AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

SERVING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES THROUGH CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, APRIL 15, 2015

Serial No. 114–9

Printed for the use of the Committee on Education and the Workforce

Available via the World Wide Web: *www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/committee.action?chamber=house&committee=education*
or
Committee address: *http://edworkforce.house.gov*

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

94–088 PDF WASHINGTON : 2016

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

JOHN KLINE, Minnesota, *Chairman*

Joe Wilson, South Carolina
Virginia Foxx, North Carolina
Duncan Hunter, California
David P. Roe, Tennessee
Glenn Thompson, Pennsylvania
Tim Walberg, Michigan
Matt Salmon, Arizona
Brett Guthrie, Kentucky
Todd Rokita, Indiana
Lou Barletta, Pennsylvania
Joseph J. Heck, Nevada
Luke Messer, Indiana
Bradley Byrne, Alabama
David Brat, Virginia
Buddy Carter, Georgia
Michael D. Bishop, Michigan
Glenn Grothman, Wisconsin
Steve Russell, Oklahoma
Carlos Curbelo, Florida
Elise Stefanik, New York
Rick Allen, Georgia

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, Virginia
Ranking Member
Rubén Hinojosa, Texas
Susan A. Davis, California
Raúl M. Grijalva, Arizona
Joe Courtney, Connecticut
Marcia L. Fudge, Ohio
Jared Polis, Colorado
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, Northern Mariana Islands
Frederica S. Wilson, Florida
Suzanne Bonamici, Oregon
Mark Pocan, Wisconsin
Mark Takano, California
Hakeem S. Jeffries, New York
Katherine M. Clark, Massachusetts
Alma S. Adams, North Carolina
Mark DeSaulnier, California

Juliane Sullivan, *Staff Director*
Denise Forte, *Minority Staff Director*

C O N T E N T S

	Page
Hearing held on April 15, 2015	1
Statement of Members:	
Kline, Hon. John, Chairman, Committee on Education and the Workforce	1
Prepared statement of	4
Scott, Hon. Robert C., Ranking Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce	6
Prepared statement of	7
Statement of Witnesses:	
Bauscher, Julia, President, School Nutrition Association, Director, School and Community Nutrition Services, Jefferson County Public School District, Louisville, KY	15
Prepared statement of	17
Krey, Kathy, Director of Research and Assistant Research Professor, Texas Hunger Initiative, Baylor University, Waco, TX	26
Prepared statement of	27
McAuliffe, Dorothy S., First Lady of Virginia, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond, VA	20
Prepared statement of	22
Storen, Duke, Senior Director, Research, Advocacy, and Partner Development, Share Our Strength, Washington, DC	10
Prepared statement of	12
Additional Submissions:	
Adams, Hon. Alma S., a Representative in Congress from the state of North Carolina, question submitted for the record to:	
Ms. Bauscher	138
Dr. Krey	140
Mrs. McAuliffe	142
Mr. Storen	144
Response to questions submitted:	
Ms. Bauscher	152
Mrs. McAuliffe	149
Mr. Storen	151
Mrs. Krey:	
The Importance of Nutrition for Learning and Well-being	109
Responses to questions submitted for the record	147
Mr. Scott:	
American Journal of Preventative Medicine	75
New School Meal Regulations Increase Fruit Consumption and Do Not Increase Total Plate Waste	83
Perceived Reactions of Elementary School Students to Changes in School Lunches After Implementation of the United States Department of Agriculture's New Meals Standards: Minimal Backlash, but Rural and Socioeconomic disparities Exist	89
Letter from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics	97
Prepared statement of National WIC Association, NWA	99
Improvements in School Lunches Result in Healthier Options for Millions of U.S. Children	114
Ending childhood hunger: A social impact analysis	117
Letter dated April 14, 2015 from Mars Incorporated	127
Prepared statement of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)	131
Wilson, Hon. Frederica S., a Representative in Congress from the state of Florida	134
Prepared statement of	135

SERVING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES THROUGH CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Wednesday, April 15, 2015
House of Representatives,
Committee on Education and the Workforce,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John Kline [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Kline, Foxx, Roe, Thompson, Walberg, Salmon, Guthrie, Rokita, Heck, Messer, Brat, Carter, Bishop, Grothman, Russell, Curbelo, Stefanik, Allen, Scott, Hinojosa, Courtney, Fudge, Sablan, Pocan, and Takano.

Staff present: Lauren Aronson, Press Secretary; Janelle Belland, Coalitions and Members Services Coordinator; Kathlyn Ehl, Legislative Assistant; Matthew Frame, Staff Assistant; Amy Raaf Jones, Director of Education and Human Resources Policy; Cristin Datch Kumar, Professional Staff Member; Nancy Locke, Chief Clerk; Daniel Murner, Deputy Press Secretary; Brian Newell, Communications Director; Krisann Pearce, General Counsel; Mandy Schaumburg, Education Deputy Director and Senior Counsel; Alissa Strawcutter, Deputy Clerk; Juliane Sullivan, Staff Director; Leslie Tatum, Professional Staff Member; Tylease Alli, Minority Clerk/Intern and Fellow Coordinator; Austin Barbera, Minority Staff Assistant; Kelly Broughan, Minority Education Policy Advisor; Denise Forte, Minority Staff Director; Scott Groginsky, Minority Senior Education Policy Advisor; Tina Hone, Minority Education Policy Director and Associate General Counsel.

Chairman KLINE. A quorum being present, the committee on Education and the Workforce will come to order.

Well, good morning. Welcome to our guests. We have a very distinguished panel of witnesses today, including the First Lady of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Mrs. Dorothy McAuliffe.

Mrs. McAuliffe, we are delighted to have you with us this morning as we discuss important policies affecting our nation's students and families.

Healthy meals are vitally important to a child's education. It is just basic common sense that if a child is hungry, then he or she is less likely to succeed in the classroom and later in life. That is why our nation has long invested in services to provide low income

students nutritious meals in schools. Those services are authorized through a number of laws, such as the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act.

In just a few short months, these laws and the programs they authorize will expire, including the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, the Supplemental Nutritional Program for Woman, Infants and Children, or WIC program, and several others.

It is the responsibility of this committee and Congress to reauthorize these programs so that students and families receive the support they need in the most efficient and effective way. Why is that important? Because no child should go to school hungry. It is that simple.

Today's discussion is not about whether we agree on this basic principle; I am confident we all do. Instead, our discussion today is about beginning a larger effort we will continue in the coming months to ensure the best policies are in place to help us reach this goal.

Last week, I had an opportunity to tour a school lunch room at the Prior Lake High School in Savage, Minnesota. Students and faculty described what's working and what isn't working in federal nutrition programs.

As a result of our conversation, two important realities are abundantly clear. First, our school nutrition professionals are dedicated men and women doing the best they can under difficult circumstances and no one should question their commitment to providing students with nutritious meals.

Unfortunately, rules and regulations put in place in recent years have made their jobs harder, not easier. The cost of the lunch and breakfast programs for schools are going up, yet fewer meals are being served. In fact, the number of children participating in these programs is declining more rapidly than any period over the last 30 years.

Second, as we reauthorize these programs, we have to provide more flexibility at the state and local levels. Those working in our schools and cafeterias recognize that this has to be a priority. Even students understand the urgent need for more flexibility.

During my visit to Prior Lake High School, I talked with a number of students about their school lunch program. Right now, the federal government determines the number of calories, vegetables, and grains that are served to students, which means Washington is dictating how much food every child is served at every school meal. This is one reason why the students in this school are urging the school to drop out of the program.

Many children are bringing food from home or buying more food because the portion sizes served at school are too small for a full meal. As one student, Perina Svigem noted, "A lot of times, we are going back and getting junk food, not healthy food."

This isn't what these children want, this isn't what their parents and school administrators want, and it is not what we want either. We have to find a better way forward, one that continues our commitment to providing nutritious meals for America's students while giving state and school leaders the flexibility they need to make it a reality.

That is why we are delighted to have you here today, Mrs. McAuliffe. Through your work, you are demonstrating that promoting healthy lifestyles is not just a federal priority, but a state and local priority, as well.

Often we are told we need more federal involvement because states can't be trusted to help those in need. But through your leadership, you are showing states can take the lead on tough issues in partnership with the federal government.

Again, I would like to thank all of our witnesses for participating in today's hearing, and working with us to strengthen child nutrition support.

With that, I will now recognize the committee's ranking member, my colleague, Congressman Scott from the Commonwealth of Virginia for his opening remarks.

[The statement of Chairman Kline follows:]

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
April 15, 2015

CONTACT: Press Office
(202) 226-9440

Opening Statement of Rep. John Kline (R-MN)
Chairman, House Education and the Workforce Committee
Hearing on "Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs"

Good morning, and welcome to our guests. We have a distinguished panel of witnesses, including the First Lady of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Mrs. Dorothy McAuliffe. Mrs. McAuliffe, we are delighted to have you with us this morning as we discuss important policies affecting our nation's students and families.

Healthy meals are vitally important to a child's education. It's just basic commonsense that if a child is hungry then he or she is less likely to succeed in the classroom and later in life. That is why our nation has long invested in services that provide low-income students nutritious meals in schools. Those services are authorized through a number of laws, such as the *Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act* and the *Child Nutrition Act.*

In just a few short months, these laws and the programs they authorize will expire, including the national school lunch and breakfast programs, the Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, and Children or WIC Program, and several others. It's the responsibility of this committee and Congress to reauthorize these programs so that students and families receive the support they need in the most efficient and effective way.

Why is that important? Because no child should go to school hungry – it's that simple. Today's discussion is not about whether we agree on this basic principle; I am confident we all do. Instead, our discussion today is about beginning a larger effort we will continue in the coming months to ensure the best policies are in place to help reach this goal.

Last week, I had an opportunity to tour a school lunchroom at the Prior Lake High School in Savage, Minnesota. Students and faculty described what's working and what isn't working in federal nutrition programs. As a result of our conversation, two important realities are abundantly clear.

First, our school nutrition professionals are dedicated men and women doing the best they can under difficult circumstances, and no one should question their commitment to providing students nutritious meals. Unfortunately, rules and regulations put in place in recent years have made their jobs harder, not easier. The cost of the lunch and breakfast programs for schools are going up, yet fewer meals are being served. In fact, the number of children participating in these programs is declining more rapidly than any period over the last 30 years.

(*More*)

Second, as we reauthorize these programs, we have to provide more flexibility at the state and local levels. Those working in our schools and cafeterias recognize that this has to be a priority. Even students understand the urgent need for more flexibility.

During my visit to Prior Lake High School, I talked with a number of students about their school lunch program. Right now, the federal government determines the number of calories, vegetables, and grains that are served to students, which means Washington is dictating how much food every child is served at every school meal. That is one reason why students are urging the school to drop out of the program. Many children are bringing food from home or buying more food because the portion sizes served at school are too small for a full meal. As one student, Corinna Swiggum, noted, "A lot of times, we're going back and getting junk food, not healthy food."

This isn't what these children want. This isn't what their parents or school administrators want, and it's not what we want either. We have to find a better way forward, one that continues our commitment to providing nutritious meals for America's students, while giving state and school leaders the flexibility they need to make it a reality.

That is why we are delighted to have you here today, Mrs. McAuliffe. Through your work, you are demonstrating that promoting healthy lifestyles is not just a federal priority, but a state and local priority as well. Often we are told we need more federal involvement because states can't be trusted to help those in need. But through your leadership, you're showing states can take the lead on tough issues in partnership with the federal government.

Again, I'd like to thank all our witnesses for participating in today's hearing and working with us to strengthen child nutrition support.

# # #

U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing, and I look forward to examining the continuum of federal child nutrition programs which are the lifelines for approximately 40 million children who rely on them for healthy food every day.

I would like to extend my thanks to all of the witnesses, but especially the First Lady of my home state of Virginia, Dorothy McAuliffe. She has been focusing not only on ending childhood hunger, but also improving access to Virginia's fresh and locally-grown agricultural commodities. This dual goal helps children, supports our farmers and strengthens local economies.

More than 60 years ago, through the enactment of the first federal child nutrition program, the National School Lunch Act of 1946, Congress recognized that feeding hungry children was not just a moral imperative but also an imperative for the health and security of our nation.

Today, a majority of the American public school students, 51 percent, are eligible for free and reduced school lunch prices. According to the latest USDA data, 15.8 million, or over 21 percent of children live in households facing a constant struggle against hunger. The rates are nearly double for African-American children at almost 40 percent, and significantly higher for Hispanic children at almost 30 percent.

The continuum of child nutrition programs and policies that we will be discussing today are vital to the long-term successes of our nation's children and, through them, our nation itself. Through WIC prenatal programs to school and summer meals and child care food programs, participation in these programs has resulted in positive health outcomes for low income children and are 4:1 return on investment. For example, WIC saves over $4 for every $1 invested in the program due to fewer low birth-weight and pre-term babies, which costs our nation over $26 billion a year.

Hunger is linked to lower student achievement and poorer behavioral outcomes. These programs are powerful tools in providing greater economic opportunities for at-risk youth and helping them break free of the tragic cycle of poverty.

While access to food is vitally important, equally important is access to nutritious, high-quality food. But 30 million children rely on the national school lunch and breakfast programs. Students consume up to half of their daily calories while at school, and, for many children, school-based meals are their primary source of nutrition.

Foods that are too high in fat and sugar have been linked to weaker educational and behavioral outcomes. They also lead to childhood obesity and long-term health consequences as adults, including heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. Approximately 10 percent of our nation's health care spending go towards treating conditions related to obesity and unhealthy weight.

To address these challenges in 2010, Congress enacted the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. In addition to expanding access to child nutrition programs, the law also updated and improved the nutritional standards for foods served to our children, standards that had not been revised in over 15 years.

Most importantly, the new standards are based on scientific evidence, not politics or fiscal bottom lines. They include weekly limits

on calories, sugar, fat and sodium, require fruits and vegetables at every meal and incorporate whole grains. These changes are not promoting an exotic diet fad; they conform to the healthy eating habits that most of us in this room try to follow every day.

In the vast majority of districts, 93 percent across the country, are successfully implementing the new health standards today and students are eating more fruit and vegetables, not just at school, but also outside of school, too.

As we focus on healthier foods for children, we cannot ignore that child nutrition is a national security issue. According to Mission Readiness, a group of retired officers who support healthy meal standards, 25 percent of young Americans are too overweight to enlist in our nation's military.

So I am pleased that today we have an opportunity to discuss the scope and impact of federal child nutrition programs, and, hopefully, ways to improve and strengthen them. And, as we move through this process, we must keep in mind that the overarching goal of these programs is to provide children with healthy foods that can support them as they learn and grow. That, in turn, supports our national interests and long-term economic prosperity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Scott follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, Ranking Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Kline, for holding this hearing today. I look forward to examining the continuum of federal child nutrition programs, which are lifelines for the approximately 40 million children who rely on them every day for healthy food.

I would like to extend my thanks to all of the witnesses, but I must extend a special welcome to the First Lady of my home state of Virginia – Dorothy McAuliffe. Mrs. McAuliffe has been focusing not only on ending childhood hunger, but also on improving access to Virginia's fresh and locally grown agricultural commodities. This dual goal helps children, supports our farmers and strengthens our local economies.

More than 60 years ago, through enactment of the first federal child nutrition program—the National School Lunch Act of 1946—Congress recognized that feeding hungry children was not just a moral imperative but also an imperative for the health and security of our nation.

Today, a majority of American public school students (51 percent) are eligible for free and reduced price lunches. According to the latest USDA data, 15.8 million, or 21.6 percent, of children live in households facing a constant struggle against hunger. The rates are nearly double for African American children at 39 percent and significantly higher for Hispanic children at 29.5 percent. In my state of Virginia, 16.2 percent of children are food insecure.

The continuum of federal child nutrition programs and policies that we will be discussing today are vital to the long-term success of our nation's children and, through them, our nation itself.

From WIC's prenatal programs, to school and summer meals, and child care food programs, participation in these programs has resulted in positive health outcomes for low-income children and a 4 to 1 return on investment.

Hunger is linked to lower student achievement and poorer behavioral outcomes. These programs are powerful tools in providing greater economic opportunities for at-risk youth, and helping them break free of the tragic cycle of poverty.

While access to food is vitally important, equally important is access to nutritious, high-quality food. About 30 million children rely on the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Students consume up to half of their daily calories while at school. For many children, school based meals are their primary source of nutrition.

Foods that are too high in fat and sugar have been linked to weaker educational and behavioral outcomes. They also lead to childhood obesity and long term health consequences as adults, including heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. Ap-

proximately 10 percent of our nation's healthcare spending goes toward treating conditions related to obesity and unhealthy weight.

To address these challenges, in 2010, Congress enacted the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. In addition to expanding access to child nutrition programs, the law also updated and improved the nutritional standards of the foods served to our children—standards that had not been revised in over 15 years. Most importantly, the new standards are based on scientific evidence, not politics or fiscal bottom lines. They include weekly limits on calories, sugar, fat and sodium, require fruits and vegetables at every meal and incorporate whole grains.

These changes are not promoting an exotic diet fad. They conform to the healthy eating habits most of us in this room try to follow each day. And, the vast majority of school districts – 93 percent – across the country are successfully implementing the new healthy meals standards today, with students eating more fruit and vegetables not just at school, but outside of school too.

As we focus on healthier food for children, we cannot ignore that child nutrition is also a national security issue. According to Mission Readiness, a group of retired officers who support the new healthy meals standards, 25 percent of young Americans are too overweight to enlist in our nation's military.

I am pleased that today we will have an opportunity to discuss the scope and impact of federal child nutrition programs and hopefully, ways to improve and strengthen them. As we move through this process, we must keep in mind the overarching goal of these nutrition programs: to provide children with healthy foods that can support them as they learn and grow, which in turn supports our national interests and long-term economic prosperity.

I again thank everyone for being here this morning. With that, I yield back to the Chairman.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, gentleman.

Pursuant to committee rule 7(c), all members will be permitted to submit written statements to be included in the permanent hearing record. And, without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days to allow such statements and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted for the official hearing record.

I will now turn to introduction of our distinguished witnesses.

And I recognize Mr. Brat to introduce our first witness.

Mr. BRAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, it is an honor to have our First Lady from Virginia with us today. Thank you for being here.

I am going to introduce Mr. Duke Storen. Duke is a national policy expert with extensive experience researching and managing child nutrition programs. He hails from my Central Virginia district, as well, and serves as senior director of research for Share Our Strength.

Share Our Strength is an organization that works to end childhood hunger in America by connecting kids to effective nutrition programs. It also teaches low income families how to shop and cook healthy food on a budget. Parents learn to shop strategically, using nutrition information to make healthier choices and cook good, affordable meals.

Before coming to Share Our Strength, Mr. Storen worked at the USDA under two administrations managing child nutrition programs and leading efforts to improve access to them. He has 22 years of experience fighting hunger and addressing poverty, and has consulted with state governments on using technology to improve program effectiveness and efficiency.

Today he will share some ideas on how to make federal nutrition programs more effective and efficient.

Pleasure to have you with us today.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman KLINE. Thank the gentleman.

It is a pleasure to have you with us today.

Now my pleasure to introduce Ms. Julia Bauscher. She is the president of the School Nutrition Association and the director of School and Community Nutrition Services for the Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Jefferson County Public School system serves an average of 36,000 breakfast and 60,000 lunches each day across 145 locations. Under the leadership of Ms. Bauscher, the school system has implemented Farm-to-School, breakfast in the classroom, and at-risk supper program and, as it is eligible for community eligibility provision, has begun to implement this option, as well.

Welcome. Glad to have you with us.

And I now will recognize Mr. Scott again to introduce our next witness.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And behalf of my colleague from Virginia, Mr. Brat, I am pleased to introduce Dorothy McAuliffe, the first lady of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In that position she has dedicated her efforts to eliminating childhood hunger and improving access to Virginia's fresh, locally-grown agricultural products for all of our citizens.

She has identified food security and nutrition as key elements necessary for educational success and building healthy communities. She serves as the chair of the Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide, which focuses on eliminating childhood hunger in Virginia, developing local agricultural markets and promoting community efforts to link locally-grown food, education, health and nutrition.

She also serves as the governor's designee to the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, which assists in easing the transition of children of military families into Virginia schools.

She also leads Virginia's efforts to encourage national service as a pathway for solving challenges in local communities and has long been devoted to arts and education, serving on the Boards of Trustees of The Kennedy Center and The Smithsonian Institute.

She earned a B.A. from Catholic University of America and earned a law degree from Georgetown University Law Center.

So we are pleased to welcome Mrs. McAuliffe.

Chairman KLINE. Thank the gentleman for the introduction and Mrs. McAuliffe for being with us here today.

I will introduce today's final witness. There is no pejorative in that, you know. We are glad to have first witness and last witness.

Dr. Kathy Krey is the director of Research and assistant research professor with the Texas Hunger Imitative at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. In her role with Texas Hunger Initiative, Dr. Krey oversees a diverse portfolio of research and evaluation projects on food security topics. Dr. Krey and her team measure and evaluate existing food programs with the goal of conducting advocacy and outreach to the community about the effectiveness of such programs.

Additionally, Dr. Krey serves as an adjunct faculty member focusing on research methods and community sociology.

Welcome, Dr. Krey. We are glad to have you here.

I will now ask our witnesses to please stand and raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Let the record reflect the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Please, be seated.

I can't ever expect a day when they wouldn't but there we go.

[Laughter.]

Before I recognize you now to provide your testimony, let me briefly explain our lighting system, which I know has been explained to you before but now you see the little boxes there in front of you.

You have 5 minutes to present your testimony. When you begin, the light in front of you will turn green. When 1 minute is left, the light will turn yellow, and when your time is expired, the light will turn red. At that point, I will ask that you wrap up your remarks as best as you are able. I don't think I have ever gaveled down a witness for going a little bit too long in their statement. We want to hear what you have to say. But I do ask that you try to wrap up as best you can.

On the other hand, I have gaveled down more than one of my colleagues for going past the 5 minutes because we want to try to give everybody a chance to participate, get their questions. Many of them, like me, have been visiting schools and we have got a lot of questions. So, please do the best you can on that little clock deal.

And, now, we will start. I will recognize Mr. Storen.

You are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MR. DUKE STOREN, SENIOR DIRECTOR, RESEARCH, ADVOCACY, AND PARTNER DEVELOPMENT, SHARE OUR STRENGTH, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. STOREN. Good morning, Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Scott and members of the committee. Thank you for holding this important hearing and inviting me to testify today.

It is truly an honor, as ending hunger in America is my vocation, and it has been my life's work. I spent more than 20 years in every sector and at all levels, local, state, and national and community organizations, state government, federal government, at university, technology consulting, and now at Share Our Strength, a national not-for-profit organization that has been on the front lines of fighting hunger and poverty for more than 30 years.

At Share Our Strength, we invest in and implement data-driven programs in all 50 states, and we conduct research to find and replicate solutions that are sustainable. Our No Kid Hungry campaign seeks to end childhood hunger in America by breaking down the barriers between programs like school breakfast and the Summer Food Service Psummer food service rogram, and the kids they are meant to serve.

We create public-private partnerships, working with states and governors on both sides of the aisle to make the federal programs work more efficiently and more effectively. At the same time, we work to empower low income families to maximize their food resources.

Why is this work so important? Because 16 million children in the United States struggle with hunger, and we cannot have a strong America with weak kids. Hunger might not be visible in America as it is in other parts of the world but it lives everywhere, and we have a responsibility to solve this problem.

Hunger affects one in five children. Hunger is in your congressional district. Hunger is in our schools. For the first time, more than half of all the children coming to school are from low income families, and we know from our survey of teachers that three out of four teachers regularly see the face of hunger in their classrooms. And they understand the profound connection between hunger, behavior, and learning. Educators spend over $420 of their own money each year to help mitigate this problem.

Childhood hunger is at its worst during the summer months, when school meals are no longer available. Over four in 10 low income parents report not having enough food to feed their families during the summer. And that is why an effective summer feeding program should be a priority in child nutrition reauthorization.

But there is good news. Childhood hunger in America is a solvable problem, and the child nutrition programs are central to that solution, thanks to the support of you in Congress.

For decades, public-private partnerships have been at the core of this solution, allowing community organizations, schools, faith-based groups and private companies to come together to address this issue. We know that none of these groups could solve the problem of childhood hunger alone, but by all of us working together, we can more efficiently leverage the existing resources.

When kids can participate, the programs help them learn, become healthier, and grow into stronger adults. For example, the school breakfast program has a clear effect on academic achievement. A Deloitte social impact analysis shows that students who eat breakfast at school score 17.5 percent higher on math tests, they attend more days of school, and, together, these benefits make them 20 percent more likely to graduate and earn an average of $10,000 more per year.

However, while these programs work for the kids that can participate, too many eligible children can't participate because of bureaucratic barriers, too much administrative burden, and, for the summer months, a program that has not been updated in over 40 years and serves fewer than one in six children in need.

Through child nutrition reauthorization, Congress has an opportunity to make practical policy changes to fix the summer meals program and to make the other child nutrition programs even more efficient.

It is unacceptable for any child in America to go hungry. And thanks to a bipartisan commitment from Congress, we have strong, sustainable programs in place to help struggling families feed their kids and get to work. But it is critical that we take this opportunity to create more efficiencies in the federal nutrition programs so that we can let kids be kids.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Mr. Storen follows:]

[illegible] STREET NW SUITE [illegible]
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
TEL [illegible]
FAX [illegible]
NOKIDHUNGRY.ORG

Testimony of Duke Storen
Senior Director, Research, Advocacy, and Partnership Development
Share Our Strength

Before the House Education and Workforce Committee
"Serving Students and Families Through Child Nutrition Programs"
April 15, 2015

Good morning. Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the Committee, thank you for holding this important hearing and for inviting me to testify today; it is an honor. Ending hunger in America is my vocation, and I have spent more than 20 years working in every sector and at all levels - local, state, national - in community organizations, state and federal government, research firms, technology consulting, and now at Share Our Strength, a national not-for-profit organization that has been on the front lines of the war against poverty and hunger for over 30 years. We invest in and implement data-driven programs in all 50 states and conduct research to find and replicate sustainable solutions.

Our No Kid Hungry campaign seeks to end childhood hunger in America by breaking down the barriers between programs like school breakfast and summer meals and the kids they are meant to serve. We create public-private partnerships, working with states and Governors on both sides of the aisle to make the federal programs run more efficiently and effectively. At the same time, we work to empower low-income families to maximize their food resources.

Why is this work so important? Because 16 million American children struggle with hunger.

Hunger might not be as visible in America as it is in some other parts of the world, but it can be found everywhere in our nation, and we have a responsibility to solve this problem.

Hunger affects one in five children.[1]

Hunger is in your Congressional district.

Hunger is prevalent in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Hunger is in our schools. For the first time in half a century, the majority of U.S. children in public schools come from low-income families,[2] and we know from our survey of teachers that they see the face of hunger each day and understand the profound connections between hunger, behavior, and learning. Educators spend an average of $420 of their own money each year to feed their students[3].

---

[1] United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, "Food Security Status of U.S. Households in 2013," 2013
[2] Southern Education Foundation, "A New Majority: Low-Income Students Now a Majority in Nation's Public Schools," 2015
[3] Share Our Strength and Salter Mitchell, "Hunger in Our Schools," 2015

NO KID HUNGRY

Despite their best efforts, charity and food banks simply can't keep up with the growing demand for food assistance.[4] That's where there federal nutrition programs come in. They are designed to meet the need at the scale it exists, and they're doing so successfully. To put this in context: all of the food provided by U.S. charities in 2010 only amounted to about six percent of the food distributed by federal food programs that year.[5] Through our on-the-ground experience in states across the country, we work directly with community organizations, churches, and nonprofits who are working tirelessly to help meet the needs of their communities. They tell us day in and day out that without the federal nutrition programs as the backbone to their work, they would be forced to turn children away to go hungry.

Over the summer – when school meals are no longer available -- children are particularly vulnerable to hunger. Their parents and caregivers struggle to fill the nutrition gap. In our survey of low-income households, over four in ten report sometimes not having enough food to feed their families during summer months.[6] This financial struggle also leads to difficult tradeoffs. Feeding America reports that, over the course of a year, sixty-nine percent of households they serve have to choose between food and utilities. Sixty-seven percent choose between food and transportation, which can affect their ability to get to work.[7] That's why an effective summer feeding program authorized by Child Nutrition Reauthorization is so vital.

When we aren't able to give our children the nutrition they need, we fail them. Not only are they less able to concentrate at school, they're also more vulnerable to toxic stress and health problems like obesity and diabetes. These are expensive problems that can follow children into adulthood, exacerbating our nation's health care burden. When they grow up, they may fall into the estimated three out of four young Americans who cannot qualify for military service, according to "Mission: Readiness," an organization of senior retired military leaders. The idea of feeding our children through organized federal programs is rooted in military readiness.[8] When the school lunch program was established by Congress in 1946, it was a reaction to military recruits being turned away due to poor nutrition. The child nutrition programs authorized in this bill still play that same vital role in preparing our children for the military and for success in any important career.

But there's good news: childhood hunger in America is a solvable problem, and, thanks to the ongoing support of Congress, the child nutrition programs are a strong and a central part of the solution. For decades, public-private partnerships have been at the core of this solution, allowing community organizations, schools, faith-based groups, and private companies to come together to address the issue. Through our work to end childhood hunger in all 50 states, we see the power that comes from all sectors working together to solve this problem. Without creating any new government programs, the No Kid Hungry public-private collaborations around the country have connected kids to over 107 million more meals.

Feeding our hungry children is not the sole responsibility of government, or of charity, or of struggling families – we have a shared responsibility. By all of us working together, we can more efficiently leverage existing resources to meet the needs of our children.

When kids participate, these programs help them learn, become healthier, and grow into stronger adults.

---

[4] Bread for the World. "Churches and Hunger." 2014.
[5] Bread for the World, "Fact Sheet: Creating a Circle of Protection to Protect the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program." 2013
[6] Share Our Strength and APCO Insight, "National Survey of Low-Income Parents." 2013
[7] Feeding America, "Hunger in America 2014," 2014
[8] Hawley, Richard E. *Written Testimony for U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture Hearing, on Behalf of Mission Readiness.* June 12, 2014.

For example, the school breakfast program has a clear effect on academic achievement. A social impact analysis conducted by Deloitte shows that, on average, students who eat school breakfast score seventeen and a half percent higher on math tests and attend one and a half more days of school each year. Together, this makes them twenty percent more likely to graduate from high school and earn an average of $10,000 more each year.[9]

Additionally, the Special Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has consistently demonstrated strong positive health outcomes for mothers, babies, and young children. Participation in WIC leads to better pregnancy outcomes, including fewer infant deaths and increased birth weights. WIC also has a positive impact on children's diet, including reducing the risk of obesity.[10]

However, while these programs work for the kids who can participate, too many eligible children can't participate because of bureaucratic barriers, too much administrative burden, and for the summer months, a program that has not been updated in 40 years and serves fewer than one in seven children in need.

Fortunately, we have proven strategies to modernize these programs. Through Child Nutrition Reauthorization, Congress has an opportunity to make practical policy changes to reform the summer meals program and make the other child nutrition programs more efficient.

In America, we are blessed to have an abundance of food, programs that provide healthy food to children in need, and a strong, shared commitment to end childhood hunger that crosses generations, cultures, and political parties. We know it is unacceptable for any child to go hungry in America. Thank you for your support of this important legislation so that we can continue to have strong, sustainable programs that help struggling families feed their kids *and* get to work. It's critical, however, that we update these programs to remove bureaucratic barriers and create efficiencies that will allow us to reach those kids who currently go without.

Let's let kids be kids and make America strong.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and I look forward to your questions.

---

[9] Deloitte and Share Our Strength. "Ending Childhood Hunger: A Social Impact Analysis." 2013.
[10] USDA Food and Nutrition Service. "About WIC." 2013.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Storen.

Ms. Bauscher, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MS. JULIA BAUSCHER, PRESIDENT, SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION, DIRECTOR, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY NUTRITION SERVICES, JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Ms. BAUSCHER. Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Scott, members of the committee, on behalf of the School Nutrition Association's 55,000 members, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the vital role of school meal programs.

School nutrition professionals know the meals we provide can be the most nutritious meals that many children receive. We are passionate about supporting the 30 million students we serve every day. Our job is to nourish them for a successful school day and help them make healthier choices.

Too often in schools across the country, students line up early at the cafeteria door on Monday mornings, hungry for school breakfast after a weekend without enough food to eat at home. We all know growling stomachs can easily distract students, affecting their academic achievement.

With Congress' support, we have been working diligently to meet students' nutritional needs so they can give teachers their full attention. We are improving school lunch, expanding breakfast, and offering more afterschool snacks, suppers and summer meals so students have access to healthy meals, even when school is not in session.

These supplementary meals not only ease food insecurity among students, but also strengthens school meal programs. The more meals and snacks we serve, the less likely our programs will become a financial burden on school district budgets.

To ensure we contribute to healthier diets, SNA members support new regulations limiting calories and unhealthy fat in school meals. We are proud to offer more whole grains, larger servings and a wider variety of fruits and vegetables, and menus with less sodium.

Schools are committed to making these healthy choices appealing with initiatives like Taste Test, Farm-to-School, and Cornell University's Smarter Lunchroom Techniques. In my district, we have steadily increased the quantity of local foods we serve, and work with a local chef to make nutritious recipes delicious.

School nutrition professionals do not want to lose ground on these improvements. SNA will continue to support healthy changes. But Congress must address the sharp increase in cost and waste and the historic decline in student lunch participation under the new rules.

For 30 years, the National School Lunch Program has grown steadily. Under the new rules, 1.4 million fewer students choose school lunch each day. Paid lunch participation has fallen by 15 percent, as students opt out of healthy school meals too often in favor of less nutritious alternatives.

SNA is encouraged to see participation in the free meal category climb, with schools' access to the community eligibility provision. In the 96 schools in my district participating in CEP, daily lunch par-

ticipation is up 8 percent, and no one has to worry about embarrassing a student without lunch money.

However, schools outside of high poverty areas do not qualify for CEP. These schools struggle the most with decreasing participation which reduces revenue when costs are rising. This year schools must absorb $1.2 billion in added costs as a result of the new rules. Even in my district where CEP has increased revenue, I am experiencing a decline in my program's reserve fund.

School meal programs operate on extremely tight budgets. We must cover labor and benefits, supplies, equipment, indirect and other costs, leaving about $1.25 to spend on the food for each lunch tray. This year, each half pint of milk costs my program a nickel more than last year. That one nickel adds over $700,000 in new expenses.

Meanwhile, a half-cup of fresh fruit, on average, costs me 38 cents. This year, I reluctantly added juice back to my high school lunch menus as a cost saving measure. I haven't served juice at lunch in 15 years in an effort to serve more fiber-rich, whole fruits.

School meal programs can only cut so much. Without some relief, increased costs will impact more than the school meal programs; they will impact school district budgets as a whole. SNA has been supporting members in addressing all these challenges and will continue these efforts. We are working with partners, including Share Our Strength, on initiatives like best practices webinars and education sessions, and we are working with USDA on its Team Up for School Nutrition Success Initiative.

We appreciate the committee's recognition of the importance of strong school nutrition programs and your consideration of the school cafeteria perspective. SNA's members will be a resource in ongoing discussions. We encourage all members of Congress to visit a school cafeteria and talk with school nutrition professionals about their unique successes and challenges.

Thank you, again, for inviting me here today, and I am happy to answer any questions.

[The statement of Ms. Bauscher follows:]

Testimony before the U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee

"Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs"

Ms. Julia Bauscher, SNS, President, School Nutrition Association; Director of School and Community Nutrition Services, Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, KY

Wednesday, April 15, 10:00 am
2175 Rayburn House Office Building

Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Scott, other members of the Committee, on behalf of the 55,000 members of the School Nutrition Association (SNA), thank you for the opportunity to discuss the vital role of school meal programs.

School nutrition professionals know the meals we provide are often the most nutritious, balanced meals that many children receive during the week. We are dedicated and passionate about supporting the 30 million students we serve. Our job is to nourish them for a successful school day and to help them make healthier choices.

Too often in schools across the country, students line up early at the cafeteria doors on Monday mornings, hungry for school breakfast after a weekend without enough food to eat at home. We all know growling stomachs can easily distract students, affecting their academic achievement.

With Congress' support, school nutrition professionals have been working diligently to meet students' nutritional needs, so they can give teachers their full attention. We are improving school lunch, expanding breakfast, and offering more after-school snacks, suppers and summer meals to ensure students have access to healthy meals, even when school is not in session.

These supplementary meals not only ease food insecurity among students, but also strengthen school meal programs. The more meals and snacks we serve, the less likely our programs will become a financial burden on school district budgets.

To ensure these meals contribute to healthier diets for our students, SNA members support new regulations limiting calories and unhealthy fat in school breakfast and lunch. We are proud to offer more whole grains, larger servings and a wider variety of fruits and vegetables and to reduce the sodium in our entrees and sides.

Schools nationwide are also committed to making these healthy choices appealing to students with initiatives like taste tests, Farm to School programs and Cornell University Smarter Lunchroom techniques. In my district we have steadily increased the quantity of local foods we serve, and we work with a local chef to help make nutritious recipes delicious.

School nutrition professionals don't want to lose ground on improvements made in the cafeteria. SNA will continue to support healthy changes, but some of the new regulations have resulted in unintended consequences, which threaten our ability to better serve students' nutritional needs. Congress must address the sharp increase in costs and waste and the historic decline in student lunch participation under the new requirements.

For thirty years, the National School Lunch Program has grown steadily, serving healthy lunches to more students each year. However, under new rules, 1.4 million fewer students choose school lunch each day, according to data from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This participation challenge thwarts our shared goal of promoting healthier diets for *all* students, not just those who rely on free meals. Paid lunch participation has fallen by 15%, as students opt out of healthy school meals, too often in favor of less nutritious alternatives.

SNA is encouraged to see participation in the free meal category climb with schools' access to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which allows all students to eat for free without an application. In the 96 schools in my district participating in CEP, daily lunch participation is up 8%, and no one has to worry about embarrassing a student without lunch money.

However, schools outside of high poverty areas do not qualify for CEP. These schools struggle the most with decreasing participation, which reduces revenue when costs are rising.

USDA estimated that this year, schools must absorb $1.2 billion in added costs as a result of the new rules. Even in my district, where CEP has increased daily revenue, I am continuing to experience a decline in my program's reserves for critical expenses like equipment replacements, marketing and nutrition education initiatives and emergency expenditures.

School meal programs operate on extremely tight budgets. We must cover labor and benefits, supplies, equipment, indirect costs and other expenses, leaving about $1.25 to spend on the food for each lunch tray. This year, each half pint of milk costs my program a nickel more than last year. That one nickel adds over $700,000 in additional costs to my program.

Meanwhile, a half cup of fresh fruit on average costs me 38 cents. Higher costs on a tight budget have forced our program to cut back on the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables we serve. This year, I reluctantly added juice back to my high school lunch menus as a cost saving measure. I haven't served juice at lunch in 15 years, in an effort to serve more fiber-rich whole fruits.

School meal programs can only cut so much. Without some relief, increased costs will impact more than the quality of meal programs – they will impact school district budgets as a whole.

School Nutrition Association has been working to support members in addressing all these challenges and connect them with solutions for their programs and students. We are partnering with other stakeholders, like Share Our Strength, on initiatives to support school meal programs, hosting best practices webinars and education sessions and working with USDA on its Team Up for School Nutrition Success Initiative, including a peer-to-peer mentoring program. We will continue these efforts to provide resources and share success stories.

We appreciate the Committee's recognition of the importance of maintaining strong school nutrition programs and your consideration of the school cafeteria perspective. SNA's 55,000 members will continue to be a resource in on-going discussions. We encourage all Members of Congress to visit a school cafeteria to see firsthand how school meals are prepared and talk with local school nutrition personnel about their unique successes and challenges.

Thank you again for inviting me here today and I'm happy to answer any questions the Committee has.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, Ms. Bauscher.

Mrs. McAuliffe, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF MRS. DOROTHY S. MCAULIFFE, FIRST LADY OF VIRGINIA, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR, COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, DEMOCRATIC WITNESS

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Scott and members of the committee for having me here today.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to be here this morning as you consider the reauthorization of our federal childhood nutrition programs. We all agree that nothing is more important to our future as a nation than the health, education and well-being of our next generation.

I know that much of your deliberations around this reauthorization will focus on what and how we serve our students and families through our nutrition programs. But my hope for my own testimony today is to make sure we remember why these programs are so important.

I come to this, first and foremost, not as a nutritional or educational expert, but simply as a mom. Programs like CEP, school breakfast, and summer food service are the best way we can help ensure our children in need take full advantage of the educational opportunities our schools provide and our taxpayers invest in.

In Virginia alone, we invest $5.5 billion in education. If we want to capture our return on that investment, we have to make sure our students are ready and able to learn when they are in our classrooms. It is both staggering and tragic to learn that, for the first time in at least 50 years, a majority, 51 percent, of public school children in the United States qualified for free and reduced lunches.

In Virginia, over 300,000 of our children are food insecure. That's one in six of our children. The impact of hunger and malnutrition on children is devastating, well documented, and obvious to anyone who is a parent or works with children.

For many children across the country and across Virginia, the meals they receive at school are the most consistent and best meal of the day. How do we prepare the next generation for the jobs of the 21st century if kids aren't strong, healthy and well educated? How can we expect our children to be hungry for knowledge if they are just plain hungry?

I have heard from administrators and teachers all across our state who agree that a hungry child cannot learn. One was Susan Mele, the principal at Stewartsville Elementary School in the rural community of Bedford County. Behavioral problems, tardiness and absenteeism are just a few of the effects of hunger Susan has witnessed in her school.

To respond to these challenges, Susan has combined universal school breakfast with responsive classroom, an approach to teaching that incorporates social-emotional learning as part of the academic day. Susan has seen an increase of 2 percentage points in overall student attendance, plus a significant decrease in trips to the office and tardy arrivals. And the result, Susan has seen a significant increase in academic performance.

Pamela Smith is a principal at Highland View Elementary School in Bristol in Southwest Virginia. Unfortunately, in a school like Highland View where issues of neglect, trauma and mental health are far too prevalent, Pamela has to meet the most basic needs of her students before she and her staff can even begin to teach.

Not only does Pamela make sure that her students start the day with a healthy meal, which she does with great success, but in many cases, the students need to be checked for bruises, be given clean clothes for the day, have their teeth and hair brushed, and just be loved and listened to.

What Pamela and her teachers and staff are doing for these children is, frankly, above and beyond what any school should be tasked with managing. But it is the reality in which far too many must operate. Pamela has done a tremendous job of reaching the needs of her students during the school year, but an area of constant concern is the summer slide. After 9 months of working to bring students up to grade level, 3 months of hunger and unmet basic needs can set students back so far that it leaves Pamela feeling like her kids are trapped in a consistent cycle of one step forward and two steps back.

Working within the current restrictions of the Summer Food Service Program, the challenge of reaching kids in a predominantly rural community has made it tough to put the brakes on the summer slide. As parents, we strive to be supportive of our children's intellectual growth by encouraging them to find their passions and pursue their dreams. It is a tragedy that not all children in Virginia and the United States look out on the world and see the endless possibilities that we know should be there for them. But that is exactly why we are here.

It is our responsibility as public servants to be advocates for the children of this great nation. When three out of four public school teachers say that they have students who consistently come to school hungry, we have to ask ourselves how can we better serve the children who need us most.

