



California School Nutrition Association

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The California School Nutrition Association is a professional organization with more than 1500 members. CSNA members are foodservice professionals committed to providing healthy meals to more than 3.3 million California school children every day. Long a leader in setting standards for school meals and a la carte sales. CSNA supports continuous improvement through strong state and federal policies. To further the effectiveness of school meal programs, CSNA recommends the following:

- ✓ **Congress should ask the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study of the costs and benefits of indexing school meal eligibility and reimbursements to reflect costs.** Federal child nutrition programs provide a basic reimbursement for all meals served that is essential support for providers who sponsor the programs. The law provides “special assistance” for low income households – those with income below 130% of the national poverty line are eligible for free school meals, and households between 130% and 185% receive school meals at a reduced price. The problem is that the statute applies a single, national standard for poverty, whereas some communities’ cost of living is substantially higher, resulting in families who are living in poverty relative to their location but which find themselves ineligible for the federal nutrition programs that are intended to assist them. If we are to achieve President Obama’s goal of ending childhood hunger in America by 2015 we must recognize that hunger and poverty are more prevalent in communities with high costs of living, and the federal government’s solutions must reflect these disparities.
- ✓ **Congress should explore options that would encourage schools to adjust to schedules so that ensure students have adequate time to consume meals.** Schools work tirelessly to help students eat, move and enjoy healthy balance and unfortunately many schools don’t provide students adequate amount of time to consume meals in order to encourage consumption of healthy foods. The recommendation is that schools have a minimum of 20 minutes after the student is served to eat a meal at school. Many students complain about not having enough time to eat school lunch. Kids who are well-nourished can and do perform better academically.
- ✓ **Congress should consider policies that will educate children about the benefits of nutrition and physical activity for lifelong wellness.** It is the position of California School Nutrition Association that sequential, standards based nutrition education is incorporated into pre-k through 12 curriculums in order to provide a foundation of life-long good nutrition practices, equip students to make nutritious choices and maximize utilization of the school based Child Nutrition Programs. Nutrition and learning go hand in hand. Therefore, nutrition education is coordinated from the classroom to the cafeteria where learning opportunities and experiences promote the practice of skills and reinforce attitudes which are needed for behavioral changes that will positively impact students' health. Nutrition Education empowers the student to select and enjoy healthy foods while learning about lowering their risks of chronic diseases and developing healthy lifestyles. Nutrition education is crucial to the well-being of every child.