rich foods consisting of any of the following or a combination thereof:		
• fresh or processed meat, poultry meat, cheese, cooked or canned fish	2 oz.	1 oz.
• Dried peas or beans or soy beans, cooked	1/2 c	1/4 c
• Peanut Butter	4 T	2 T
• Eggs	1	1/2
Raw, cooked or canned vegetables or fruits or both	3/4 c	1/2 c
Bread, muffins or hot bread made of whole grain cereal or enriched flour	1	1
Butter or fortified margarine	2 t	1 t

The easiest was Type C as a 1/2 pint of whole milk served as a beverage.

Type A lunch was designed to meet 1/3 to 1/2 of the minimum daily requirements of a child, age 10 to 12 years. Type B lunch was devised to provide supplementary lunch in schools without adequate preparation facilities.

Article continued from page 42.

Reimbursement was on a monthly basis for the cost of food and preparation on a cost per meal basis for the number of meals served that met the nutritional requirements. Reimbursement rates in 1946 were set at the following:

Type A: 9 cents

Type B: 6 cents

Type C: 2 cents

Reimbursement for meals served without milk were reduced by 2 cents but this was only permitted if an adequate supply of milk meeting the standards for butterfat and sanitation was not available. Total reimbursement to any school could not exceed the total amount spent for food.

Just a reminder that the funding for the Child Nutrition Programs always has been and will continue to be from Section 32 funds that are collected under Customs Laws. This is an important piece of information as we work towards Reauthorization this school year given the current political discussions about defining sources of

revenue for programs before adding to their funding. Section 32 has always been and will continue to be a great source of revenue for our programs.

One of the reasons we as a national and state association chose not to be a permanent program is so that we can get the program looked at, ideally every 5 years even though this time it has been 10 years. Our purpose is to be able to add amendments and program, clarifications and additional funding.

In the next edition of the Serving Spoon we will look at those amendments and changes as they occurred going forward from 1946 to the present day.

Again, I wish to credit and thank Gordon W. Gunderson for his extensive study and documentation of the Child Nutrition Programs history and Robert Hunter who wrote the book entitled "Poverty" as well as the federal register which I used in developing these articles.

Mary Klatko
MdSNA Webmaster