When students eat school breakfast, teachers report profound results. Seventy-three percent see kids paying better attention in class, 53 percent see improved attendance, and 48 percent see fewer disciplinary problems.

But with results like these, why are only half of the students who are eligible for free or reduced-price breakfast getting one? And why are only one in seven participating in the summer meals program?

I am confident that your deliberations will uncover better ways to serve children and families through our federal nutrition programs. In Virginia, we look forward to partnering with you to find and implement those solutions. Working together, I know we can guarantee that all of our children are fed and fed well.

Thank you very much. I look forward to the questions.

[The statement of Mrs. McAuliffe follows:]

Dorothy S. McAuliffe
First Lady of Virginia

Testimony before the House Education and Workforce Committee

"Serving Students and Families Through Child Nutrition Programs"

April 15, 2015

Thank you, Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the committee for having me here today.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to be here this morning as you consider the Reauthorization of our federal Childhood Nutrition programs, and to be able to serve the Commonwealth of Virginia in my role as First Lady.

I know we all agree that nothing is more important to our future as a nation than the health, education and well-being of our next generation.

And I know that much of your deliberations around this reauthorization will focus on what and how we serve our students and families through Child Nutrition Programs, but my hope for my own testimony today is to make sure we remember why it's so important.

I come to this first and foremost, not as a nutritional or educational expert, but simply as a mom.

The Governor and I have made it our mission to take every step we can towards eliminating child hunger in Virginia.

Over the past year, we have joined with our legislative leaders in a bi-partisan effort to support school breakfast participation, pushed to enroll schools in the Community Eligibility Provision, worked to expand summer meal access at schools and libraries across the Commonwealth, and the USDA recently announced that Virginia will manage an $8.8 Million Demonstration Project Grant to End Child Hunger in the Commonwealth, which will fund an innovative plan we have developed to use schools as food distribution centers in some of our neediest neighborhoods.

While I'm incredibly proud of the way our Commonwealth has come together to tackle this issue and work together towards this goal, ensuring our students are well fed and ready to learn must be a continued partnership between our states and Congress, our schools, community leaders and families.

Programs like CEP, School Breakfast and the Summer Food Service are the best way we can help ensure our children in need take full advantage of the educational opportunities our schools provide and our taxpayers invest in.

In Virginia alone - we invest over $ 5.5 Billion each year in Education.

If we want to capture our return on that investment, we have to make sure our students are ready and able to learn when they are in our classrooms.

Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

(804) 663-7490
www.firstlady.governor.virginia.gov
Dorothy.McAuliffe@governor.virginia.gov

It is both staggering and tragic to learn that for the first time in at least 50 years a majority - 51% - of public school children in the United States qualify for free and reduced lunches.[i]

With supportive families and a strong educational system behind them, we know that our students have the power and the potential to break the cycle of poverty.

Unfortunately, hunger remains a painful reality in far too many homes in our great nation. In 2013, more than 17 million households were food-insecure, meaning they were unable to attain or provide adequate food for their families during the year.[ii]

Nearly half of those households include children.

In Virginia, over three hundred thousand of our children are food insecure[iii]. That is one in six of our kids.

The impact of hunger and malnutrition on children is devastating, well-documented, and obvious to anyone who is a parent or works with children.

Far too many students start the week hungry from the weekend. For many children across the country, and across Virginia, the meals they receive at school are the most consistent and best meal of the day.

How do we prepare the next generation for the jobs of the 21st century? How can we expect our children to be hungry for knowledge, if they are just plain hungry?

Our military leaders, business leaders, community leaders and health care professionals all agree that our future depends on our kids being strong, healthy and well-educated if they are going to be able to lead us into an era of national security and global economic competitiveness.

That is why they have all joined this conversation.

Our faith-based communities, neighborhood pantries and food bank system in Virginia are incredible resources, and do an amazing job.

But they will tell you, the demand keeps growing and it's harder and harder to keep up with the need. It is not a sustainable model, nor is it the best model, for feeding our population in Virginia or nationwide.

School is where most children spend most hours of most days. For many it is the safest place in their community. It's the place their parents trust and know – it's a place where kids' dreams are fostered. It makes sense that school and summer school is the best place to reach our neediest kids.

In my travels and conversations across Virginia, time and again I have met school leaders and teachers who understand that their ability to succeed as educators doesn't start with a lesson plan; it starts with a meal and students who are emotionally available to learn.

A few months ago, my husband and I invited Susan Mele, the principal at Stewardsville Elementary School in the rural community of Bedford County, to meet with us in Richmond.

Susan shared her experience that when students are hungry, it's just too big an obstacle for teachers to overcome to try to teach. Behavioral problems, tardiness, and absenteeism are just a few of the effects of hunger Susan witnessed in her school.

So, Susan has implemented an innovative school breakfast program with a Responsive Classroom program, which is an approach to teaching that incorporates social emotional learning as part of the academic day.

Since implementing this approach, Susan has seen an increase of two percentage points in overall student attendance, plus a significant decrease in tardy arrivals to school and office referrals for behavioral issues.[iv]

She also reports an improved learning environment because students are no longer hungry and instead are ready and eager to learn. Her teachers also use mealtimes to talk about nutrition and manners, and build important connections between teachers and students, and students and their classmates.

The result: Susan has seen a significant increase in academic performance.

Rather than viewing behavioral issues, social skill development and hunger as separate issues in her school – Susan's approach has been to provide her students the opportunity to develop social skills while sharing a meal together.

Pamela Smith is a principal at Highland View Elementary School in Bristol in far Southwest Virginia.

Pamela came to Richmond to highlight that, in a school like hers where issues of neglect, trauma, and mental health are far too prevalent, before she and her staff can even begin to teach they have to meet the basic needs of these children.

Not only does Pamela make sure her students start the day with a healthy meal – which she does with great success– but in many cases, the students she helps need to be checked for bruises, be given clean clothes for the day, brush their teeth and hair, or just be loved and listened to.[v]

The things Pamela, and her teachers and staff, are doing for these children and families are frankly above and beyond what any school should be tasked with managing, but it is the reality in which far too many must operate.

Pamela has done a tremendous job of reaching the needs of her students during the school year, but an area of constant concern for her is the "summer slide."

After nine months of working to bring students up to grade level, three months of hunger and unmet basic needs can set students back so far that it leaves Pamela feeling like her kids are trapped in a cycle of one step forward, two steps back.

Pamela and other local leaders have been working to find solutions, but – working within the current parameters of the Summer Food Service Program – the challenge of kids getting to sites in a predominantly rural community has made it tough to put the brakes on the summer slide.

The Governor and I have five children who range from a son in middle school to a daughter who recently graduated from college.

As their parents, we strive to be supportive of our children's intellectual growth by encouraging them to find their passion and pursue their dreams.

It's a tragedy that not all children in Virginia or the United States look out on the world and see the endless possibilities that we know should be there for them.

But that's exactly why we are here.

It's our responsibility as public servants to be advocates for the children of this great nation.

When 3 out of 4 public school teachers say that students regularly come to school hungry – it's time to get serious about addressing this need.[vi]

The good news is that we already know how to get there.

When students eat school breakfast, teachers report profound results.

73% see kids paying better attention in class, 53% see improved attendance, and 48% see fewer disciplinary problems.

But, with results like these, we have to ask ourselves why only half of the students in our schools who are entitled to a free or reduced breakfast are getting them – or why only one in seven low-income children who ate a school lunch during the regular 2012-2013 school year participated in the Summer Nutrition Program?

I'm confident that your deliberations will uncover new ways to serve children and families through the federal nutrition programs. In Virginia, we look forward to partnering with you to find and implement these innovations.

Working together, I know we can guarantee that all of our children are fed, and fed well.

Thank you!

---

[i] Research Bulletin: A New Majority Low Income Students Now a Majority In the Nation's Public Schools, Southern Education Foundation, January, 2015 http://www.southerneducation.org/Our-Strategies/Research-and-Publications/New-Majority-Diverse-Majority-Report-Series/A-New-Majority-2015-Update-Low-Income-Students-Now

[ii] Household Food Security in the United States in 2013, USDA, http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/key-statistics-graphics.aspx

[iii] Map the Meal Gap, Feeding America, http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/map-the-meal-gap/

[iv] "Bedford Principal Cuts Disciplinary Referrals 75% in Three Years - Susan Mele says Responsive Classroom Works" http://www.wdbj7.com/news/local/bedford-principal-cuts-disciplinary-referals-75-in-three-years/24227418

[v] Principal urges Virginia leaders to repeal A-F scale for public schools- Smith shares school's story in new role as liaison to Sen. Carrico http://www.tricities.com/news/principal-urges-virginia-leaders-to-repeal-a-f-scale-for/article_facsdc16-acdb-11e4-8c9c-c340375829869.html

[vi] 2015 Hunger in our Schools Report, Share Our Strength, hungerinourschools.org/img/NKH-HungerInOurSchoolsReport-2015.pdf

Chairman KLINE. Thank you very much.

Dr. Krey, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF DR. KATHY KREY, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND ASSISTANT RESEARCH PROFESSOR, TEXAS HUNGER INITIATIVE, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY, WACO, TEXAS

Ms. KREY. Thank you.

Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Scott and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the importance of child nutrition programs for students and families.

My name is Kathy Krey and I am the director of research at the Texas Hunger Initiative at Baylor University. THI developed strategies to end hunger through research, education and community development. We convene federal, state and local government with non-profits, faith-based groups and business leaders to increase food security.

Child nutrition programs are an important resource for lessening the effects of food insecurity. These programs are instrumental in ensuring that students from low income families, especially, have access to healthy meals throughout the year.

In Texas, it is estimated that 27 percent of children live in food insecure households, which is higher than the national average, meaning, they have difficulty meeting basic food needs at least some time during the year. THI and its partners across our state have fostered public-private partnerships to maximize the reach and efficiency of child nutrition programs.

Public challenges like food insecurity pertain to more than one jurisdiction by nature. Therefore, they require a response that exceeds the capabilities and resources of any one department or organization. And collaboration provides a way to stretch resources to accomplish more with less.

The administration and coordination of child nutrition programs present unique opportunities for public-private partnerships to take shape. Through actors such as the Texas Department of Agriculture, schools, non-profits, congregations and foundations, community-based resources like funding, volunteers and space are pooled and maximized.

The need for meals is especially high during summer months for Texas children when school is not in session. The summer meals program is one way to ensure that children receive health meals. Schools, non-profits and local municipality service sponsors and have meal sites within their regions.

In Texas, about 300,000 kids a day participate in the summer meals program, and regular access to healthy meals in the summer is important, not just for students' health, but for students' academic well-being. We know that inadequate nutrition can intensify summer learning loss, especially for low income students who can lose up to twice the ground of other students during summer months.

Additionally, after-school snacks and meals can help relieve financial burdens for working parents and provide support for schools and non-profits that run afterschool enrichment programs

so they can provide healthy meals. In Texas, in 2014, we served an average of 51,000 meals a day in afterschool programs.

In addition, school meal programs like school breakfasts are important to a successful school day, especially for low income children who might not have access to breakfast at home. In Texas, more than 1.7 million students start their day with school breakfast, including 1.5 million low income students. Eating breakfast is associated with positive student outcomes, including improved attention and memory, and decreased disciplinary action.

School meals offer all students better opportunities to succeed in school, especially children at risk of missing meals at home.

Following are examples of public-private partnerships in Texas that supplement and maximize federal funding and state administration of child nutrition programs. In the Rio Grande Valley, Catholic Charities utilizes the Summer Food Service Program to sponsor over 75 summer meal sites. And they collaborate with churches and non-profits in their area to support these sites, including a local non-profit that provides activities for kids and classes for adults in the summer, and a national non-profit that provide books and educational programming at summer meal sites.

These churches and non-profits coordinate their efforts by sharing volunteers, serving meals and providing activities. In East Texas, THI partners with the local community food coalition and local farmers to redistribute excess food from a local farmer's market to summer meal sites. The program includes educating families on healthy eating habits and cooking lessons. These partnerships link families with existing services in the community to improve quality of life.

Child nutrition programs are necessary to curb the effects of food insecurity. Public-private partnerships bridge local, state and federal resources to maximize the efficiency and reach of these programs so that children can stay fueled for learning all year round.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

[The statement of Dr. Krey follows:]

TEXASHUNGER
INITIATIVE
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

Written Testimony

of

Dr. Kathy J. Krey
Director of Research
Assistant Research Professor
Texas Hunger Initiative
Baylor University

on the issue of

"Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs"

before the

House Education and the Workforce Committee

April 15, 2015

Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the importance of child nutrition programs for students and families. My name is Kathy Krey. I am the Director of Research at the Texas Hunger Initiative at Baylor University where I oversee a diverse portfolio of research and evaluation projects on food security topics, including evaluation of child nutrition programs in Texas. The Texas Hunger Initiative (THI) is a collaborative, capacity-building project focused on ensuring that every Texan has access to three nutritious meals a day, seven days a week. THI develops and implements strategies to end hunger through research, policy, education, community organizing and community development. Headquartered at Baylor University with 12 regional offices across the state, THI convenes federal, state and local government stakeholders with nonprofits, faith communities and business leaders to create an efficient system of accountability that increases food security in Texas.

Child nutrition programs are an important resource for lessening the effects of food insecurity in the United States. These programs include the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the at-risk afterschool meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which provide meals and snacks to low-income children. These programs also include school meals offered to all children but that are particularly important for students that qualify for free and reduced-price meals based on their household income (children who live in families at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty line). These child nutrition programs are instrumental in ensuring that students whose families that are economically poor have access to healthy meals throughout the year. In order to estimate need, researchers utilize free and reduced- price meal (FRP) eligibility data, which serves as a rough proxy for the number of children living in poverty because census poverty data isn't broken down by school/school district level. Fifty-one percent of U.S. public school children (Southern Education Foundation, 2015) and 61 percent of Texas public school children qualify for FRP meals (TDA, 2013-2014 NSLP Breakfast & Lunch Data). This is measure is important because poverty is a strong predictor of how well children do in school, both academically and behaviorally.

To understand the larger picture, 19.5 percent of American households with children were "food insecure at least some time during the year" meaning they "had difficulty providing enough food for all their members due to a lack of resources," and in 9.9 percent of households with children, one or more children were food- insecure) (Coleman-Jensen, Gregory, & Singh,

2014). In Texas, it is estimated that 27 percent of children live in households experiencing food insecurity, which is higher than the national average (21%) (Feeding America, 2014). THI and its partners across the state have fostered innovative public-private partnerships to maximize the reach and efficiency of child nutrition programs so that more children and families who need the programs have access to them.

Public-Private Partnerships

Because public challenges, such as food insecurity, are multijurisdictional in nature, "they require a response that exceeds the capabilities and resources of any one department, organization, or jurisdiction, and collaboration, including multijurisdictional partnerships, provides a way to stretch resources, and accomplish more with less" (O'Leary & Gerard, 2013, p. 57). Benefits of public-private partnerships include "cost savings [and] enhanced quantity and quality of services" in addition to benefits for the local community such as "addressing community needs, enhancing trust between participating entities, and increasing citizen support" (Hilvert & Swindell, 2013, p. 251).

The administration and coordination of child nutrition programs present unique opportunities for public-private partnerships to take shape. Through actors such as the Texas Department of Agriculture, schools, nonprofits, congregations, and foundations, community-based resources are pooled and maximized. By stretching these resources, including funding, volunteers, space, food, and educational activities, local communities are able to accomplish more through collaboration. Most importantly, public-private partnerships decrease access barriers, encourage family and community involvement, and build the networked capacity of local communities to address the issue of food insecurity so that low-income children have access to meals year round.

Summer and Afterschool Meals

The need for meals is especially high during the summer months for Texas children, when school is not in session. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Department of Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS), is one way to ensure that children receive healthy meals during the summer. The National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) was created as an alternative to SFSP

for schools that already participate in school meal programs and wish to continue meal service into the summer. Schools, nonprofit organizations, and local municipalities serve as summer meal sponsors and have meal sites within their region. Summer meals programs also often provide education and/or recreational activities in addition to serving meals.

In Texas, about 300,000 kids a day participate in the summer meals program (TDA, 2014 Summer Meals Data). Regular access to healthy meals in the summer months is important, not just for health but for students' academic well-being. We know that health issues and inadequate nutrition can intensify the learning loss that occurs over the summer. Students who are not engaged in learning during the summer tend to fall behind academically, especially in areas such as math and reading (Smink, 2011). This particularly affects low-income students "who lose up to twice the ground of other students" in reading and language during the summer months (Kerry & Davies, 1998, p. 119). There is still unmet need in Texas. We know that lack of awareness and transportation challenges, for example, discourage some low-income children from participating in the program. Fortunately, work is being done at the state and local level to address some of these barriers and ensure that the children who need the program have access to it.

Additionally, children can be served meals through the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program, which is part of the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program reimburses certain afterschool providers for snacks or meals served to participating children. The snacks and meals are served after the regular school day ends. The afterschool meals program helps to relieve the financial burden of working parents and "provides financial support for schools and community centers that run afterschool programs, so they can provide healthy meals and additional programming" (CPPP, 2015, p. 18). An average of 51,000 meals per day were served in Texas through afterschool programs in 2014 (Afterschool Alliance, 2014).

Our in-house, on-going evaluation of the summer meals and afterschool meals programs assesses the operations of the programs and factors that affect participation. The study utilizes existing publicly available data, surveys of sponsor staff, and focus groups with parents and children. Food quality, transportation, and stigma are often cited as barriers to participation in summer meals programs, and rural areas of Texas tend to be most underserved. However, even given these barriers, there has been a steady increase in the number of summer meals sponsors

and meal sites in Texas over the last five years which will help the program reach more low-income students and reach previously underserved areas, while also building on the capacity of organizations.

THI and two of its national partners developed and administered a survey to summer meals sponsors to better understand their perspectives on how a summer meals program operates locally Overall, Texas sponsors reported being satisfied with the summer meals program experience. However, sponsors cited transporting kids as a major obstacle. Sponsors conducted a wide number of outreach efforts, most often sending information home through schools and providing information at program sites. Most Texas sponsors operate five or fewer sites and have kept their number of sites consistent over the past year. Nonprofit sponsors are more likely than schools to report an interest in growing their programs, increasing their meal sites, and offering more meals. The partnership of community-based organizations is essential because they have established trust, networks, and resources. Barriers to participation are being addressed in Texas through innovative programming and strategic outreach.

School Breakfast

In addition to summer and after school meals, school meals programs, like school breakfast, are an important component to a successful school day, especially for low-income children who might not have access to breakfast at home due to things like: two working parents with limited time, the early start to the school day, and limited food resources at home. In Texas, more than 1.8 million students start their day with school breakfast, including 1.5 million low-income students (TDA, 2013-2014 NSLP Lunch & Breakfast Data).

The research is clear: eating breakfast is associated with positive student outcomes, including improved attention and memory and decreased disciplinary action (Ingwersen et al., 2007; Mahoney et al., 2005; Wesnes et al., 2003, Murphy et al., 1998, Terry & Kerry, 2000). School meals offer all students better opportunities to succeed in school, especially children at risk of missing meals at home.

Public-Private Partnership Case Examples

We have seen improvement in programming for summer meals, afterschool meals, and school breakfast because of the partnerships among schools, nonprofits, foundations that

supplement and maximize federal funding and state administration of the programs. The following are case examples of public-private partnerships for child nutrition program efficiency in Texas.

Mobile Summer Meals Bus and Afterschool Meals Program: Waco, TX

In Waco, Texas, the Texas Hunger Initiative collaborated with the City of Waco and Greater Harvest Assembly Church of God in Christ to increase access to summer and afterschool meals in the local area, utilizing SFSP and CACFP. The three groups received a grant from the National League of Cities to provide funding for the programs. Waco Independent School District and CitySquare, a privately funded nonprofit, served as the sponsors for each program. This public-private partnership also pioneered a mobile summer meals program, The "Meals on the Bus" program, in collaboration with Waco ISD, added 10 new summer meals sites in the Waco area. CitySquare sponsored 12 additional summer meals sites last summer, and 17 sites now serve afterschool meals, and all of these in previously underserved areas. This collaboration eliminated transportation barriers for both the summer meals and afterschool meals program.

Community-Based, Extra-Curricular Summer Meals Program: Rio Grande Valley, Texas

In South Texas, the Rio Grande Valley, Catholic Charities sponsors 75 summer meals sites and teams up with other local nonprofit organizations, including ARISE. Catholic Charities utilizes federal funding from SFSP and collaborate with churches and nonprofits to recruit and support summer meals sites. The first year, they had several churches utilizing the summer meals program for their week-long Vacation Bible Schools. The next year, Catholic Charities asked several of these churches to consider extending their week-long service. That summer, 10 churches served meals at least one month and some even served the entire summer. In addition to providing summer meals, ARISE provides classes for adults during the summer, and FirstBook, a national nonprofit, provides books for educational programming at the summer meals site. The churches and nonprofits coordinate their efforts by sharing volunteers, serving meals, and providing activities with the children and their families.

A Farmers' Market and Summer Meals Program Collaboration: Tyler, Texas

In Tyler, Texas, the East Texas Community Food Coalition and THI partnered to redistribute excess food from the market to summer meals sites. The farmers donated the extra produce that was not sold at the market to families who could use it via parents whose children attended the summer meals sites. The program provided an avenue for children to try new foods and education on healthy eating habits. Several summer meals sites now incorporate cooking lessons for the activity portion of the program and bring in nutritionists to educate children and families about healthy eating. The group has also incorporated other programming for families such as job training and ideas on how to eat healthy with a limited budget. Partnerships are linking families with existing services in the community to improve quality of life beyond meeting the need for meals. The East Texas Community Food Coalition, THI and the farmers around Tyler, Texas, are excited to maximize the impact of the program next summer. Their goal is to collect all of the leftover produce and distribute it at sites in each of the eight food deserts in Tyler.

A Congregation-led Summer Meals Program: Lockhart, Texas

In Lockhart, Texas, a pastor stumbled into the summer meals program. After learning more about THI and how his church could get involved, the pastor organized a meeting in his small, community. After administering a community assessment, revealing the high needs of the community, the faith-based community stepped up to form a THI-supported anti-hunger coalition. The coalition is run by Caldwell County Christian ministries which secure volunteers to run every summer meals site. Representatives from multiple congregations, such as First Baptist Lockhart Church and the Church of Christ, sit together on the coalition and plan for summer meals every year by utilizing SFSP. Lockhart ISD serves as the sponsor to provide all the meals. In 2012, Lockhart opened two sites. In 2013, they reached other underserved areas through three additional sites and in 2014 it had five different sites, a slow and steady improvement in a small community.

Conclusion

Child nutrition programs are necessary to curb the effects of food insecurity. Public-private partnerships bridge local, state, and federal resources to maximize the efficiency and

reach of these programs. Innovative collaborations increase the capacity of communities to take ownership of their needs so that children can stay fueled for learning all day, all year round.

References

Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., & Olson, L. (2007). Summer learning and its implications: Insight from the beginning school study. *New Directions for Youth Development, 114,* 11-32.

Afterschool Alliance. (2014). America after 3pm: Texas. Retrieved from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/detail.html#s/TX/demand/p_of_children_in_programs_2014

Bellisle, F. (2004). Effects of diet on behaviour and cognition in children. *British Journal of Nutrition, 2* (Suppl.), S227–S232.

Belot, M., & James, J. (2009). *Healthy school meals and educational outcomes* (Unpublished manuscript). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Benton, D., Maconie, A., & Williams, C. (2007). The influence of the glycaemic load of breakfast on the behaviour of children in school. *Physiology & Behavior, 92*(4), 717–724.

Center for Public Policy Priorities. (2013). Food & nutrition in Texas: What you need to know. http://forabettertexas.org/images/HW_2015_01_NutritionReport_web.pdf

Coleman-Jensen, A., Gregory, C., & Singh, A. (2014). Household food security in the United States in 2013. *Economic Research Service, Report Number 173.*

Fairchild, R. (2011). Why and how communities should focus on summer learning. *National Civic Review*, *100*(4),13-20. doi:10.1002/ncr.20079

Feeding America. (2014). Map the meal gap. http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/map-the-meal-gap/

Hilvert, C., & Swindell, D. (2013). Collaborative service delivery: What every local government manager should know. *State and Local Government Review 45*(4), 240-254.

Hoyland, A., Dye, L., & Lawton, C.L. (2009). A systematic review of the effect of breakfast on the cognitive performance of children and adolescents. *Nutrition Research Reviews, 22,* 220–243.

Hilvert, C., & Swindell, D. (2013). Collaborative service delivery: What every local government manager should know. *State and Local Government Review 45*(4), 240-254.

Ingwersen, J., Defeyter, M. A., Kennedy, D. O., Wesnes, K. A., & Scholey, A. B. (2007). A low

glycemic index breakfast cereal preferentially prevents children's cognitive performance from declining throughout the morning. *Appetite, 49*(1), 240–244.

Kerry, T., & Davies, B. (1998). Summer learning loss: The evidence and a possible solution. *Support For Learning, 13*(3), 118-122.

Kleinman, R.E., Hall, S., Green, H., Korzec-Ramirez, D., Patton, K., Pagano, M.E., & Murphy, J.M. (2002). Diet, breakfast, and academic performance in children. *Annals of Nutrition & Metabolism, 46*(suppl 1), 24–30.

Mahoney, C. R., Taylor, H. A., Kanarek, R. B., & Samuel, P. (2005). Effect of breakfast composition on cognitive processes in elementary school children. *Physiology & Behavior, 85*(5), 635–645.

Murphy, J.M., Pagano, M.E., Nachmani, J., Sperling, P., Kane, S., & Kleinman, R. E., (1998). The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, 152*, 899–907.

O'Leary, R., and C. Gerard. 2013. Collaborative governance and leadership: A 2012 survey of local government collaboration. The Municipal Yearbook 2013. Washington, DC: ICMA

Smink, J. (2011). A new vision for summer school. *Educational Leadership 69*(4), 64 -67.

Southern Education Foundation. (2015). A new majority research bulletin: Low income students now a majority in the nation's public schools. Retrieved from http://www.southerneducation.org/Our-Strategies/Research-and-Publications/New-Majority-Diverse-Majority-Report-Series/A-New-Majority-2015-Update-Low-Income-Students-Now.

Texas Hunger Initiative analysis of 2013-2014 NSLP Lunch and Breakfast Data, requested from the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Texas Hunger Initiative analysis of 2014 Summer Meals Data, requested from the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Terry, S.G., & Kerry, K. (2000). *Classroom breakfast: Helping Maryland students make the grade*. Baltimore, MD: Maryland Dept. of State.

Wesnes, K.A., Pincock, C., Richardson, D., Helem, G., & Hails, S. (2003). Breakfast reduces declines in attention and memory over the morning in schoolchildren. *Appetite, 41*(3), 329–331.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, Dr. Krey.

Thank you to all the witnesses for your testimony.

We will move now into a discussion, into questions. I will start, and I will be put on the clock.

[Laughter.]

In my ever futile efforts to get my colleagues to contain themselves.

Ms. Bauscher, this is kind of a strange question with what I think is an obvious answer, but with all the rhetoric that is out there, we ought to get this straight.

You represent an awful lot of professionals. Are there any school food directors actually looking to serve unhealthy meals?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Absolutely not.

Chairman KLINE. Exactly. And, yet, we do have a lot of discussion and we are trying to figure out what federal policy we need in place that allows these directors to serve healthy meals. I mentioned earlier, Mrs. McAuliffe and I had a brief discussion before we started the hearing.

I visited a school in my district, you have suggested that all of my colleagues do that, and I would concur. And I went to their cafeteria and I was there at lunchtime and I watched how it worked. It was a very well-organized program. But this school is actually contemplating dropping out of the federal program and just operating it on their own. This idea came from kids, and so I sat down with four students, exceptionally bright kids, they are all kids to me, young men and women in the high school and they spoke highly of healthy meals. They even talked about how they liked the fruits and vegetables. There was some discussion about broccoli but, in general, they really liked that. They just want the meals to be bigger and better. And they really did a lot of research, these four kids, and they pointed out some, what I think are just crazy examples.

There was one young man sitting there, a senior, getting ready to go off next year on a football scholarship and play football. And his portion was exactly the same size as the kid who weighed probably 100 pounds less and was not going off to play football. So they had some consternation there and the kids thought, this is a fairly well-to-do school, the kids have money, and so what they are doing is just buying other food.

So they are getting the healthy meal but then they are going and buying more food because they are not getting enough to eat before they go off to football practice or to gym practice or something like that.

So the school is actually considering dropping out of the program. Have you heard of other schools who have either left the program or are considering leaving the program because of the constraints?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Yes, sir. I recently, this past weekend, attended the school nutrition association of New Hampshire's conference, and I have actually talked to two managers in a district that recently went to a contract management company, or off of the school lunch program, because they could not meet the current requirements and satisfy students' needs.

Across the country, there have been a number of districts or schools that have come off of the program, primarily in areas where

there is a low number of at-risk students. They have got the money to buy other things, and, under the current guidelines, it is difficult with the reimbursement that we receive to meet the students' needs given the requirements, for example, that we make them take a fruit or vegetable. If that goes in the trash, then we are throwing resources away that could be used to improve the program in other areas, potentially meet some their needs, or to provide nutrition education which teaches them the importance of eating healthier choices.

Chairman KLINE. I have used the word and hear the word used many times, flexibility, that you and your professionals need more flexibility. What does that mean to you?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Well, for example, again, a requirement the students must take a half cup of a fruit or vegetables, we are asking for flexibility to allow the school food authority to determine whether or not students have to take that component.

The good news is, students across the country are becoming more accepting and comfortable with a wide variety of fruits and vegetables and SNA supports the larger serving sizes and the wider variety that we offer. But, again, if that fruit or vegetable goes in the trash, we are throwing valuable resources away that could be used to improve the program in other areas.

Regarding the whole grain requirement, beginning July 1 of this year, 100 percent of the breads and grains that we serve have to be whole-grain rich. Most districts are exceeding or were exceeding the requirement that at least 50 percent of the whole grains be whole-grain rich.

But across the country in regions there are particular items; where I live in the south, its biscuits. In the deeper south it is biscuits and grits. In the northeast, it is that New York-style bagel and in the southwest it is tortillas; where many school food authorities struggle to find a product available in their area that is acceptable to their students.

That is the flexibility that we need in order to plan and serve meals that are appealing to our students, keep them in the cafeteria. We, of course, realize how important it is for them to consume our food and be ready for the teachers to teach them.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you.

My time has expired. I failed in my first test here.

Mr. Scott, you are recognized.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. McAuliffe, thank you for being with us today. Can you say a word about the need for a federal role in child nutrition?

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. Well, I think it is clear, Congressman Scott, you have been a witness to this for so many years, the importance of it. Our military leaders, our generals and admirals are a part of this conversation. They are a part of ensuring that the nutritional standards stay in place, that we work towards this goal of making sure that the food access is there but also the food quality because we know that, yes, over decades, we have relied and become a culture of convenience.

And so we are up against decades of maybe not going in the right direction where we should in terms of nutritional standards. But it will take time and it will take consistent effort to ensure that

our children are building lifelong habits around choosing and having access to healthy food.

I think that any parent would recognize the story about, you know, trying to introduce vegetables to your young toddlers and that it takes more than one time, 2, 3, 4 years of continual introduction of the right, proper and different foods. We have a middle school son so I can speak to that. It still goes on, he is 12 years old, but we still have these conversations at dinner every night.

I would just want to say that those school nutrition directors that we know, that we have met in Virginia, we are seeing 94 percent of our schools that are saying that they are meeting the guidelines, they have thought about implementation over time, not all at once.

It is gradual, that is the way we know we introduce the right habits and tastes and all of those kinds of things, and we feel like, with the proper technical assistance, training and guidance, that, with support and perhaps more resources, I would argue, because we do understand. School nutrition directors are operating on pennies a day to feed our children. And that is tough and we know that.

So I would just say there is a long commitment in this country, in this committee to making sure that our next generation is strong and healthy. We know. It is what our grandparents and our parents always told us, food is the best medicine. So I would say that I appreciate the opportunity to be here and to just ask that we seriously not think about turning back but continuing to push forward.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you.

Now, Dr. Krey, you have research on the effect of good nutrition on academic success?

Ms. KREY. Yes. There is a body of literature that shows the connection—

Mr. SCOTT. And also behavior?

Ms. KREY. Yes.

Mr. SCOTT. And long-term health?

Ms. KREY. Yes.

Mr. SCOTT. Could we get the benefit of that, could you provide us with that research that you have?

Ms. KREY. Yes, I can follow up with you and—

Mr. SCOTT. Good.

Ms. KREY.—provide you those specific studies.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you.

And, Mr. Storen, does your organization have research on good nutrition effects on academic performance, behavior and long-term health?

Mr. STOREN. Yes, we do.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay, and if you could provide that, I would appreciate it.

Mr. STOREN. I would be happy to.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay.

Ms. Bauscher, does good nutritional food cost more?

Ms. BAUSCHER. It can cost more, especially the costs around fruits and vegetables right now. Half cup serving of kiwi, which is one of my students' favorite fruits, is currently 80 cents. Therefore, I have to limit how much I offer. I have instructed my managers to continue to purchase kiwi; kids love it, they will pick it up. But

only to include a slice of it in a fruit cup that contains other, less expensive fruit.

Mr. SCOTT. Now, when we increased the nutritional standards, did the federal government reimbursement go up—

Ms. BAUSCHER. We received an additional—

Mr. SCOTT.—enough?

Ms. BAUSCHER.—six cents for each lunch.

Mr. SCOTT. Was that enough to pay for the additional nutritional value?

Ms. BAUSCHER. That is not enough.

Mr. SCOTT. How much more should it have it been?

Ms. BAUSCHER. SNA is requesting 35 cents more for each lunch and for each breakfast. That will help school food authorities afford the foods that we must serve. But, unfortunately, that won't make students consume it. And that is what we are also focused on is finding ways to ensure students will eat the healthy foods that we are making available to them and not throw it in the trash, which is throwing away very valuable resources.

Mr. SCOTT. There are different studies on how much food has been thrown away.

Ms. BAUSCHER. Yes, there are. There are—

Mr. SCOTT. Some show that the food waste has not gone up with the additional—

Ms. BAUSCHER. But there—

Mr. SCOTT.—nutritional—

Ms. BAUSCHER. There are also studies; Cornell University study that showed there was an additional $684 million, or $1.3 million a day, of fresh fruits and vegetables going in the trash. In our own member surveys, members have reported to us especially fruits and vegetables are the most often components that students are pitching as they go through the serving line. And I think that we need to be concerned—

Mr. SCOTT. But there are studies on both sides of that issue?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Yes, there are.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired. We both failed miserably, so, now I am cracking down on the rest of you.

Mr. Thompson, you are recognized.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you, Chairman. Thanks for the precedent that you have given, and your leadership. Thank you for this hearing, actually. Incredibly important topic that we talk about fueling our next generation and all future generations.

And thanks to all the panelists for being here for your testimony, your passion, your expertise on an important issue.

Ms. Bauscher, you know, thank you to you and all those that you represent in your association. I spend a lot of time at schools, but I also spend times—the passion, the commitment of the professionals who work in school nutrition, we meet in the community, they come to the office, not just in the school, and I appreciate their leadership and what they do in our schools.

I believe as a result of the most recent federal school nutrition standards, we have seen a sharp decline in the participation of school meal programs. I mean, that is what I am seeing as I get around a lot of my congressional district, which is just about a quarter of the state of Pennsylvania, geographically.

Since fewer students are eating lunch in the cafeteria, they are more at risk of under-consuming the recommended amounts of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and milk. And, notably, 1.1 million fewer students drank milk with lunch during the 2014 school year than compared to 2012.

I would like to reference a new report from the National Dairy Council that highlights the nutritional importance of milk and stresses concern for recent consumption declines. Report underlines that milk is the number one source of nine essential nutrients in young Americans' diets and provides multiple health benefits, including better bone health, lower blood pressure, and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and Type 2 Diabetes. If today's school students are falling even further behind in milk consumption, it should be easy to agree that action is needed.

You know, my question for you is, given your hands-on experience and the hands-on experience of those that you represent today, and the extensive background with school nutrition, do you agree that this is a concern? And, additionally, what can be done on a federal level to help you increase the average daily participation in the school milk programs?

Ms. BAUSCHER. First of all, the new meal requirements do require us to offer fat free, flavored and unflavored, milk and 1 percent unflavored milk. These milk varieties have been widely accepted by students in many, many programs. Many school food authorities transitioned to those varieties in anticipation of the new rules.

To the question of increasing participation in the programs, again, I think that school food service directors and school managers who are the most passionate people I know in any profession, need a little bit of—we keep coming back to flexibility in terms of being able to prepare and serve menu items that appeal to students. That may mean the ability to serve a refined grain tortilla instead of a whole grain tortilla, or to offer grits at breakfast in the south. We believe that we can increase participation in the program that way.

And, most importantly, we want this program to be acceptable and available to all students. I mentioned in my testimony that participation in the free category has increased and we are very grateful for that.

Pay participation is down, however, and one of the unintended negative consequences of decreases in paid meal participation is that free students who live in food insecure environments and need healthy school meals may not participate because they are afraid of the stigma associated with school lunch and they do not want to be identified as needy or poor.

So, again, we want the flexibility to prepare and serve meals to students that they will consume happily.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you. And asking for more flexibility is what I hear anecdotally as—just consistently with every meeting that I have.

Very quickly, I don't have a lot of time.

Mr. Storen, in your testimony, you say hunger might not be as visible in America as it is in other countries. Can you tell us what you mean by that and what it implies for hunger in America?

Mr. STOREN. Sure, I mean, I think some people have an association that hunger is the equivalent to the images we see of malnourished children in famine settings in other countries. And, in America, you know, that is not the image of hunger. Hunger is in the suburbs, hunger is in rural communities, hunger is in schools, hunger is, you know, with kids zero to 5 before they come to schools.

And, so, when we talk about the solutions that we need to put in place to address hunger in America, and what those impacts are, we have got to find a way to make those programs meet the specific needs of kids where they are based on their developmental needs so that we can have the positive impacts that we want. Because we have talked already about the positive impacts of healthy nutrition on healthcare, on educational attainment and workforce development.

THOMPSON. Thank you.

Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman KLINE. Okay, thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. Hinojosa?

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you, Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott.

I want to thank you all for bringing this panel to talk to us about something very, very important and concerns that we have in Congress.

The Centers for Disease Control tell us that over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates have tripled. Nearly one out of every five American children between the ages of 6 and 19 are obese. That is a national crisis that these programs are designed to address.

Nutrition is directly connected to how well those children do in the classroom, as stated before. Ask any teacher and they will tell you that if children don't have nutrition in the morning, if there is not food in their homes and they come to school hungry, they start to act out in class because they start to drift.

In addition to hunger, we are also fighting a national concern, the scourge of childhood obesity. This concern is found in all 50 states, in both young children and adolescents. It affects our social and economic levels.

The school breakfast lunchroom programs make a difference because they provide more than 50 percent of a student's food and nutrient intake on school days. Child nutrition is at the heart of our social safety net and the safety of all of our children, and these programs have been overwhelmingly successful and they have been cost effective.

Childhood obesity and diabetes are reaching epidemic proportions in both the Hispanic community and the black community across the nation. We must do more to help all young people develop healthy lifestyles.

I could speak about the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas where approximately 85 percent of the students in our region participate in free and reduced meals in our school meal program. According to USDA, one in every three Hispanic and black households with children is food insecure and may not know when the next meal will be available.

Twenty-seven percent of Texas children, as stated before, one in four, live in food insecure households, the second highest rate in the whole country. The source of this data is found in USDA/Feeding America.

I was born and raised in Hidalgo County where more than half of the residents are on food stamps, and they have all these children who are participating. That is why I fully support these new child nutrition programs and believe we should continue to strengthen them, not to weaken them.

My first question is to First Lady McAuliffe. What are the effects on children that Virginia has seen because of your efforts on summer food and school breakfast?

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. Well, thank you for the question, sir. We have seen success but we know we need to continue to build on success. I would say that I agree, school nutrition directors, our cafeteria staffs are probably the hardest working—I shouldn't single out any group because everyone in our public schools are working very hard to ensure that our children do well.

But I think that where we have seen success and we have seen it broadly, we have all visited a lot of school breakfast and school lunch lines, and the places where, as I mentioned before, we are seeing gradual implementation and bringing along the ideas and the curriculum with nutrition is really absolutely critical to success.

We have seen teachers, we have talked with teachers where children don't know where a carrot comes from. They don't know what a real peach looks like. And I think that is a faraway place from where we want to be as a nation. But when we—

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you for—

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. So when we think about—

Mr. HINOJOSA. Thank you for your answer. My time is running out, and I want to make statement so it will be in the record.

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. Yes.

Mr. HINOJOSA. It was back in a past administration between 2004 and 2011 that we discovered that there had been some national food distributors to our national food program who were fixing prices, and, consequently, bringing the cost of much of the food to our school lunch programs. And Congress refused to remove those companies—national names that I won't name, but it is in the record that we wanted to remove them from approved national firms that could get the contracts for food distribution. And that, naturally, is something that we need to readdress again and see if we can bring down the food cost.

But let us not say that $1 billion increase as was pointed out by Ms. Bauscher is too much because I was voting to approve for many, many years, 12, 13 years, spending $10 to $12 billion a month in our war in Iraq and Afghanistan. So $1 billion is not much.

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Guthrie?

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate being here and having Ms. Bauscher here from Kentucky and, First Lady, I will say I drive every now and then—about twice a year

and it is always a pleasure to drive through Virginia. What a beautiful state.

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. Please stop by some time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. We do stop and see some of our heritage there. You have got a lot of heritage and we appreciate that. Of course, until 1792, we were Virginians in Kentucky, as well.

[Laughter.]

Mr. GUTHRIE. Ms. Bauscher, you know, this is important. I am glad that you are here because, you know, I hear from a lot of school nutritionists and pros and cons of what is going on and what is common is every single one of them is dedicated to kids eating better. And just trying to figure out how we make this work in the situation that we are in.

And, so, following this, I hope we will invite you, but, following this, I am going to do four roundtables back home with school nutritionists, so I will be in I think Elizabethtown and also in Jessamine County—or Bullitt County, and then Bowling Green and Owensboro, so any of those, you will be welcome to make. Because we just want to hear from the practitioners who are really putting this—and, as I said, all of them to the one, that we want kids to eat better. But there are some issues that we need to address.

And, so, I have a couple of questions for you. And since the rollout of the new meal standards, you know, I have heard from administrators in my district that say there is an increase in students bringing their lunch to school, as well as increase in food waste. And when your district partnered, I believe, with a local chef to try to increase the appeal of the nutritious food, how did your students respond? Or just talk about that program. Did you see a change in participation and how much more did it cost?

Ms. BAUSCHER. We worked on a contract basis with a local chef, a wonderful chef, who not only helped us revise our recipes but also did healthy food demonstrations for students during the school day and for parents at evening events. I think it is important that we teach families how to prepare healthy meals at home.

So we worked with him. We established also something called Student Nutrition Advisory Councils which many districts implement that strategy for ensuring input from students so that before we produce a recipe in a vast quantity, I have a central kitchen so I prepare 200 gallons of some products at a time, we know that it is going to appeal to students. So we test taste products with those students.

