



CALIFORNIA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

2015 Federal Legislative Issue Paper

The California School Nutrition Association is a professional organization with more than 2,200 members. CSNA members are food service professionals committed to providing healthy meals to more than 3.3 million California school children every day. A longtime 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 has taken the following positions:

- ✓ **CSNA supports indexing school meal eligibility and reimbursements to reflect costs.** Federal child nutrition programs provide a basic reimbursement for all meals served -- an 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; however, in some communities the cost of living is substantially higher, resulting in families who are living in poverty relative to their location but who find themselves ineligible for the federal nutrition programs that are intended to assist them. In response to a request by the California Congressional delegation, the Government Accountability Office issued report #GAO-14-557 last July. The report agrees with CSNA's concerns that the current law creates unequal access for many California children living in high cost communities, but does not make recommendations for addressing it. CSNA believes there is a solution that would not reduce access for lower cost regions.

Congress should address the issue of regional indexing this year in Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

- ✓ **CSNA supports providing entitlement for USDA Foods for every breakfast served.** Under current law, schools receive USDA Foods for every reimbursable lunch served based on a rate established in the Act. There is no similar support for school breakfast. Providing USDA Foods for breakfast would be beneficial to help schools provide breakfast and, concurrently, increase support for American agriculture.

Congress should provide 10¢ in commodity entitlement for every breakfast served.

- ✓ **CSNA supports policies that will educate children about the benefits of nutrition and physical activity for life long wellness.** It is the position of CSNA that sequential, standards-based nutrition education should be incorporated into Pre-K through 12 curriculums in order to provide a foundation of lifelong 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. If nutrition education is coordinated from the classroom to the cafeteria, learning opportunities and experiences will promote the practice of skills and reinforce the attitudes 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.

Congress should increase funding for nutrition education and marketing healthful eating.

- ✓ **CSNA supports The SNA positions regarding flexibility in implementing meal patterns, and competitive foods.**