We also work to provide samples of new menu items in the cafeteria, and one of my priorities for next school year is to continue develop partnerships with school site-based PTAs and other parent groups that can help us do that sampling in the cafeteria because we don't have enough hands to do that.

It does increase participation and pickup of those items in some instances. But, overall, I have had an increase in participation because I participate in CEP. In my non-CEP schools, my participation is still off at breakfast and lunch by 3 percent.

So we are trying new items, encouraging them to take new items. I agree with Mrs. McAuliffe, we must teach children why it is important to eat healthy. We know we are helping them establish life-

long eating habits and we take that very seriously and passionately.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Yes, I know you do. And you also, during the out-of-school—I know, Jefferson County had probably—well, there are six members of Congress, one has Jefferson County, so you probably have six of the Commonwealth students. So, I mean, you have the volume and they geographically connect. I mean, they are close to each other so the volume.

I know you partner with private entities for when school is not in session. Can you describe some of those programs? Summer and when school is not in session?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Yes, we prepare our summer meals in our central kitchen. We provide those meals to Willow Metro government; they are also a summer sponsor through the Community Action Partnership Program. We provide meals to them.

Two years ago, I started a bus stop cafe. Our transportation department donated a bus to us and we outfitted it to provide summer meals. We go throughout the community to at-risk neighborhoods, mobile home parks, public pools, the Greenwood boat dock on the Ohio River, and feed kids through that program. It has been tremendously received and very successful.

We added a second bus last summer. We have not added a bus for this summer but we are partnering with a group that is donating books to kids and wants them to have access to them in the summer, so there is going to be a book buggy following the bus. Local arts groups have contacted us and want to be able to provide some arts programming for students during the summer at the sites where we are providing meals.

Mr. GUTHRIE.—I live in Bullitt County—

Ms. BAUSCHER. Great partnerships.

Mr. GUTHRIE.—so I am right next to you. It looks like I don't have enough time but I was in Europe at a NATO meeting, and one of the Europeans were saying, you know, the problems in America with your hunger is not what you just said, Mr. Storen described as obesity.

Well, I just lost my time.

So I was just kind of wondering if it was an access to food or proper food. I am out of time. He is going to gavel—

Chairman KLINE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. Fudge?

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I thank you all for your testimony today.

Just want to make a couple of comments before I get to my question.

One, certainly, we all understand that we can do better, that we can find better ways to feed hungry children. But I do also want to say that I can understand why wealthy school districts do have a problem because these programs were not designed to help wealthy kids. And so we have to look at it from that perspective. So I can understand if they want to opt out it might be difficult because it is not designed for them.

Now, let me just get to my questions. And I am going to ask everybody the same question. There was a lot of discussion about summer feeding programs which I am especially concerned about

because I do represent a district that has more than a 20 percent poverty rate, and in my schools, it is significantly higher, of poor children. So if each one of you can just tell me what you think we can do to make our summer feeding program better. Just one thing you think will make a change, I would appreciate that, as succinctly as possible.

Mr. Storen?

Mr. STOREN. Sure. Thank you. I think that states and communities need more options in terms of the way that summer benefits are delivered. Now, there is a single, sort of uniform congregate feeding model, and that works great for some but it doesn't work at all for most. And, so, Congress authorized in 2010 a series of demonstration projects to look at alternative service models. There is great data coming out of the third-party evaluations and I think in there is a roadmap to giving states more options so that, you know, a city can do it one way and a rural community can do it another way.

Ms. FUDGE. So we have the data, we just need to use it?

Mr. STOREN. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you.

Ms. BAUSCHER. And I would agree with Mr. Storen's comments, more options for delivering that program would be very helpful. I know, particularly at my bus sites which are outside, one of the problems we face is the extreme heat in the summertime. It would be great if the students could take those meals with them on a regular basis. That would be very helpful.

I think we could also look at the paperwork involved in implementing these programs. If that could be streamlined in some fashion. Improving the way in which we approve sites for participation in the program would also be helpful.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you.

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. I agree. I agree congregate feeding sites really need to be looked at, especially critical in our rural communities. It makes it so difficult.

Easing the paperwork and how we qualify our kids. The paperwork is done. It is done in our schools, our community centers, our Boys & Girls Clubs, our local partners need to have, why do we have to go through extra layers of identifying those kids in need. And I think transportation I will, again, say, with those congregate feeding sites, and looking at that is really critical.

Ms. FUDGE. So do you think that the lack of transportation is one of the problems that keeps the participation low? I am really trying to figure out how do we increase participation? In my state, only 10 percent of eligible kids participate in the summer program. Nationally, I think that average is about 16 percent. How do we get that participation up?

Dr. Krey?

Ms. KREY. Yes, as Dr. Storen mentioned, in Texas we were one of the states that had one of those demonstration pilots that USDA tested, and we saw that was effective in reducing food insecurity by about an extra 20 percent and that it helped reduce barriers like transportation, which is significant, especially in rural parts of Texas and where we do have extreme heat, additionally, that can be a barrier.

Ms. FUDGE. Well, I am glad to see that something that we did worked. I saw the federal government actually did a good thing by trying to determine how we make these programs better, so I thank you for that.

Mrs. McAuliffe, you talked about a program that you helped start, Eat Smart, Move More, which is very similar to our Farm-to-School program. Why do you think that these programs are effective at getting young people to eat better?

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. I think that the curriculum piece is absolutely critical, and so when you bring—the Farm-to-School piece is also a wonderful way to blend the nutrition with agriculture, education, bioscience, technical jobs in the ag area, you know. Agriculture is our number one private industry in Virginia. We are very lucky that way.

So to be able to talk about why food is important, not only for your own personal health and well-being but as part of our larger economy in looking at the jobs of the future and where your career track might be, and knowing where a carrot and a peach really come from, I think, is absolutely critical for our children and the more we talk about it as part of the curriculum, the more those conversations carry over into the cafeteria.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, gentlelady.

Mr. Rokita, you are recognized.

Ms. ROKITA. I thank the Chairman. I thank the witnesses for their testimony and their leadership on this issue. It is really appreciated.

I want to focus some of my questions around the bureaucracy, maybe in these programs generally and what you do and maybe even if you see some waste, fraud and abuse.

But, Mr. Storen, starting with you, you mentioned bureaucratic inefficiency in your testimony. Can you give me some specific examples?

Mr. STOREN. So I would say that one place where I think there is inefficiency and duplication is in the administration of the programs that are delivered—

Ms. ROKITA. Is your mike on? Are these mikes on?

Mr. STOREN. Thank you. I am sorry about that.

I think one place where we can increase efficiency and address some administrative duplication is in the delivery of the programs that are implemented through those public-private partnerships with churches and Boys & Girls Club, YMCAs and food banks.

During the school year, as Dr. Krey referenced, many of these programs have afterschool meals programming where they provide a healthy snack to kids. If they want to provide that same child with a snack at the same place at the same time with the same programming afterschool is out, then they have to flip to an entirely new USDA program. It might have a new state agency. They have to fill out a new application, have a new site inspection, have different reporting requirements.

Ms. ROKITA. But, Mr. Chairman, they are run by the same—it is the USDA in both cases in your example, right?

Mr. STOREN. That is correct. But the way that the law is structured has different authorizing language for the summer feeding program and for the CEP at-risk program. So if we want these great community organizations to continue to provide services and focus on kids instead of focusing on paperwork, I think there is a real opportunity there to create some efficiencies so we have one program for community organizations out of school time.

Ms. ROKITA. Thank you, Mr. Storen.

My time is limited so let me go on to Ms. Bauscher. Thank you, again, for your leadership.

Obvious constitutional issues aside for a second, one of our duties is to ensure the programs we are authorizing are actually running effectively and in accordance with the law. You mentioned cost, I believe, in your testimony, especially with the new regulations. But do you see or do your members see any pattern, waste or fraud going on or abuse of any kind in these programs?

Ms. BAUSCHER. I do not. And I do not know of anyone who does.

Ms. ROKITA. Are you looking for it?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Oh, absolutely, yes.

Ms. ROKITA. How?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Well, we do that by regularly monitoring what occurs in the cafeteria at the point of sale to assure that we are offering reimbursable meals. We do training all of the time to make sure that our cashiers understand what the requirements are.

Ms. ROKITA. Are all the sign ups legitimate? Is the eligibility'—

Ms. BAUSCHER. The eligibility—we do verification and—

Ms. ROKITA. How?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Well, we pull a sample of the applications that we approve and we send letters to households asking them to provide proof of income. And we do that if anyone in the community were to report a potential case of fraud. We can verify for cause. So we do that regularly.

To Mr. Storen's message about streamlining this and making it more effective, I think one of the things that many states are doing and I am very fortunate to be in Kentucky because we do an excellent job of directly certifying students for free meal benefits—

Ms. ROKITA. What does that mean?

Ms. BAUSCHER.—which means that they are receiving certain other types of federal assistance, including Medicaid, some forms of Medicaid we can automatically, categorically qualify the students in the household for free meals, and that decreases the errors.

Ms. ROKITA. In that situation, the school would be out of the business of pushing the application out to the parents or whatever. You drill into a database of some sort—

Ms. BAUSCHER. Yes. Now, we still have to collect applications for those students who may not be directly certified who aren't receiving other federal benefits—

Ms. ROKITA. Oh, so the school is still pushing applications?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Yes.

Ms. ROKITA. Thank you—

Ms. BAUSCHER. But, in my district, 55 percent of my students are directly certified for direct free meal benefits. That means 55 percent of my households don't have to complete a free and reduced meal application in order for their students to receive benefits.

Ms. ROKITA. Do you think that is a good policy?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Yes, I do.

Ms. ROKITA. Why?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Again, in my district and in many districts around the country, we have got very diverse communities where sometimes there are communication barriers. We often work with students on helping, you know, having the student translate to their parents for us to help them complete an application. They are afraid of the process and intimidated by the process so—

Ms. ROKITA. I am out of time. Thank you.

Ms. BAUSCHER. Okay.

Chairman KLINE. Thank the gentleman.

Mrs. Davis, you are recognized.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all of you for being here.

I wanted to follow up on the discussion on summer meals earlier and, to you, Mr. Storen, I know you have had some experience with this. What role can the electronic benefit transfer play? We know that the pilot program has been seen as effective and the issue really here, in addition to some others, I think, how do you bring that to scale? And what issues do you think need to be addressed?

Mr. STOREN. Sure, thank you for your question.

I do think the evaluations from the summer EBT projects showed the most promise as a new option for service delivery for state agencies, you know, reached upwards around 90 percent of the target audience. It decreased food insecurity by over 20 percent and over 33 percent for very low food security. It led to healthier food consumption; children consumed 12 percent more fruit and vegetables, 30 percent more whole grains, 10 percent more dairy.

And I think the reason that this program can be brought to scale is twofold. One is it implemented through an existing infrastructure. So the benefit is added to either a SNAP or a WIC EBT card. Those infrastructures have been built and proven to be successful and have great integrity. And, so, you can bring those to scale because they are already present.

The second is, you know, a third of all the low income children in the United States live in communities where the summer meals isn't even operate—

Mrs. DAVIS. Right.

Mr. STOREN. By law, it has got to be in a concentration of poverty of at least 50 percent for your reduced-price kids. And with the suburbanization of poverty that we have now in the United States, we see more poor children in suburbs than we do in urban areas or anywhere else.

And then the challenge that the First Lady McAuliffe talked about in rural communities. So by overcoming transportation barriers and providing a benefit to children where they are, and we know from our own research of low income families, that 80 percent of children are at home in the summer.

Mrs. DAVIS. Yes.

Mr. STOREN. So meeting kids where they are instead of trying to bring kids to a place where they can't get.

Mrs. DAVIS. Yes, oh, I appreciate that. I mean, we often talk about the educational loss in the summer and I have always won-

dered to what extent that is that kids are just basically hungry throughout the summer. And so even the kinds of games and toys and options they might have, which are maybe, you know, limited compared to a lot of other children who have pretty enriched summer experiences, they really aren't able to participate as well. Thank you. We need to really work on that.

One of the things we know about the participation of schools, I mean, generally speaking, 93 percent of school districts, I think, are exceeding the new nutrition standards. But for that smaller percentage that are not, what kind of trends do you see, and, I guess, to Ms. Bauscher, what stands out the most? We have talked about the need for flexibility, we have talked about the need for food that kids identify with, and that they feel more comfortable eating.

Are there some other issues that you see that really need to be addressed so that, for many of those districts, we are not just doing an overall waiver for them. I know for even San Diego Unified School District, there are some issues, and I am curious about where you see some of the trends. I mean, what is it that is holding people back?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Again, it is their inability to provide foods that their students are familiar with and will consume. Those are the primary concerns. We also see some concerns around providing program simplification which—

Mrs. DAVIS. I am sorry, programs of?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Simplification—

Mrs. DAVIS. Oh, okay.

Ms. BAUSCHER.—to Mr. Storen's point so that the programs are easy to access. One of our policy requests or asks is for more money so that we can afford—

Mrs. DAVIS. Is technical assistance a major problem? Do schools need more help or support in trying to figure this out?

Ms. BAUSCHER. There are districts that need more support—or technical assistance, and SNA has been one of the leaders in offering our members that support, again, through best practices webinars, education sessions offered at our conferences. We have over 100 education sessions scheduled for our summer conference this year. Our state affiliates are also providing training. So that equips food service directors and food service managers with strategies they can use to encourage kids to make healthier choices, but it doesn't control the cost of those items often, and it doesn't make kids consume them. So, yes, training and technical assistance is important but it won't solve all of our problems.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

Chairman KLINE. Gentlelady's time is expired.

Dr. Heck?

Mr. HECK. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you all for being here.

I represent the Clark County School District in Southern Nevada where about 58 percent of its almost 320,000 students are on free and reduced lunch.

We are fortunate in my community to have the Three Square food bank organization that provides a lot of services to our students, including backpack for kids, so they go home on Friday with a backpack of food to carry them through the weekend. They par-

ticipate in feeding for America's Kids Cafe and they also provide summer feeding services.

Mr. Storen, you have mentioned that too many eligible children can't participate in some cases during the summer months because the program has not been updated in 40 years. What types of updates are necessary so that more children can participate?

Mr. STOREN. Thank you. I think the updates that we are looking for are more tools in the toolbox, more options for state agencies and communities than only having a congregate feeding model. Again, that works great where it works but it doesn't work for most kids. And so having summer EBT as one of those options to reach children in communities where it is not practical to have a congregate feeding site.

Being able to send children home with a meal on the weekends, like the food bank does in your district, being able to deliver meals to children at home, having waivers from congregate feeding when there is extreme heat.

So, you know, every community is different. There are different weather conditions, there are different resources, there is a different geography. We don't need a single approach; we need tools so that approach can be customized by the state and that local community to meet their needs, and just having more options.

Mr. HECK. You also talked about, you know, the importance of public-private partnerships, several of you did. In your experience, is there a specific model that seems to work better than another or a specific model that is fraught with peril and doesn't work out as well?

Mr. STOREN. No, I think that, you know, the child nutrition programs have a long history of successful implementation with public-private partnerships but those public-private partnerships look different in different communities. I don't think we can assign any one model and say, you know, all churches are great, or all churches aren't great, or every food bank, you know, should be the only ones providing afterschool meals.

I think, you know, the resources and the community organizations are different. I think it is important to pay attention to program integrity, understand the needs in the community, and to come together and what we stress is a collaboration. We bring stakeholders from the public and the private sector together to share their strength, to figure out what they can contribute to solving the problem. And I think it is that level of planning and collaboration that is most effective.

Mr. HECK. And I think what I have taken from most of the answers to several of the other questions is that the underlying request is really to have increased flexibility that will allow you to accomplish many of these goals and in an environment that is not as restrictive as current law.

Mr. STOREN. I would say that is the case for the summer feeding program and then I think there are some administrative efficiencies in the other programs.

Mr. HECK. Right, well, Mr. Chair, unlike yourself, I will yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman KLINE. You are my hero. Thank you.

[Laughter.]

Chairman KLINE. Ms. Bonamici?

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott, for holding today's hearing.

And thank you to all the witnesses for being here to talk about this important issue that has historically been bipartisan. I am really looking forward to working with all my colleagues to take ambitious steps to ensure that fewer children have to worry about where they are going to get their next meal.

And I really appreciate Mr. Rokita bringing up the efficiencies and thank you for your ideas on that. Let us make this work better for more children.

My home state is already doing some great work but still facing some challenges. Just recently our governor signed a bill to eliminate copays for school lunch. I know that other states, Minnesota, Colorado, Vermont, have some variations of this. It is going to affect roughly 30,000 Oregon children who had qualified for reduced-price lunch; it will now be free lunch. We are removing a barrier for many of them.

We also have been doing an Oregon summer EBT for children program. The pilot programs doing EBT transfers for children have seen a significant, up to a third, reduction in child hunger through this program. It has worked well in our pilot in Oregon. We should talk about expanding that because with that significant reduction in hunger, there is a lot of potential there especially with the summer programs.

So it is clear that we need to take action and I know that many of you discussed, of course, how it is difficult for children to learn if they are hungry. It is really in our best interest. In a country like ours where we have so much, it is just wrong for students to be hungry, for children to be hungry.

I thank Representative Fudge who apparently has left for her work on Farm-to-School programs, really important in our state of Oregon, I actually joined one of my colleagues and had lunch at an elementary school that does a Farm-to-School program. We had great fun. It was really good food, too.

So there is, again, a win-win to work on those. Actually, it is a win-win-win because the children get more nutritious food, it supports local agriculture, but it also educates students about the source of their food.

So I wanted to focus on childcare settings and talk about the importance of making sure that children in child care settings can get a late afternoon snack or supper when their parents have to work late, for example.

So I want to ask you, Mr. Storen—first of all, thank you for acknowledging that this is a shared responsibility. It is an important role for Congress but there are also a lot of partnerships with our faith community, our non-profits, our parents.

Can you talk, Mr. Storen, about some of the steps that we could take to promote a provider's participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program? Child nutrition programs provide a great opportunity to educate families and promote healthy eating and I am wondering a little bit about these CAFPCC programs could help educate programs, serve as models.

I imagine that there is a capacity there to provide nutrition education, might vary a little bit between a large center and a smaller daycare home, but is there a role for us to support nutrition and nutrition education in CAFPCC? And others could weigh in, as well. Would like your thoughts on that program, please.

Mr. STOREN. Sure, absolutely. I think the Child and Adult Care Food Program, you know, funds reimbursement for meals in a variety of settings, childcare settings, at-risk afterschool meals, adult daycare, homeless shelters, and, you know, that meal reimbursement, you know, it doesn't happen in a vacuum. It happens as part of a strong program, and those programs can look very different depending upon the age of the child and the setting.

Rep. BONAMICI. Right

And so I do think that there is great opportunity for nutrition education to be part of the programming, either directly for the participants, perhaps if they are, you know, school age or older, or for the caregivers. I know we run a nutrition education program called Cooking Matters, and it is a wonderful 6-week cooking course, you know, that teaches families the food skills they need to shop for and prepare healthy food on a budget.

And we also do these grocery store tours where we take people to the grocery store and teach them per unit pricing. And we have partnered with child, and adult care providers of the childcare settings to teach those caregivers of children in that setting those skills. It has been really successful and I think the afterschool meals programs—

Ms. BONAMICI. Absolutely. Before my time expires, do you have any thoughts on—there is some discussion about changing the area eligibility test for Tier 1 reimbursement for Child and Adult Care Food Program? For example, what if it changed from its current 50 percent to 40 percent so if reimbursement were offered to providers in areas where 40 percent of the children qualified for reduced price as opposed to 50 percent, how would that change access? Do you have thoughts on that?

Mr. STOREN. Yes, I don't have the numbers in front of me. I would be happy to try to get back to you after the hearing. It would certainly increase access because there would be more opportunities—

Chairman KLINE. Gentlelady's time has—

Ms. BONAMICI. My time is expired.

Chairman KLINE.—expired.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you.

Chairman KLINE. Mr. Brat?

Mr. BRAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was going to tee up a couple softballs for my friends on the panels but the more I listen the more I am kind of a Johnny One Note. With an economics background, I think I am going to go there again.

Flexibility seems to be the key, and so I am going to ask this to all four of you, and you are not going to like the question because there are no good answers coming, but I want to hear you address flexibility.

Public-private is in the air and I am going to give you a little hint as to what is coming on the public-private relationship coming

up with my comments. I met with the governor of Virginia yesterday; he is doing a great job, going to China and India. They are growing at 7 percent; we are growing at 2 percent.

And in this country, defense sequestration is taking a huge toll on Virginia, and Virginia's economy, and so everybody wants to know what are we going to do about resources across the board on this. There is no money. Right? There is no money for anything. And I said, well, if you think that is bad, I got worse news for you. Four programs under the federal government will consume the entire federal budget by 2032. Right? So you go to the U.S. debt clock, make sure I am not fibbing, right? Factcheck does it for me weekly in my newspaper so you can go check it out. But the country is $18 trillion in debt. We have $127 trillion in unfunded liabilities at the federal level.

Four programs under law, the entitlement programs, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Bush prescription drug plan, are two-thirds of the budget currently. Those four programs will be 100 percent of the budget by 2032. So that is the context we are all operating in. And so I have got a tough question for you.

It seems to me the solution isn't food. The solution seems to me, as an economist, is getting the parents engaged in the private sector with meaningful jobs so that they can provide food and are educated to solve the problem. So I think if we are aiming for the wrong policy target, we are going to hit it. And it is the wrong answer.

So the problem isn't food, the problem is how do you have gainfully employed parents who are educated to the point that they can provide food for their kids? Because we all care about the kids. And that is the goal.

And so I am just kind of laying that out to—you have got 16 years to solve that problem, right? It is not going to be a matter of finding resources and funding for food at the federal level, given the numbers I just gave you. So put on your creative thinking cap. How do you think about that problem? What do you got? We have got 16 years before four programs take up 100 percent of the federal budget to solve this problem.

Any ideas? Go in order.

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. Thank you, my friend from Virginia. I would love to answer that question because we do know that jobs are the ultimate goal. That is the ultimate goal. Families want to provide for themselves. Families should. That is our goal.

However, this committee is called Committee on Education and Workforce. We don't have a workforce to attract the jobs in the 21th century, if we have kids who cannot take advantage of the education we are providing for them, $5.5 billion in Virginia. So if we look at the moral imperative but there is an economic imperative here, as well. That is my answer.

Anybody else? I can keep talking if you want.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BRAT. And the economic imperative, I mean, I am newly elected. I have been going around to all the high schools and I am asking the high schoolers, senior graduating high schoolers, you know what a business is? Half the hands go up. I said, good, now

put your hands way high in the air because I am going to ask you a question about business. Every hand goes down, right?

And so business and economics, that is the imperative, but at the school level, what are we doing, right, to get kids equipped, 20, 25 percent of the kids are going go on to 4-year colleges. The rest are not and so food is an issue, that is an issue, so, I mean, I am interested in hearing some creative thinking on how we solve some huge education problems.

That is our committee, to get kids ready for that workforce and, in the short run, I am with you. I mean, I did economic regression stuff on all this inputs to what creates higher SOL scores in Virginia for 20 years. So I know the inputs, the cause whatever. So, in the short run, it is an answer. In the long run, I don't think it is a sustainable answer.

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. I would just say in the short term, I don't think we can afford to have hungry kids in our schools.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman's time has expired.

[Laughter.]

Chairman KLINE. Well, you had 7 seconds to go there.

Mr. Courtney, you are recognized.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for starting sort of the opening bell here for the next reauthorization effort which you and I and a number of us up here were around for the last go around.

And, Mr. Scott, when his opening remarks noted that this program was created in 1946 in the wake of World War II and it was the Richard Russell Defense School Nutrition Act because the country found to its, I think, horror, that draftees were malnourished, and that this was seen as a sort of effective national federal strategy to sort of address that issue.

Fast forward to the last reauthorization, again, we had military testimony that was in those tables there, talking about the fact that one out of four enlistees were rejected because they were too heavy to serve. And the need for national nutritional standards was something that, again, the military in some ways sort of cut through a lot of the, you know, indecision in terms of getting a bill done.

In 2013, five four-stars from every branch, along with 450 of their senior military colleagues, issued a report called Retreat Is Not An Option, again, showing that the trend lines, in terms of, you know, what they are seeing coming in the door was still challenging and, again, I think, you know, expressed a pretty powerful support for maintaining the nutritional standards that were in the 2010 bill.

So, Mr. Chairman, first of all, for the record, I would like to have Retreat Is Not An Option entered into the record.

[The information follows:]

RETREAT IS NOT AN OPTION: A message from retired 4-star admirals and generals

★★★★
John C. Harvey, Jr.
Admiral, U.S. Navy
(Retired)

★★★★
James M. Loy
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
(Retired)

★★★★
Gregory S. "Speedy" Martin
General, U.S. Air Force
(Retired)

★★★★
William L. "Spider" Nyland
General, U.S. Marine Corps
(Retired)

★★★★
William S. Wallace
General, U.S. Army
(Retired)

While the Nation's obesity epidemic makes daily headlines, its effect on the U.S. military has largely been unreported: a 61 percent rise in obesity since 2002 among active duty forces; more than $1.5 billion in annual obesity-related health care spending and costs to replace unfit personnel; significant recruiting challenges with nearly one in four young adults too heavy to serve; and newly released data in this report showing overall ineligibility above 70 percent in most states.

With this in mind, the more than 450 retired senior military leaders who comprise MISSION: READINESS *are marking the start of the third school year in which—thanks to Congress' enactment of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010—millions of students are now eating healthier school meals with more whole grains, fruits, vegetables and lean proteins. This is also the first year in which candy and many other high-calorie, low-nutrient snacks and beverages in vending machines and elsewhere are being replaced with healthier snacks and drinks.*

These changes are important victories in the battle against obesity. America's youth spend considerable time at school, and many young people consume up to half of their daily calories there. If we are to win, schools must be our allies.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), more than 90 percent of the country's school districts are successfully meeting the healthier meal standards. Recent surveys indicate widespread student acceptance of healthier lunches across all grade levels. Furthermore, 72 percent of parents nationwide favor updated nutrition standards for school meals and school snacks, while 91 percent favor requiring schools to serve fruits or vegetables with every meal. From a financial perspective, USDA projects that school food service revenue will far outpace costs over five years.

We understand that some schools need additional support to help meet the updated standards, such as better equipment and more staff training, and that support should be provided. At the same time, moving forward with implementation of the standards for all schools is paramount. Students depend on schools to reinforce efforts by parents and communities to put them on track for healthy and productive lives. Healthy school meals and snacks are a vital part of that effort.

When it comes to children's health and our national security, retreat is not an option.

THE SPREADING EPIDEMIC OF OBESITY IN AMERICA (1990-2013)

Percent of obese adults (Body Mass Index of 30+)

No Data | 0-9.9% | 10-14.9% | 15-19.9% | 20-24.9% | 25-29.9% | 30-34.9% | 35%+

— 1990 —

— 1995 —

— 2000 —

2005-2013 on page 2 →

RETREAT IS NOT AN OPTION

NEARLY 1 IN 4 IS TOO HEAVY TO JOIN, & 1 IN 8 WHO GOT IN IS NOW OBESE

The more than 450 retired military leaders who comprise MISSION: READINESS know that healthier school meals and snacks are vital for addressing the nation's obesity epidemic and supporting national security as well.

Our previous reports—including *Too Fat to Fight*—have detailed how weight and fitness problems often prevent young people from qualifying for the military. Data now show that these issues also pose tremendous challenges for millions of active duty personnel.

Currently 12 percent of active duty service members are obese based on height and weight—an increase of 61 percent since 2002—which is resulting in serious problems with injuries and dismissals.[1] Given that one-third of American children and teens are now obese or overweight and nearly one-quarter of Americans ages 17 to 24 are too overweight to serve in our military, the obesity rate among active duty service members could get even worse in the future if we do not act.[2] Obesity among our military and their families is costing our defense budget well over $1.5 billion a year in health care spending and recruiting replacements for those who are too unfit to serve.[3]

IT WAS NOT ALWAYS LIKE THIS

When World War II began, frequent undernourishment and health problems stemming from the Great Depression meant that our troops were, on average, an inch and a half shorter than troops are today. In fact, military leaders led by Major General Lewis B. Hershey (the Director of the Selective Service System at the time) stepped in and urged Congress to pass a national school lunch program to improve the health and well-being of our nation's children and youth.[4]

Today, however, children are surrounded by too many calories and not enough opportunities for exercise, a combination that has played a major role in the tripling of childhood obesity rates over the past three decades.

What has changed?

Due to poor nutrition and health before World War II, U.S. troops in the war were on average 1.5 inches shorter than today.

That is why General Hershey, the Director of Selective Service, called for Congress to approve a National School Lunch program in 1945.

Mostly due to excess calories and too little exercise, young adults today are on average 20 pounds heavier than in 1960.

That is why over 450 retired admirals and generals support healthier meals and snacks in our schools.

See page 8 for new data by state on how many Americans cannot join the military.

THE SPREADING EPIDEMIC OF OBESITY IN AMERICA (1990-2013)

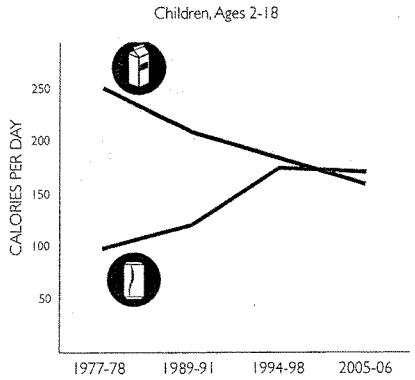
Percent of obese adults (Body Mass Index of 30+)

No Data | 0-9.9% | 10-14.9% | 15-19.9% | 20-24.9% | 25-29.9% | 30-34.9% | 35%+

— 2005 — — 2010 — — 2013 —

Sources: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Trust for America's Health.

Trends in calories consumed from sugary drinks and milk



Source: Trust for America's Health

Lower consumption of calcium and vitamin D coupled with less exercise leads to more stress fractures.

Young American men as a whole are now 20 pounds heavier than the average male in his twenties was in 1960.[5]

Obesity is one of the main reasons why more than 70 percent of young Americans are unable to serve in today's military. This includes young adults in families with generations of military service, and others who have the critical skills our military needs but cannot join simply because of too many extra pounds.[6]

WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

Children's biology has not changed in the course of a single generation. What has changed dramatically is our nutritional and exercise environment. Things that would have been considered absurd in the 1960s are now commonplace in American society, such as drinking sugary drinks daily instead of milk or water, or watching television and playing video games all afternoon instead of riding bikes and playing outside with friends.

Obesity is not the only problem. During the critical adolescent years for bone growth—ages 11 to 14 for girls and 13 to 17 for boys—children have a heightened need for calcium, vitamin D and exercise. But 85 percent of girls and 58 percent of boys at these ages are not getting enough calcium and nearly half of boys and girls in those age groups are not getting enough vitamin D in their diets.[7] One reason for this problem is that consumption of milk has dropped and been overtaken by rising consumption of sugary drinks.[8] Compounding the problem, more than two-thirds of adolescents do not get the recommended hour of exercise daily.[9] More exercise will help with our national problem of obesity, but that is only one part of the equation.[10]

THE MILITARY IS NOT IMMUNE

Our country should rightly be proud of everyone serving in uniform. The majority of the men and women in the military are very fit and form the strongest overall fighting force in America's history.

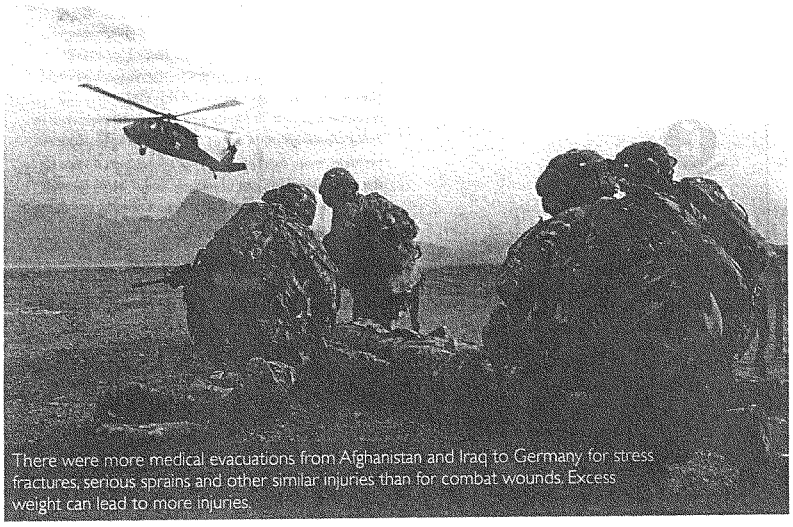
Yet even the military is not immune to rising weight problems among some troops. These problems are not only a challenge for military recruiters looking for enough fit individuals, but they are also leading to increased injuries and dismissals among those who serve.

For example, the military's basic training programs work wonders to get young men and women into shape rapidly by replacing fat with muscle. But many recruits enter basic training with significant challenges:

- Each year, thousands of recruits lose 20 pounds or more to join the military, and they are at a higher risk of gaining that weight back once they leave basic training.[11]
- According to one study, one out of every seven male Army recruits reported that they had not exercised or played any sports in a typical week prior to joining.[12]

Keeping young men and women in shape after basic training is another challenge:

- One study of more than 2,000 men in a U.S. Army light-infantry brigade in Afghanistan found that 14 percent were obese.[13]
- Across the military, too many men and women are not just overweight but actually obese. In 2002, less than eight percent of active duty service members were obese, but by 2011 that figure had jumped to



There were more medical evacuations from Afghanistan and Iraq to Germany for stress fractures, serious sprains and other similar injuries than for combat wounds. Excess weight can lead to more injuries.

more than 12 percent—a 61 percent increase.[14]

Basic training can help to build a lot of muscle, but strengthening bones is not as easy. The military is facing an unprecedented rise in the type of injuries that stem, in part, from poor nutrition and lack of physical activity in adolescence:

- The obese service members in the brigade in Afghanistan were 40 percent more likely to experience an injury than those with a healthy weight, and slower runners were 49 percent more likely to be injured.[15]
- This higher risk of injuries has serious consequences for our forces in combat: there were 72 percent more medical evacuations from Afghanistan and Iraq to Germany for stress fractures, serious sprains and other similar injuries than for combat wounds.[16]

Finally, problems with weight and fitness are leading to dismissals among those who serve, and are placing significant burdens on our defense budget:

- Thousands of unfit personnel are let go each year at a great cost to taxpayers. In 2012, for example, the Army dismissed 3,000 soldiers and the Navy and Air Force each dismissed 1,300 service members for being overweight or out of shape. The cost to recruit, screen and train their replacements amounts to nearly half a billion dollars.[17]
- The military spends well over $1 billion a year to treat weight-related health problems such as heart disease and diabetes through its TRICARE health insurance for active duty personnel, reservists, retirees and their families.[18]
- Obesity is contributing greatly to rising health care spending within the military, which now accounts for 10 percent of the total defense budget.[19]

THE TRANSITION TO HEALTHIER MEALS IN SCHOOLS IS WORKING

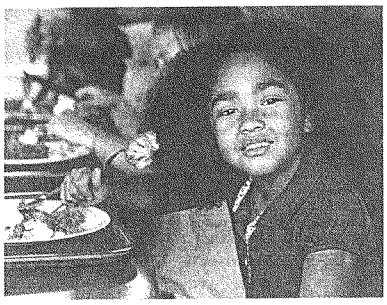
Good nutrition starts at home, and parents play a central role. But with children consuming up to half of their daily calories while at school and out of sight of their

parents, schools should be a focal point in the nation's effort to combat childhood obesity.

Since the bipartisan enactment of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act in 2010, the vast majority of schools have implemented updated nutrition standards successfully. USDA is providing kitchen equipment grants and technical assistance to schools that are facing challenges implementing the updated standards. We should continue to support any schools that are having a tougher time, but like our armed forces, we should not stop when the going gets tough.

The new approach of serving healthier food and drinks in schools is working, according to available research and data:

- According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), more than 90 percent of schools are successfully serving healthier meals.[20]
- In a study published in *Childhood Obesity*, 70 percent of elementary school administrators concluded that "students like the new lunches" and that acceptance of the changes had grown over time.[21]
- A recent poll showed that, across party lines, the majority of parents support the updated nutrition standards for school meals and snacks. Nine out of ten parents also support requiring schools to include a serving of fruits or vegetables with every meal.[22]



- A study by Harvard University researchers found that plate waste (food thrown away) decreased when the updated nutrition standards were put in place in a large, urban school district.[23]
- The same Harvard study found that under the new guidelines, children added 23 percent more fruits to their plates, and children ate 16 percent more vegetables.[24]
- Schools received an additional $200 million in revenue during the first year of implementation of the updated standards due to increased reimbursement rates. USDA has also provided $36 million in kitchen

THE MILITARY'S INNOVATIVE EFFORTS TO ADDRESS OBESITY

Our armed services are working hard to change the nutritional and exercise environment within the military.

In 2013, the military launched a campaign called Operation Live Well to improve the health of our troops and their families. Chief among these efforts is the Healthy Base Initiative at 14 pilot sites across the country, aimed at promoting health among troops and their families by educating them about the dangers of a sedentary lifestyle and poor nutrition and creating environments that support healthy behavior. The initiative will allow the military to see which innovations are working at different bases and identify the ones that could be expanded service-wide. The Department of Defense is currently collecting and evaluating results from the first phase, which will be reported by August 2015.[33]

Services have also launched their own initiatives. The Army's "Go for Green" initiative, for example, uses food and beverage labels to point out "high performance food" (marked in green) and "performance limiting food" (marked in red) in meal lines and vending machines. It has also changed menus to include more nutrient-dense foods, including whole grains, green vegetables and reduced-fat milk, as well as fewer fried foods and sugary beverages than in the past.[34] Meanwhile, the Air Force offers courses to parents living on bases about how to encourage their young children to eat healthier foods and become more active. Another class provides health coaches to retirees who are at risk for obesity-related health problems.[35] In response to the consequences of obesity and lack of fitness, the Navy has made accommodations for individuals who are less fit or more prone to injuries by giving every recruit custom-fitted running shoes and using more forgiving materials on their tracks.[36]

Experts in the military know that this problem did not emerge overnight and will not go away overnight, but they are committed to coming up with long-term solutions that provide real results. However, the military cannot reverse the nation's obesity epidemic on its own.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER:
Educating Parents and Children

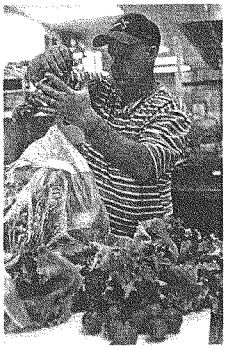
Serving healthier foods and drinks in schools can have a ripple effect: for example, school nutrition directors have reported that parents sometimes request recipes after their children come home asking that they make the meal they had in school.[37] But in addition to serving children healthier food in schools, we need to make sure children and their parents have access to information as well. For example, 51 percent of parents of overweight or obese children think their child's weight is normal or even underweight.[38] Also, too many children and adults are unaware that a typical, 20-ounce bottle of soda sold in most public vending machines includes the equivalent of up to 18 teaspoons of sugar.[39]

One 20-ounce soda = Three Miles of Walking (12 times around the track)

Source: New York City Health Department

equipment grants and targeted technical assistance to help struggling schools achieve implementation.[26]

- Based on USDA projections, it is likely that as children shift from buying snacks for lunch to buying more meals, the additional revenue generated will be higher than the costs of providing healthier options.[27]
- Schools with modern and adequate food storage and kitchen equipment have adjusted more easily to the updated nutrition standards. Providing funding for schools in need of new kitchen equipment is one effective strategy to improve compliance with the new standards.[28]
- While school lunch participation declined slightly overall from 2010 to 2013, participation among those receiving free lunches actually increased. Moreover, declines appear to have been concentrated in relatively few schools, as 84 percent of school administrators reported that the number of students purchasing lunches remained steady or increased following implementation of the updated guidelines. For example, the Los Angeles Unified School District (one of the nation's largest school districts) experienced a 14 percent increase in participation following implementation of the updated standards.[29]



A local farmer delivering vegetables to a Fort Campbell middle school.

Photo credit: Fort Campbell Courier

EXAMPLES OF SCHOOLS THAT ARE MAKING IT WORK

Kentucky's Fort Campbell Schools is a Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) school district with nine schools and 4,700 students located on the Fort Campbell Army base. Like most DoDEA schools, the Fort Campbell district participates in the National School Lunch Program. To begin implementing the updated standards, the district formed a partnership with registered dieticians at a nearby Army hospital, which helped each school develop an action plan to achieve its nutrition goals. The district made sure that food service workers received extensive training on the standards and created a competition to reward an "outstanding cafeteria." The food service director also got creative, changing the vegetable selection every day after students reported that they liked the variety. With help from the dieticians, the district also launched a Farm-to-School program to get more fresh produce into lunches—"the first Department of Defense school system to undertake such an effort."[30]

Alabama's Hoover City Schools is a large district with 16 schools and nearly 14,000 students. As a participant in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's HealthierUS School Challenge, the district's meals were already close to meeting the updated standards for school meals before they went into effect. They still faced challenges, however, with getting students and parents on board with the healthier choices.

The solution? Catchy initiatives like "Beets and Sweets" (chopped beets mixed with sweet potatoes) and a phone app that tells parents what the next day's menu item will be along with total calories. District leaders also paid closer attention to what students liked, finding that students were more likely to eat roasted vegetables and buy trendy items such as hummus and Greek yogurt from a la carte lines. Since 2011, the district has reported both an improvement in the productivity of lunch preparation and an increase in snack revenues after their state nutrition standards for snacks were implemented.[31]

CONCLUSION

We all want our children to grow up stronger and healthier, not weaker and sicker.

That will require improving the eating and exercise habits that have led to the tripling of childhood obesity rates since 1980, military obesity rates increasing by 61 percent in less than a decade, and countless billions of dollars spent treating preventable illness and disease.

There are signs that recent efforts to provide children with healthier food and beverages at school, more nutrition education, and more exercise opportunities may be beginning to cause this dangerous epidemic to level off among most children and even some encouraging evidence that obesity is beginning to fall among our youngest children. Unfortunately, adult obesity increased in some states in 2013 and remained high overall.[32] We need to do more, however, to make the healthy choice the easy and accessible choice for every child in every community.

We must continue building on these signs of progress for the sake of our children's health, our economic competitiveness and our national security. The more than 450 retired admirals and generals who are members of MISSION: READINESS are standing strong to keep school nutrition standards on track, because when our national security and our children's health are at stake, retreat is not an option.

PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE (2013)

STATE	RATE
Alabama	33%
Alaska	26
Arizona	24
Arkansas	34
California	41%*
Colorado	18%*
[illegible]	26
Delaware	30
Florida	27
Georgia	30
Hawaii	28
Idaho	26
Illinois	25
Indiana	30%*
Iowa	27%*
Kansas	29
Kentucky	33
Louisiana	29
Maine	26
Maryland	26
Massachusetts	23
Michigan	28
Minnesota	N/A
Mississippi	28
Missouri	31
Montana	22
Nebraska	27
Nevada	26
New Hampshire	25
New Jersey	23
New Mexico	28
New York	25
North Carolina	28
North Dakota	28
Ohio	29
Oklahoma	27
Oregon	N/A
Pennsylvania	28*
Rhode Island	27
South Carolina	31
South Dakota	25
Tennessee	32
Texas	32
Utah	17
Vermont	29
Virginia	27
Washington	N/A
West Virginia	32
Wisconsin	25
Wyoming	24

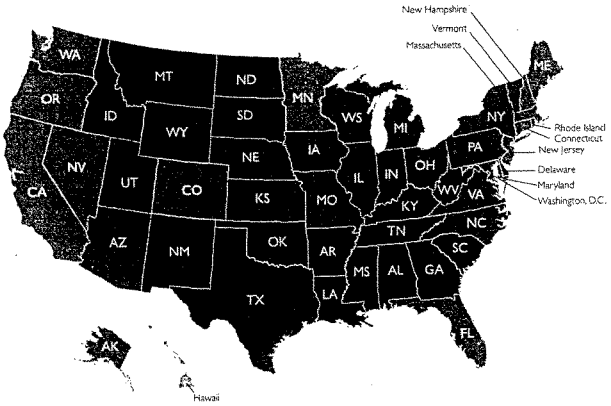
*California estimate based on both BMI and body fat; from the 2012-13 California Physical Fitness Report for ninth grade students only.
*Colorado data from 2011
*Indiana data from 2011
*Iowa data from 2011
*Pennsylvania data from 2009

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

MILITARY INELIGIBILITY AMONG YOUNG AMERICANS AGES 17-24

Source: Department of Defense, 2014

Three leading preventable causes of not being able to join the military include being overweight, lacking adequate education and having a history of crime or drug use.[40]



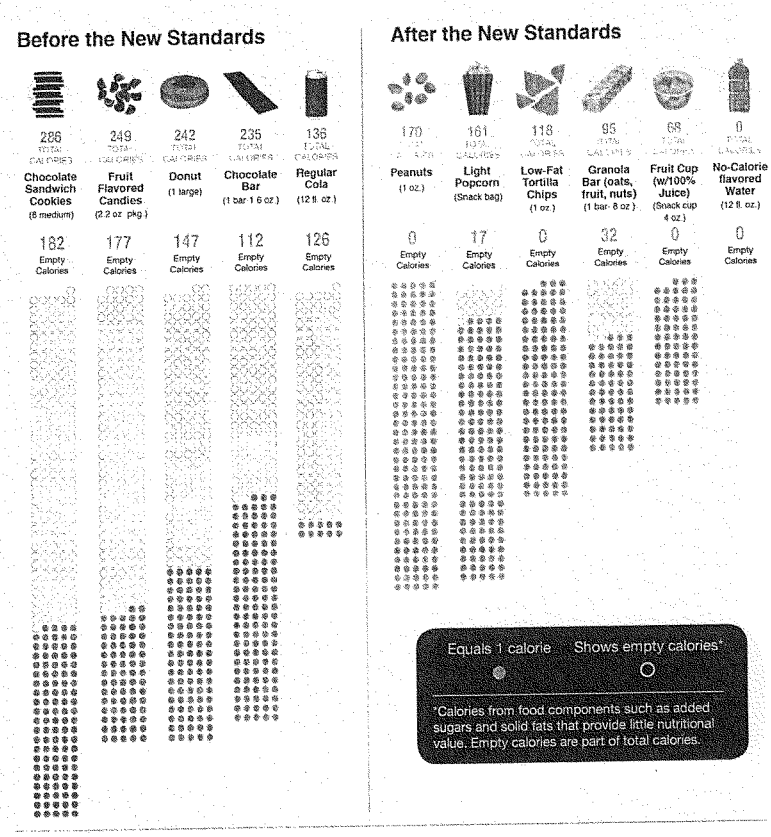
RANK	STATE	PERCENT INELIGIBLE
51	Mississippi	78%
50	District of Columbia	78%
49	Louisiana	76%
48	Alabama	75%
47	West Virginia	75%
46	Arkansas	74%
45	South Carolina	74%
44	Tennessee	74%
43	North Dakota	73%
42	Montana	73%
41	South Dakota	73%
40	Kentucky	73%
39	New Mexico	73%
38	Oklahoma	73%
37	Texas	73%
36	Georgia	73%
35	Idaho	73%
34	Rhode Island	72%
33	North Carolina	72%
32	Missouri	72%
31	Indiana	72%
30	Arizona	72%
29	Pennsylvania	72%
28	Utah	72%
27	Ohio	72%

RANK	STATE	PERCENT INELIGIBLE
26	Michigan	71%
25	Florida	71%
24	Vermont	71%
23	Virginia	71%
22	Wisconsin	71%
21	Delaware	71%
20	Nebraska	71%
19	Wyoming	71%
18	New York	71%
17	Iowa	71%
16	Kansas	71%
15	Alaska	71%
14	Illinois	71%
13	Maine	70%
12	Nevada	70%
11	Oregon	70%
10	New Hampshire	70%
9	Maryland	70%
8	California	70%
7	Massachusetts	70%
6	Colorado	70%
5	Minnesota	69%
4	Connecticut	69%
3	Washington	69%
2	New Jersey	68%
1	Hawaii	67%

USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

SMART SNACKS IN SCHOOL

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires USDA to establish nutrition standards for all foods sold in schools — beyond the federally-supported meals programs. This new rule carefully balances science-based nutrition guidelines with practical and flexible solutions to promote healthier eating on campus. The rule draws on recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, existing voluntary standards already implemented by thousands of schools around the country, and healthy food and beverage offerings already available in the marketplace.



ENDNOTES

1 12.4% in 2011 vs. 7.7% in 2002 according to: Department of Defense (2013, February). 2011 Health Related Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Military Personnel. TRICARE Management Activity. Fairfax, VA. Smith, TJ, Marriott, BP, White, A, Hulden, L et. al (2013, June). Military Personnel Exhibit a Lower Presence of Obesity than the General U.S. Adult Population. Military Nutrition Division, U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine. Natick, MA.
2 Ogden, C. L., Carroll, M. D., Kit, B. K., & Flegal, K. M. (2014). Prevalence of childhood and adult obesity in the United States, 2011-2012. JAMA, 311(8), 806-814. For the estimate that nearly a quarter of young Americans are too heavy to qualify, see: Cawley, J., & MacLean, J.C. (2010). Unfit for service: The implications of rising obesity for US Military recruitment. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
3 See endnotes 17 and 18
4 U.S. Congress. (1945). House of Representatives 49th Congress 1st Session, Hearings Before The Committee on Agriculture on H.R. 2673, H.R. 3143 (H.R. 3370 Reported). Bills Relating to the School-Lunch Program, March 23-May 24, 1945. Testimony of Major General Lewis B. Hershey.
5 Fryar, C. D., Carroll, M. D., & Ogden, C. L. (2012). Prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents: United States, trends 1963–1965 through 2009–2010. National Center for Health Statistics; Ogden, C. L., Fryar, CD, Carroll, MD, & Flegal, KM (2004, October 27). Mean body weight, height, and body mass index United States 1960-2002 (pp. 1-17). Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.
6 Personal communication with the Accession Policy and Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies teams at the Department of Defense in July 2014.
7 Bailey, R. L., Dodd, K. W., Goldman, J. A., Gahche, J. J., Dwyer, J. T., Moshfegh, A. J., et al. (2010). Estimation of total usual calcium and vitamin D intakes in the United States. The Journal of nutrition, 140(4), 817-822.
8 Nielsen, S. J., & Popkin, B. M. (2004). Changes in beverage intake between 1977 and 2001. American journal of preventive medicine, 27(3), 205-210.
9 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.) "Daily Physical Activity." 1991-2013 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Retrieved on August 6, 2014 from nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline
10 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.) "Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity." Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/winnable/battles/obesity/index.html
11 Department of Defense (2013, February). 2011 Health Related Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Military Personnel. TRICARE Management Activity. Fairfax, VA.
12 Sweeller, D.L., Knapik, J.J., Williams, K.W., Grier, T.L., & Jones, B.H. (n.d.). Risk factors for medical discharge from United States Army basic combat training. Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD: US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine.
13 Anderson, MK, Grier, T, Canham Chervak, M, Bushman, TT & Jones, BH, Army Institute of Public Health. Association of health behaviors and risk factors for injury: A study of military personnel. Poster session presented at: 141st American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Expo; 2013 Nov 2-6. Boston, MA.
14 Department of Defense (2003, October). 2002 Health Related Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Military Personnel. RTI International. Research Triangle Park, NC; Department of Defense (2013, February). 2011 Health Related Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Military Personnel. TRICARE Management Activity. Fairfax, VA.
15 Anderson, MK, Grier, T, Canham Chervak, M, Bushman, TT & Jones, BH, Army Institute of Public Health. Association of health behaviors and risk factors for injury: A study of military personnel. Poster session presented at: 141st American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Expo; 2013 Nov 2-6. Boston, MA.
16 Cohen, S.P., Brown, C., Kurihara, C., Plunkett, A., Nguyen, C., & Strassels, S.A. (2010). Diagnoses and factors associated with medical evacuation and return to duty for service members participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom: a prospective cohort study. The Lancet, 375, 301-09.
17 The military spends nearly $500 million to replace overweight or unfit personnel in the Army, Navy and Air Force based on a $75,000 cost to replace a service member in the Army, $150,000 in the Navy and $50,000 in the Air Force. The Army separated 1,200 soldiers for failing the physical fitness test and 1,800 for failing to control their weight. See: Tan, M. (2013, April 22). "Army to discharge 25K unfit, nondeployable soldiers." Army Times. Retrieved from http://www.armytimes.com/article/20130422/CAREERS/304220009/Army-discharge-25Kunfit-nondeployable-soldiers; Accession Medical Standards Analysis and Research Activity (n.d.) "Scope of Problem." Retrieved on August 8, 2014 from www.amsara.amedd.army.mil (Army); Bipartisan Policy Center (2012). How America's Health and Obesity Crisis Threatens our Economic Future. (Navy); Manacapilli, T., Matthies, C. F., Miller, L. W., Howe, P., Perez, P., Hardison, C. M., et al. (2012). Reducing Attrition in Selected Air Force Training Pipelines. RAND Corporation. Santa Monica, CA. and Rieke, M. (2012, December). "Airman acquitted over PT test failure." Military Times. (Air Force).
18 Specifically, $4.1 billion in TRICARE health insurance costs according to a careful analysis was done in 2007. A repeated analysis has not been done, but given increasing health care costs to society (the fastest quarterly growth in three decades, according to the U.S. Commerce Department) and rising obesity within the military, it is likely the cost of weight-related health problems for the military's insurance system is higher than it was previously. Dall, T.M., Zhang, Y., Chen, Y.J., Wagner, R.C., Hogan, P.F., Fagan, N.K., et al. (2007). Cost associated with being overweight and with obesity, high alcohol consumption, and tobacco use within the Military Health System's TRICARE prime-enrolled population. American Journal of Health Promotion, 22(2), 120-139.
19 Remarks of Dr. Jack Smith, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Clinical and Program Policy for Health Affairs, DOD, National Prevention Strategy Conference April 11, 2012.
20 U.S. Department of Agriculture (2014, June). FACT SHEET: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act School Meals Implementation. Release No. 0098.14. Food and Nutrition Service. Retrieved on August 8, 2014 from http://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2014/009814
21 Turner L, and Chaloupka, FJ (2014, July). Perceived Reactions of Elementary School Students to Changes in School Lunches After Implementation of the United States Department of Agriculture's New Meals Standards. Childhood Obesity.
22 72 percent of parents overall support both meal and snack standards (56% of Republican and 84% of Democrat parents support the meal standards, 56% and 87% respectively for the snack standards. The Kids' Safe & Healthful Foods Project (2014, August 20). "Nationwide Polling Regarding Parents' Views of School Meal and Smart Snacks Standards." Hart Research Associates and Ferguson Research.
23 Cohen, J. F., Richardson, S., Parker, E., Catalano, P. J., & Rimm, E. B. (2014). Impact of the new US Department of Agriculture school meal standards on food selection, consumption, and waste. American journal of preventive medicine, 46(4), 388-394.
24 Cohen, J. F., Richardson, S., Parker, E., Catalano, P. J., & Rimm, E. B. (2014). Impact of the new US Department of Agriculture school meal standards on food selection, consumption, and waste. American journal of preventive medicine, 46(4), 388-394.
25 The Kids' Safe & Healthful Foods Project (2014, August 20). "Nationwide Polling Regarding Parents' Views of School Meal and Smart Snacks Standards." Hart Research Associates and Ferguson Research.
26 U.S. Department of Agriculture (2014, June). FACT SHEET: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act School Meals Implementation. Release No. 0098.14. Food and Nutrition Service. Retrieved on August 8, 2014 from http://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2014/009814; U.S. Department of Agriculture (2014, April). "USDA Awards Grants for New School Food Service Equipment to Help Schools Dish Up Healthy Meals." Retrieved from http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2014/04/0065.xml&navid=NEWS_RELEASE&navtype=RT&parentnav=LATEST_RELEASES&edeployment_action=retrievecontent
27 U.S. Department of Agriculture (2014, June). FACT SHEET: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act School Meals Implementation. Release No. 0098.14. Food and Nutrition Service. Retrieved on August 8, 2014 from http://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2014/009814;
Federal Register (2011, June 17). National School Lunch Program: School Food Service Account Revenue Amendments Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. 76(117).
28 Kids' Safe & Healthful Foods Project (2012, September). Serving Healthy School Meals: Despite Challenges, Schools Meet USDA Meal Requirements. The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Retrieved on August 8, 2014 from http://www.healthyschoolfoodnow.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Serving_Healthy_School_Meals.pdf
29 Participation declined by 3.7 percent between 2010 and 2013. U.S. Government Accountability Office (2014, January). SCHOOL LUNCH: Implementing Nutrition Changes Was Challenging and Clarification of Oversight Requirements Is Needed. GAO-14-104; Turner L, and Chaloupka, FJ (2014, July). Perceived Reactions of Elementary School Students to Changes in School Lunches After Implementation of the United States Department of Agriculture's New Meals Standards. Childhood Obesity. U.S. Department of Agriculture (2014, June). FACT SHEET: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act School Meals Implementation. Release No. 0098.14. Food and Nutrition Service. Retrieved on August 8, 2014 from http://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2014/009814
30 Dashil, C. (2013, April 4). "Fort Campbell joins HealthierUS School Challenge." The Fort Campbell Courier. Retrieved from http://www.fortcampbellcourier.com/news/article_9c6d7b2a-9d60-11e2-9147-001a4bcf887a.html; Simpson, ML (2013, April 18). "Lettuce Eat." The Fort Campbell Courier. Retrieved from http://www.fortcampbellcourier.com/news/article_013387c62-a8c3-11e2-a9b6-001a4bcf887a.html; Simpson, ML (2012, February 17). "Fort Campbell's cafeteria competition prompts nutrition, quality." The Fort Campbell Courier. Retrieved from http://www.army.mil/article/74098/Fort_Campbell_s_cafeteria_competition_prompts_nutrition__quality/
31 Personal communication with Melinda Bonner, Child Nutrition Program Director, Hoover City Schools, Alabama on August 14, 2014
32 Xi, B., Mi, J., Zhao, M., Zhang, T., Jia, C., Li, J., et al. (2014). Trends in Abdominal Obesity Among US Children and Adolescents. Pediatrics, 134(2), e334-e339.
Ogden, C. L., Carroll, M. D., Kit, B. K., & Flegal, K. M. (2014). Prevalence of childhood and adult obesity in the United States, 2011-2012. JAMA, 311(8), 806-814; Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2014). State of Obesity 2014. Retrieved on September 8, 2014 from stateofobesity.org
33 Personal communication with Brian Borda, Healthy Base Initiative Program Director, Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense on July 30, 2014; Department of Defense (n.d.). "MC&FP FACT SHEET: Healthy Base Initiative." Military OneSource. Retrieved on August 8, 2014 from http://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/HBI_Factsheet.pdf
34 Glickman, D, Hertling, M, Milam, C. & Reddington, T. (2014, March). Opinion: Health initiatives can save money, boost readiness. Military Times. Retrieved from http://www.militarytimes.com/article/20130315/BENEFITS06/303130032/Opinion-Health-initiatives-can-save-money-boost-readiness
35 Davis, K. (2014, July 28). "AF takes aim at obesity in dependents, retirees." Air Force Times. Retrieved on August 8, 2014 from http://www.13wmt.com/story/news/local/robins-air-force-base/2014/07/28/air-force-launches-health-program-for-spouses-retirees/13261747/
36 Personal communication with the DoD's Office of Health Affairs, March 2013
37 Remarks by Lisa Sims, Food Service Director, Daviess County Public Schools, Kentucky at the Hill Briefing "The Impact of Obesity on the Military: Leveraging the School Environment to Maintain National Security" on April 26, 2013.
38 Lundahl, A., Kidwell, K. M., & Nelson, T. D. (2014). Parental underestimates of child weight: A meta-analysis. Pediatrics, 2013-2690.
39 Harvard School of Public Health (n.d.) Sugary Drinks and Obesity Fact Sheet. Retrieved from http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/sugary-drinks-fact-sheet
40. See our previous report, "Ready, Willing and Unable to Serve."

WHO WE ARE

MISSION: READINESS is the nonprofit, nonpartisan national security organization of more than 450 retired generals, admirals and other senior retired military leaders who work to ensure continued American security and prosperity by calling for smart investments in the upcoming generation of American children. It operates under the umbrella of the nonprofit Council for a Strong America.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MISSION: READINESS is supported by tax-deductible contributions from foundations, individuals, and corporations. MISSION: READINESS accepts no funds from federal, state, or local governments.

This report was supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Major funding for MISSION:READINESS is provided by: Alliance for Early Success • The Boeing Company • The California Education Policy Fund • The California Endowment • The Annie E. Casey Foundation • CME Group Foundation • Sam L. Cohen Foundation • The Colorado Health Foundation • Early Care and Education Funders Collaborative of The Washington Area Women's Foundation • Ford Foundation • Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation • The Grable Foundation • George Gund Foundation • The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust • The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation • Robert Wood Johnson Foundation • W.K. Kellogg Foundation • The Kresge Foundation • Oscar G. and Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation • The David & Lucile Packard Foundation • William Penn Foundation • The Pew Charitable Trusts • The J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation • Rauch Foundation. The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Pew Charitable Trusts or any of the other supporters listed here.

This report was written by William Christeson, Kara Clifford, and Amy Dawson Taggart. Chris Beakey and David Carner also contributed to this report.

Design by Soren Messner-Zidell and Stefanie Campolo.

Chairman KLINE. Without objection.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you.

And, so, you know, obviously, there has been a lot of back and forth since the law was passed. I visited the school cafeterias. Connecticut, you know has had some struggles, you know, with the transition. I think Secretary Vilsack has listened to people, in my experience. I mean, he did make some adjustments as we sort of moved along.

But I guess the question I would like to pose to Ms. Bauscher and Mrs. McAuliffe is, you know, on this question of nutritional standards. I mean, the federal taxpayer is in on this. We know from the, you know, the forensics of the school lunch program that it had a national objective. It had a national mission, you know, that even goes into our national defense, and, you know, I mean, when we talk about state flexibility, are we talking about basically retreating from what the military leadership is saying we need to maintain, or we are talking about, you know, maintaining standards. Anything can use improvement, but, again, I was just wondering what your association's position is.

Ms. BAUSCHER. So, let me first say, SNA supported the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, and we support the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act today. What we are asking for is under the most restrictive requirements in the law, primarily around grains and fruits and vegetables, some sensible flexibility that will allow districts to operate programs in a fiscally-sound way.

As I mentioned, when Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act began, I had a 3-month operating balance. Operating balances around the country are used to provide program improvement. It may be improving the equipment that the food is prepared in and with. It may be improving the decor in the cafeteria so that it is an inviting place for students to consume healthy meals.

Since that time through February of this year, my operating fund balance has decreased by 1.2 months. What that means is I have got 1.8 months operating balance so the—and it is mainly due to the increased cost of meeting the standards. And a lot of the food that the students don't like goes in the trash, and that is precious—

Mr. COURTNEY. Just I want to give Mrs. McAuliffe a chance—

Ms. BAUSCHER. Okay.

Mr. COURTNEY.—to jump in. But I just want to tell you. If there is a gap in terms of, you know, the rules versus your operating, we want that information because, frankly, there are other ways to solve that problem rather than weakening standards.

Mrs. McAuliffe?

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. Well, I agree, and I understand that the difficulties of the challenges of working with pennies, literally pennies, nickels and dimes a day, to feed our children and feed them well. I think that the Retreat Is Not An Option analogy is absolutely spot on. We know the right thing to do as parents, we know what we have to teach as teachers, and we don't give up. We don't retreat. We figure out, we add creativity, we add extra work and urgency to our mission.

I would say that it is tough but it is being done and there are success stories out there and I think what we are finding in Vir-

ginia, too, is the peer-to-peer colleagues, working school nutrition directors together, sharing best practices, looking at what works within their agricultural community and how are we, you know, warehousing that local hamburger meat so we can spend a little bit more on the local hamburger meat but, you know, not have to sacrifice, you know, all of our budget for it. I think that it all takes a lot more—it is more demanding on all of us but we can't retreat.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman's time is expired.

Mr. Grothman?

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you all for being here today. Very illuminating and I can see you all have a lot of enthusiasm for the topic.

I am going talk a little bit to Ms. Bauscher first. You talked about that the problems we have of kids throwing away their food, and I have had people lobbying me in my office on that topic and I hear anecdotal evidence of that from kids in my district. You mentioned that you were having more success and your children liked the kiwis but they were expensive. You brought that anecdote up for a reason. Do you feel if you had more money, maybe put a few more of those in the fruit cups or whatever, we could have more kids eat the food?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Again, kids like what they like and kiwi is one of the things that they really like and, yes, more money would help me provide that and potentially help them consume that since it includes something that they like.

So I think that we need to stay focused on teaching kids the importance of consuming healthy foods. We need to continue to make them available in the cafeteria but, again, if I lose or my program reserves continue to decline and program operates in the red, I have to hold out my hand to my administration and ask them to cover my deficit, and that is occurring in more and more districts around the country.

So we all recognize the critical importance of these programs in assuring that kids are prepared to learn and in moving the needle on student achievement. We want to make sure that all of our students are prepared for success throughout their lives. So these programs are critical and, you know, when the program goes in the red, a school potentially goes off of the program, we are not able to provide the support they need.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Certain foods. Because some of your statistics across the board kind of surprised me. I mean, for a minute, I felt I was like in the Bangladesh house of representatives rather than the United States House of Representatives, hearing we have such a crisis of hunger apparently in our schools.

One of you mentioned that we have a hunger problem, kids zero to 5, and if there was a problem there, I would assume we would see it reflected in the measurements of our 5-year olds when they enter school. I assume we keep track of those things over time, you know, average weight and height of a 5-year old in the 2010, 2000, 1960, 1950, what have you. Do you see any changes over time in the size and the weight and height of our 5-year olds?

Ms. BAUSCHER. We do not collect that information in our program. It is possible, but the other departments within the district

might collect that information. I think that we would be happy to get back to you.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Why don't I talk to Mr. Storen because he is the director of research advocacy on this stuff. I mean, some of us kind of wonder. Like I said, you guys have a little bit of a problem because we talk about this obesity epidemic and then we say we have this problem with all these people are hungry and just on first blush, they kind of are contradictory.

So I am going to ask on something that is hard. Over a period of time, when we measure our 5-year olds in this country, do we see a change in height or a change in weight before the system is able to get ahold of them?

Mr. STOREN. Yes, I don't have those data available. I would be happy to try to get back to try to get back to you. What I do know is that the program WIC which is designed to help those children ages zero to 5, there is a strong body of evidence about the positive health impacts when kids do participate in it. And I know about half of all babies in the United States do participate in that program, so.

Mr. GROTHMAN. But we don't collect data on that, okay.

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. May I comment on that—could I—

Mr. GROTHMAN. Go ahead. No, sure.

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. The point about obesity I think is a really big part of the conversation. Obesity, I view it as hunger in many ways because it is hunger for the right type of food. It is malnutrition. In Virginia, we have 17 percent of our families living in food deserts. And so that is why if school meals are consistently often the best and most consistent meal for children, I think it is imperative on us to make sure that we are doing the best that we can in terms of food quality, as well as access.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I will give you another thing to think about and any of you can respond to this. A while back I read something dealing with some of these food programs and that we are kind of—it used to be it was important for kids to sit around the dinner table at night and I think it is kind of an important thing to sit around the breakfast table in the morning. And, as time goes on, it becomes more—where we are sending a message to parents that is more of the government's concern and not their concern.

Does that concern you at all insofar as, you know, we are kind of taking away a role that has maybe been the most basic role the parents probably throughout all of history in kind of saying that, you know, providing breakfast for your kids, providing dinner for your kids or during summer periods, that, you know, we are beginning to change the nature of life in that we begin to make it more of a government thing than a family thing. Does that—

Chairman KLINE. I am sorry; the gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. DeSaulnier, I think you are up.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and the ranking member for bringing this up.

I want my comments in the context of somebody who has spent 35 years in the food service industry and is sympathetic to the comments by Ms. Bauscher. I know running restaurants, you couldn't make customers eat food that they didn't want to and pay for it, so. And having been a single parent, I understand the challenges

in getting kids to eat what is good for them. But we have to separate food from nutrition and we started to just hit on this, so.

I want to talk about the overall context. So I was an author of one of the first local government menu labeling bills, in spite of the fact of being in the restaurant business in California. I was the coauthor of the first state's menu labeling bill in the United States in California with a L.A. colleague. That has been in effect for about 8 years now, and we did that in response to the Center for Disease Control declaring a national epidemic when it came to obesity in America.

America has the second highest obesity rate in the world. We spend almost $200 billion a year on public health consequences for obesity, and where it has most impacted is amongst young people. So the way to do it is collectively and then most of it is around education. So menu labeling was letting parents know you are busy, you have to go through the drive in at Taco Bell but you can see the menu is changing now in fast food restaurants. You can see McDonald's now actually promoting to their investors that they are changing.

So, in that context, I always thought that this was the best investment the federal government could do, and along with education. Not telling parents or kids they have to eat it because they won't unless they know it is good for them. And then we know from a nutritional standpoint that your palate changes and adjusts.

And in terms of spoilage in California, what we found is that we have actually reduced spoilage when we use fresh ingredients. So in California, I know we are weird and we are different, but 66 percent of Republicans and 87 percent of Democrats in a recent Pew Charitable Trust poll said that they supported the current standards.

So in the context of my colleague from Virginia talking about cost, I view this as an investment. We change the cost curve when we invest in letting kids know that they can grow healthy foods in their school gardens, they can go in the kitchen afterschool programs and Dr. Krey and Mrs. McAuliffe's overall question is in regards to larger context, directed at Mrs. McAuliffe and if Dr. Krey wants to jump in there.

And then the secondary thing is intercession, summer school loss, both cognitively and nutritionally, and what a difference it makes for poor kids. So those are the two sort of general questions in terms of cost avoidance in investment in a broad scale, not just in this program, and to agree with education. That the best way to gets kids and parents to invest in good nutrition is to educate them to the cost in the long term, both cognitively and nutritionally.

Ms. McAuliffe?

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. Sorry, I lost track of—I am sorry about the question; I heard every single thing you said—

Mr. DESAULNIER. So the overall question is, in the context, in California, we did it across the board. We wanted to educate parents, we wanted to educate adults about the obesity—the consequences of that, and I wonder if you are doing that in Virginia.

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. I think that, you know, schools, local programs are doing things differently in their own way. But, yes, I think that

part—when you are talking about nutrition curriculum, you are talking about educating the next generation but there is always a piece about taking these conversations home, talking to parents. And I think that parents—many schools are inviting parents in as part of the, you know—we have heard of nights where everybody eats in the cafeteria at night to introduce some of the new foods as they go along with the guidelines.

So I think that is absolutely, you know—schools are definitely a partnership, students, parents and teachers. And that partnership has to remain strong always and it is definitely an imperative part of this conversation.

Mr. DESAULNIER. So, Dr. Krey, just to follow up on the intercession of summer school loss, you said it is not just for students' health but for the learning loss, up to half of that learning loss happens during the summer. Could you extrapolate on that a little bit, just briefly?

Ms. KREY. Certainly, certainly. We know from studies that there are social, emotional and behavioral problems associated with being food insecurity and micronutrient deficiencies, cognitive delays and so when we look at child nutrition programs, that is one reason why summer is such a difficult period because it is regular, sustained access to nutritious meals that help prevent a lot of those deficiencies that I have talked about, and enable students to stay on track and to continue to be prepared to learn.

Mr. DESAULNIER. I want to yield back the remainder of the time I have.

Chairman KLINE. You also are my hero.

[Laughter.]

Mr. Allen?

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I am having one of those days where I have got two of these going on at the same time. In fact, we were talking about nutrition over at Ag, and the food bank process and how that is working coordinating with the SNAP program.

But I represent Georgia's 12th district where roughly 31 percent of children have limited or uncertain access to adequate nutritious food. These kids come from great families but, because of economic times, you know, they struggle to make ends meet living paycheck to paycheck.

We all know how important child nutrition is and I thank you for your work in that area. And, you know, our school food programs ensure that kids have access to the foods.

Dr. Krey, you state in your testimony that 19.5 percent of American households with children are food insecure. Can you discuss what being food insecure means and how that impacts children specifically?

Ms. KREY. Certainly. So food insecurity is a broad term so it captures both outright hunger and the coping mechanisms that households use to avoid it. So it refers to a lack of food access based on resources. It is a household situation so it affects everyone in a household but it can affect them differently, and it is a year-long measure. So we know that food insecurity can be episodic and cyclical, giving other factors that put people at risk.

And we know from a lot of studies that food insecure individuals have worse health and educational outcomes than food secure households. It has been well documented, and we know that households suffering from food insecurity are more likely to have children, which is what makes it a larger concern. And we know that when children live in food insecure households, they are more likely to have disrupted eating patterns and diets and we know the link that we have talked about between good nutrition and children's health development and learning.

Mr. ALLEN. Good. Thank you.

I recently saw a poll that indicated about 93 percent of parents in Georgia think school food service should serve a fruit and vegetable on every meal. For example, in Burke County in my district, they are having a lot of success with the Farm-to-School program serving locally-grown collard greens, one of my personal favorites, along with sweet potatoes, cabbage, broccoli and other favorites, strawberries, whole grain grits and, because we are a big blueberry area now, and with, you know, mixing that with whole wheat flour and local products. Do you think programs like Farm-to-School or Smarter Lunchrooms have been helpful, and how can we grow that program?

Ms. BAUSCHER. Donna Martin, who is the director in your area—

Mr. ALLEN. Yes.

Ms. BAUSCHER.—is a wonderful success story and we tap her all the time to share her successes and her recipes with members to inspire them.

I think Farm-to-School programs are very important. Many, many school food authorities have Farm-to-School programs or school garden programs. To Mrs. McAuliffe's point earlier, it is important that kids learn where food comes from. And when kids are actively involved in growing and harvesting food, they are more likely to consume it and generally consume more.

One of the programs we haven't touched on today at all is the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, available in schools with high at-risk students. I have got 30 of my schools that participate in that program. It includes a nutrition education component and we work through that program to teach children where their food comes from, why it is healthy for them, and, anecdotally, I know that in schools that participate in that program, they choose and consume more fruits and vegetables with their meal.

The unfortunate part is that program is not available to all school food authorities. So it is a wonderful program that not only provides nutrition education but, again, encourages kids to consume healthier fruits and vegetables.

Mr. ALLEN. How can we make that more available? Is there just the rural versus urban—

Ms. BAUSCHER. Well, it currently is only available in areas where at least 50 percent of the—

Mr.Allen. Right.

Ms. BAUSCHER.—students qualify for free or reduced meals.

Mr. ALLEN. I got you.

Ms. BAUSCHER. So making programs like that more accessible, you—because even a lot of our paid-students need to learn where

their food comes from, so making it more widely available would support the current requirement.

Mr. ALLEN. Good. Yes, Donna did share a lot of this information with me and I am very appreciative of her efforts, as well.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the remainder of my time.

Chairman KLINE. Thank you, gentleman. Another hero.

Mr. Polis?

Mr. POLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Last week in Colorado I got to visit the school nutrition services at Poudre School District in my district, which serves schools in Fort Collins area. And at Poudre School District they serve healthy, often locally-grown fruits and vegetables to students as part of their Farm-o-School initiative. The leaders of this school nutrition service at PSD are thrilled with upgrading the federal regs. In fact, due, in fact, part to whole grains, they have been able to attract 10 percent more families back to opt in to the district lunch program.

As an example of what they are serving then, they put their menu and recipes up at PSDSchools.nutraslice.com, PSDSSchools@nutraslice.com. Today, they are serving a General Tso chicken and steamed broccoli. Yesterday was lasagna with veggies, rotini with roasted spring veggies, and chicken, and steamed vegetables.

They have really found that offering healthy and nutritious food in excess of the federal nutrition standards actually helps pull families back into participating, which improves the economic viability of their paid lunch program and, of course, as well through scale, their free and reduced lunch program. They are very excited about bringing healthier foods to students and helping instill positive eating habits in schools.

Another school district in Boulder Valley School District in my district in Colorado, working with Chef Ann Cooper and the Ann Cooper Foundation, has implemented a large-scale food change. As Chef Ann Cooper says, who is the head of nutrition food services for Boulder Valley School District, she says, "I envision a time soon when being a chef working to feed children fresh, delicious and nourishing food will no longer be considered renegade."

Mrs. McAuliffe, I was wondering if you could talk more about initiatives like those in Poudre School District and Boulder Valley School District and others that can be replicated and encouraged through a reauthorization of the child nutrition act?

Mrs. MCAULIFFE. Thank you, I appreciate that. The connection between where our food comes from, what we are putting in our bodies, it matters. There is a growing demand for that in this country, both in our schools but in our community at large it is important. We see those demands growing.

Andrea—I have to give a shout out to one of our lead school nutrition directors, Andrea Early in Harrisonburg City Schools, who is a national leader on Farm-to-School, and what she has done is brought in the ag extension program, the agricultural community, and brought in Farmer Joe to talk about lettuce when we introduce the school with the salad bar at school.

So this community garden piece, the Farm-to-School piece, it is so critical to connecting in a real live way, a tangible way to get

kids excited about how does Farmer Joe grow his lettuce. And Farmer Joe is really fun to listen to, and I think I will try his lettuce because it is on a salad bar today.

So that connection between where your food comes from and making it very real is really critical to success of these programs.

Mr. POLIS. And, again, one of the things that our school districts have found that is contrary to some of the testimony from the others is, by increasing nutrition standards, they actually got more families to participate in the lunch program.

I would also like to highlight a non-profit in my district called the Kitchen Community that has an approach to school gardens where kids actually grow their own food and it can provide 1 or 2 or 3 days' worth of nutrition. Both Boulder Valley School District and Poudre School District have implemented salad bars in every school, as well as vegetarian options.

These are the kinds of things that, if more districts did, and I wanted to address this to Ms. Bauscher, why aren't more districts doing this kind of thing on their own? Why are we even forced to talk about it here? Obviously, we are a big funder of this. Why aren't districts like ours getting more families to participate by launching salad bars, by making sure they have vegetarian options as more and more kids want them?

Ms. BAUSCHER. First, let me say that a lot of districts are offering salad bars and more vegetarian options, but school food authorities are as diverse as your Congressional districts; not all school food authorities have the resources to do that. Salad bars, for example—

Mr. POLIS. Well, reclaiming my time, but our districts have found is that they have more resources when they offer these things—

Ms. BAUSCHER. And—

Mr. POLIS.—because families that have not participated in the school lunch program because the kids are vegetarian or the family wants food from a salad bar, they are the ones that are opting in, giving the school districts more resources along with it. And I think that is what we can accomplish nationally to improve the viability and the efficiency of school lunch programs across the country.

And I think that is what we can do by raising the federal bar, and I hope that we renew our commitment to healthy and nutritious school lunches across the country, which I think is consistent with the fiscal viability that you indicated in your testimony.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman KLINE. I thank the gentleman for yielding back his time, however how much of it had expired.

I now recognize the ranking member for any closing remarks that he may have.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think this has been a great hearing. We have heard about the importance of nutritious meals. It is a national security interest because 25 percent of our young people are obese and can't even enlist in the military. It has other long-term health effects. We have heard about the correlation between academic achievement, including behavior, and attendance with good nutrition.

And so our reauthorization has to make sure we continue the programs and also recognize that nutritious meals actually cost

more. Federal standards are important. It has been pointed out that 93 percent of our schools are in compliance so they can't be that unreasonable.

We have heard a lot about unnecessary paperwork that needs to be addressed, and the summer availability. We have seen a lot of studies that showed that a significant portion of the achievement gap is due to regression during the summer.

So I look forward to the authorization and, in the meanwhile, Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the Harvard study from last year showing that more students eating fruits and vegetables. Another one from the University of Connecticut this year showing that students are eating more fruit and no increase in plate waste. And one from last year, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation study on students accepting and liking the school food under the new standards, and no increase in plate waste. And a letter from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics on the importance of the school programs. And one from the National WIC Association with the significant recommendations on how we can improve nutrition.

[The information follows:]

Provided for non-commercial research and education use.
Not for reproduction, distribution or commercial use.

AMERICAN JOURNAL OF
Preventive Medicine

VOLUME 46(4) www.ajpmonline.org APRIL 2014

Research Articles

331 The Impact of Tobacco Dependence Treatment Coverage and Copayments in Medicaid
J Cohen, RM Stoltz, GB McMenamin

337 Health Inequalities Among Sexual Minority Adults: Evidence from Ten U.S. States, 2010
JH Blewett, BM Farmer, JGL Lee, MMD Stenson, DJ Flower

350 Deployment Experiences and Motor Vehicle Crashes Among U.S. Service Members
MA Stevens, JS Jacobson, MF Dunn-Cardoza

359 Breast and Cervical Screening by Race/Ethnicity: Comparative Analyses Before and During the Great Recession
CJ Ney, J Chen, MA Garcia, DE Thomas

368 e-Care for Heart Wellness: A Feasibility Trial to Decrease Blood Pressure and Cardiovascular Risk
RE Sevick, GE Anderson, AJ Clark, S Cato, PA Fishman, JM McClure, RJ Reid

378 Fast-Food Restaurants, Park Access, and Insulin Resistance Among Hispanic Youth
S Ward, JC Mossey, KD Cummins, LE Chaufield, L Christian, JB Dowd, M Gross, RJ Kimbrough, D Sarwer-Foner

388 Impact of the New U.S. Department of Agriculture School Meal Standards on Food Selection, Consumption, and Waste
PW Cohen, S Richardson, E Parker, R Catalano, RB Rosen

395 "Smoking Revolution": A Content Analysis of Electronic Cigarette Retail Websites
RS Grana, PM Ling

Brief Reports

404 Mobile Technology for Obesity Prevention: A Randomized Pilot Study in Racial- and Ethnic-Minority Girls
M Nollen, MS Mayo, JE Carlson, MM Rosenberg, KJ Goggin, EP Elsenbach

409 E-cigarette Advertising Expenditures in the U.S., 2011–2012
AB Kim, KY Arnett, O Makomenaka

Review and Special Articles

413 Residential Traffic Exposure and Childhood Leukemia: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis
M Boothe, TK Bunzner, AM Wendel, FT Ng

423 Toward a Healthier City: Nutrition Standards for New York City Government
K Lenhart, CJ Curtis, LE Shea, SY Angell

Current Issues

429 Alternatives to Monetary Incentives for Employee Weight Loss
JJ Lesser, EM Puhl

Departments

445 Research Letter

CME available online at www.ajpmonline.org
Available only online at www.ajpmonline.org

A Journal of the
ACPM American College of Preventive Medicine & APTR Association for Prevention Teaching and Research

ELSEVIER

This article appeared in a journal published by Elsevier. The attached copy is furnished to the author for internal non-commercial research and education use, including for instruction at the authors institution and sharing with colleagues.

Other uses, including reproduction and distribution, or selling or licensing copies, or posting to personal, institutional or third party websites are prohibited.

In most cases authors are permitted to post their version of the article (e.g. in Word or Tex form) to their personal website or institutional repository. Authors requiring further information regarding Elsevier's archiving and manuscript policies are encouraged to visit:

http://www.elsevier.com/authorsrights

Author's personal copy

Impact of the New U.S. Department of Agriculture School Meal Standards on Food Selection, Consumption, and Waste

Juliana F.W. Cohen, ScM, ScD, Scott Richardson, MBA, Ellen Parker, MBA, MSW, Paul J. Catalano, ScD, Eric B. Rimm, ScD

Background: The U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently made substantial changes to the school meal standards. The media and public outcry have suggested that this has led to substantially more food waste.

Purpose: School meal selection, consumption, and waste were assessed before and after implementation of the new school meal standards.

Methods: Plate waste data were collected in four schools in an urban, low-income school district. Logistic regression and mixed-model ANOVA were used to estimate the differences in selection and consumption of school meals before (fall 2011) and after implementation (fall 2012) of the new standards among 1030 elementary and middle school children. Analyses were conducted in 2013.

Results: After the new standards were implemented, fruit selection increased by 23.0% and entrée and vegetable selection remained unchanged. Additionally, post-implementation entrée consumption increased by 15.6%, vegetable consumption increased by 16.2%, and fruit consumption remained the same. Milk selection and consumption decreased owing to an unrelated milk policy change.

Conclusions: Although food waste levels were substantial both pre- and post-implementation, the new guidelines have positively affected school meal selection and consumption. Despite the increased vegetable portion size requirement, consumption increased and led to significantly more cups of vegetables consumed. Significantly more students selected a fruit, whereas the overall percentage of fruit consumed remained the same, resulting in more students consuming fruits. Contrary to media reports, these results suggest that the new school meal standards have improved students' overall diet quality. Legislation to weaken the standards is not warranted.
(Am J Prev Med 2014;46(4):388–394) © 2014 American Journal of Preventive Medicine

Background

In the U.S., schools provide government-subsidized meals to roughly 32 million students daily.[1] Until recently, the nutrition standards for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program were based on outdated 1995 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.[2] In general, meals were high in sodium, saturated fats, and low in whole grains and fiber.[3] In response to these issues and the First Lady's Let's Move! campaign to promote child health, Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which required the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to update the national school meal standards to reflect the most recent (2010) Dietary Guidelines for Americans.[4]

The new USDA *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program* took effect at the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year.[5] These standards increased the availability of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables; increased the portion sizes of fruits and vegetables offered; and required the selection of a fruit or vegetable. Additionally, grade-specific limits were

From the Department of Nutrition (Cohen, Rimm), the Department of Biostatistics (Catalano), the Department of Epidemiology (Rimm), the Department of Biostatistics and Computational Biology (Catalano), Harvard School of Public Health; Project Bread (Richardson, Parker); Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (Catalano); and Channing Division of Network Medicine, Department of Medicine (Rimm), Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts

Address correspondence to: Juliana F.W. Cohen, ScM, ScD, Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health, 677 Huntington Avenue, Boston MA 02115. E-mail: jcohen@hsph.harvard.edu.

0749-3797/$36.00

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2013.11.013

 © 2014 American Journal of Preventive Medicine • Published by Elsevier Inc.

Author's personal copy

placed on the total calories and sodium contents of the meals, and trans fats were removed.

Food service directors, teachers, parents, and students criticized the regulations for causing an increase in food waste owing to both larger portion sizes and the requirement that a student must select a fruit or vegetable.[6] To our knowledge, these beliefs were based on unquantified observations and anecdotal reports and not a formal test of consumption in a paired set of children during this time period. Some levels of food waste can be expected in a school cafeteria setting, for reasons including food preferences and ranges in caloric needs.[7] It has yet to be documented whether the new standards result in increased food waste when compared to the substantial food waste, particularly in fruits and vegetables, previously observed in cafeterias before the new school meal standards.[7] This study was conducted in a large prospectively collected sample of school-age children to determine whether the new standards affected students' selection and consumption of school foods, using plate waste data collected pre- and post-implementation.

Methods

Project Modifying Eating and Lifestyles at School (MEALS) was a school-based study developed by the nonprofit organization Project Bread (www.ProjectBread.org) and the Harvard School of Public Health. In 2011, Project Bread hired a professional chef to work with several schools in a low-income, urban school district in Massachusetts to enhance the palatability and nutrient profile of the school meals. Additionally, some schools received a behavioral psychology intervention to influence the selection and consumption of the healthier foods offered. Eight elementary/K–8 schools within the district were assigned to intervention (n=4) or control status (n=4). The present study focuses on the four control schools.

All students in grades 3–8 were recruited to participate with active consent, and n=1,030 students at the four control schools provided parental/student consent and completed a survey with demographic information (46% of the eligible population). The information collected included the child's gender; date of birth (to calculate age at baseline); and race/ethnicity. All students in grades 1–8 also had the option to participate with passive consent, and 99.8% of the remaining eligible population agreed to participate using this method, with no identifying information collected about the student (0.2% of parents requested that their child not participate). No eligible students declined to participate on a study day. At Year 2, n=864 students with active consent (84%) remained in participating schools and attended lunch on a study day, and passive consent was collected for new students. Students with active or passive consent participated in the study if they attended lunch on a study day (participating schools had closed campuses, so students could not leave to purchase other foods during the school day), and were excluded if they did not receive a school lunch. Roughly 85% of the students in the school came from low-income families and were eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Among students who provided active consent, the mean (SD) age was 10.7 years (1.8) and 54.4% were girls. The majority of students (83.0%) were Hispanic, 4.6% were white, 2.9% were Asian, and 1.8% were black. There were no substantial differences in demographics between the students with active consent and the general population at the participating schools.

Intervention

At the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year, the new school meal standards went into effect in schools participating in the National School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs (Table 1). This resulted in a natural experiment in the middle of data collection for the Project MEALS study.

Although there were some similarities between the old and new school meal standards, there were many important updates as well. Schools must continue to offer five components to students at lunch: a grain, meat/meat alternative, fruit, vegetable, and milk (the grain and meat/meat alternative are often provided together as a combination entrée), and students are required to select three of the components.

However, the new standards require that one of the three components selected is a fruit or vegetable. Additionally, the serving sizes for fruits and vegetables are larger, and a greater variety of vegetables must be served, including weekly offerings of legumes, dark green vegetables, and red/orange vegetables. Although the previous standards did not specify the type of grain offered, the new standards require that half of the grains offered be whole grains (beginning with the 2014–2015 school year, all grains must be whole grain). Whole and 2% milk can no longer be offered; only fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk can be available to students.

Additionally, the regulations finally address sodium by setting maximum levels, with the target level decreasing through the 2022–2023 school year. Although both the previous and new guidelines have calorie minimums for the overall meal, the new standards have also placed a maximum level on the calories offered, which varies by grade. The requirements for protein levels and specific micronutrients have been removed from the new standards.

The limit on saturated fats (<10% of total calories) remains unchanged, but unlike the previous standards that did not address trans fats, the new standards require zero grams of artificial trans fats in the school meals, with products with less than 0.5 g per serving counted as zero. Unrelated to the new standards, the school district participating in Project MEALS made the decision to remove sugar-sweetened (i.e., flavored) milk from all of its schools during the 2012–2013 school year although sugar-sweetened milk is still allowed under the new standards if it is fat-free.

Author's personal copy

Table 1. Comparison of previous versus current school lunch standards[a]

Food group	Previous requirements K–12	Current requirements K–12
Fruit and vegetables	0.5–0.75 cup of fruit and vegetables *combined* per day	0.75–1 cup of vegetables *plus* 0.5–1 cup of fruit per day[b]
Vegetables	No specifications as to type of vegetable subgroup	Weekly requirement for (1) dark green; (2) red/orange; (3) beans/peas (legumes); (4) starchy; (5) other (as defined in 2010 Dietary Guidelines)
Whole grains	No requirement	At least half of the grains must be whole grain rich as of July 1, 2012. Beginning July 1, 2014, all grains must be whole grain rich.
Milk	1 cup; variety of fat contents allowed; flavor not restricted	1 cup; must be fat free (unflavored/flavored) or 1% low fat (unflavored)[c]
Nutrient standards		
Calories	Minimum only (based on grade)	Minimum and maximum (based on grade)
Sodium	No requirement	Limits (based on grade), with the target levels decreasing through the 2022–2023 school year
Saturated fats	<10% of total calories	<10% of total calories
Trans fats	No requirement	0 g per serving[d]

[a]Adapted from "Comparison of Previous and Current Regulatory Requirements under Final Rule "*Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs*"
[b]Although students must be *offered* 0.75–1 cup of vegetables *and* 0.5–1 cup of fruits per day (versus previous requirements that allowed students to be offered a combined total of 0.5 –0.75 cup fruit and vegetables), students are allowed to *select* only 0.5 cup of fruits or vegetables (previous requirements allowed students to select only 0.125 cup of fruits or vegetables)
[c]This is a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirement. The participating district's decision to remove all flavored milk (including fat-free options) exceeded the USDA requirements
[d]Products with less than 0.5 grams per serving count as 0

Plate Waste Measures

Consumption was measured using established plate waste study methods[8–10] on 2 days per school in the fall of 2011 (pre-implementation for the new school meal standards) and 2 days per school in the fall of 2012 (post-implementation). Plate waste study days were randomly selected without prior knowledge of what was being served. All lunch periods and consented students were included on each study day.

Before the first lunch period began, all trays were given unique identifying numbers and trash cans were removed from the cafeteria. Ten random samples of each food offered were weighed on a food scale (Oxo 1130800; New York NY) to provide a stable estimate of the pre-consumption weights of the foods, and where applicable, serving containers were weighed.

Cafeteria staff members were also trained in portion control methods to minimize the variability in the servings. When each lunch period began, students entered the cafeteria and selected their foods. When they exited the cafeteria line with their selected foods, research assistants discreetly standing by the exits recorded their tray number and the food components on the trays.

At the beginning of each lunch period, students were reminded about the study and that participation was voluntary. Students who had provided active consent were also asked to include their names on their trays. No personal identifying information was collected for students with passive consent. At the end of the each meal, the trays were collected and each meal component was weighed separately. The Committee on Human Subjects at the Harvard School of Public Health approved the conduct of the study.

Analyses for Children with Active Consent

The primary analyses were conducted using data from the n=1,030 students with active consent who provided demographic information. Within-child differences in pre- versus post-implementation for food selection and consumption were examined between Years 1 and 2. All students (n=1,030) were included in the analyses, and 864 students with both pre- and post-implementation data were used to calculate the point estimates, and the additional 166 students who were lost to follow-up contributed to the variance calculations in the analyses.

To analyze differences in selection of each food component, logistic regression was used, applying a marginal model approach (generalized estimating equations) with the SAS program PROC GENMOD (version 9.1, 2003; SAS Institute, Cary NC). This method was used to account

Author's personal copy

for the correlations associated with repeated measures of students nested within schools. The analyses were also adjusted for gender, age at baseline, and race/ethnicity.

To calculate differences in meal consumption among students who selected a meal component, mixed-model ANOVA, with school and student as a random effect (students nested within schools) were conducted using the SAS program PROC MIXED. The models were also adjusted for gender, age, and race/ethnicity.

Analyses for Children with Passive Consent

Selection and consumption was also examined among the students with active and passive consent (99.8% of the entire population) using logistic regression and mixed-model ANOVA adjusted for lunch period and accounting for clustering of observations within schools. Because no identification was collected for students with passive consent, students could not be tracked over time; therefore, each student observation within a school over the 4 study days was treated as independent (i.e., no repeated measures were included in this analysis). Analyses were conducted in 2013.

Results

At baseline, the participating schools met the previous USDA school meal standards and at follow-up were compliant with the new requirements for all food groups and nutrient standards, with the exception of one vegetable offering (the portion size offered on the study day was only 0.5 cup). Table 2 shows the percentage of students that selected each meal component pre- and post-implementation of the new standards. There were no changes in entrée selection, with all students selecting this meal component; a list of the foods offered is presented in Appendix A.

There were also no significant differences in vegetable selection. However, compared to pre-implementation, the percentage of students selecting a fruit after the new standards took effect increased significantly by 23.0% (52.7% vs 75.7%, respectively, $p<0.0001$). Milk selection decreased from 79.8% during the first year to 55.1% during the second year after the districts' milk policy changed (−24.7%, $p<0.0001$).

The consumption levels of each meal component both before and after implementation of the new standards are shown in Table 3. The percentage of entrée consumed increased from 72.3% pre-implementation to 87.9% post-implementation (15.6%, $p<0.0001$). Compared to pre-implementation, among the children who selected a vegetable, consumption increased both as the percentage consumed (24.9% vs 41.1%, respectively, $p<0.0001$) and as

Table 2. Meal component selection before and after implementation of the new USDA standards for school meals

Meal component	Mean % pre[a]	Mean % post[a]	Difference (post − pre)	p-value[b]
Entrée	100	100	0	N/A
Milk	79.8	55.1	**−24.7**	<0.0001
Vegetable	68.5	68.6	−1.1	0.21
Fruits	52.7	75.7	**23.0**	<0.0001

Note: Boldface indicates significance.
[a]Results are unadjusted
[b]Calculated using logistic regression, accounting for correlated data, with students nested within school and adjusted for gender, age, race/ethnicity, and lunch period time
USDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture

cups per day consumed (0.13 cups/day vs 0.31 cups/day, respectively, $p<0.0001$).

There were no significant differences in the percentage or quantity of fruit consumed. Because of the significant increase in students selecting fruits without a corresponding increase in fruit waste, this resulted in a substantial increase in the number of students consuming fruits. Before the district's new milk policy took effect, students consumed roughly 64.0% of their milk, compared with 53.9% after the policy's implementation (−10.1%; $p<0.0001$).

Students who agreed to participate through active consent may have differed from those who did not consent; therefore, global differences in consumption and waste in the entire lunchroom before and after implementation were calculated. In these analyses, among students selecting a meal component (milk, vegetables, and fruit), the percentage consumed was not substantially different than that among the active consent group (Table 4). The percentage of the total entrée consumption was lower among the whole group than among those who provided active consent, although the absolute improvement in entrée consumption was similar between the two groups.

Discussion

The impact of the new USDA *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program* on school meal selection and consumption was examined. Contrary to public concerns, the new school meal standards did not lead to increases in meal waste for entrées, fruits, or vegetables in this urban, low-income population. Entrée and vegetable selection remained unchanged, and their overall consumption increased significantly. The increase in portion size for vegetables also resulted in more cups of vegetables consumed. No potato

Author's personal copy

Table 3. Meal consumption before and after implementation of the new USDA standards for school meals (n=1,030)[a]

Meal component	Mean pre[b]	Mean post[b]	Difference (post − pre)	p-value
Entrée (% consumed)	72.3	87.9	**15.6**	<0.0001
Milk (% consumed)	64.0	53.9	**−10.1**	<0.0001
Vegetable (% consumed)	24.9	41.1	**16.2**	<0.0001
Vegetable (cups)	0.13	0.31	**0.18**	<0.0001
Fruits (% consumed)	58.1	55.2	−2.9	0.10
Fruits (cups)	0.42	0.42	0.00	0.87

Note: Boldface indicates significance.
[a]Point estimates were calculated using the n=864 students with both pre- and post-implementation data and all students (n=1030) were used to calculate the variance. Results are calculated based on students who selected the meal component, using mixed-model ANOVA, with school and student as a random effect (student nested within schools). Estimates are adjusted for gender, age, race/ethnicity, and lunch period time
[b]Calculated using least squares regression
USDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture

products were served on the plate waste study days after the USDA standards were implemented; thus students were consuming other vegetable subgroups. As a result of the new regulation requiring that a fruit or vegetable must be selected, significantly more students selected a fruit. This regulation did not lead to increases in fruit waste; there was no change in the percentage of fruit consumed among students who selected this meal component, and therefore the new standards resulted in more students consuming fruits. No differences in the amount of cups of fruits consumed were observed, largely because the cafeterias served primarily whole fruits (e.g., fresh apples, oranges, and bananas), which already met the new standards and therefore the amount of fruit offered to students was minimally changed.

After implementation of the district's policy to remove sugar-sweetened milk from the cafeteria during the second year of the study, both milk selection and consumption decreased. However, the plate waste study occurred immediately following the policy change while students were still acclimating to the modification in milk availability. A previous study examining the long-term impact of a similar policy change found that students acclimated over time and had little difference in white milk consumption compared with control students with access to sugar-sweetened milk.[11]

Although the new school meal standards did not result in increased food waste, the consistently high levels of fruit and vegetable waste are concerning. Students discarded roughly 60%–75% of the vegetables and 40% of the fruits on their trays. These levels of waste are similar to those previously found in other urban, low-income schools in Massachusetts with a different ethnic mix.[7] This suggests that the high levels of fruit and vegetable waste have been a continuous problem that warrants serious attention.

Moreover, although the new standards make important changes by requiring reimbursable school meals to have increased quantities of fruits and vegetables and more vegetable variety, this may not be sufficient. Schools must also focus on the quality and palatability of the fruits and vegetables offered and on creative methods to engage students to taste and participate in selection of menu items to decrease overall waste levels.[12,13]

Many low-income students rely on school meals for up to half of their daily energy intake.[14] Therefore, school meals can have important implications for student health. Increased consumption of healthier foods during the school day may result in the displacement of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods that many students are exposed to after leaving school grounds.[15,16]

Food service directors and staff should receive additional assistance as they implement these important changes for school meals, including increased access to healthy commodity food options, financial support, culinary training opportunities, and creative programs to engage students to enhance the meals served. Additionally, strong competitive food standards are needed to support food service directors' efforts to create a healthy school environment.

Recently, politicians have pressured the USDA to make certain school meal standards more lenient.[17] This has resulted in the USDA lifting the limits on meat/meat alternatives and grains. However, lawmakers continue to express concerns about the waste levels of school meals.[17] This study suggests that further weakening of the new school meals standards should not be considered, as this could potentially lead to decreased fruit and vegetable selection and consumption.

Limitations

Only elementary and middle school children in an urban, low-income district were examined. Additional studies should examine the impact of the new standards on food selection and consumption in higher-income school

Author's personal copy

Table 4. Meal consumption before and after implementation of the new USDA standards for school meals for all students (N=5,936)[a]

Meal component	Mean pre[b]	Mean post[b]	Difference (post − pre)	p-value
Entrée (% consumed)	63.4	73.6	**10.2**	<0.0001
Milk (% consumed)	62.4	50.1	**−12.3**	<0.0001
Vegetable (% consumed)	25.8	40.3	**14.5**	<0.0001
Vegetable (cups)	0.13	0.30	**0.17**	<0.0001
Fruits (% consumed)	59.1	56.9	−2.2	0.05
Fruits (cups)	0.44	0.45	0.01	0.29

Note: Boldface indicates significance.
[a]Includes all students with active and passive consent and information on the students' gender (provided through active consent or recorded by a research assistant for students with passive consent)
[b]Results are calculated based on students who selected the meal component, using mixed-model ANOVA, with school as a random effect. Estimates are adjusted for gender and lunch period time. Means calculated using least squares regression
USDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture

districts, in high schools, and/or in other regions of the U. S. Also, little is known about the waste levels of meals consumed at school but packed at home.

Additionally, it is unknown how changes in consumption at lunch may alter dietary habits throughout the rest of the day. Although consumption was evaluated on only 2 days at each school for the pre and post assessments, there was no reason to suspect that consumption on study days was different from that on other days. Students also had to be their own controls in this study because the school meal standards went into effect throughout the nation, and thus no control group was possible.

Although it is possible that some of the changes in consumption observed were due to increased calorie requirements as the students aged, data collection occurred over the span of only one year, thus the difference in caloric needs were likely small and had a minimal impact on the study results.[18] Additionally, the ability to have students as their own controls led to an increase in power and limited the student-to-student variability, increasing the precision of the analyses.

The large sample size further strengthened this study. Although it is possible that there was some selection bias among students who agreed to participate using active consent and remained in the study for both years, the consumption of students with active consent was also compared to students with passive consent, with similar results observed.

Conclusions

To our knowledge, this is the first study to examine the implications of the new school meal standards on student meal selection and consumption. Overall, the new requirements have led to improvements in student diets and have not resulted in increased food waste. These results, together with previously reported levels of food waste in schools, suggest that additional efforts must be taken to reduce fruit and vegetable waste.

Lawmakers should not consider further weakening the school meal standards. The new school meal standards are the strongest implemented by the USDA to date, and the improved dietary intakes will likely have important health implications for children.

References

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture. National school lunch program: participation and lunches served. www.fns.usda.gov/pd/slsummar.htm.
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dietary guidelines for Americans, 1995. www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs1995Guidelines.htm.
3. Crepinsek MK, Gordon AR, McKinney PM, Condon EM, Wilson A. Meals offered and served in US public schools: do they meet nutrient standards? J Am Diet Assoc 2009;109(2S):S31–S43.
4. Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Public Law 111-296, 124 stat., 3183. 2010.
5. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Nutrition standards in the national school lunch and school breakfast programs. Federal Register 2012;77 (17):4088–167.
6. Mitka M. Meal programs questioned. JAMA 2012;308(18):1849.
7. Cohen JF, Richardson S, Austin SB, Economos CD, Rimm EB. School lunch waste among middle school students: nutrients consumed and costs. Am J Prev Med 2013;44(2):114–21.
8. Adams MA, Pelletier RL, Zive MM, Sallis JF. Salad bars and fruit and vegetable consumption in elementary schools: a plate waste study. J Am Diet Assoc 2005;105(11):1789–92.
9. Nichols PJ, Porter C, Hammond L, Arjmandi BH. Food intake may be determined by plate waste in a retirement living center. J Am Diet Assoc 2002;102(8):1142–4.
10. Whitaker RC, Wright JA, Finch AJ, Psaty BM. An environmental intervention to reduce dietary fat in school lunches. Pediatrics 1993;91 (6):1107–11.
11. Cohen JFW, Smit LA, Parker E, et al. The long-term impact of a chef on school lunch consumption: findings from a 2-year pilot study in Boston middle schools. J Acad Nutr Diet 2012;112(6):927–33.
12. Story M, Mays RW, Bishop DB, et al. 5-a-day power plus: process evaluation of a multicomponent elementary school program to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. Health Educ Behav 2000; 27(2):187–200.
13. Perry CL, Bishop DB, Taylor GL, et al. A randomized school trial of environmental strategies to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption among children. Health Educ Behav 2004;31(1):65–76.
14. Briefel RR, Crepinsek MK, Cabili C, Wilson A, Gleason PM. School food environments and practices affect dietary behaviors of US public school children. J Am Diet Assoc 2009;109(2S):S91–S107.
15. Kestens Y, Daniel M. Social inequalities in food exposure around schools in an urban area. Am J Prev Med 2010;39(1):33–40.

Author's personal copy

16. Simon PA, Kwan D, Angelescu A, Shih M, Fielding JE. Proximity of fast food restaurants to schools: do neighborhood income and type of school matter? Prev Med 2008;47(3):284–8.
17. Mitka M. Nutrition and school lunches. JAMA 2013;309(10):973.
18. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Estimated calorie needs per day by age, gender, and physical activity level. www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/USDAFoodPatterns/EstimatedCalorieNeedsPerDayTable.pdf.

Appendix

Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found at, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2013.11.013.

Have you seen the *AJPM* website lately?
Visit www.ajpmonline.org today!

CHILDHOOD OBESITY
XXX 2015 | Volume XX, Number X
Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.
DOI: 10.1089/chi.2015.0019

New School Meal Regulations Increase Fruit Consumption and Do Not Increase Total Plate Waste

Marlene B. Schwartz, PhD,[1] Kathryn E. Henderson, PhD,[2] Margaret Read, MA,[1] Nicole Danna, BA,[3] and Jeannette R. Ickovics, PhD[4]

Abstract

Background: The 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act required the USDA to update the nutrition standards of the National School Lunch Program. New policies were implemented in the 2012–2013 school year. These changes were followed by anecdotal reports of increased food waste. Empirical research is needed to reliably measure student intake and plate waste before and after this policy change.

Methods: Food consumption and waste was collected annually from a cohort of middle school students in 12 schools in an urban, low-income school district before (spring 2012) and after (spring 2013 and 2014) policy changes. Generalized linear regression was used to compare pre- versus postpolicy selection and consumption of entrées, fruits, vegetables, and milk.

Results: Comparing 2012 to 2014, the percentage of students choosing fruit significantly increased from 54% to 66% and fruit consumption remained high at 74%. Student selection of fruit increased by 9% for each additional type of fruit offered with the meal. The proportion of students who chose a vegetable dropped from 68% to 52%, but students selecting vegetables ate nearly 20% more of them, effectively lowering vegetable waste. Entrée consumption increased significantly from 71% to 84%, thereby also decreasing waste.

Conclusions: Students responded positively to the new lunches. They consumed more fruit, threw away less of the entrees and vegetables, and consumed the same amount of milk. Overall, the revised meal standards and policies appear to have significantly lowered plate waste in school cafeterias.

Introduction

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides subsidized meals to more than 30 million children every day.[1] Established in 1946, the NSLP has always required all lunches to meet minimum research-based nutritional requirements.[2] In recent years, studies of the diets of American children and adolescents have consistently demonstrated the need for an increase in consumption of fruit, vegetables, and whole grains and a decrease in sodium and empty calories from solid fats and added sugars.[3,4] In response, the federal government took action to update the nutrition requirements of school meals. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 required the USDA to issue regulations to align school meal standards with the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

The USDA released the proposed rule in January 2011.[5] Recommended changes included an increase in whole grains, new calorie limits by age group, and a reduction in sodium. Another change was to consider fruits and vegetables two different food categories, require different types of vegetables to be served each week, and increase produce serving sizes. These changes are consistent with research documenting that people consume more when

[1]Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, University of Connecticut, Hartford, CT.
[2]Henderson Consulting, Guilford, CT.
[3]School of Public Policy, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA.
[4]Community Alliance for Research and Engagement, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

© Marlene B. Schwartz, Kathryn E. Henderson, Margaret Read, Nicole Danna, and Jeannette R. Ickovics, 2015; Published by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc. This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly credited.

presented with variety and larger portions.[6–8] The 1981 policy called "Offer vs. Serve"[9] was updated to address the problem that students do not consume recommended levels of fruits and vegetables. Instead of requiring students to take any three of the five meal components available, the policy was updated to require that one of the three components is a fruit or vegetable serving, thus making the inclusion of a fruit or vegetable with each lunch normative.[10]

The proposed new rules received approximately 130,000 comment letters and the comments were generally supportive; however, one frequently cited concern was the potential increase in plate waste.[11,12] Specifically, commenters noted that larger portion sizes for fruits and vegetables and requiring students to take a fruit or vegetable would not necessarily lead to increased consumption. Commenters suggested that students may not want the additional food; they do not have enough time to eat a larger quantity of food; and younger students may be overwhelmed by the amount of food. Further, some argued that changing the regulations may lead to lower participation in the program, given that students (particularly older students) may rebel against mandates.[12]

The final rule was released in 2012, and the first phase of changes was implemented in the 2012–2013 school year.[11] Subsequent to initial implementation of the new regulations, there were anecdotal media reports of an increase in food waste.[13] Paradoxically, there were also media reports of students saying that there was not enough food served in the new lunches.[14] To date, there are few empirical studies on student consumption of the new lunches. One study measured plate waste after the new standards went into effect and found that 45% of the food was being thrown away; however, they did not have any prepolicy baseline measures for comparison.[15] Cohen and colleagues reported prepolicy plate waste rates of 38–43% among middle school students.[16] In a follow-up study, these researchers compared plate waste data pre- and postregulation change among 1030 school children in four schools in an urban, low-income school district.[17] They documented postpolicy improvements in both the nutritional quality of the lunch consumed and decreased waste of fruits and vegetables.

Methodologically rigorous studies are needed to evaluate the impact of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act on food waste in schools over the first 2 years of policy implementation. The aim of this study is to examine food component selection and consumption data from students participating in the NSLP in a low-income, urban district from spring 2012 (preregulation) to spring 2013 and 2014 (postregulation) and measure changes over time.

Methods

Participants

Data were collected in 2012, 2013, and 2014 as part of a larger study of student health and academic achievement in an urban school district.[18] In this district, over 70% of children qualify for free lunch and 13% qualify for reduced-price lunch. The student population is 47% African American, 38% Hispanic, and 15% white. Several years before this study, this school district removed all vending machines and competitive foods from their schools.

Twelve K to eighth-grade schools were randomly selected from the 27 in the district and all agreed to participate. The larger study followed an entire one-grade cohort of approximately 680 students from fifth to seventh grade across the 12 schools. Student BMI was assessed in fifth grade and there was a high prevalence of overweight (19.3%) and obesity (29.9%). The percentage of the cohort who took a lunch during data collection was 80% ($n=545$) in 2012, 75% ($n=508$) in 2013, and 63% ($n=430$) in 2014. The 10% of students who selected an alternative lunch were excluded from analyses owing to our inability to obtain reliable preweights for all of the alternative choices. The final sample included all students who selected the featured school lunch in 2012 ($n=502$), 2013 ($n=465$), and 2014 ($n=373$).

The week before data collection each year, passive consent letters were sent home to all parents describing the protocol and providing the researchers' contact information. The letters explained, "During lunch, we will take a picture of your child's meal tray. This picture will not include your child, only the food and drink items on the tray." No parents contacted the researchers with questions or to deny consent to this observation study. The school district and the Yale University Institutional Review Board (New Haven, CT) approved all procedures.

Measures and Procedure

There were a total of 36 data collection days (*i.e.*, once a year for 3 years for 12 schools). To control for seasonal effects, data were collected each year in April, May, or June.

Before the start of the lunch period, three servings of all available food and beverage items were weighed on a food scale and the average was calculated to serve as the preweight value. After the students swiped their cards with the lunchroom staff, researchers verbally asked the students for permission to take a picture of their trays. None of the children refused. The procedure took only a few seconds and did not disrupt the flow of the line. Trays were numbered sequentially, student gender was recorded, and the trays were photographed. At the conclusion of the meal, research staff collected all lunch trays and weighed and recorded each remaining meal component. Tray photographs were referenced to identify any items that were consumed entirely and left no waste.

Meal components were classified as follows: entrée, fruit, vegetable, and milk. The entrée contained both the grain and meat/meat alternate components. There were 17 different entrées served during the study. No entrée appeared in more than three schools each year of data collection or more than twice in the same school across the years. Juice was separated from the fruit

category, so that fruit represented whole fruit or fruit cups. The vegetable component consisted of all vegetables, including potatoes and corn. The milk component included only plain 1% or 2% milk. Flavored milks were not offered during meal times in the district during the 3 years of the study.

Statistical Analysis

Differences in meal component selection and consumption associated with the change in school meal standards were analyzed using one period of preimplementation data (2012) and two periods of postimplementation data (2013 and 2104). A generalized linear regression model (GLM) was used to analyze differences in both selection and consumption of each meal component: entrée, fruit, vegetable, and milk. Meal component selection was coded as a binary outcome, equal to 1 if one or more servings of the meal component were selected. Meal component consumption was coded as a ratio between 0 and 1, indicating the proportion of the meal component consumed.

To analyze differences in both selection and consumption of each meal component, a GLM was used with a binomial family specification and a logit link function. This method was used to overcome non-normal error distribution and nonlinear effects resulting from the dependent variables being binary or a ratio bounded within the [0, 1] interval. The models control for gender, and cluster robust standard errors were calculated to account for nonindependent observations as a result of repeated measures within schools. A multilevel modeling approach was not used owing to the limited number of schools in the analysis. Average marginal predictions, presented in Tables 1 and 2, were obtained by predicting the average outcome (selection or consumption) for school meal i at time t and averaging the predictions over all observations for which the model was fitted.

Results

Selection

Table 1 shows the percentage of students who selected each meal component by year, before and after the implementation of the new school meal standards. The percentage of students selecting a fruit significantly increased after the new standards took effect, from 54% in 2012 to 71% in 2013 and 66% in 2014 ($p<0.05$, for comparisons of both postimplementation periods to baseline). The percentage of students selecting vegetables significantly decreased from 68% in 2012 to 62% in 2013 ($p<0.05$); however, the difference between the 2012 and 2014 means is not statistically significant owing to the degree of variation in the 2014 data. Over half of the students selected milk with their lunches, and this level remained consistent over all 3 years. Whereas nearly all students selected an entrée as one of the three required components all three years, there was a significant rise from 91% in 2012 to 98% in 2014 ($p<0.05$).

Consumption

Table 2 shows the percentage consumed of each meal component among the students who selected the meal component. The percentage of the vegetable serving consumed did not change significantly the first year of the new standards, but did increase significantly from 45% in 2012 to 64% in the second year, 2014 ($p<0.05$). Consumption of the entrée meal component followed a similar pattern: Levels remained consistent from 2012 to 2013, followed by a significant increase from 71% in 2012 to 84% in 2014 ($p<0.05$). Milk consumption remained consistent over all 3 years, with students consuming approximately half their milk. There were no significant differences in the percentage of fruit consumed; consumption levels ranged from 61% to 74% over the 3 years.

Table 1. Meal Component Selection Before and After Implementation of the Updated USDA Standards for School Meals: Marginal Predictions

	Percentage of students selecting item		
	Before implementation	After implementation	
	2012	2013	2014
Meal component	*N*=502	*N*=465	*N*=373
Fruit	53.7 [45.1, 62.2]	70.6* [63.3, 78.0]	66.0* [54.8, 77.2]
Vegetable	68.4 [5S9.4, 77.4]	61.6* [52.4, 70.7]	51.9 [23.4, 80.4]
Entrée	91.4 [86.7, 96.2]	95.5 [91.5, 99.5]	98.3* [96.3, 100.0]
Milk	53.7 [46.8, 60.6]	56.6 [51.0, 62.1]	53.0 [42.2, 63.9]

Asterisks (*) indicate significant differences with 2012 at the 5% level. Means calculated using a generalized linear regression model; cluster robust standard errors calculated to account for nonindependent observations. Data in brackets indicate confidence intervals.

Table 2. Meal Component Consumption Before and After Implementation of the Updated USDA Standards for School Meals: Estimated Marginal Mean Percentages

Meal component	Mean percentage consumed		
	Before implementation	After implementation	
	2012	2013	2014
Fruit	72.3 [60.5, 84.1] ($n=269$)	60.7 [50.9, 70.6] ($n=327$)	74.3 [69.4, 79.2] ($n=246$)
Vegetable	45.6 [40.5, 50.7] ($n=344$)	38.9 [28.8, 50.0] ($n=286$)	63.6* [53.6, 73.5] ($n=193$)
Entrée	70.9 [59.6, 82.2] ($n=459$)	67.9 [59.3, 76.5] ($n=443$)	83.6* [77.4, 89.8] ($n=367$)
Milk	53.8 [48.5, 59.1] ($n=268$)	53.6 [46.5, 60.8] ($n=263$)	56.7 [48.2, 65.2] ($n=200$)

Asterisks (*) indicate significance differences with 2012 at the 5% level. Means calculated using a generalized linear regression model; cluster robust standard errors calculated to account for nonindependent observations. Data in brackets indicate confidence intervals.

Variety and Preferences

Over the 3 years, there were a variety of fruits offered to the students. Some schools would offer only one type of fruit per meal, whereas others offered multiple options. An ordinary least squares regression was used to test whether the number of fruit options presented each day influenced the percentage of children who selected fruit at that meal. Holding school and year constant, this test revealed a significant positive relationship between the number of choices and frequency of selection; specifically, increasing the number of fruit options by one is associated with a 9.3% increase in fruit servings selected by students. Further, students exhibited preferences for some produce over others. Table 3 lists the average percent consumed for the most popular fruit and vegetable types, combining the data from all schools and all years.

Table 3. Percentage of Meal Component Consumed by Most Popular Fruit and Vegetable Type, Across All Schools and Years

Fruit type	% consumed	Vegetable type	% consumed
Fruit cup	88	Potatoes*	72
Banana	78	Corn	65
Orange	70	Beans	46
Pear	56	Salad	42
Apple	48	Broccoli	38

*Potatoes served were not fried.

Discussion

Our results indicate that the revised NSLP nutrition standards and policies have led to more nutritious meals and less overall plate waste. The increase in fruit selection combined with consistent rates of fruit consumption means that more students are consuming fruit and the percentage of fruit students throw away has not increased as a result of the policy change. There has also been a decrease in vegetable plate waste. Although fewer students are selecting vegetables, those who do choose vegetables eat more of the serving and throw away less. Despite concerns that students do not like the new entrées that meet the whole grain and meat/meat alternate regulations, our data show that more students are selecting the entrée and they are wasting significantly less because consumption is up to 84%.

The increase in fruit selection may, in part, be attributed to an increase in the number of fruit options offered to students postimplementation of the new standards. We found that students enjoy variety and are more likely to choose fruit with each additional option. Interestingly, the fruit cup (which includes different types of fruit, such as pineapple, peaches, and grapes in water, 100% juice, or light syrup) was among the most consumed items.

The findings from our study are consistent with those from Cohen and colleagues.[17] It is notable that both studies examined children in a low-income, urban district. It is possible that the new school lunches have been accepted more readily in districts where the majority of the students are eligible for free/reduced lunch because the lunch program is viewed as an integral part of the school. It is also possible that low-income students are used to eating the school lunch each day and feel comfortable with the food service in their schools, making them more willing to trust them and try new options. Turner and Chaloupka[19] recently did a national survey of administrators and food service staff in elementary schools after the USDA regulations went into effect and most reported that students were eating the new lunches, especially those from urban and low-income districts.

A distinctive characteristic of the district in the current study is that it does not offer competitive foods in the cafeteria. It is possible that other districts have seen students switch from the school lunch to competitive foods since 2012. Importantly, the new "Smart Snacks" standards for competitive foods will ensure that all à la carte snack and vending options also meet nutrition standards. This will improve the overall nutrition environment of schools and reduce the problem of school meals having to compete with unhealthy snacks within the building.

The present study has some limitations. Whereas data collection took place over 3 years in the same schools with the same group of children, the design would have been stronger if we had been able to match individual children from one year to the next. This cohort design also introduces the possibility that participants changed their eating behavior as they aged from fifth to seventh grade. It is conceivable that, as students grew older, they also ate more and wasted less. However, if older children consumed more overall, one would expect an increase in milk consumption because it was the meal component that did not change. This did not occur; the selection and consumption of milk was remarkably steady over time. Another possibility is that social desirability influenced student eating because they knew they were being observed. If this were the case, one would expect the effect to be consistent over the years and therefore not influence the primary research questions.

Another limitation of this study is that we collected data only once a year from each school. This creates the possibility that an extremely popular entrée such as pizza could disproportionately influence our findings. Fortunately, this concern is reduced because there were 17 different entrées served across the 36 days and no single option was systematically present in a particular school or year.

An additional limitation is that we do not know why our sample size decreased each year. Unfortunately, we were not able to collect data on the students from our cohort who did not choose the school lunch. We do not know whether they were absent that day, eating a lunch from home or outside of school, or not eating at all. One reason for the decrease may be that, as the students grew older, they are less likely to participate in the school lunch. Other research from Connecticut comparing elementary, middle, and high school lunch participation rates found that participation decreases from one school level to the next.[20]

Another explanation may be that fewer students chose the school lunch each year because they did not like the new options. To explore this possibility, we examined state-wide data and found that participation in the NSLP decreased overall from 2012 to 2014; however, this was preceded by consistent annual decreases from 2010 and 2011 as well, suggesting that the recent decrease cannot be attributed to the new regulations alone.[21]

Conclusions

This study adds evidence to the scientific literature on student selection and consumption of different components of the school lunch. We had the opportunity to examine selection and consumption before and after USDA regulation updates were implemented. Encouragingly, there was nearly universal acceptance of the new entrée selections, and entrée plate waste dropped significantly after the new standards were implemented. Milk consumption remained the same. The new requirement for students to select a fruit or vegetable with each lunch is an effective strategy to improve the nutritional quality of school meals. There was no evidence of an increase in the percentage of fruit thrown away, and vegetable waste significantly decreased. Overall, this study suggests that the new standards have led to a decrease in school lunch plate waste.

Acknowledgments

This study was funded by the National Institute of Child and Human Development (R01 HD070740; J.R.I. and M.B.S., multiple principal investigators) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (M.B.S., principal investigator). The authors thank Ms. Sarah Novak, Dr. Tatiana Andreyeva, and the New Haven Public Schools for their assistance with the study.

Author Disclosure Statement

No competing financial interests exist.

References

1. USDA. Child nutrition tables. 2014. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables Last accessed December 5, 2014.
2. Gunderson G. History of the School Lunch Program. 2014. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/history_5 Last accessed December 5, 2014.
3. Guenther PM, Dodd KW, Reedy J, et al. Most Americans eat much less than recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables. *J Am Diet Assoc* 2006;106:1371–1379.
4. Reedy J, Krebs-Smith SM. Dietary sources of energy, solid fats, and added sugars among children and adolescents in the United States. *J Am Diet Assoc* 2010;110:1477–1484.
5. USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Nutrition standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program. Vol. 76, No. 9. Vol. 7 CFR Parts 210 and 220. *Federal Register* 2011:2494–2570.
6. Wansink B, Kim J. Bad popcorn in big buckets: Portion size can influence intake as much as taste. *J Nutr Educ Behav* 2005;37:242–245.
7. Zampollo F, Kniffin KM, Wansink B, et al. Food plating preferences of children: The importance of presentation on desire for diversity. *Acta Paediatr* 101:61–66.
8. Kahn BE, Wansink B. The influence of assortment structure on perceived variety and consumption quantities. *J Cons Res* 2004;30:519–533.
9. Ralston K, Newman C, Clauson A, et al. *The National School Lunch Program: Backgrounds, trends, and issues*. Economic research report no. 61. USDA: Washington, DC, 2008.
10. Wansink B. Convenient, attractive, and normative: The CAN approach to making children slim by design. *Child Obes* 2013;9:277–278.
11. USDA (ed). Nutrition standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs: Final rule. *FNS* 2007-0038. Vol. 7 CFR Parts 210 and 220. *Federal Register* 2012:4088–4167.
12. ICF Incorporated. FNS coding and comment analysis: Proposed rule on all food sold in school as required by the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Final Summary of Public Comments. June 21, 2013. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/allfoods_commentsummary.pdf. Last accessed March 2, 2015.

13. Yee V. No appetite for good-for-you school lunches. *The New York Times*. October 5, 2012.
14. Hellmich N. Students push back on new school lunches. *USA Today*. September 18, 2012.
15. Byker CJ, Farris AR, Marcenelle M, et al. Food waste in a school nutrition program after implementation of new lunch program guidelines. *J Nutr Educ Behav* 2014;46:406–411.
16. Cohen JF, Richardson S, Austin SB, et al. School lunch waste among middle school students: Nutrients consumed and costs. *Am J Prev Med* 2013;44:114–121.
17. Cohen JF, Richardson S, Parker E, et al. Impact of the new U.S. Department of Agriculture school meal standards on food selection, consumption, and waste. *Am J Prev Med* 2014;46:388–394.
18. Ickovics JR, Carroll-Scott A, Peters SM, et al. Health and academic achievement: Cumulative effects of health assets on standardized test scores among urban youth in the United States. *J Sch Health* 2014;84:40–48.
19. Turner L, Chaloupka FJ. Perceived reactions of elementary school students to changes in school lunches after implementation of the United States Department of Agriculture's new meals standards: Minimal backlash, but rural and socioeconomic disparities exist. *Child Obes* 2014;10:349–356.
20. Long MW, Henderson KE, Schwartz MB. Evaluating the impact of a Connecticut program to reduce availability of unhealthy competitive food in schools. *J Sch Health* 2010;80:478–486.
21. USDA. National School Lunch Program total participation by state. 2015. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables Last accessed January 20, 2015.

Address correspondence to:
Marlene B. Schwartz, PhD
Director, Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity
University of Connecticut
One Constitution Plaza
Suite 600
Hartford, CT 06103

E-mail: marlene.schwartz@uconn.edu

CHILDHOOD OBESITY
August 2014 | Volume 10, Number 4
© Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.
DOI: 10.1089/chi.2014.0038

Perceived Reactions of Elementary School Students to Changes in School Lunches after Implementation of the United States Department of Agriculture's New Meals Standards: Minimal Backlash, but Rural and Socioeconomic Disparities Exist

Lindsey Turner, PhD[1,2] and Frank J. Chaloupka, PhD[1,3]

Abstract

Background: Updated standards for meals sold through the USDA's National School Lunch Program took effect at the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year. The current study assessed the perceptions of school staff regarding student reactions to these changes in school lunches and how perceptions varied across schools.

Methods: Mailback surveys were gathered from administrators and food service staff at a nationally representative sample of 557 US public elementary schools in the second half of the 2012–2013 school year.

Results: Half of the respondents (56.4%) agreed that students complained about the meals at first, but 70% agreed that students like the new lunches. Perceived student complaints were significantly higher among respondents from rural schools ($n = 184$) than from urban ($n = 127$) or suburban ($n = 171$) schools. Respondents at rural schools also were more likely to report that they perceived that fewer students were purchasing the meals and that students were consuming less of the meals than during the previous year. Perceived student complaints were higher at schools not offering regular (i.e., higher-fat) pizza. Respondents at socioeconomically disadvantaged schools (> 66% of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals) perceived that more students were buying lunch and that students were eating more of the meal than in the previous year.

Conclusions: Perceptions of school personnel suggest reasonable acceptance of school lunches subsequent to revisions. Given the importance of offering healthful foods at school, the revised USDA meals standards are a promising strategy to improve the diets of children.

Introduction

Most US children's diets exceed recommended levels of sugar, fat, and sodium[1] and are deficient in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.[2–4] Given the documented role of foods and beverages consumed at school in contributing to children's excessive intake of solid fats and added sugars,[5] the school food environment has received much attention recently. Nationally representative data on school lunches from the School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study-IV in 2009–2010 showed that elementary school lunches as offered and served exceeded recommendations for average percentage of daily calories from solid fats and added sugars and fell short of recommended daily amounts of vegetables and whole grains.[6]

The majority of US public schools participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), which is administered by the USDA, and provided meals to 31 million students in 2012.[7] Until recently, USDA meals standards had not been

[1]Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.
[2]Present affiliation: College of Education, Boise State University, Boise, ID.
[3]Department of Economics, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.

updated for 15 years, but as directed by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010,[8] the USDA revised the meals standards to align with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.[9] New standards were released in 2012,[10] requiring implementation in the 2012–2013 school year.

The updated USDA standards for lunches[11] required that by 2012–2013 half of grains offered must be whole-grain–rich products, with phase-in so that by 2014–2015 all grains are whole-grain rich. Both a fruit *and* a vegetable must now be offered daily, with a variety of vegetables to be served within a week, including dark green vegetables, red/orange vegetables, legumes, starches, and other vegetables. Milk is limited to nonfat or low-fat (1%) milk (sweetened flavored milk is only allowed if nonfat). Limits on saturated fats did not change from the previous standards, but trans fats were limited to zero, and new targets for lower sodium content were established. Although the new USDA meal standards do not restrict any particular foods—such as those common in school meals and often high in fat, such as pizza and fries—in some schools these foods have been removed from menus or revised to better meet the nutritional standards. For example, some schools offer more-healthful versions of pizza by using lower-fat cheese, vegetables instead of meats for toppings, and whole-grain crusts.

The new standards bring the potential for major improvements in the quality of school lunches, but also created many implementation challenges for school and district food service personnel.[12] A recent study by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) indicated that student participation in the NSLP dipped by 3.7% from 2010–2011 to 2012–2013 and concluded that decreased participation—which occurred mainly among full-price–paying students—may have been the result of increased meal prices and/or decreased student acceptance of the new lunches.[13] The GAO also surveyed state child nutrition directors during the summer of 2013, and respondents confirmed that implementing the new regulations had been challenging.[13] Difficulties included challenges in planning new menus, increased costs resulting from more fruits and vegetables, and dealing with plate waste from food thrown away, rather than being consumed, by students. However, all respondents supported the goal of improving the nutritional quality of meals and agreed that the changes would facilitate such improvements.

Because the regulations are new, and relatively little is known thus far about implementation challenges, the aim of the current study was to assess the perceptions of elementary school administrators and food service personnel regarding students' reactions to the new lunches. Three topics were of interest: (1) perceived reactions of students regarding the new lunches; (2) variation in perceived reactions across schools; and (3) whether perceived reactions were associated with lunch meal characteristics. This study uses data gathered during 2012–2013 as part of the Bridging the Gap research program's survey of nationally representative samples of US public elementary schools.

Methods

Overview

Mailback surveys were conducted during the spring of the 2012–2013 school year. The project was reviewed and approved by the institutional review board at the University of Illinois at Chicago (Chicago, IL).

Sample and Weights

The sample was developed at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, based on a public-use data set from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).[14] All public elementary schools in the contiguous United States containing a third-grade class with at least 20 students were eligible for sampling. Among the sample of 1051 schools, 623 responded (59.3% response rate). As a result of the focus on USDA lunch standards, only schools participating in the NSLP ($n = 586$) were included for these analyses. After 29 schools not providing data on lunches were omitted, a total of 557 schools were included in the analytic data set. Weights were developed to allow for inference to US elementary schools. After data collection, weights were adjusted for potential nonresponse bias through calibration that modeled school characteristics associated with propensity for nonresponse.

Procedure

Surveys were mailed to principals in January of each school year, with a modest ($100) incentive. Follow-up by mail, e-mail, and telephone continued until recruitment ended in June. The survey consisted of two parts: one that pertained to school-wide practices and policies to be completed by the principal and a second module intended for the school food service manager, regarding foods and beverages sold in competitive venues and at lunch. Items for the current analyses were drawn from the second module. Respondents were asked to indicate the role of the person who completed the surveys; in some cases, this was left blank or a person's name, not a job title/role, was provided. Among the 462 cases where information on respondent role was useable, a food service provider was the primary respondent at 105 schools (22.8%) and a secondary respondent at an additional 91 (19.7%). At 238 schools (51.5%), the principal responded, and at 28 (6.0%), the respondent was a business manager or teacher.

Measures

The surveys were developed by researchers to be consistent with surveys from an existing, parallel study of practices in middle and high schools, as well as a review of earlier research, and original development of items of interest to the research team.

Lunch characteristics. Respondents were asked to indicate how often each of a list of foods and beverages were available to elementary students in "the school lunch meal (not a la carte)," with response options of 1 = never,

2 = some days, or 3 = most or every day. The items include: vegetables (excluding potatoes); fresh fruit; salad bar; premade main course salads; whole grains (such as wheat bread or brown rice); fried potatoes (including reheated French fries or tater tots); regular pizza; and healthier pizza (*e.g.*, whole-wheat crust, lower-fat cheese, and/or toppings). The more-healthful items were collapsed as binary variables to compare "most or every day" versus "some days or never." Regular pizza and fries were collapsed as "never" versus "some days, most days, or every day." A series of items asked about milks at various levels of fat content, with or without flavoring. These items were combined to indicate: (1) whether any higher-fat milks disallowed under the new guidelines were ever offered (*i.e.*, 2% or whole-fat unflavored or flavored milks, and flavored 1% milk) and (2) whether any flavored milks were offered.

Perceived reactions to new lunches. Subsequent to the release of the updated USDA standards, six items were added to the 2012–2013 survey to assess perceived reactions to the new meals. The items were developed by the research team based on the researchers' personal experience with and knowledge of lunch practices in schools. However, they were not pretested and were not validated (*i.e.*, perceptions were not validated against objective measures of student participation in meals programs or plate waste). As such, they only represent *perceptions*, not actual prevalence of students' complaints or changes in meal participation or consumption.

The lead-in stated: "New USDA standards for school meals took effect starting at the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year, setting requirements about fruit and vegetable availability, whole-grain products, fat and sodium content, and other meals characteristics. Please answer the following questions specifically about changes you have seen since the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year." The first item asked "Compared to this time last year (spring 2012), how many students at your school typically purchase (whether they eat it or not) the school lunch offered through the USDA-reimbursable National School Lunch Program (whether it is purchased at full/reduced-price or free)?" Responses were: A lot more students; slightly more students; about the same; slightly fewer students; a lot fewer students; and don't know. A second question asked, "Has the percentage of food in lunches that students typically consume each day changed since this time last year?", with responses of: Students are eating a lot more of the food; students are eating slightly more of the food; about the same; students are eating slightly less of the food; students are eating a lot less of the food; and don't know. Four attitude items were measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. Respondents were asked to indicate agreement with the statements: "Students generally seem to like the new school lunch," "At first, students complained about the new lunches," "Few students complain about the new lunches," and "Most students don't seem concerned about the changes in the school lunches."

Contextual factors. School-level demographic data were obtained from public-use data files from the NCES.[14] These variables, used as covariates in all analyses, included region, locale, school size, student racial/ethnic composition, and student eligibility for free/reduced-priced lunch as an inverse proxy for socioeconomic status (SES). Variables were collapsed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participating US Public Elementary Schools[a]

Characteristics	% schools[b]	No. of schools[c]
Region		
South	36.8	179
West	23.8	89
Midwest	24.0	155
Northeast	15.3	134
Locale		
Urban	34.5	127
Suburban	29.9	171
Town	9.6	75
Rural	26.1	184
School size		
Large (>621 students)	22.6	109
Medium (451–621 students)	31.7	177
Small (<451 students)	45.7	271
Student race/ethnicity		
Predominantly (≥66%) white non-Latino	40.5	293
Majority (≥50%) black	13.2	53
Majority (≥50%) Latino	20.7	74
Other	25.6	137
Socioeconomic status (based on eligibility for free/reduced-price meals)		
Lower (>66% of students eligible)	38.0	161
Middle (>33–≤66% of students eligible)	37.2	220
Higher (≤33% of students eligible)	24.9	176

[a]n = 557.

[b]Percentages are weighted to the school level. Percentages sum by column to 100 within category, but as a result of rounding some may not sum to exactly 100%.

[c]Number of schools is unweighted.

Analyses also controlled for whether the primary respondent was a food service provider (vs. administrator/other school staff).

Statistical Analysis

Analyses were conducted in Stata statistical software (Stata/SE version 12.0; StataCorp, College Station, TX) and accounted for sampling stratum and for the clustering of schools within districts. Data were weighted to provide inference to all US public elementary schools.

Results

As shown in Table 1, the sample represented a diverse cross-section of schools from all regions of the country, with adequate representation of lower-SES schools. Scores on the six items used to assess perceived reactions were distributed across the full range of responses (see Table 2). Psychometric analyses examined the feasibility of combining the four perceived complaints items for parsimonious use as a single scale score: Principal components analysis showed a strong unitary component (eigenvalue = 1.97). All items had strong item-to-total correlations ($rs > 0.70$), and the coefficient alpha for the scale was 0.80. Items 1, 3, and 4 loaded negatively and were reverse-scored before averaging. Possible scores ranged from 1.0 to 4.0, and the distribution of scores was fairly normal (kurtosis = 2.78; mean = 2.46; median = 2.25), so the scale was treated as a continuous variable. Perceived changes in meal purchases and consumption were recoded to center around zero (*a lot fewer/less* = −2; *slightly fewer/less* = −1; *about the same* = 0; *slightly more* = 1; *a lot more* = 2) and were treated as roughly continuous variables.

Three multivariate linear regression models were used to examine variations in perceived reactions across schools. Each model controlled for contextual characteristics and respondent role. A consistent pattern of differences emerged by locale, with respondents at rural schools perceiving more student complaints, decreased purchasing, and decreased consumption of lunches. In addition, there were significant differences in perceived purchasing and consumption of lunches, with both variables showing increases at lower-SES schools, as compared to decreases at higher-SES schools. To explore these effects, adjusted margins were computed for each locale and for each SES tertile group, and these represent the average response for each subgroup, controlling for all covariates in the model (see Table 3).

Next, a series of multivariate linear regressions examined the associations between lunch characteristics and perceived student reactions (results not shown in tables). Separately, each lunch characteristic was added to the contextual covariates as predictor variables. The school lunch meal characteristics were binary (0/1) variables, and the percentages of schools coded as yes for each were as follows: Offering fresh fruit on most days (76.9%); offering vegetables other than potatoes on most days (85.1%); offering whole grains on most days (49.4%); ever offering

Table 2. Perceived Reactions to Changes in School Lunch Meals During the 2012–2013 School Year, as Indicated by Survey Respondents at a Nationally Representative Sample of US Public Elementary Schools[a]

	Percentage of respondents endorsing each option					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		Number of valid responses
Students generally seem to like the new school lunch.	5.6	24.4	62.6	7.4		535
At first, students complained about the new lunches.	8.6	35.0	42.7	13.7		534
Few students complain about the new lunches.	8.2	28.2	55.4	8.2		531
Most students don't seem concerned about the changes in the school lunches.	7.8	29.0	51.9	11.3		535
	A lot fewer/less	Slightly fewer/less	About the same	Slightly more	A lot more	
How many students purchase lunch, compared to last year?	4.3	12.2	64.6	12.9	6.2	524
Any change in the percentage of the lunch meal that students consume?	5.1	15.8	58.6	11.2	9.2	517

[a]$n = 557$.

Table 3. Elementary School Respondents' Perceptions of Student Reactions to Changes in School Lunch Meals, by School Locale and Socioeconomic Status

	Range of possible scores	Locale				Socioeconomic status		
		Urban mean (SE)	Suburban mean (SE)	Township mean (SE)	Rural mean (SE)	Lower mean (SE)	Medium mean (SE)	Higher mean (SE)
Perceived complaints scale	1 to 4	2.25 (0.07)[a]	2.37 (0.07)[a]	2.43 (0.10)[a]	2.69 (0.07)[b]	2.38 (0.06)	2.48 (0.06)	2.40 (0.08)
Perceived change in number of students purchasing lunches	−2 to +2	0.23 (0.10)[a]	0.16 (0.10)[a]	0.00 (0.14)	−0.24 (0.08)[b]	0.25 (0.09)[a]	−0.01 (0.07)	−0.15 (0.09)[b]
Perceived change in amount of lunch meal consumed	−2 to +2	0.25 (0.12)[a]	0.19 (0.10)[a]	−0.11 (0.14)	−0.33 (0.10)[b]	0.24 (0.12)[a]	−0.07 (0.07)	−0.14 (0.11)[b]

Estimates shown are covariate adjusted (i.e., controlling for contextual school characteristics and survey respondent role).

Socioeconomic status (SES) defined by percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals (lower SES, >66% of students eligible; medium SES, 33–≤66% of students eligible; higher SES, ≤33% of students eligible).

Within each category (locale and SES) different superscripts indicate significant differences at $p < 0.05$ or better.

Perceived complaints scale coded so that higher scores indicate more complaints; perceived changes in purchasing and consumption coded so that: −2 = a lot fewer/less; −1 = slightly fewer/less; 0 = about the same; +1 = slightly more; +2 = a lot more.

SE, standard error.

healthier pizza (84.9%); never offering regular pizza (53.1%); and never offering deep-fried French fries or potatoes (40.2%). Salad bars were regularly offered at 28.7% of schools, and premade main-course salads were regularly offered at 25.8% of schools. Many schools used either or both of these practices; therefore, the two variables were combined for analysis (47.1% of schools offered salad bars and/or premade salads). The percentage of schools offering milks disallowed under the new guidelines was 70.9%. However, in many of these schools, the milks were compliant with the exception of 1% flavored milks, which are not allowed under the new standards. Only 39.1% of schools offered 2% or whole-fat milks, and the other 31.8% of schools failed to comply with the guidelines only because of the 1% flavored milks. Flavored milks (at any fat content) were nearly ubiquitous, being offered in 90.4% of schools.

Scores on the perceived complaints scale were only associated with one practice: not offering regular pizza. Where regular pizza was never offered, respondents perceived more student complaints (*adjusted coeff* = 0.17; $p < 0.01$). Perceived change in purchasing was associated with only the availability of vegetables (other than potatoes), with respondents perceiving that more students were purchasing meals, compared to the previous year, at schools where vegetables were offered on most days (*adjusted coeff* = 0.27; $p < 0.05$). Perceived change in meal consumption was associated with only the availability of salads, with respondents perceiving that students were eating more of the meal, compared to during the previous year, at schools where salads were offered on most days (*adjusted coeff* = 0.30; $p < 0.001$).

Finally, to test whether perceived student reactions varied by time, a variable to account for the timing of the survey response (winter 2013 versus spring/early summer 2013) was added to the multivariate models, but response timing was not associated with any outcomes.

Discussion

This study assessed school respondents' perceptions of elementary school students' early reactions to the lunches served subsequent to revisions in the USDA school meals standards. Many aspects of school lunch quality have been improving over time, with many improvements underway even before the 2012–2013 school year.[6] Although some media reports[15–17] have described student complaints about the meals, in actuality, very few respondents perceived strong resistance to the changes. Although 13.7% of respondents "strongly agreed" that at first students complained about the meals, 63.2% also agreed or strongly agreed that most students are no longer concerned about the meals.

Although not validated against actual plate waste or administrative data on rates of participation in the meals programs, respondent perceptions of whether more or fewer students were buying meals and how much food they were eating also revealed a fairly balanced picture. Only 4.3% of respondents perceived that "a lot fewer" students were purchasing lunch, whereas 6.2% perceived that "a lot more" were purchasing lunch. Likewise, consumption estimates were balanced between the extremes of "a lot less" and "a lot more," with most respondents using the middle of the scale. Although this assessment is subjective

and less precise than objective measures, it does provide relevant data regarding the perceptions of school personnel across the country and allows for the generation of hypotheses that can be tested with administrative data or observational methods. Recent research in urban elementary and middle schools shows that the new NSLP standards increased students' consumption of vegetables and did not result in increased plate waste[18]; nevertheless, lawmakers have expressed concerns about wasted food in school meals[19,20] and, therefore, additional research is needed to assess changes in consumption.

One significant area of concern illuminated by the current data is that rural schools fared worse than urban or suburban schools in terms of the issues examined here: perceived student complaints about new meals, purchasing of meals, and consumption of meals. This is particularly important, given the higher rates of childhood obesity in rural areas,[21] as well as an overall reduced life expectancy among rural populations and a widening rural-urban life expectancy gap.[22] In addition, schools in small towns and rural areas have significantly fewer policies to support healthy school environments—particularly with regard to fruit and vegetable availability—than do urban or suburban schools.[23] Speculation as to the reasons for greater implementation challenges in rural schools is beyond the scope of the current data; therefore, future work is essential for further understanding this important health disparity.

Another key health disparity was noted with regard to perceived changes in purchasing and consumption of meals. At schools serving higher proportions of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, respondents perceived that more students were purchasing the meal and that students were consuming more of the meal, as compared to the previous year. This is consistent with the conclusions of the GAO study,[13] speculating that students dropping out of the meals programs were those paying full price, rather than the students receiving subsidized meals. Previous work shows that paid meal participation rates are affected by meal prices,[6,24,25] with an estimated 1.5% decrease in full-price lunch participation with each 10% increase in the price of lunches.[6] Additional studies are needed to examine the longitudinal associations between changes in meal prices and student participation rates. The current data offer some encouraging news that schools serving primarily lower-income students may not be seeing disproportionately adverse effects of the new meals standards, in terms of student uptake. Over the past three decades, student participation rates in the NSLP were quite stable, at 50–58% of students, but during periods of economic decline the proportion of students who participated at free or reduced-price status increased.[26] As one key element of the nation's child nutrition programs, the NSLP provides a safety net for socioeconomically disadvantaged families, particularly during challenging economic times, such as the past few years. It is possible that widespread implementation of national policy has been effective for improving the diets of socioeconomically disadvantaged children, but more research is needed to understand the effect of changes in the meal standards on children's participation and dietary intake and also to examine how changing prices affect these key outcomes.

With regard to associations between meal characteristics and student reactions, perceived complaints were higher at schools that did not offer regular pizza. The current data also indicate a decrease in the prevalence of regular pizza in school lunches: In 2006–2007, we found that 98% of public elementary schools offered pizza on some or most days.[27] The current data show that 46.9% of schools now offer regular pizza, and 84.9% of schools offer healthier pizzas, suggesting that pizza has not been removed from lunch lines, but rather has been reformulated in ways to make it healthier. Student complaints were not associated with the availability of healthier pizza, just the absence of regular pizza, suggesting possible pushback as a consequence of changing menu options.

Often, new policy initiatives are met with objections and some resistance, but, over time, norms change and individuals adapt to changing environments. Lunchroom interventions based on behavioral economics (*i.e.*, attending to the presentation of fruits and vegetables and serving healthful foods first in lunch lines) can improve children's food consumption choices and behaviors,[28–30] and thus such strategies hold great promise to improve the effectiveness of policy implementation, in terms of actually changing student behaviors. Although anecdotal stories of students refusing to eat meals are concerning, and they draw media attention,[15,16] school personnel actually seem to be more neutral about the effect of the new meals. Given the possible threat of legislation to roll back these new meal standards, it is crucial to base policy decisions on data, rather than on rhetoric. The current data show that purchasing may have increased where vegetables were offered, and respondents estimated that consumption of meals was slightly higher than in previous years where healthier options, such as salad, were regularly offered. Other work also shows that new meals standards have increased students' consumption of non-potato vegetables, without resulting in increased plate waste.[18]

The current conclusions are subject to several important limitations. Survey data can be affected by social desirability bias or lack of complete knowledge. Although the analytic weights were adjusted for potential nonresponse bias, some factors may have systematically biased which schools responded. The data were cross-sectional, and thus we were unable to compare changes in the number of students participating in the meals programs in 2012–2013, as compared to previous years; archival data are needed to track changes in the number of students who purchase meals from year to year. As noted earlier in the article, the current conclusions are based on respondent perceptions, rather than objectively measured data regarding meal purchases or plate waste. The survey respondents were a mix of mostly food service providers and school administrators; although at most elementary schools the administrator

spends time in the lunchroom and keeps a pulse on the climate of the school (*i.e.*, being aware of student complaints), their perspectives may differ from those of food service providers. Finally, it is important to note that this study only considered elementary schools, but not secondary schools; older students may have had different reactions to the new meals.

Conclusions

The perceptions of elementary school personnel regarding the effect of new meals on student purchasing and consumption patterns suggest little change overall in student behaviors subsequent to the revised USDA meals standards. Although many respondents agreed that students complained at first, most also agreed that few students now complain about the lunches. Greater challenges were perceived by respondents at rural schools, highlighting the need for future work to understand and address health disparities in rural communities. Given the importance of offering healthful foods to young children while at school, the revised USDA meals standards are a promising strategy to improve the diets of children.

Acknowledgment

Research support was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

We thank Ms. Anna Sandoval.

Author Disclosure Statement

No competing financial interests exist.

References

1. Clark MA, Fox MK. Nutritional quality of the diets of US public school children and the role of the school meal programs. *J Am Diet Assoc* 2009;109:S44–S56.
2. Guenther PM, Dodd K, Reedy J, et al. Most Americans eat much less than recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables. *J Am Diet Assoc* 2006;106:1371–1379.
3. Krebs-Smith SM, Guenther PM, Subar AF, et al. Americans do not meet federal dietary recommendations. *J Nutr* 2010;140:1832–1838.
4. Holman DM, White MC. Dietary behaviors related to cancer prevention among pre-adolescents and adolescents: The gap between recommendations and reality. *Nutr J* 2011;10:60.
5. Poti JM, Slining MM, Popkin BM. Solid fat and added sugar intake among US children: The role of stores, schools, and fast food, 1994–2010. *Am J Prev Med* 2013;45:551–559.
6. Fox MK, Condon E. School Nutrition Dietary Assessment IV: Summary of findings. 2012. Available at www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/nutrition/snda-iv_findings.pdf Last accessed April 2, 2014.
7. United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Fact sheet: National School Lunch Program. 2013. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf Last accessed April 2, 2014.
8. United States Department of Agriculture. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. 2013. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/CNR_2010.htm Last accessed April 2, 2014.
9. United States Department of Agriculture and United States Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010*. US Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, 2010.
10. United States Department of Agriculture. Nutrition standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs: Final rule. 2012. Available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf Last accessed April 2, 2014.
11. United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition standards for all foods sold in school as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Interim final rule. *Fed Regist* 2013;78:39067–39120.
12. Byker CJ, Pinard CA, Yaroch AL, et al. New NSLP guidelines: Challenges and opportunities for nutrition education practitioners and researchers. *J Nutr Educ Behav* 2013;45:683–689.
13. Government Accountability Office. School lunch: Implementing nutrition changes was challenging and clarification of oversight requirements is needed. GAO-14-104. Available at www.gao.gov/products/GAO-14-104 Last accessed April 2, 2014.
14. National Center for Education Statistics. Common core of data. Available at http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/ccddata.asp Last accessed June 9, 2014.
15. Yee V. No appetite for good-for-you school lunches. *The New York Times*. October 5, 2012. Available at www.nytimes.com/2012/10/06/nyregion/healthier-school-lunches-face-student-rejection.html?pagewanted=all Last accessed May 2, 2014.
16. Hellmich N. Students push back on new lunches. *USA Today*. September 28, 2012. Available at http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2012/09/28/kids-push-back-on-new-school-lunch/57842204/1 Last accessed May 2, 2014.
17. Jalonick MC. Schools seek changes to healthier lunch rules. Available at http://bigstory.ap.org/article/schools-seek-changes-healthier-lunch-rules-0 Last accessed May 5, 2014.
18. Cohen JFW, Richardson S, Parker E, et al. Impact of the new US Department of Agriculture school meal standards on food selection, consumption, and waste. *Am J Prev Med* 2014;46:388–394.
19. Mitka M. Nutrition and school lunches. *JAMA* 2013;309:973.
20. Mitka M. Meal programs questioned. *JAMA* 2012;308:1849.
21. Lutfiyya MN, Lipsky MS, Wisdom-Behounek J, et al. Is rural residency a risk factor for overweight and obesity for US children? *Obesity* 2007;15:2348–2356.
22. Singh GK, Siahpush M. Widening rural-urban disparities in life expectancy, US, 1969–2009. *Am J Prev Med* 2014;46:e19–e29.
23. Nanney MS, Davey CS, Kubik MY. Rural disparities in the distribution of policies that support healthy eating in US secondary schools. *J Acad Nutr Diet* 2013;113:1062–1068.
24. Dragoset L, Gordon A. Selecting policy indicators and developing simulation models for the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs: Final report. Report no. CN 10-PRED. Washington, DC: USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, June 2010.
25. Moore Q, Hulsey L, Ponza M. Factors associated with school meal participation and the relationship between different participation measures. Contractor and cooperator report no. 53. Washington, DC: USDA, Economic Research Service, June 2009.
26. Hanson K, Oliveira K. How economic conditions affect participation in USDA nutrition assistance programs. Report EIB-100. Washington, DC: USDA, Economic Research Service, September 2012.
27. Turner L, Chaloupka FJ, Sandoval A. School policies and practices for improving children's health: National Elementary School Survey

results: School years 2006–07 through 2009–10. Vol. 2. Bridging the Gap Program, Health Policy Center, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago: Chicago, IL, 2012

28. Hanks AS, Just DR, Wansink B. Smarter lunchrooms can address new school lunchroom guidelines and childhood obesity. *J Pediatr* 2013;162:867–869.
29. Wansink B, Hanks AS. Slim by design: Serving healthy foods first in buffet lines improves overall meal selection. *PLoS One* 2013; 8:e77055.
30. Wansink B, Just DR, Hanks AS, et al. Pre-sliced fruit in school cafeterias: Children's selection and intake. *Am J Prev Med* 2013; 44:477–480.

Address correspondence to:
Lindsey Turner, PhD
Research Associate Professor
College of Education
Boise State University
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725

E-mail: lindseyturner1@boisestate.edu

eat right. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Child Nutrition Programs
Promoting Healthy Children, Healthy Communities and a Strong Economy

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals, is committed to improving the nation's health. Nationwide, The Academy has over 75,000 members, comprised of registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), dietetic technicians, registered (DTRs), and advanced-degree nutritionists. The Academy, on behalf of its members, is proud support the 2015 reauthorization of federal child nutrition programs. These programs touch the lives of millions of low-income children each day, and reauthorization provides an opportunity to improve and strengthen these programs.

The United States Department of Agriculture's nutrition assistance programs authorized through the Child Nutrition Reauthorization provide an integrated system of food and nutrition support for millions of America's children when they are at school, in other supervised child care settings, and – through WIC – for infants, very young children and their low-income mothers during pregnancy. Services are provided through over 100,000 of America's public, private and parochial schools, 42,000 community food sites, 57,000 child care centers, 122,000 home day care sites, and over 1,900 local WIC agencies in 10,000 WIC clinic sites in low-income community settings[1].

Child Nutrition Programs originated when the Great Depression caused widespread under-nutrition that resulted in 40 percent of inductees being rejected for military service in World War II[2]. The National School Lunch Program was established at the end of the War as an entitlement program for all children to assure that this threat to national security would never be repeated. As American households changed and understanding of children's needs grew, Congress established complementary nutrition programs, each of which addressed a specific impediment to the health or educational attainment of large proportions of American children. All programs have been evaluated and are overseen for proper administration.

Unfortunately, the diets of most children continue to fall far short of recommendations for good health. Currently, more than one in five American households and one out of every ten children still experiences food insecurity[3]. At the same time, obesity rates that began rising in the 1990s have led to one in three children in the U.S. being overweight or obese. Obesity is even higher in children from racial, ethnic, and low-income groups that also experience high rates of nutrition-related chronic disease (e.g., Hispanic, African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and some Asian subgroups). Poor diet, physical inactivity, and childhood obesity are resulting in the early onset of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, and hypertension. These are diseases that historically appeared later in life, but are now presenting in childhood and adolescence. In a recent study, the prevalence of

---

[1] Congressional Research Service. (2014). School Meals Programs and Other USDA Child Nutrition Programs: A Primer.
[2] Mission Readiness. We are counting the days when Congress doesn't retreat from healthier school nutrition. http://www.missionreadiness.org/. Accessed January 30, 2015.
[3] US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Key Statistics and Graphics. http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/key-statistics-graphics.aspx#foodsecure. Accessed January 10, 2015.

both type 1 and type 2 diabetes in children was reported to have increased by more than 20% in just one decade[4].

Early onset of such diseases adds new strain to the health system, impairs young parents during their wage-earning years, and reduces the quality of life and future prospects of their children[5]. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that obesity costs the U.S. $147 billion annually in 2008 dollars[6]. By 2030, medical costs associated with obesity are expected to increase by at least $48 billion annually; medical costs coupled with reduced economic productivity costs could total between $390 billion to $580 billion[7]. At the same time, growing income inequality has widened disparities in educational attainment and opportunity[8]. Coming full circle, Mission Readiness, a nonpartisan national security organization of over 500 retired admirals, generals, and other retired senior military leaders, has expressed concern for our country's national defense because at least nine million 17 to 24-year-olds in the United States do not meet military requirements related to weight and are not fit to serve[9].

While there is evidence that the rise in childhood obesity may have plateaued or be decreasing in parts of the country and in some groups of children, the gains are inadequate. Authoritative reports call for an aggressive, comprehensive, multi-sector approach – using schools as a centerpiece – to reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity. Child Nutrition Programs provide an infrastructure that can be mobilized to improve children's diets and health on a nationwide scale while also improving school attendance, test scores and educational attainment. In addition, there is evidence of social and economic benefits of the Child Nutrition Programs that extend into local communities. These include improvements in the diet of other family members, healthier options in the general food marketplace, economic stimulus to communities, stable customers for American agriculture, job creation, and poverty reduction[10].

The *2010 Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA)* responded to widespread public concern by authorizing long-overdue changes in Child Nutrition Programs and WIC that have been introduced carefully over the last five years.

These improvements were an important and far-reaching first step in strengthening the potential of Child Nutrition Programs and WIC. Together, their collective impact should yield benefits greater than the sum of individual parts and help resolve the complex childhood problems of food insecurity, poor diet, obesity, and chronic disease risk. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics thinks that the 2015 reauthorization must take a second giant step by building on foundations laid in 2010 and strengthening it with other long-overdue improvements.

---

[4] Dabelea D, Mayer-Davis EJ, Saydah S, Imperatore G, Linder B, Divers J, Bell R, et al. Prevalence of type 1 and type 2 diabetes among children and adolescents from 2001 to 2009. *JAMA*. 2014;311(17):1778-1786.

[5] Childhood Obesity Fact Sheet. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/obesity/facts.htm Accessed November 10, 2014

[6] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Overweight and Obesity Facts.

[7] Trust for America's Health. (2012). F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future.

[8] Reardon SF. (2011). The widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor: new evidence and possible explanations. In R. Murnane & G. Duncan (Eds.), *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality and the Uncertain Life Chances of Low-Income Children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press.

[9] Mission Readiness. We are counting the days when Congress doesn't retreat from healthier school nutrition. http://www.missionreadiness.org/. Accessed January 30, 2015.

[10] IOM (Institute of Medicine). (2012). Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Statement of the National WIC Association, NWA
to the
House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Hon. John Kline, Chair
Hon. Bobby Scott, Ranking Member
Wednesday 15 April 2015

The **National WIC Association, NWA**, the education arm and advocacy voice of the 8.5 million mothers and young children – over half of all America's infants and one-quarter of its children 1–5 years of age – who participate in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children – WIC, and the 12,200 state and local WIC service provider agencies is pleased to submit this statement to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce as the Committee considers reauthorization of WIC and the Child Nutrition Programs.

NWA's mission is to provide leadership to promote quality nutrition services; advocate for services for all eligible women, infants, and children; and assure the sound and responsive management of WIC. NWA represents the voices of WIC in the 50 geographic and 40 trust, commonwealth, territories, and Indian Nations who proudly administer WIC. Our vision is a nation of healthier women, children, and their families.

WIC is documented to have improved at-risk children's health, growth and development, and prevented health problems for over 40 years. **WIC children enter school Ready to Learn,** showing better cognitive performance.

Families Turn to WIC in Economic Crises
Families turning to WIC for nutrition assistance are vulnerable and at-risk. Economic crises compound their vulnerability. WIC food packages and the nutrition services that accompany them ensure that WIC mothers and young children stay healthy.

Quality Nutrition Services – at WIC's Heart
Quality nutrition services are the centerpiece of WIC: nutrition and breastfeeding education, nutritious foods, and improved healthcare access for low and moderate income women and children with, or at risk of developing, nutrition-related health problems including overweight, obesity, and type-2 diabetes. WIC's committed, results oriented, entrepreneurial staff stretch resources to serve the maximum numbers of women, infants, and children and ensure program effectiveness and integrity.

As the nation's premier public health nutrition program, ***WIC is a science-based, rigorously studied, cost-effective, sound investment – ensuring the health of our children.***

WIC is Strongly Bi-Partisan Supported
According to a 2012 Bi-Partisan public opinion poll conducted by American Viewpoint and the Mellman Group, voters across political, ideological, ethnic and socio-economic groups hold WIC in high regard. A vast majority of voters (69%) have a strongly favorable view of WIC ranking it just behind Social Security and Medicare and above National Defense; favorability grows to 72% when voters learn more about WIC's nutrition and health services. Two-Thirds of voters, including a majority of Republicans view WIC as effective. By two-one voters oppose cutting WIC funding as a deficit strategy including independents, Hispanics, moms, and a majority of Republican women and opposition to cuts remains strong after hearing strong arguments from both sides.

NWA Reauthorization Recommendations

- ***Assuring WIC's Preventative Public Health Value***

Naming WIC for What it Delivers – the Child Nutrition Act states that the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) "shall serve as an

adjunct to good health care, during critical times of growth and development, to prevent the occurrence of health problems, including drug abuse, and improve the health status of these persons." The program's purpose includes providing "supplemental foods and nutrition education, including breastfeeding promotion and support . . . ." WIC is more than a nutrition program. It is the gateway to health care for millions of mothers and young children providing referrals to prenatal and pediatric care, lead screening, oral hygiene, immunizations, smoking cessation, and abuse.

NWA recommends: *renaming WIC in Sec. 17. [42 U.S.C. 1786] the Special Supplemental* ***Public Health*** *Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children and revising Sec. 17. [42 U.S.C. 1786](a) to read "It is, therefore the purpose of the program . . . to provide,* ***nutritious*** *supplemental foods and nutrition* ***counseling and*** *education including breastfeeding promotion and support . . . . The program shall serve as* ***gateway and*** *adjunct to good health care . . . ."*

Assuring Nutrition Services (NSA) Funding – adequate nutrition services administration (NSA) funding allows WIC staff to deliver quality nutrition services – the key to influencing and transforming eating habits and affecting the nation's epidemic of obesity and overweight.

- NSA funding includes nutrition counseling and education, preventative and coordination and referral services (e.g., prenatal and pediatric health care, oral health, social services), and promotion of breastfeeding and immunizations.
- In Fiscal Year 2012, total NSA funding amounted to 22.43% of the WIC appropriation with 15.23% for nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion, and other client services and only 7.20% for program management/administration.
- From 1989-2014, NSA costs/person/month adjusted for inflation averaged $17.35, remaining relatively constant over the two and half decade period. WIC agencies consistently implement cost efficiencies to assure administrative and program management savings.

Adjunctive Eligibility – enacted in 1989 to link WIC preventive services to other health and social service programs –

- enables WIC applicants to show proof of participation in SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, or certain State-administered programs to be automatically income-eligible for WIC. These programs already document applicants' income relieving WIC of duplication of effort.
- supports program integrity, assures lower NSA and reduced administrative costs by reducing error, promoting clinic efficiency, streamlining paperwork, and improving coordination between WIC and other health and social services.
- decreases health care costs by preventing illness, developmental problems, and chronic diseases and assures the preventative public health value of WIC – healthy pregnancies, improved birth outcomes. WIC's positive impact on the incidence of overweight and obesity, improved overall nutritional health and well-being of the nation's at-risk mothers and young children – is well documented.

Who is Adjunctively Eligible – 64% of WIC participants apply for WIC thru adjunctive eligibility. This includes infants, children and pregnant women in need of preventive nutrition services and access to healthful foods. 73% of WIC participants reside in families with income below the poverty level. In 2008, only 1.7% of WIC participants had income above 185% of the Poverty Guidelines.

What Would be the Consequence of Capping Adjunctive Eligibility For WIC Clinics – Significantly increased administrative costs and paperwork with fewer health benefits as clinics in states with Medicaid eligibility above 185% would spend more time documenting income for all applicants, creating documentation redundancies and excess paperwork.

NWA recommends: *protecting and preserving the current language in Sec. 1786 (h)(1)&(2) and in Sec. 1786 (d)(2)(A)(iii) and the current language in Sec. 1786 (c)&(d).*

- ***Protecting and Preserving the Integrity of the WIC Food Packages***

Securing Science Based Decisions – The nutritional value of the food packages and the types and kinds of food products included in the WIC food packages are and must remain science based and immune from politics and the legislative process. This assures public trust and confidence in the health and nutritional value of WIC foods. Congress supported **NWA**'s call for a regular scientific review of the WIC food packages, leading to recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine (IOM) to create healthier food packages by including fruits and vegetables, culturally appropriate foods, reduced quantities of eggs and juice, milk substitutes, and low fat dairy products in the food packages.

NWA recommends: *Congress oppose efforts to thwart nutrition science and the regulatory and science review process. The IOM is currently undertaking a second review of the food packages with a view to updating them to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans expected to be released in 2016.*

- ***Enhancing the Quality of the WIC Food Packages***

Cash Value Vouchers for Fruits and Vegetable – The nutritional value of the food packages was revised and enhanced in 2009 with the addition of fruits and vegetables, as recommended by National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine (IOM). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, have advised that the 2009 revised and enhanced WIC food packages may have contributed to improved diets and a halt in the rise of obesity rates among low-income preschool age children. Women are provided a $10 monthly fruit and vegetable cash value voucher and children and $8 monthly voucher. Assuring the continued nutrition and health benefits of the fruit and vegetable vouchers for mothers and children is critical to assuring improved health outcomes including impacts on obesity, early childhood diabetes, and other chronic nutrition related diseases.

Currently, cash value vouchers are adjusted annually for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index for fresh fruits and vegetables, but the dollar value of the cash value vouchers is rounded down to the nearest whole dollar increment (except in instances when the dollar value would decrease). This approach fails to preserve the value of the food package. Should USDA continue to consistently round down, mothers and young children will be shortchanged over time.

NWA recommends: *USDA round to the nearest dollar increment, rather than always rounding down.* While the cash value voucher values have increased by $2 monthly through legislative and regulatory changes, had those increases not occurred, the value of participants' vouchers would have been eroded. By rounding *up or down* to the nearest dollar increment, USDA can ensure that changes in the purchasing power of cash value vouchers as a result of inflation balance out over time.

Suggested language – To Sec. 1786 (f)(11) add (D) Cash Value Vouchers.—The Secretary, when adjusting annually for food cost inflation in the food package, shall round to the nearest dollar increment to maximize and preserve the value of the fruit and vegetable cash value vouchers.

Maintaining the Enhanced Value of the Breastfeeding Food Package – In 2005, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommended an enhanced breastfeeding food package to encourage and support mothers who choose to fully breastfeed. USDA Food & Nutrition Service (FNS), in publishing its Interim Final Rule on the WIC Food Packages, correctly emphasized the distinction between the fully breastfeeding food package and other food packages for women when it set the fruit and vegetable cash value vouchers for this food package at $2 above the value for other food packages for women. The fiscal year 2010 Agriculture Appropriations Act directed FNS to increase

the fruit and vegetable cash value voucher for women to $10, eliminating that important distinction.

NWA recommends: *To maintain the enhanced value of the fully breastfeeding food package, as recommended by the IOM and as proposed by FNS in the Interim Final Rule, the monthly cash value voucher benefit for fully breastfeeding women be increased by $2.*

- ***Assuring Choice in the WIC Food Packages***

WIC families should have similar choices as other families including national and private label brands, variety to encourage consumption and respect cultural preferences, and formats that align with family lifestyles.

Limiting a WIC mother's ability to choose the brands that best meet her family's nutritional and cultural needs coupled with knowing what foods her family will actually eat, has a definite impact on WIC success. Restricting brands, product variety, size or formats of approved foods – impacts enrollment, redemption, consumption and retention. In short – the foods available to families through WIC impact a WIC mother's decision and ability to enroll in WIC, purchase and consume the nutritional foods provided by WIC, and remain in WIC.

NWA recommends: *Maximizing State flexibility to assure national and private label brand options to adequately and appropriately respond to consumer needs, cultural preferences, and family lifestyles.*

Suggested language – To Sec. 1786 (f)(11) add (E) Consumer Choice Options.—The Secretary shall maximize opportunities for state agency flexibility to assure adequate and appropriate consumer choice to meet consumer needs, cultural preferences, and family lifestyles within the context of science based WIC food packages.

- ***Achieving Efficiencies, Coordinating Nutrition Services with Health and Safety Net Programs, and Saving Medicaid and Health Care Costs***

Extending Certification Periods for Infants –According to medical experts, the first two years of life are a key timeframe to invest in the health of a child. By allowing WIC certification for infants for up to two years, Congress has the opportunity to eliminate duplicative paperwork and focus WIC on health, nutrition, breastfeeding, immunization, and pediatric referral services that will make a significant difference in the lives of lower income infants and young children. This change will allow better nutrition services coordination, increase opportunities for nutrition intervention, assure improved breastfeeding duration, improve coordination with healthcare services, reduce duplicative and invasive blood work for infants and toddlers, provide for more counseling time and time with high-risk infants and toddlers, and streamline and reduce paperwork for clients, clinics, and health care providers.

NWA recommends: *giving States the option to certify infants for two years.*

Suggested language – To Sec. 1786 (d)(3)(A) add (iv) Infants.—A State may elect to certify infants for a period of 2 years.

Extending Certification Periods for Postpartum Women – Medical professionals recognize that good maternal health *prior* to pregnancy is of vital importance to improving health outcomes for both mother and infant. Internatal care, the period between the birth of a woman's child and until the birth of her next child, is now seen as a critical opportunity to improve the health of mothers and subsequent births. WIC's vital services to postpartum non-breastfeeding women for six months and breastfeeding women for one year following delivery include: breastfeeding services, nutritious foods, nutrition counseling, health screenings, and resource referrals. WIC is uniquely positioned to continue these essential services for women during the later postpartum period and during future pregnancies.

NWA recommends: *giving States the option to* increase the certification timeframe for both breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding women to two years postpartum. Certification for the extended postpartum period may address crucial needs for the mother, infant, and potentially subsequent children during vulnerable life stages. These services include:

- **Nutrition counseling to assist mothers in returning to their pre-pregnancy weights.** This service may decrease mothers' risks for becoming overweight or obese later in life and the related health consequences of these conditions. Returning to a healthy weight status prior to a subsequent pregnancy reduces the risks of infant birth defects and low birth weight/prematurity, operative deliveries, and maternal complications such as gestational diabetes and gestational hypertension.

- **Breastfeeding support that includes peer and professional breastfeeding services.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for at least one year and the World Health Organization recommends breastfeeding for at least two years. Breastfeeding support may improve breastfeeding outcomes, including initiation, duration, and exclusivity, and decrease risk for a myriad of adverse health outcomes associated with not breastfeeding or premature breastfeeding discontinuation. Increasing breastfeeding duration may also increase the duration of lactational amenorrhea, thus facilitating family planning and potentially increasing spacing between children to the 24 months recommended by the World Health Organization.

- **Nutrition counseling and provision of nutritious foods to reduce the risk of common nutrition deficiencies** in postpartum women, such as iron-deficiency anemia. In addition, nutrition counseling during this period may enable adequate intake of nutrients vital to a healthy subsequent pregnancy including folic acid to prevent neural tube defects. Folic acid is crucial for normal fetus development in the very early prenatal period, before many women are aware of their pregnancy and before they may pursue WIC certification.

- **Resource referrals for services crucial to maternal and child health and the health of potential future pregnancies.** These include parenting education, substance abuse such as smoking cessation, mental health services such as postpartum depression, and intimate partner violence.

Suggested language – Revise Sec. 1786 (d)(3)(A)(ii) breastfeeding women.—A State may elect to certify a breastfeeding woman for a period of 2 years postpartum. To Sec. 1786 (d)(3)(A) add (v) postpartum women.—A State may elect to certify postpartum women for a period of 2 years.

Extending Eligibility for Children – WIC provides nutrition assistance to children up to age five at which point many enter public school where they may qualify for school breakfast and lunch programs that continue to supplement their intake of healthy food choices. A child's birth date impacts their eligibility to enter school and a number of children remain ineligible well past their 5th birthday – sometimes for as much as a year. Continuing WIC nutrition services assures a continued strong health and nutrition foundation preparing children for school entrance, getting them ready to learn, reducing childhood obesity and other chronic diseases.

NWA recommends: *extending eligibility for children to age six.*

Suggested language – To Sec. 1786 (b)(2) revise to read: "Children" means persons who have had their first birthday but have not yet attained their sixth birthday.

- ***Improving WIC Infrastructure***

WIC infrastructure funding has failed to keep pace with inflation and remained static at roughly $14 million since 1999. WIC has responded entrepreneurially to limit clinic challenges by shifting from one month to three month food benefit issuance and where possible, extending clinic hours.

WIC desperately needs to build capacity to respond to reduce the risks of systemic problems. The current infrastructure funds level is small and has been inadequate to meet other essential program infrastructure needs. This has caused USDA to sacrifice the resource base on a single priority to the disadvantage of other infrastructure program needs including special project grants that help WIC State agencies demonstrate more effective ways of doing business.

NWA recommends: *that infrastructure funding be unencumbered and increased from $14 million to $40 million.*

Suggested language – revise Sec. 1786 (h)(1)(J)(10)(A)to read: In General.—For each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020, the Secretary shall use for the purposes specified in subparagraph (B), $215 million. (B) Purposes.—Of the amount made available under subparagraph (A) for a fiscal year, not more than—(i) "$40 million" shall be used for . . . ."

- ***Enhancing Service Delivery Through Information Technology***

Improving the Use of Information Technology to Enhance Service Delivery and Building Management Information Systems (MIS) – Technology provides a critical foundation for quality WIC services and Program Integrity. Funding WIC technology from existing resources compromises WIC's ability to deliver services and develop responsive MIS systems. Current limits on funding prevent roughly one in three WIC State agencies from meeting USDA core functions. To develop and maintain MIS and electronic service delivery systems (EBT) – ***NWA recommends:*** *Congress provide an additional $35 million annually in unencumbered funds outside the regular NSA grant to implement MIS core functions, upgrade WIC technology systems, maintain MIS and electronic services, render MIS systems EBT-ready.*

Suggested language – Preserve and protect paragraph (10)(B)(ii) of Sec. 1786 (i)(J) which reads: (B)(ii) "$35,000,000 shall be used to establish, improve, or administer management information systems for the program, including changes necessary to meet new legislative or regulatory requirements of the program;" And revise paragraph (10)(A) of Sec. 1786 to read: In General.—For each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 (i)(J) to read: "PROPORTIONAL DISTRIBUTION.—In a case in which less than $215,000,000 is available to carry out this paragraph, the Secretary shall make a proportional distribution of funds allocated under subparagraph (B)."

- ***Moving WIC to Electronic Benefits Service Delivery by 2020***

Providing for a Participant and Vendor Friendly Electronic Benefits Service Delivery System (EBT) – EBT is the most efficient, cost effective, green way of delivering participant benefits. **NWA** strongly supports the need for consistent, national standards for both on-line and off-line EBT technology solutions to assure systems integrity, ease of implementation, and service delivery effectiveness. **NWA** urges that State agencies have full choice in determining the EBT system that is most appropriate for a given State's unique circumstances and encourages State agencies to partner collaboratively with their retail community to assure smooth implementation.

WIC EBT assures program integrity providing data on the type and amount of foods purchased, allowing for accurate rebate billing on infant formula, ensuring that retailer claims do not exceed the shelf price, assuring secure transactions, timely and accurate claims, reducing resources spent on retailer compliance activities, monitoring and reconciling retailer overcharges, reducing forgery and fraud opportunities, increasing accountability, reducing paperwork, improving administrative efficiencies, and streamlining clinic operations increasing the time available for nutrition education.

WIC EBT assures participants convenience and the ability to purchase the full complement of food benefits within the valid period, through easy, quick, secure, discreet, confidential single transactions for all items purchased in a particular shopping trip, an accurate listing of benefits prior to and after shopping, increased time for nutrition education in the WIC clinic, and improved targeted nutrition education based on redemption patterns.

WIC EBT assures retailers participant purchases of only WIC-authorized foods, eliminates improper substitutions, reduces cashier error and the need for intensive training, provides for a secure, single transaction for all items purchased, allows for timely claims, settlements, fast and easy operation, reduced paperwork by eliminating paper food instruments, numerous activity reports, and more trips to the store by participants resulting in increased purchases.

NWA recommends: *that Congress provide at least $50 million per year up to a total of$219 million , to provide for the smooth transition of WIC service delivery from paper based systems to EBT systems, assuring State WIC EBT implementation by the close of fiscal year 2020.*

Suggested language – Add paragraph (10)(B)(iv) to Sec. 1786 (i)(J) to read: "$50,000,000 shall be used in each fiscal year up to a total of $219 million to establish, improve, or administer implementation of electronic benefit service delivery systems for the program, including changes necessary to meet new legislative or regulatory requirements of the program;"

- ***Protecting WIC's Limited Technology Resources***

Moving to an Electronic Benefit transfer (EBT) Environment – Current law asks WIC to absorb a retail vendor's costs of transition to an EBT environment. **NWA** does not believe that it was Congressional intent to have WIC serve as the payer of first intent for ongoing retail vendor WIC EBT costs.

NWA recommends: *Current law be amended to clarify that WIC is not expected to pick up the on-going costs of communications lines, processing fees, maintenance, and new and replacement equipment costs, and further that where an authorized vendor accepts both SNAP and WIC benefits that the vendor assume the incremental costs for EBT.*

Suggested language – Add paragraph (12)(E)(i)(I) of Sec. 1786 (h) to read: Subsequent to the successful completion of a state-wide rollout of an EBT system, communications, processing fees, maintenance, and new or replacement equipment costs will be borne by authorized vendors as an integral part of the commercial relationship with the software/hardware companies that support them. Add paragraph (12)(E)(i)(II) of Sec. 1786 (h) to read: any vendor participating in both WIC and SNAP shall be required to assume the incremental costs of communications, processing fees, maintenance, and new or replacement equipment.

- ***Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding in WIC***

Breastfeeding is the normal and most healthful way to feed infants – The benefits to infants and mothers are numerous.

For children, science shows that human milk; may lower the risk of obesity in childhood and adolescence; promotes and supports development; protects against illness symptoms and duration; improves IQ and visual acuity scores; lowers cancer rates; decreases cavities; improves premature infants' health; and significantly reduces health care costs.

For mothers: decreases the likelihood of ovarian and breast cancers; reduces the risk of osteoporosis and long-term obesity; increases bonding between mother and child; and significantly reduces the incidence of child neglect.

WIC maintains that breastfeeding is the best source of infant nutrition and currently earmarks funds for breastfeeding promotion and support activities. **NWA** promotes exclusive breastfeeding for infant feeding through the first year of life and beyond, with the addition of appropriate complementary foods when the infant is developmentally ready, usually around six months of age.

All WIC staff have a role in promoting and providing support for the successful initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.

Emphasizing the Importance of Breastfeeding in WIC – To emphasize breastfeeding support and promotion as an integral part of nutrition education – ***NWA recommends:*** *Adding "breastfeeding support and promotion" to each citation related to WIC for nutrition education in the Child Nutrition Act of 1966.*

Suggested Language – Revise all paragraphs beginning with Sec. 1786 (a) to read: It is, therefore, the purpose of the program authorized by this section to provide, up to the authorization levels set forth in subsection (g) of this section, supplemental foods and nutrition education, "breastfeeding support and promotion" through any eligible local agency that applies for participation in the program.

Enhancing a Successful Breastfeeding Initiative – In 2005, Congress set aside monies to fund what has become a successful breastfeeding peer counseling initiative. The funding need exceeds the authorized level. ***NWA recommends:*** *increasing resources to assure more breastfeeding mothers access to critical breastfeeding support.*

Suggested language – Revise paragraph (10)(B)(iii) of Sec. 1786 (i)(J) to read: "(iii) $180,000,000 shall be used for special nutrition education such as breastfeeding peer counselors and other related activities."

- ***Protecting WIC Cost Containment***

Preserving the Integrity of Infant Formula Cost Containment – WIC's highly successful infant formula cost containment program has saved WIC enormous sums since implementation in 1989 and currently saves WIC $2 billion a year. WIC State agencies obtain significant discounts in the form of rebates from infant formula manufacturers for each can of formula purchased through WIC. In exchange, the manufacturer offering the lowest net wholesale price (manufacturer's wholesale price minus the rebate) is given exclusive right to provide its product to WIC participants in the State for a specified period – generally 3 years.

Prior to 2004, WIC State agencies had the option to form State contracting alliances of varying size to obtain better rebates from infant formula manufacturers. In 2004, Congress limited the size of new contracting alliances to no more than 100,000 infants participating in the alliance as a means of potentially improving competition.

In 2005, USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) found that there was no evidence that WIC's infant formula rebate program had resulted in a reduction of the number of infant formula manufacturers, and thereby lessened price competition.

One out of every four participants in the WIC program (i.e., almost 2 million mothers and young children per month in fiscal 2000) was able to do so because of State agencies' use of rebate money to offset food costs – money that would otherwise require appropriation.

To assure the continued viability of this highly successful cost containment system, ***NWA recommends:*** *State WIC agencies have the option to form contracting alliances without limits on the number of participants.*

Suggested language – delete paragraph (8)(A)(iv) Size Of State Alliances.—(I) and paragraph (8)(A)(iv)(II) Addition Of Infant Participants..

- ***Assessing the Effects of Nutrition Services***

Providing for Innovation, Data Collection, and WIC Outcomes Research – To support rigorous research and evaluation documenting WIC's continued success – ***NWA recommends:*** *flexible use of Special Project Grants funds, State WIC funds and other grant resources for health outcomes research and evaluation to identify effective nutrition education and breastfeeding promotion and support services, to test innovative service delivery and food prescriptions, and to support*

USDA's partnership with ***NWA*** *to achieve WIC sensitive research and evaluation objectives.* **NWA urges Congress to provide $15 million to support updated rigorous health outcomes research and evaluation** documenting WIC's continued success.

As the nation's premier public health nutrition program, WIC is a cost-effective, sound investment – ensuring the health of our children.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement. For questions or further information kindly contact the Rev. Douglas A. Greenaway on 202-232-5492 or by email at douglasg@nwica.org, or Martelle Esposito on 202-232-5492 or by email at mesposito@nwica.org.

Love them lots. Feed them well!
Your child has you. And you have WIC!

WIC For A Healthier, Stronger America!

Chairman KLINE. Without objection, we will include them all.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you.

Chairman KLINE. Gentleman yields back.

I want to add my thanks to all of you, a great panel. It really has been very informative. We are dealing with I think sometimes a very confusing subject.

Mr. Grothman brought this notion up in his questions when he talked about, wait a minute, we talking about obesity here or we talking about hunger, we talking about malnutrition, we talking about wealthy schools, poor schools. We are talking about all of these things and it hard to get the policy right. This is a first and important step.

One of my colleagues said, well, it is okay for some wealthy schools to drop out because this isn't about wealthy schools. Wealthy schools have poor kids, as well. And this isn't just about poor kids and wealthy kids; this is about all of our kids.

So we have got a pretty big job. I very much appreciate the input that all of you had. I have been sitting here contemplating what a whole grain tortilla would actually taste like and I am guessing not that good. So we have got our work cut out for us; we are eager to do it. We very much appreciate your help here today.

There being no further business, committee stands adjourned.

[Additional submission by Ms. Krey follows:]

The Importance of Nutrition for Learning and Well-being

Physical Health

Victora, C.G., Adair, L., Fall, C., Hallal, P.C., Martorell, R., Richter, L., Sachdev, H.S. (2008). Maternal and child undernutrition: Consequences for adult health and human capital. *Lancet, 371*, 340–357.

> This paper reviews the associations between maternal and child undernutrition with human capital and risk of adult diseases in low-income and middle-income countries. The authors conclude that damage suffered in early life leads to permanent impairment, and might also affect future generations. Its prevention will probably bring about important health, educational, and economic benefits. Chronic diseases are especially common in undernourished children who experience rapid weight gain after infancy.

Cook, J.T., Frank, D.A., Berkowitz, C., Black, M.M., Casey, P.H., Cutts, D.B., et al. (2004). Food insecurity is associated with adverse health outcomes among human infants and toddlers. *Journal of Nutrition, 134*, 1432–1438.

> The U.S. Household Food Security Scale, developed with federal support for use in national surveys, is an effective research tool. This study uses these new measures to examine associations between food insecurity and health outcomes in young children. Food Stamps attenuated (but did not eliminate) associations between food insecurity and fair/poor health. Food insecurity is associated with health problems for young, low-income children. Ensuring food security may reduce health problems, including the need for hospitalizations.

Deshmukh-Taskar, P. R., Nicklas, T. A., O'Neil, C. E., Keast, D. R., Radcliff e, J. D., & Cho, S. (2010). The relationship of breakfast skipping and type of breakfast consumption with nutrient intake and weight status in children and adolescents: the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 1999-2006. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 110*(6), 869-878.

> In this paper, the objective was to examine the relationship between breakfast skipping and type of breakfast consumed with nutrient intake, nutrient adequacy, and adiposity status. In conclusion, ready-to-eat cereal consumers had more favorable nutrient intake profiles and adiposity indexes than breakfast skippers or other breakfast consumers in US children and adolescents.

Smith, K. J., Gall, S. L., McNaughton, S. A., Blizzard, L., Dwyer, T., & Venn, A. J. (2010). Skipping breakfast: longitudinal associations with cardiometabolic risk factors in the Childhood Determinants of Adult Health Study. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, *92*(6), 1316-1325.

> Skipping breakfast over a long period may have detrimental effects on cardiometabolic health. Promoting the benefits of eating breakfast could be a simple and important public health message.

Seligman, H. K., Laraia, B. A., & Kushel, M. B. (2010). Food insecurity is associated with chronic disease among low-income NHANES participants. *Journal of Nutrition*, *140*(2), 304-310.

> Food insecurity refers to the inability to afford enough food for an active, healthy life. Numerous studies have shown associations between food insecurity and adverse health outcomes among children. These data show that food insecurity is associated with cardiovascular risk factors. Health policy discussions should focus increased attention on ability to afford high-quality foods for adults with or at risk for chronic disease.

Mental Health and Behavior

Murphy, J.M., Wehler, C.A., Pagano, M.E., Little, M, Kleinman, R.F., Jellinek, M.S. (1998). "Relationship between hunger and psychosocial functioning in low-Income American children." *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *37*, 163-170.

> Results of this study suggest that intermittent experiences of food insufficiency and hunger as measured by CCHIP are associated with poor behavioral and academic functioning in low-income children. The current study also supports the validity and reliability of the CCHIP measure for assessing hunger in children.

Bellisle F. (2004). Effects of diet on behaviour and cognition in children. *British Journal of Nutrition*, *92* (2), 227-232.

> Diet can affect cognitive ability and behaviour in children and adolescents. Nutrient composition and meal pattern can exert immediate or long-term, beneficial or adverse effects. Beneficial effects mainly result from the correction of poor nutritional status. Overall, the literature suggests that good regular dietary habits are the best way to ensure optimal mental and behavioural performance at all times. Then, it remains controversial whether additional benefit can be gained from acute dietary manipulations. In contrast, children and adolescents with poor nutritional status are exposed to alterations of mental and/or behavioural functions that can be corrected, to a certain extent, by dietary measures.

Pollitt, E. (1995).The Relationship between undernutrition and behavioral development in children: A report of the International Dietary Energy Consultative Group (IDECG) Workshop on Malnutrition and Behavior. *Journal of Nutrition, 125* (8S).

> In 1993 the International Dietary Energy Consultative Group (IDECG) formed a task force with the mandate to assess current knowledge of the relationship between undernutrition and behavioral development in children. The reviews in this supplement document sufficient evidence to conclude that even the most prevalent levels of general undernutrition represent a risk factor that increases the probability of deviating human development from its normal trajectory.

Academic Well-Being

Zeng, Y. , Li, S. , Xiong, G. , Su, H. and Wan, J. (2011) Influences of protein to energy ratios in breakfast on mood, alertness and attention in the healthy undergraduate students. *Health, 3*, 383-393.

> Present findings demonstrate the relationship between high-protein (HP) breakfast and mood, alertness and attention. This study indicated that HP breakfast may enhance human performance probably by increasing the thermic effect of a food and elevating body temperature.

Alaimo K, Olson C.M., Frongillo, E.A. (2001). Food insufficiency and American school-aged children's cognitive, academic and psychosocial development. *Pediatrics, 108*(1): 44-53.

> This study investigates associations between food insufficiency and cognitive, academic, and psychosocial outcomes for US children and teenagers ages 6 to 11 and 12 to 16 years. Food-insufficient teenagers were more likely to have seen a psychologist, have been suspended from school, and have had difficulty getting along with other children. Further analyses divided children into lower-risk and higher-risk groups. The associations between food insufficiency and children's outcomes varied by level of risk. The results demonstrate that negative academic and psychosocial outcomes are associated with family-level food insufficiency and provide support for public health efforts to increase the food security of American families.

Taras H. (2005). Nutrition and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health, 75*(6): 199-213.

> This article reviews research from published studies on the association between nutrition among school-aged children and their performance in school and on tests of cognitive functioning. Food insufficiency is a serious problem affecting children's ability to learn, but its relevance to US populations needs to be better understood. Research indicates that school breakfast programs seem to improve attendance rates and decrease tardiness.

Among severely undernourished populations, school breakfast programs seem to improve academic performance and cognitive functioning

Kleinman, R. E., Hall, S., Green, H., Korzec-Ramirez, D., Patton, K., Pagano, M. E., & Murphy, J. M. (2002). Diet, breakfast, and academic performance in children. *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism*, *46*(Supplement 1), 24-30.

Participation in a school breakfast program enhanced daily nutrient intake and improvements in nutrient intake were associated with significant improvements in student academic performance and psychosocial functioning and decreases in hunger.

[Additional submission by Mr. Scott follows:]

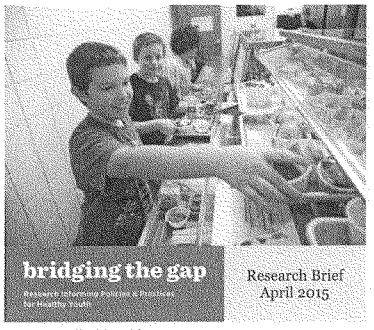


Photo credit: Matt Moyer

Improvements in School Lunches Result in Healthier Options for Millions of U.S. Children:

Results from Public Elementary Schools between 2006–07 and 2013–14

Introduction

Most U.S. children's diets exceed recommended levels of sugar, fat, and sodium,[1] and are deficient in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.[2, 3] In 2009–10, elementary school lunches exceeded recommendations for calories from solid fats and added sugars, and fell short of recommended daily amounts of vegetables and whole grains.[4] As directed by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010,[5] the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated the national nutrition standards for school meals to align with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.[6] These updated standards[7] were announced in January 2012, and schools began to implement them at the beginning of the 2012–13 school year.

The updated standards require schools to offer: a fruit or vegetable daily, a variety of vegetables, and only fat-free or low-fat milk. As of the 2014–15 school year, they also require that 100 percent of grain products offered at lunch be whole-grain rich[8] (up from 50 percent during 2012–13 and 2013–14), although schools may seek exemptions to remain at the 50 percent standard through 2015–16. Some schools had already been meeting these benchmarks prior to 2012–13, but the updated standards led to widespread changes to meals served at most schools.

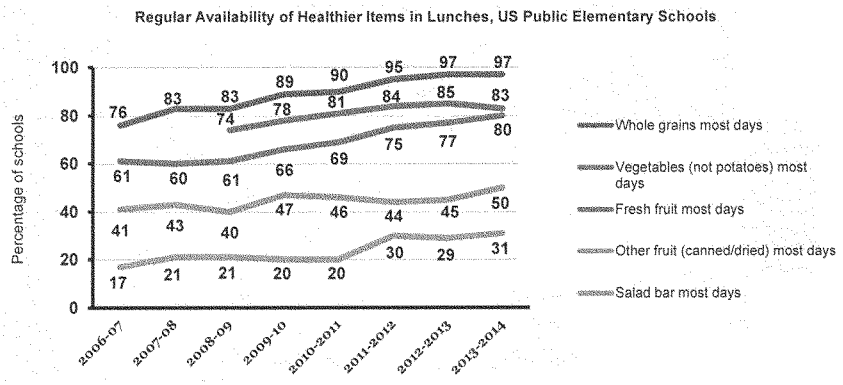
This brief uses data from surveys of elementary schools to examine: a) how the types of items offered in school lunches have changed over time; and b) whether the variety of healthy options changed from the first to the second year of updated standards.

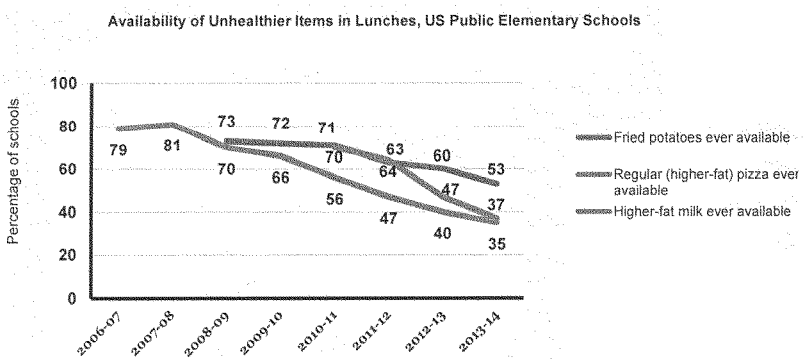
This brief reports on nationally representative data obtained from administrators and food service personnel at U.S. public elementary schools between the 2006–07 and 2013–14 school years. These data do not allow for evaluation of whether a specific school was in compliance with the new meal standards, but they do provide an indication of trends in the availability of healthier items (i.e., a variety of vegetables, fresh fruits, salad bars, and whole grains) and unhealthier items that tend to be high in fat and sodium (i.e., fried potatoes, regular pizza, and higher-fat milks). In 2013–14, the survey included several items assessing changes in lunch characteristics from 2012–13 to 2013–14. Additional detail on the methods used for this study are available online.[9]

The results show that elementary school lunches have been improving consistently since the 2006–07 school year, with more schools offering healthier items and fewer schools offering unhealthier items. This trend has continued through the implementation of national standards in 2012–13, as the overwhelming majority of schools maintained or improved their offerings in the second year of implementation as compared with the first. Together, these findings suggest that elementary schools are able to successfully offer healthier lunches to students and that the national standards are consistent with those efforts.

Key Findings

Significantly more elementary schools were regularly offering healthier items in lunches in 2013–14 than in 2006–07. The availability of unhealthier items in school lunches also decreased notably during the same period.



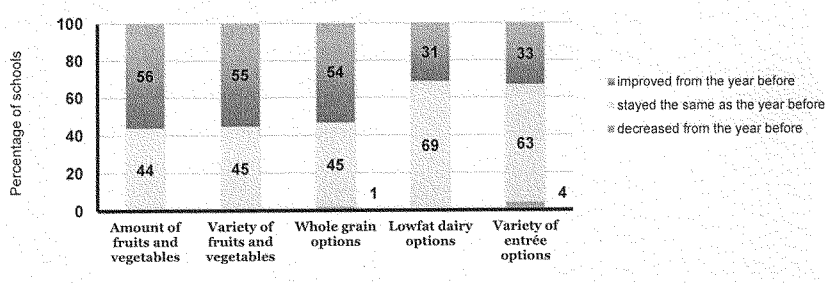


Key Findings

All schools either increased or maintained the amount and variety of fruits and vegetables offered since the standards went into effect in 2012–13.

- At more than half of elementary schools, lunches in 2013–14 included more fruits and vegetables and whole grains, as well as a greater variety of fruits and vegetables, than in 2012–13.
- The majority of schools maintained the same variety of entrée options as in 2012–13, although 33 percent of schools actually increased entrée variety.

Changes in Lunches at US Public Elementary Schools, Reported in 2013–14 School Year



Conclusions and Policy Implications

School lunches have changed considerably over time, with significant improvements documented particularly in recent years. The recent updates to the national nutrition standards are consistent with these improvements. A March 2015 study shows that since the implementation of the new lunch standards—which require students to take either a fruit or vegetable at each meal—students are selecting and eating more fruit, and throwing away less food than they did before the changes were implemented.[10] Recent surveys also show that many students have adapted well to the revised meals, with few complaints.[11] It is essential for policymakers to continue to support implementation of the healthier standards for school meals to support optimal nutrition and health for millions of U.S. children and adolescents.

Endnotes

1. Clark MA, Fox MK. Nutritional quality of the diets of US public school children and the role of the school meal programs. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2009;109:S44I-S56.
2. Guenther PM, Dodd K, Reedy J, Krebs-Smith S. Most Americans eat much less than recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2006;106:1371-1379.
3. Krebs-Smith SM, Guenther PM, Subar AF, Kirkpatrick SI, Dodd KW. Americans do not meet federal dietary recommendations. *Journal of Nutrition*. 2010;140(10):1832-1838.
4. Fox MK, Condon E. *School Nutrition Dietary Assessment IV: Summary of Findings*. 2012. www.mathematicampr.com/publications/PDFs/nutrition/snda-iv_findings.pdf
5. United States Department of Agriculture. *The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*. www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/ Legislation/CNR_2010.htm
6. United States Department of Agriculture and United States Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. 2010.
7. United States Department of Agriculture. Final Rule: Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. 2012. www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf
8. Kline A. Requests for exemption from the school meals' whole grain-rich requirement for school years 2014-15 and 2015-16. U.S. Department of Agriculture. http://origin.drupal.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cnd/SP20-2015os.pdf
9. Turner L, Chaloupka FJ. Bridging the Gap's Food and Fitness elementary school survey: technical report on survey development, sampling, and methodology. http://bridgingthegapresearch.org/_asset/34zbxw/BTG_Food_Fitness_ES_survey_methodology_Apr_2015.pdf
10. Schwartz MB, Henderson KE, Read M, Danna N, Ickovics JR. New school meal regulations increase fruit consumption and do not increase total plate waste. *Childhood Obesity*. 2015. Online first: http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1089/chi.2015.0019
11. Turner L, Chaloupka FJ. Perceived reactions of elementary school students to changes in school lunches after implementation of the United States Department of Agriculture's new meals standards: minimal backlash, but rural and socioeconomic disparities exist. *Childhood Obesity*. 2014;10(4):1-8.

Suggested Citation. Turner L, Chaloupka FJ. *Improvements in School Lunches Result in Healthier Options for Millions of U.S. Children: Results from Public Elementary Schools between 2006–07 and 2013–14*. A BTG Research Brief. Chicago, IL: Bridging the Gap Program, Health Policy Center, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago; 2015.

For more on this Research Brief, contact:
Lindsey Turner
LindseyTurner1@boisestate.edu

Bridging the Gap is a nationally recognized research program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation dedicated to improving the understanding of how policies and environmental factors affect diet, physical activity and obesity among youth, as well as youth tobacco use. For more information, visit www.bridgingthegapresearch.org and follow us on Twitter: @BTGresearch.

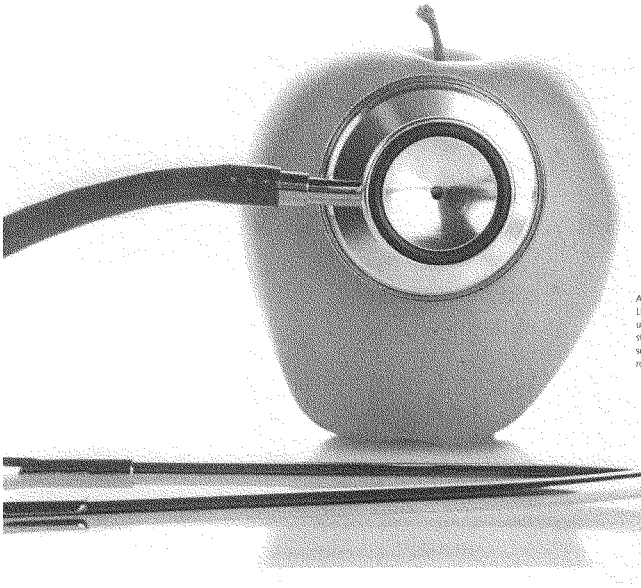
Deloitte.

NO KID HUNGRY SHARE OUR STRENGTH center for BEST PRACTICES

Ending childhood hunger: A social impact analysis

Contributing authors:

Robin Augustine-Thottungal, *Consultant*
John Kern, *Manager*
Jackie Key, *Senior Consultant*
Becca Sherman, *Consultant*



As used in this document, "Deloitte" means Deloitte LLP and its subsidiaries. Please see www.deloitte.com/us/about about for a detailed description of the legal structure of Deloitte LLP and its subsidiaries. Certain services may not be available to attest clients under the rules and regulations of public accounting.

Deloitte's work on Ending childhood hunger

Background

Big problems require big solutions. Share Our Strength®, a national nonprofit based in Washington, D.C., wants to solve a big problem: it aims to end childhood hunger in America. In order to reach this goal, Share Our Strength must address the underlying causes of food insecurity, a social issue that has worsened during recent tough economic times.

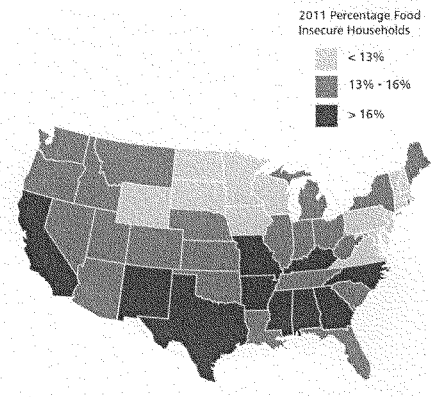
Through its No Kid Hungry® campaign, Share Our Strength is connecting kids in need with nutritious food and teaching their families how to cook healthy, affordable meals. The No Kid Hungry campaign helps to connect kids with healthy food offered through Federal food and nutrition programs, such as the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and Summer Meals programs. Through its Cooking Matters® program, the No Kid Hungry campaign equips low-income families with food skills to stretch their food budgets so their kids get healthy meals at home. Cooking Matters participants learn to shop smarter, use nutrition information to make healthier food choices, and cook delicious, affordable meals. These skills enable families to stretch their limited food dollars to eat healthy food.

Deloitte is committed to helping Share Our Strength achieve its goal to end childhood hunger in America. As part of our long-standing relationship with Share Our Strength, Deloitte conducted a pro-bono social impact and strategic growth analysis to help Share Our Strength develop a compelling case for its continued efforts to end childhood hunger in America. Through this analysis, Deloitte shared its strength in data analytics by using innovative techniques to visualize large quantities of demographic and program data, in order to draw insights about the No Kid Hungry campaign's potential impact on its target communities.

Deloitte conducted the social impact analysis for Cooking Matters and the School Breakfast Program by analyzing publically available data and linking relevant academic research findings. Utilizing academic research, Deloitte developed several frameworks that connected outcomes from Cooking Matters and the School Breakfast Program with long-term health, education, and economic benefits. Deloitte also analyzed publically available data from Maryland public schools, as well as data the No Kid Hungry campaign's Maryland grantee schools, to assess the impact that alternative school breakfast models, such as Breakfast in the Classroom, have on low-income schools and students.

Food insecurity: A national crisis

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), a family is "food insecure" if it faces "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways."[1] In 2011, 17.9 million U.S. households were food insecure – 14.9% of all households in the country.[2] More importantly, households with children are nearly twice as likely to be food insecure as households without children. Although children are often shielded from hunger in food insecure households, over 3.9 million American families have children that have not had access to adequate, nutritious food.[3] The



[1] "Food Security in the US." US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.aspx#insecurity>

[2] Coleman-Jenson, Alisha; Nord, Mark; Andrews, Margaret and Seven Carlson. United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. "Household Food Security in the United States in 2011." ERS Report Number 141. September, 2012.

[3] Ibid.

Factors contributing to food insecurity

Low-income families can experience food insecurity due to several factors, including

- Low incomes and strained budgets
- Volatile income and expenses
- Only part of a family's food needs are typically covered by Federal food assistance

crisis becomes even more pressing for families facing severe economic hardships. Over two-thirds of food insecure families have household incomes that are below $42,000 for a family of four (an income level that equals approximately 185% of the Federal poverty line for 2012), and over eighty percent of food insecure families participate in Federal food assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or free/reduced-price school meals.[4]

Like poverty, food insecurity is a dynamic, intensely complex issue. For many families, seemingly small changes to income, expenses, or access to federal or state assistance programs may instantly reduce the ability to purchase healthy food and result in increased vulnerability to food insecurity. Moreover, families and children do not feel the impact of hunger at just the dinner table; food insecurity manifests itself in many other social outcomes, including health, education, and economic prosperity. Combined, these negative impacts can contribute to a less competitive workforce for the nation and higher healthcare costs borne by the U.S. government and employers.[5]

Food insecurity can have negative impacts on children's health and academic achievement. These impacts on individual children can add up to significant consequences for American society as whole.

Food insecurity in early childhood (ages 0-3) is associated with impaired cognitive development, which can negatively impact a child's future potential academic and economic success.

Across children of all ages, food insecurity is linked with lower academic achievement.

Hungry children are sick more often and are 31% more likely to be hospitalized, at an average cost of approximately $12,000 per pediatric hospitalization.

Food insecure children are 3.4 times more likely to be overweight or obese.

The No Kid Hungry Campaign: Tackling food insecurity from many angles

Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign connects kids in need to effective Federal nutrition programs like school breakfast and summer meals and teaches low-income families to cook healthy, affordable meals through its Cooking Matters® program. By helping low-income families obtain access to food and financial resources, as well as learn how to maximize food resources and prepare healthy meals, the No Kid Hungry campaign plays a critical role in addressing childhood hunger.

Programs like Cooking Matters and the School Breakfast Program address two of the major obstacles low-income families face in overcoming food insecurity: access to and affordability of nutritious meals. Through education, outreach, and advocacy, the No Kid Hungry campaign connects low-income children with free or low-cost meals while also providing families with the tools to avoid food insecurity by maximizing food benefits and budgets. These programs can have significant societal impacts, as improving access to affordable meals can be linked to long-term health, education, and economic outcomes. Combined, No Kid Hungry efforts to provide nutrition education through Cooking Matters and increase participation in the School Breakfast Program can support families in maximizing nutrition, reducing healthcare spending, improving educational achievements, and achieving greater economic prosperity. By improving families' access to affordable, nutritious meals, Share Our Strength helps children and their families reduce their vulnerability to food insecurity and also benefit society as a whole.

[4] Nord, Mark and Mark Prell. United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. "Struggling to Feed the Family: What Does it Mean to be Food Insecure?". Amber Waves. June 2007

[5] Cook, John and Karen Jeng. Feeding America. "Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on our Nation." 2009. < http://feedingamerica.org/SiteFiles/child-economy-study.pdf>

Combined, Cooking Matters and the School Breakfast Program could offer the following benefits to low-income families

Maximized nutrition per food dollar:
Eating healthy food using the limited resources available to low-income families

Healthcare cost savings:
Preventing or reducing chronic disease and illness to reduce healthcare costs incurred by a family by eating healthier foods

Greater educational achievement:
- Improved academic achievement and school attendance
- Increased likelihood of high school graduation through improved nutrition

Increased potential economic productivity:
- High school graduates have the potential to earn higher wages
- Improved health can avoid income lost due to sick days taken by parents

School breakfast: Feeding students at school

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the National School Lunch Program (NLSP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), both of which offer free and reduced-price meals to low-income students. Historically, more low-income students eat school lunch than school breakfast, with NLSP reaching over 20 million low-income students to the SBP's 10.5 million in 2011.[6,7] Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign recognizes the need to increase the number of low-income students who eat school breakfast, addressing children's need for nutrition, and also contributing to academic and economic benefits that reduce long-term vulnerability to food insecurity.

The traditional school breakfast delivery model, where students can receive breakfast from their school cafeteria before school begins, has not been widely effective in getting students to eat breakfast at school. This may be due to the social stigma associated with the program as being for "poor kids" as well as the difficulty of getting students to school early enough to eat breakfast in the cafeteria. The No Kid Hungry campaign aims to increase SBP participation by advocating that schools implement "alternative breakfast models," in which breakfast is made part of the school day, thereby

The No Kid Hungry campaign's impacts on food insecurity

The No Kid Hungry campaign helps children and their families reduce their vulnerability to food insecurity by
- Offering nutrition education to low-income families through its Cooking Matters program
- Advocating for and increasing participation in federal food and nutrition programs that connect children and their families to food resources, such as:
  - School Breakfast Program (SBP)
  - Summer Meals
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Supplemental Assistance for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

[6] United States Department of Agriculture. Food and Nutrition Service. "National School Lunch Program: Participation and Lunches Served." July 2012.

[7] United States Department of Agriculture. Food and Nutrition Service. "School Breakfast Program: Participation and Meals Served." July 2012.

increasing student access to breakfast and reducing the stigma associated with the program.

School breakfast can have far-reaching impacts on low-income students' health, academic achievements and economic prospects. Studies have indicated that students who eat breakfast see fewer vitamin deficiencies, are less likely to experience chronic illnesses and are more likely to maintain a healthy BMI [8,9]. Additionally, research has shown that eating school breakfast can contribute to increased attendance and greater academic achievement. Students who participate in the SBP attend 1.5 more days of school annually, score 17.5% higher on math tests, and are less likely to have disciplinary issues.[10] These academic benefits can not only help students to achieve proficiency in the short term, but they can also help low-income students elude poverty and lessen vulnerability to food insecurity later in life. Current education research indicates that improved academic achievement increases the likelihood that a student will obtain a high-school diploma and subsequently have greater earning potential as an adult.[11]

Case study: Impact of alternative breakfast in Maryland

A case study of the potential positive impacts of expanding school breakfast to reach more low-income elementary and middle school students in Maryland shows that increasing SBP participation can have significant benefits. Maryland has an estimated 81,000 low-income elementary and middle school students who eat school lunch, but do not eat school breakfast. Based on the estimates of potential academic improvements referenced above, increasing school breakfast participation among these students to be 70% of the number of elementary and middle school students participating in school lunch could lead Maryland to see up to 56,000 additional students achieving math

Higher Academic Achievement		Greater Economic Productivity
Students who eat school breakfast on average: Attend 1.5 more days of school per year Score 17.5% higher on standardized math tests	Students who attend class regularly (miss <5 days per semester) have 20% higher high school graduation rates Students achieving at least a B average are 25% more likely to graduate high school[12]	High school graduates are shown to have greater long-term economic productivity than those who do not receive high school diplomas. High school graduates: Earn $10,090 higher annual wages[13] Have a 4.0% higher employment rate[14]

[8] Brown, Larry J; William H Beardslee, Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Food Research Action Center (FRAC). "Impact of School Breakfast on Children's Health and Learning." Breakfast for Health Fall (2011): 1-4.

[9] Block Joy, Amy; Goldman, George and Vijay Pradhan. "Cost-benefit analysis conducted for nutrition education in California." California Agriculture 60.4 (2006): 185-191. <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/7kz1r9cv

[10] Murphy JM. "Breakfast and Learning: An Updated Review." Journal of Current Nutrition and Food Science 3.1 (2007): 3-36

[11] Pinkus, Lyndsay. Alliance for Excellent Education. "Using Early-Warning Data to Improve Graduation Rates: Closing Cracks in the Education System." August 2008

[12] Ibid.

[13] United States Department of Commerce. Census Bureau. "Table A-3: Mean Earnings of Workers 18 and Over, by Educational Attainment, Race, Hispanic Origin and Sex: 1975-2012.

[14] United States Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Economic News Release: Table A-4 Employment status of the civilian population 25 years and over by educational attainment." August 2012.

[15] Estimation of low-income elementary and middle school students who participate in NSLP but not SBP was calculated by applying the percentage of public school students in Maryland enrolled in elementary and middle school to the NSLP/SBP gap in Maryland.

[16] United States Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. "Table 1 – Public School Membership, by grade and state or jurisdiction: School Year 2009-2010.

[17] The number of students likely to graduate from the original cohort of students reached by the SBP increase, assuming they continue to benefit from SBP through the 12th grade.

Potential impacts of increasing school breakfast participation to 70% of school lunch participation

84,890 fewer absences

56,590 students with highter math test scores

14,140 more high school graduates

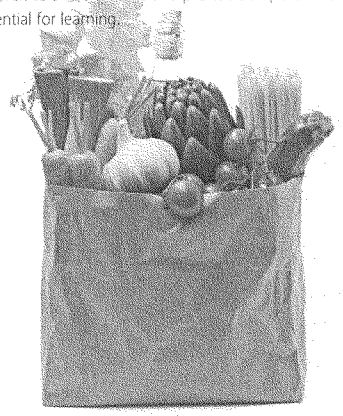
proficiency and 14,000 more high school graduates over time[15,16,17]:

Alternative breakfast models can help increase SBP participation

Recognizing the importance of school breakfast, Share Our Strength provides small grants to schools across the country to help provide the infrastructure and start-up costs associated with implementing alternative breakfast models. In Maryland, 17 schools were able to implement alternative breakfast models by September 2011, and reported data throughout the school year. These schools included eight elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools and one school that spans all grade levels (K-12). Combined, these schools saw an increase in SBP participation of 35% between September 2011 and March, 2012, suggesting that alternative breakfast models are significantly more effective at enabling low-income students to partake in the SBP than the traditional breakfast model.

Alternative models may positively impact chronic absenteeism and improve proficiency

Schools with alternative breakfasts are less likely to have students that are chronically absent than similar schools with traditional models.[18] Furthermore, students with access to alternative breakfasts are more likely to achieve proficiency on standardized math and reading tests[19], as evidenced by proficiency and absenteeism data from Maryland's public schools. The State of Maryland sponsors the Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) program, in which schools can apply for supplemental funding to support in-class breakfasts for all students. As the graphs below illustrate, in 2010 MMFA schools had significantly lower rates of chronic absenteeism and higher levels of proficiency on standardized tests in comparison with schools using traditional SBP models. The analysis also reveals that the gap in academic performance and absenteeism between MMFA schools and schools with a traditional SBP model widens as the school's percentage of free or reduced-price eligible students increases. This suggests that alternative breakfast models have the greatest impact in high-poverty schools where school breakfast can be provided to students at greatest risk of food insecurity. These findings are associations and do not necessarily illustrate a causal link between alternative breakfast models and improved proficiency and reduced absenteeism. However, as alternative breakfast models reduce the obstacles facing many low-income children from accessing breakfast in the morning, these alternative models may lead to positive outcomes as they encourage children to arrive on time and provide adequate nutrition essential for learning.



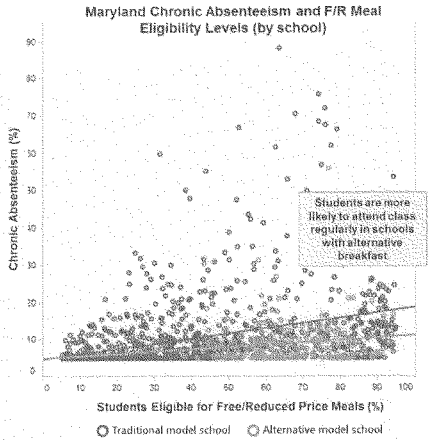
[18] The Maryland State Department of Education considered students who have missed more than 20 days of class between September and June of a school year to be "chronically absent"

[19] Proficiency is defined by each state according to No Child Left Behind guidelines

Schools with alternative breakfast have lower chronic absenteeism rates [20]

In Maryland, schools serving in-class breakfasts have 2.9% - 7.2% lower rates of chronic absenteeism. While chronic absenteeism increases as the percentage of low-income students in a school rises, the increase is less severe in schools with alternative breakfast models. Students in schools with 80% low-income students that serve in-class breakfast are 6% less likely to be chronically absent than students in similar schools with a traditional model.

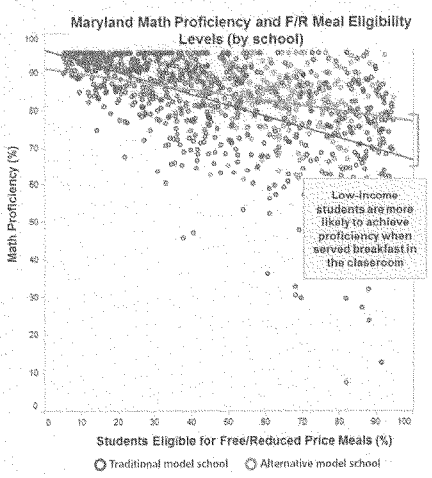
*Chronic absenteeism is defined as a student missing more than 20 days of class in a school year. [21]



Alternative breakfast is linked to higher levels of math proficiency

Schools with in-class breakfast have 2.2% - 12.5% more students achieving math proficiency. While math proficiency decreases as the percentage of low-income students in a school rises, the decrease is lower in schools with alternative breakfast models. Alternative SBP model schools with 80% low-income students have 9.7% more students achieving math proficiency than similar "traditional" model schools.

*A student who achieves proficiency has met a threshold on state-wide tests to demonstrate grade-level math skills.



[20] The analysis was conducted using data from Maryland State Report Card (2010) and Maryland Meals for Achievement (2010).

[21] The Maryland State Department of Education considered students who have missed more than 20 days of class between September and June of a school year to be "chronically absent"

Federal food programs such as SBP are essential in the fight to end childhood hunger. Giving school breakfast to a low-income child does more than just provide essential nutrition to which they might not otherwise have access; school breakfast can also improve a student's ability to focus in class, excel at their school work, and increase their likelihood to attend class, thereby raising their chance of obtaining a high school diploma. By increasing access to breakfast through alternative breakfast models, schools can reach more free/reduced-eligible students who are vulnerable to food insecurity, and consequently improve their chances at leading healthier lives, achieving higher academic performance, and avoiding food insecurity in adulthood.

About Share Our Strength

No child should grow up hungry in America, but one in five children struggles with hunger. Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry® campaign is ending childhood hunger in America by ensuring all children get the healthy food they need, every day. The No Kid Hungry campaign connects kids in need to effective nutrition programs like school breakfast and summer meals and teaches low-income families to cook healthy, affordable meals through Cooking Matters. This work is accomplished through the No Kid Hungry network, made up of private citizens, public officials, nonprofits, business leaders and others providing innovative hunger solutions in their communities. Join us at NoKidHungry.org.

About Deloitte Community Involvement

Deloitte helps its communities thrive by leveraging innovative thinking to strengthen nonprofit capacity by helping with strategic, operational and financial challenges, so nonprofits can help more people and communities faster and better; complementing innovative thinking with an investment of financial resources at the national and regional level; and creating and sharing new research, content and insights on ways organizations can leverage skills-based volunteerism.

Copyright © 2013 Deloitte Development LLC. All rights reserved.
Member of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited

MARS
incorporated

6885 Elm Street
McLean, VA 22101
T+1 703 821 4900
F+1 703 448 9678

April 14, 2015

The Honorable John Kline
Education and the Workforce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Testimony for Consideration by the House Education and Workforce Committee Regarding Child Nutrition Programs

Dear Chairman Kline:

As the Education and the Workforce Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives considers federal child nutrition programs, Mars, Incorporated (Mars) is pleased to submit this written testimony regarding our support for strong school nutrition standards under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Mars, Incorporated is a private, family-owned business with more than a century of history and some of the best-loved brands in the world including M&M'S®, PEDIGREE®, DOUBLEMINT®, and UNCLE BEN'S®. Headquartered in McLean, VA, Mars has more than $33 billion in sales from six diverse business segments: Petcare, Chocolate, Wrigley, Food, Drinks, and Symbioscience. More than 75,000 Associates across 73 countries are united by the company's Five Principles: Quality, Efficiency, Responsibility, Mutuality, and Freedom, and they strive every day to create relationships with stakeholders that deliver growth we are proud of as a company.

Mars is committed to being a leader in health and nutrition, and has voluntarily initiated numerous efforts to further health and nutrition goals, including adoption of an industry-leading Marketing Code in 2008, under which we do not advertise to children under the age of 12, and global adoption of front-of-pack Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) labeling on the bulk of our chocolate, food and sugar confectionery products.

Mars strongly supports the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) updated nutrition standards for school lunch and breakfast programs, as well as school vending and a la carte lines. Our national childhood obesity epidemic requires that industry and government work together to help individuals make meaningful changes in their diet and exercise habits to improve overall health. A key component of this effort is strong school nutrition standards that help school children identify and become accustomed to healthy meal, snack, and beverage options.

In 2008-2010, Mars worked closely with Congress in support of its efforts to reauthorize the national school lunch and breakfast programs, including testifying before the Senate Agriculture Committee in 2009 in support of updated school nutrition standards for snacks sold in schools. Additionally, Mars supported USDA's recent final rules implementing stronger nutrition standards for the school lunch and breakfast programs and school snacks. The Department's recommendations on sodium reduction and consumption of whole grains, in particular, are consistent with initiatives Mars has undertaken to reduce sodium in its products and develop diverse whole grain rice products under the UNCLE BEN'S® brand. In addition, Mars believes the Smart Snacks rule sets reasonable nutrition criteria for foods sold in vending machines and a la carte lines. As such, **Mars opposes any effort by Congress to roll back the school nutrition standards USDA established in the Smart Snacks interim final rule or the final rule for the school lunch and breakfast programs, including the later phase-ins of these standards.**

I. Mars Supports Strong Sodium Standards in School Nutrition Programs

Mars supports USDA's sodium reduction standards for school meals, and considers these milestones to be achievable and critically important to ensuring improved cardiovascular health of school students over time.

In 2010, Mars Food was one of the first food manufacturers to sign on to the National Salt Reduction Initiative (NSRI). Led by New York City, the NSRI is a coalition of more than 90 cities, states, and national health organizations that are working to help food manufacturers and restaurants voluntarily reduce the amount of salt in their products. The goal is to reduce Americans' salt intake by 20% over five years. The NSRI is a model for how voluntary public/private partnerships can bring about meaningful change in the food industry and now includes commitments from 28 companies to reduce sodium content in their products.

Under the NSRI, Mars Food voluntarily committed to reduce sodium in its UNCLE BEN'S® flavored rice products in accordance with NSRI standards. (The company's other varieties of UNCLE BEN'S® brand rice products, and the organic Seeds of Change® pasta sauce, simmer sauce and salad dressings, already met NSRI standards.) Since joining the NSRI, Mars Food has successfully met its 2012 and 2014 sodium reduction targets, reducing sodium content across our global portfolio by an average of 25%.

As part of Mars Food's nutrition and wellness strategy, we have been committed to making meaningful sodium reductions without compromising the great taste our consumers expect as they continue to seek healthier food choices. We will continue to work with school foodservice and nutrition staff to identify options, including our plain white and brown rice, and mixed and flavored grain products, that can be incorporated into school meals as part of foodservice recipes. We believe USDA's school nutrition standards will have a meaningful impact on student health and justify continued industry efforts to further the development of lower-sodium products for schools. As such, we support implementation of all phases of USDA's sodium standards for school nutrition programs, as mandated in USDA's final rule on school lunch and breakfast standards.

II. Mars Supports Strong Whole Grain Standards in School Nutrition Programs

Mars supports USDA's whole grain standards for school meals, including the longer term goal that all grains served in schools be whole grain-rich. We believe that industry should be a constructive player in working to provide high-quality, tasty whole-grain products that schools are seeking and that can be used in a variety of ways to meet USDA standards. Mars Food has been an industry leader in the development of whole grain rice products, including whole grain brown rice, flavored whole grain brown rice, and mixed whole grain offerings. Today, 34% of the Mars Food North America portfolio is comprised of whole grains, including 46 Stock Keeping Units (SKUs) that offer 100% whole grain. Nearly 83% of our SKUs contain 48 grams (dry) or more whole grains in one serving, meeting the total daily recommended amount of whole grains. Additionally, Mars continues to serve as a resource to school nutrition and foodservice staff who are seeking to meet USDA standards in new and different ways, and we believe that USDA's whole grain standards are achievable. As such, we support the continued implementation of USDA whole grain standards in school nutrition programs.

III. Mars Supports USDA's Smart Snacks Rule

As noted above, Mars is very supportive of USDA's Smart Snacks rule governing the nutritional content of snacks sold in schools, despite that fact that a majority of our confection offerings do not qualify for sale in schools under the rule. We believe our products can be enjoyed in moderation as part of a healthy diet, yet we support USDA's efforts to limit their availability in school vending machines. We are particularly supportive of USDA's decision to allow the sale of sugar-free gum in schools given the numerous studies demonstrating that chewing sugarless gum within 20 minutes of eating can help reduce cavities. As a whole, we believe the Smart Snacks rule is an important component of a stronger school nutrition program for today's school children. As such, we support the continued implementation of the Smart Snacks rule and have

participated in public/private dialogues regarding how industry can work in partnership with schools to implement the program successfully.

IV. Conclusion

Mars understands that the implementation of USDA's school nutrition standards may increase costs for some schools or present other challenges for schools seeking to meet these standards. However, we do not believe that a rollback of these standards is the appropriate way to address these challenges. Instead, we believe industry has a role to play in working with school nutrition staff, parents, students, and other stakeholders to identify options that meet these standards and develop creative recipes that children will enjoy. The health of our children is too important to retreat from important efforts initiated several years ago to strengthen school nutrition standards.

Mars appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of existing USDA school nutrition standards, and thanks the Committee for its careful attention to these issues. We would be pleased to serve as a resource to the Committee as you continue to review child nutrition programs.

Sincerely,

Brad Figel
Vice President, North America Public Affairs

Testimony before the House Education and Workforce Committee
On behalf of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)
April 15, 2015

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is the leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. FRAC has worked with Members of Congress for decades to improve and strengthen the federal child nutrition programs through the reauthorization, appropriations, budget, and oversight processes. We also work extensively with federal, state, and local government agencies, schools, private nonprofits, health providers, low-income communities and other stakeholders to ensure that the programs reach the children who need them. We appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony and share our thoughts on the strengths of the programs as well as ways to make critical new investments to strengthen and improve them.

The upcoming child nutrition reauthorization provides the House Education and Workforce Committee an opportunity to improve access to quality, nutritious meals for millions of low-income children in school through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, during out-of-school time through the Afterschool and Summer Nutrition Programs, and in child care through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and to support pregnant women and young children through WIC. These federal child nutrition programs are successful and cost-effective and play a critical role in in reducing hunger, improving health, and supporting educational achievement.

We encourage the Committee to work with other Members of Congress and the Administration to invest significant new funding to develop a child nutrition reauthorization bill that: assures and strengthens program access and supports participation by underserved children and communities; ensures nutrition quality; and simplifies program administration and operation. The 2015 reauthorization also must maintain the critical gains made in the last reauthorization, including the improvements in the school meals nutrition standards and the overall school nutrition environment.

Maintaining Nutrition Standards

FRAC strongly supports maintaining the new nutrition standards for the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs, as well as the new standards for foods sold in schools during the school day outside the school meals programs (commonly called competitive foods). The new standards are vital to the health and learning of the nearly 32 million children who eat school lunch each day, and the nearly 14 million who eat school breakfast. Of the students who eat lunch at school, more than 20 million are from low-income families and receive free or reduced-price meals. These students rely on school meals, and the new standards improve nutrition shortfalls and help address the nation's obesity problem.

Most schools across the county, 93 percent of those participating in the National School Lunch Program, have certified that they have implemented the new school nutrition standards. The new school nutrition standards may present some challenges, but USDA is aggressively working to help districts make the transition as smoothly as possible, including by implementing reimbursements to help schools with any increased costs. School districts that certify that they meet the new standards receive an additional 6 cents per meal reimbursement. As of June 2014, 93 percent of all school districts nationwide had implemented the new standards and had started receiving this reimbursement.

The new standards are important to parents—a majority of parents support the new standards, according to a poll released by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Heart Association. Seventy-two percent favor national school meal standards and school

snack standards. The support cut across racial and political lines, with 68 percent of whites, 85 percent of Hispanics and 91 percent of African-Americans supporting the standards, and 56 percent of Republicans, 71 percent of independents and 84 percent of Democrats supporting the standards.

The new standards have not caused a reduction in participation in school lunch or breakfast. Rather, a recent FRAC report, *National School Lunch Program: Trends and Factors Affecting Participation*, showed that more low-income children are participating in school lunch. This growth trend began in the 2007-2008 school year, driven by an increase of children eligible for free school meals due to the recession and on-going improvements to the process that certifies eligible children for free school meals. The growth trend continued as the new nutrition standards were being implemented. Participation among moderate and higher income children began decreasing across the same time frame, dropping an average of five percent each school year until the 2013-2014 school year. The decreasing participation among children paying for their own lunches began five years prior to the implementation of the new nutrition standards, driven by the recession and by significant increases in school lunch fees for children not eligible for free or reduced-price meals. FRAC's report *School Breakfast Program: Trends and Factors Affecting Student Participation* took a similar look at school breakfast participation and found that breakfast participation among low-income students continued to grow and participation among higher income students remained flat during the same period. In both school lunch and breakfast, therefore, the new standards have not changed the trajectory of participation, and that trajectory is one of increased participation.

And most importantly, the improved school nutrition standards are getting healthier meals to students, many of whom rely on school food for half their daily caloric intake. For example, according to one study from the Harvard School of Public Health looking at a number of schools, the new standards increased fruit selection by 23 percent, and increased vegetable consumption by 16 percent per student. The study also found the new standards did not result in increased average plate waste per student.

Improving Access to School Meals

In addition to maintaining the new nutrition standards, the Committee can make important new investments in school meals to increase access for low-income students. The reauthorization can increase low-income children's access to school meals by eliminating the reduced-price copayment for lunch and breakfast, thereby removing a significant barrier to near-poor families. The Committee also should take steps to ensure that eligible children are certified for free school meals by increasing the use of direct certification, which uses participation in other federal means-tested programs to certify low-income children for free school meals. The list of federal programs that can be used for direct certification can be expanded, and requiring direct certification for children in households participating in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and the Food Distribution Program for Indian Reservations (as is required for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and better systems to qualify other children, such as foster and homeless children, automatically eligible for free meals would allow more eligible children to receive free school meals.

The School Breakfast Program reduces hunger and improves nutrition, classroom behavior, test scores, grades, and school attendance, yet only half of the low-income children who participate in school lunch participate in school breakfast. Requiring all Title I schools to provide breakfast (and lunch) would help increase school breakfast (and lunch) participation. In addition, expansion of breakfast programs, including programs in high poverty schools that offer free breakfast to all students and in-classroom programs, ensure that many more of them begin the day with the nutrition they need to succeed. The policies listed above that would increase the certification of eligible children for free school meals will allow more high poverty schools to offer breakfast for free to all students.

Expanding Access to Afterschool and Summer Meals
The afterschool and summer nutrition programs provide children with meals and snacks in schools, local government agencies, and nonprofit organizations, often combined with enriching recreational and educational activities. The meals draw children into educational and enrichment activities ensuring that children are learning, safe, and active, while their parents are working. Both programs serve too small a fraction of children who participate in the school nutrition programs. Aligning the eligibility requirements with those used for the underlying (not nutrition related) federal funding for afterschool and summer programs (through 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Schoolwide Title I programs), streamlining program operations to reduce unnecessary red tape, providing funding for transportation, and allowing all sites to serve three meals (as is allowed during the school year) will have a dramatic impact on access. These opportunities are outlined in the bi-partisan Summer Meals Act (H.R. 1728, S. 613) introduced by Reps. Don Young (R-AK) and Rick Larsen (D-WA) and Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). In addition, providing a Summer EBT card to children in low-income families in areas (such as rural areas) that are underserved by the Summer Nutrition Programs will help to reduce summer hunger.

Improving Access to Meals in Child Care
The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides funding to serve healthy meals to children in child care. It not only supports good nutrition, but helps improve the quality of child care, helping children to develop fully and enter school ready to learn while allowing parents to work. Investments in CACFP can help to reduce hunger, reduce childhood overweight and obesity, improve child nutrition and wellness, and enhance child development and school readiness. Ways to ensure more young children have access to the nutritious meals available through CACFP include improving the area eligibility test, increasing CACFP reimbursements, enhancing CACFP sponsors funding, and providing 2 year implementation funds to state CACFP agencies.

Ensuring Access to WIC
The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides low-income at-risk pregnant and postpartum mothers and young children with critical nutrition services, health and social service referrals, and culturally appropriate nutritious foods that contribute to their overall health and well-being. Assuring access to WIC contributes to healthy pregnancies, improved birth outcomes, positive impacts on the incidence of childhood overweight and obesity, improved readiness for school, and reduced health care costs. It is critical for Congress to support WIC's current eligibility rules and nutritional support so that women, infants and young children continue to experience the full complement of WIC's health benefits.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments.

[Additional submission by Ms. Wilson follows:]

Congresswoman Frederica Wilson
Statement for the Record
"Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs" The Committee on Education and the Workforce
Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Thank you to the Chair and Ranking Member for this hearing.

As a lifelong educator and longtime school principal, I know how important it is for a child to have healthy, nutrient-rich foods to help them learn and grow.
I also know that children do not like the thought of eating vegetables, so we have to make food fun and interesting for them.

- Salad bars are an innovative way for children to get the healthy foods they need.
- We know that when schools have salad bars, children *try* new fruits and vegetables. And when children try these new foods they incorporate their new favorites into their diets and develop the healthy habits that will last them a whole lifetime.
- We also know that when schools have salad bars, children consume *more* fruit and vegetables. According to the CDC, children who have access to salad bars eat three times more fruits and vegetables.

As a former principal, I also know that salad bars are also great for schools and address many concerns that my colleagues have with the child nutrition standards.

- Salad bars reduce waste because, although children are trying new fruits and vegetables, they only choose the items that they want, leading to less food left over on their plates.
- And when students see the new and exciting foods on salad bars, more children participate in the school lunch program, which can mean more paid lunches and more revenue for schools.
- Salad bars can also mean schools will not need to purchase as many entrees, and these savings can offset start up costs.
- Salad bars are also a great way for schools to meet the new nutritional standards for fruits and vegetables. Schools can use salad bars as part of their reimbursable meal or make the salad bars their entire reimbursable meal.

We know that salad bars work because of the success of programs like "Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools," which was founded in support of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiative. This program has been working since 2010 to provide the equipment and training schools need to make salad bars part of their food service programs. As of late February, this organization has donated 4,000 salad bars that serve more than 2 million children a day. Almost half of these children are eligible for federal free and reduced lunch.

Salad bars have also been endorsed by the USDA and the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity.

We know that they work. But only 17% of schools use salad bars. We must do more to ensure more schools can use this innovative tool to provide more children with more nutritious food.

We must ensure that Child Nutrition Act reauthorization encourages schools to develop salad bars.

[Questions submitted for the record and their responses follow:]

MAJORITY MEMBERS:

JOHN KLINE, MINNESOTA, *Chairman*

THOMAS E. PETRI, WISCONSIN
HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, CALIFORNIA
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
TOM PRICE, GEORGIA
KENNY MARCHANT, TEXAS
DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA
DAVID P. ROE, TENNESSEE
GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN
MATT SALMON, ARIZONA
BRETT GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY
SCOTT DESJARLAIS, TENNESSEE
TODD ROKITA, INDIANA
LARRY BUCSHON, INDIANA
LOU BARLETTA, PENNSYLVANIA
JOSEPH J. HECK, NEVADA
MIKE KELLY, PENNSYLVANIA
SUSAN W. BROOKS, INDIANA
RICHARD HUDSON, NORTH CAROLINA
LUKE MESSER, INDIANA
BRADLEY BYRNE, ALABAMA

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

MINORITY MEMBERS:

GEORGE MILLER, CALIFORNIA
Senior Democratic Member

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA
RUBÉN HINOJOSA, TEXAS
CAROLYN McCARTHY, NEW YORK
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS
RUSH HOLT, NEW JERSEY
SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP, NEW YORK
DAVID LOEBSACK, IOWA
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT
MARCIA L. FUDGE, OHIO
JARED POLIS, COLORADO
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
FREDERICA S. WILSON, FLORIDA
SUZANNE BONAMICI, OREGON
MARK POCAN, WISCONSIN
MARK TAKANO, CALIFORNIA

July 13, 2015

Ms. Julia Bauscher
President, School Nutrition Association
Director, School and Community Nutrition Services
Jefferson County Public School District
Louisville, KY 40209

Dear Ms. Bauscher:

Thank you for testifying at the April 15, 2015, hearing on "Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs." I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by members of the Committee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than Monday, August 3, 2015, for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Matthew Frame of the Committee staff, and he can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you, again, for your important contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

John Kline

JOHN KLINE
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce

Rep. Adams (D-NC)

1. Ms. Bauscher, until recently, your organization was a strong supporter of HHFKA and its nutritional regulations. Has the change in the demographic of your organization's members or in your resource of funding precipitated this change to return to the era of unregulated, low-nutrition and poor health advice for our students?

2. It appears that you are dedicated to ending hunger for children, yet there are differences on avenues on how to reach this goal. Yet regardless of the strategy which we may adopt to feed children during the school day, there is still a gap in service for children once school is out, particularly during the summer. Without going into detail about the specifics of the nutrition of the food, what are some ways that we can expand access to summer meals for low-income or impoverished students? For instance, in my district, only about 14 percent of low-income students are getting summer meals. Do you all know if this a gap in knowledge of the program or a gap in the delivery of the program?

3. In my district there are several Summer Food Service Program sites, especially in the Charlotte metropolitan area. However, much of my district is rural, and therefore children in poverty are deemed to live in "ineligible" areas due to a decreased population density. But the quality of a child's meal or their access to programs that they would otherwise be eligible for should not depend on their zip code. Can you describe some ways that we can expand the Summer Food Program to those students in areas that lack access to metro hubs or even transportation to the program sites?

MAJORITY MEMBERS:

JOHN KLINE, MINNESOTA, *Chairman*

THOMAS E. PETRI, WISCONSIN
HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, CALIFORNIA
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
TOM PRICE, GEORGIA
KEVIN McCARTHY, TEXAS
DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA
DAVID P. ROE, TENNESSEE
GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN
MATT SALMON, ARIZONA
BRETT GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY
SCOTT DesJARLAIS, TENNESSEE
TODD ROKITA, INDIANA
LARRY BUCSHON, INDIANA
LOU BARLETTA, PENNSYLVANIA
JOSEPH J. HECK, NEVADA
MIKE KELLY, PENNSYLVANIA
SUSAN W. BROOKS, INDIANA
RICHARD HUDSON, NORTH CAROLINA
LUKE MESSER, INDIANA
BRADLEY BYRNE, ALABAMA

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6100

MINORITY MEMBERS:

GEORGE MILLER, CALIFORNIA
Senior Democratic Member

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA
RUBEN HINOJOSA, TEXAS
CAROLYN McCARTHY, NEW YORK
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS
RUSH HOLT, NEW JERSEY
SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA
RAUL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP, NEW YORK
DAVID LOEBSACK, IOWA
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT
MARCIA L. FUDGE, OHIO
JARED POLIS, COLORADO
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
FREDERICA S. WILSON, FLORIDA
SUZANNE BONAMICI, OREGON
MARK POCAN, WISCONSIN
MARK TAKANO, CALIFORNIA

July 13, 2015

Dr. Kathy Krey
Director of Research and Assistant Research Professor
Texas Hunger Initiative
Baylor University
One Bear Place #97120
Waco, TX 76798

Dear Dr. Krey:

Thank you for testifying at the April 15, 2015, hearing on "Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs." I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by members of the Committee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than Monday, August 3, 2015, for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Matthew Frame of the Committee staff, and he can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you, again, for your important contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

John Kline

JOHN KLINE
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce

Rep. Adams (D-NC)

1. It appears that you are dedicated to ending hunger for children, yet there are differences on avenues on how to reach this goal. Yet regardless of the strategy which we may adopt to feed children during the school day, there is still a gap in service for children once school is out, particularly during the summer. Without going into detail about the specifics of the nutrition of the food, what are some ways that we can expand access to summer meals for low-income or impoverished students? For instance, in my district, only about 14 percent of low-income students are getting summer meals. Do you all know if this a gap in knowledge of the program or a gap in the delivery of the program?

2. In my district there are several Summer Food Service Program sites, especially in the Charlotte metropolitan area. However, much of my district is rural, and therefore children in poverty are deemed to live in "ineligible" areas due to a decreased population density. But the quality of a child's meal or their access to programs that they would otherwise be eligible for should not depend on their zip code. Can you describe some ways that we can expand the Summer Food Program to those students in areas that lack access to metro hubs or even transportation to the program sites?

MAJORITY MEMBERS:

JOHN KLINE, MINNESOTA, *Chairman*

THOMAS E. PETRI, WISCONSIN
HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, CALIFORNIA
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
TOM PRICE, GEORGIA
KENNY MARCHANT, TEXAS
DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA
DAVID P. ROE, TENNESSEE
GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN
MATT SALMON, ARIZONA
BRETT GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY
SCOTT DESJARLAIS, TENNESSEE
TODD ROKITA, INDIANA
LARRY BUCSHON, INDIANA
LOU BARLETTA, PENNSYLVANIA
JOSEPH J. HECK, NEVADA
MIKE KELLY, PENNSYLVANIA
SUSAN W. BROOKS, INDIANA
RICHARD HUDSON, NORTH CAROLINA
LUKE MESSER, INDIANA
BRADLEY BYRNE, ALABAMA

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6100

MINORITY MEMBERS:

GEORGE MILLER, CALIFORNIA
Senior Democratic Member

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA
RUBEN HINOJOSA, TEXAS
CAROLYN McCARTHY, NEW YORK
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS
RUSH HOLT, NEW JERSEY
SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP, NEW YORK
DAVID LOEBSACK, IOWA
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT
MARCIA L. FUDGE, OHIO
JARED POLIS, COLORADO
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN,
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
FREDERICA S. WILSON, FLORIDA
SUZANNE BONAMICI, OREGON
MARK POCAN, WISCONSIN
MARK TAKANO, CALIFORNIA

July 13, 2015

Mrs. Dorothy S. McAuliffe
First Lady of Virginia
Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mrs. McAuliffe:

Thank you for testifying at the April 15, 2015, hearing on "Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs." I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by members of the Committee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than Monday, August 3, 2015, for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Matthew Frame of the Committee staff, and he can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you, again, for your important contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

John Kline

JOHN KLINE
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce

Rep. Adams (D-NC)

1. It appears that you are dedicated to ending hunger for children, yet there are differences on avenues on how to reach this goal. Yet regardless of the strategy which we may adopt to feed children during the school day, there is still a gap in service for children once school is out, particularly during the summer. Without going into detail about the specifics of the nutrition of the food, what are some ways that we can expand access to summer meals for low-income or impoverished students? For instance, in my district, only about 14 percent of low-income students are getting summer meals. Do you all know if this a gap in knowledge of the program or a gap in the delivery of the program?

2. In my district there are several Summer Food Service Program sites, especially in the Charlotte metropolitan area. However, much of my district is rural, and therefore children in poverty are deemed to live in "ineligible" areas due to a decreased population density. But the quality of a child's meal or their access to programs that they would otherwise be eligible for should not depend on their zip code. Can you describe some ways that we can expand the Summer Food Program to those students in areas that lack access to metro hubs or even transportation to the program sites?

MAJORITY MEMBERS:

JOHN KLINE, MINNESOTA, *Chairman*

THOMAS E. PETRI, WISCONSIN
HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, CALIFORNIA
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
TOM PRICE, GEORGIA
KENNY MARCHANT, TEXAS
DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA
DAVID P. ROE, TENNESSEE
GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN
MATT SALMON, ARIZONA
BRETT GUTHRIE, KENTUCKY
SCOTT DesJARLAIS, TENNESSEE
TODD ROKITA, INDIANA
LARRY BUCSHON, INDIANA
LOU BARLETTA, PENNSYLVANIA
JOSEPH J. HECK, NEVADA
MIKE KELLY, PENNSYLVANIA
SUSAN W. BROOKS, INDIANA
RICHARD HUDSON, NORTH CAROLINA
LUKE MESSER, INDIANA
BRADLEY BYRNE, ALABAMA

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6100

MINORITY MEMBERS:

GEORGE MILLER, CALIFORNIA
Senior Democratic Member

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA
RUBÉN HINOJOSA, TEXAS
CAROLYN McCARTHY, NEW YORK
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS
RUSH HOLT, NEW JERSEY
SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, ARIZONA
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP, NEW YORK
DAVID LOEBSACK, IOWA
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT
MARCIA L. FUDGE, OHIO
JARED POLIS, COLORADO
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN,
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
FREDERICA S. WILSON, FLORIDA
SUZANNE BONAMICI, OREGON
MARK POCAN, WISCONSIN
MARK TAKANO, CALIFORNIA

July 13, 2015

Mr. Duke Storen
Senior Director, Research, Advocacy, and Partner Development
Share our Strength
1030 15th Street, N.W., 11th Floor West
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Storen:

Thank you for testifying at the April 15, 2015, hearing on "Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs." I appreciate your participation.

Enclosed are additional questions submitted by members of the Committee after the hearing. Please provide written responses no later than Monday, August 3, 2015, for inclusion in the final hearing record. Responses should be sent to Matthew Frame of the Committee staff, and he can be contacted at (202) 225-6558.

Thank you, again, for your important contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

John Kline

JOHN KLINE
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce

Rep. Adams (D-NC)

1. It appears that you are dedicated to ending hunger for children, yet there are differences on avenues on how to reach this goal. Yet regardless of the strategy which we may adopt to feed children during the school day, there is still a gap in service for children once school is out, particularly during the summer. Without going into detail about the specifics of the nutrition of the food, what are some ways that we can expand access to summer meals for low-income or impoverished students? For instance, in my district, only about 14 percent of low-income students are getting summer meals. Do you all know if this a gap in knowledge of the program or a gap in the delivery of the program?

2. In my district there are several Summer Food Service Program sites, especially in the Charlotte metropolitan area. However, much of my district is rural, and therefore children in poverty are deemed to live in "ineligible" areas due to a decreased population density. But the quality of a child's meal or their access to programs that they would otherwise be eligible for should not depend on their zip code. Can you describe some ways that we can expand the Summer Food Program to those students in areas that lack access to metro hubs or even transportation to the program sites?

[Dr. Krey response to questions submitted for the record follow:]

Representative Adams,

Thank you for your questions. In your first question (*what are some ways that we can expand access to summer meals for low-income or impoverished students?)*, you brought attention to a very important issue. Throughout Texas, we have noticed that there is a large gap between students participating in school feeding programs and those participating in summer meals. There are many ways to improve access to assistance during the summer.

Public-private partnerships among state agencies, schools, nonprofits, and congregations stretch child nutrition program resources and funding while decreasing access barriers and encouraging family and community involvement. The USDA has conducted and studied pilots that include enhancements to the summer meals program. Texas was a pilot state in USDA's demonstration to study alternative approaches to providing food assistance to children in the summer months. According to their findings, the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC) improves food security outcomes among children and families. The study demonstrates that an allotment of $30 a month reduced very low food security among children.[1] Other pilots in the demonstration included enhancements to the administration and delivery of summer meals program through alternatives like take-home backpack and meal delivery programs.[2]

As you highlighted in your second question (*do you all know if this is a gap in knowledge of the program or a gap in the delivery of the program?)*, there are gaps in both the knowledge and delivery of the program.

In regards to knowledge, parents may be unaware of the presence of summer meal sites. Normally, schools utilize various methods to inform parents about summer meal sites. Some schools send fliers home in the children's backpacks and many different media outlets are used to disseminate information. Furthermore, state agencies and nonprofits provide hotlines, call centers, and site finders so that families can easily find the location of local meal sites. However, site locations can change from year to year, so it is important that parents and students are informed about meal site locations each year.

The delivery of the program also affects participation in summer meals. Transportation can be a significant barrier for low-income families who may only own one car. Working parents need this vehicle to transport them to and from work, and many parents work during the day, so they can't take their children to meal sites. Many of the children eligible for summer meals are too young to use public transportation, and many of the affected communities lack a public transportation infrastructure which can be particularly problematic when sites are not always accessibly located.

Your third question, (*can you describe some ways that we can expand the Summer Food Service Program to those students in areas that lack access to metro hubs or even*

transportation to the program sites?) points to the important work that is being done to address rural and transportation barriers.

To remedy the transportation barrier, summer meal sites are strategically positioned to be easily accessible to children. In Texas, we use administrative and demographic data to prioritize areas of high need. In urban areas, summer meal sites are often located in housing complexes so children can easily walk down to the meal site from their apartments. However, even though meal sites may be within walking distance of children's home, some parents are still uncomfortable with allowing their children to walk to the sites by themselves. Especially in communities with high rates of violence, it may be dangerous for children to be walking alone on the streets.

Rural communities also face unique challenges. Since the population is dispersed, finding a centrally accessible meal site is difficult. While there remain challenges for these areas, mobile meals sites and partnerships with the USDA Rural Development, Department of Transportation and Rural Transit are presenting promising opportunities for serving more children in need. It is important to invest in alternative approaches to providing food assistance during the summer months, so that children living in remote locations can receive meals. When sites have autonomy to determine which model is appropriate, we are promoting safer and more practical programming particularly when operating in rural areas, when there are severe weather or heat advisories, or when neighborhood safety is a concern.

References

[1]Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC) Demonstration: Evaluation Findings for the Third Implementation Year. 2013 Final Report. November 2014. http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ops/sebtc2013.pdf

[2]Report on the Summer Food for Children Demonstration Projects for Fiscal Year 2013. U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, A Report to Congress. December 2013.
http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SEBTC_2013.pdf

[Mrs. McAuliffe response to questions submitted follows:]

Dorothy S. McAuliffe
First Lady of Virginia

August 26, 2015

Honorable Alma Adams
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6100

Dear Rep. Adams,

Thank you for your questions and your interest in expanding access to nutrition assistance for children during the summer. You are absolutely correct that summer represents a stark nutrition gap for many kids. Unfortunately, the current Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is structured in a way that makes it challenging to reach more than a small percentage of the children who rely on free and reduced price meals during the school year. Your district's participation rate of 14 percent is similar to Virginia's as a whole. I believe your first and second questions are very closely related so I will attempt to address both of them simultaneously.

It is simply too challenging for most children to travel to a congregate feeding site each day, when the closest site is often several miles away, and children do not have adequate transportation or parental supervision. In many communities, there is also a safety concern with asking children to leave their immediate neighborhoods to attend a site. We have seen mobile programs achieve success in many rural and urban communities by taking food directly within multiple low-income neighborhoods each day. Other sites are able to serve large numbers of children through partnerships with enrichment programs facilitated by local libraries or non-profits. Still, the congregate feeding regulation, requiring children to eat their entire meals on-site, severely limits the universe of site locations to those with sufficient facilities, staff, and food storage capacity. We know that we could reach many more children, especially those who live in rural areas, by providing flexibility around the congregate meal requirement.

You are also correct to note that there are high numbers of food insecure children who live in ineligible areas where the Free and Reduced Meal participation rate is below 50%. It would certainly be helpful to lower the eligibility floor to 40%, but we would still need a way to provide for those below that mark, whatever number is agreed to. Summer EBT and non-congregate models would work well in these communities, both of which are included in the Hunger-Free Summer for Kids Act recently introduced by a bi-partisan group in the US Senate.

Finally, I want to acknowledge that program awareness among food insecure families is a barrier to participation as well. We are partnering with Share Our Strength to advertise a texting service that will provide the location of the closest summer feeding sites. More can be done to encourage schools,

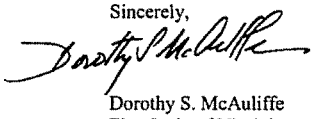
Patrick Henry Building | 1111 East Broad Street | Richmond, Virginia 23219
dorothy.mcauliffe@governor.virginia.gov | www.firstlady.governor.virginia.gov | 804-663-7490

The illustration above is inspired by the Rawlins friezes in the New Room at Mount Vernon, chosen to honor Virginia's agricultural legacy and the great bounty produced by our farmers, as well as to recognize efforts to bridge the nutritional divide in our Commonwealth.

municipalities, and state agencies to promote the program to families in need. Until access can be assured to *every* child in need, though, marketing and outreach can only do so much.

Please don't hesitate to let me know if my office or I can be of any further assistance to you. Thank you for your advocacy in support of hungry children.

Sincerely,



Dorothy S. McAuliffe
First Lady of Virginia

[Mr. Storen response to questions submitted follows:]

1050 15TH STREET NW, SUITE 1000W
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
TEL 800 959 4767
FAX 202 347 5869
NOKIDHUNGRY.ORG

Questions related to the April 15th hearing: "Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs"

Response to Representative Adams (D-NC)

Duke Storen, Share Our Strength

Combined Answer to Questions #1 and #2

The low participation in summer nutrition programs is due to multiple factors predominately related to program structure. Nationally one-third, and in North Carolina 22 percent of all low-income children live in communities that cannot operate open summer feeding sites. Additionally, the Summer Food Service Program requires kids to travel to meal sites which open only for a short time each day and consume those meals on premises. Unlike the school year when school buses run and kids eat lunch in the cafeteria, the transportation barriers make it impossible for most kids to find their way to a meal site and impossible for sites to stay open because there are not enough kids.

Fortunately, we know how to fix this problem. Starting in 2011, USDA has been testing alternative ways to feed kids during the summer, and the results of those demonstration projects provide common sense program options that can meet the needs of children in rural America. These options include allowing programs to deliver meals to kids instead of making kids come to meals and giving low-income parents additional funds on their SNAP or WIC cards so they can purchase additional food for their children during the summer. The evaluations of these program options shows that they were able to reach more needy children and that those children consumed more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy. Adding these program options - referred to as "summer EBT" and "offsite meals" - to the current program model would provide community organizations, local governments, and state agencies the flexibility to meet the unique needs of their communities and to help the program reach those children not currently living in communities that operate any summer meals site.

NOKIDHUNGRY

1. School Nutrition Association (SNA) members have been offering more whole grains, fruits, vegetables and other healthy options in the cafeteria - long before the first requirements under the new federal nutrition standards took effect in 2012. SNA is proud of this progress and supports strong federal nutrition standards for school meals and snacks, including limits on calories and unhealthy fats and mandates to offer a wide variety of produce with school meals *(see requirements shaded in green in the chart on page 2)*.

Although the new nutrition standards have brought many positive changes to school meals, some of the rules have drastically increased the cost of preparing school meals and resulted in a decline in student participation. Combined, these factors threaten the financial sustainability of many school meal programs and limit their ability to invest in innovative, appealing menus that can entice students back to the cafeteria to eat healthier school meals. For this reason, SNA is advocating for increased funding and reasonable flexibility under a few of the most stringent rules.

USDA estimates that as a result of the new rules local school districts and states must absorb $1.2 billion in new food and labor costs in Fiscal Year 2015 alone. These estimated increases in food and labor costs are equivalent to adding about 10 cents to the cost of preparing each reimbursable school lunch and about 27 cents for each reimbursable breakfast in FY 2015. Congress only provided schools an additional 6 cents for each lunch to meet the new standards, and no funding for breakfast.

The decline in student lunch participation under the new standards adds to the financial pressure on school meal programs by reducing revenue when costs are rising. On a national level, USDA data shows that more than a million fewer students choose school lunch each day since 2012, when the new standards took effect. The Government Accountability Office affirmed that the new standards influenced this decline in participation.

As a result of these factors, a recent SNA survey found that more than half of school meal program operators surveyed anticipated that their program expenses would exceed revenue in the 2014-15 school year. Only 18% anticipated their programs will break even, while 29% were unsure if costs will exceed revenue. Meal programs are prohibited from carrying loses over from one school year to the next. When these programs can't cover their costs, school districts must pick up the tab, to the detriment of all students.

SNA's requests will protect school meal programs and help students adjust to and accept healthy changes in the cafeteria.

[Ms. Bauscher response to questions submitted follows:]

New Requirements *School Nutrition Association supports mandates shaded in green and opposes mandates shaded in red.*	Implementation School Year for National School Lunch Program (L) and School Breakfast Program (B)				
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2017/18	2022/23
Fruits/Vegetables Component					
Offer both fruit and vegetable daily	L				
Fruit/Vegetable quantity increase	L		B		
Offer vegetables subgroups weekly (dark green, red/orange, legumes)	L				
Students must take a fruit or vegetable with each reimbursable meal (1/2 cup min)	L		B		
Grains Component					
Half of grains must be whole grain-rich	L	B			
All grains must be whole grain-rich			L / B		
Dietary Specifications (to be met on average over a week)					
Calorie ranges	L	B			
Saturated fat limit (no change)	L / B				
Zero grams of trans fat per portion	L	B			
Sodium Targets o Target 1			L / B		
o Target 2				L / B	
o Final target					L / B
Milk Component					
Offer only fat-free (unflavored or flavored) and low-fat (unflavored) milk	L / B				

Joint response to Questions 2 & 3:

2. USDA, schools and community sponsors of summer feeding programs are all working to expand access to summer meals and inform eligible students and their families of summer feeding sites. However, there are a number of ways that Congress can improve this valuable program.

For instance, eliminate the mandate for congregate feeding. Especially in rural areas, and even in crowded urban areas, feeding sites are not located near where children live and play. In my district, we have combated this by providing four mobile routes that help us create sites where students live and play - in mobile home parks, neighborhoods and public pools and parks. This has increased participation in the program, and as the word spreads, we get more and more requests to establish mobile feeding sites. We still have a long way to go to reach all of the students in my district who would benefit from the summer meal program, but we are working very hard to expand access. If students did not have to consume their meal at the site more students would likely participate, i.e. they would prefer to take their meal home to eat it. Congress could also consider grants and other ways to promote more of these mobile meal solutions to reach children in rural communities and those with no means to travel to summer feeding sites.

In addition, there are low-income, eligible children in all areas, and they should all have access to this wonderful program. However, to establish a summer meal site, communities must have at least 50 percent or more of area children eligible for free or reduced price meals. Lowering the eligibility threshold from 50% to 40% or lower would help expand access to healthy summer meals.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

○