



Position Statement: Food Service Equipment and Facilities

The California School Nutrition Association (CSNA) supports legislative efforts to improve the well-being of the children of California. Child Nutrition Programs work as partners in the education community to provide healthy meals to all children in order to improve student health and academic achievement. It is the intent of CSNA to work to secure the best possible environment for learning, physical health and safety within the school setting.

Position Statement

CSNA strongly advocates funding designated for the improvement of cafeteria equipment and facilities on school campuses to encourage consumption of healthy meals by the children of California.

Rationale

CSNA is aware of the limitations involved in serving nutritionally adequate meals to children including poor facility design, limited space, and aging and inadequate food service preparation equipment. Every effort should be made to provide adequate space in a clean and attractive facility that promotes a positive lunch time experience for children and encourages participation in local school meal programs.

Food service equipment is often inadequate for optimum preparation and service of foods that are nutritious and appealing to students. Dining areas in many schools are inadequate due to expansion of student populations and priority given to classroom space over common facilities construction.

With the expansion of student populations, schools have given higher priority to classroom space than expanding kitchen and cafeteria eating facilities. Food service facilities are often inadequate for optimum preparation and service of foods that are nutritious and appealing to all students. In many schools, seating is inadequate and rotating meal periods must begin early and end late. With inadequate dining facilities and insufficient time to eat, many students turn to foods that are readily accessible in vending machines and snack bars.

Response for Change – CSNA Recommendations

In order to foster a healthy nutrition environment, the California School Nutrition Association strongly supports funding for the improvement of cafeteria facilities on California school

campuses. The California School Nutrition Association proposes the following recommendations:

- Provide funding to improve cafeteria facilities and replace outdated equipment.
 - Facilities funding directed at food service areas will complement state policy efforts to combat childhood obesity and to improve nutrition and fitness.
 - Attractive eating areas promote participation in local school meal programs.
 - SB19 (Escutia, 2001) funded Linking Education, Activity and Food (LEAF) Grants of approximately \$200,000 to each of 16 schools. The Fiscal Impact Report (published April 2005 <http://cnr.berkeley.edu/cwh/activities/LEAF.shtml>) concluded that in order to successfully implement sustainable nutrition standards similar to SB19 “that at least some of the one-time food service expenditures would be required in order to improve the meals, kitchens, and eating areas and thereby attract student participation in the meal program.” While SB19 was not implemented, SB12 and SB 965 (Escutia, 2005) are substantially similar and will be implemented in 2007 and 2009 respectively.
 - Many school cafeteria facilities and equipment were designed to produce menus that are now outdated and less nutritious. For example, deep fat fryers need to be replaced with steamers and ovens, produce washing and preparation areas are in need of construction or modernization to increase healthier food offerings, etc.
- Allocate up to \$300 million for the modernization of food service facilities over 25 years old.
 - When school districts receive modernization funding, student learning areas typically receive the bulk or all of the improvements. Food service areas are many times the last considered for expansion or remodeling.
 - Many California school districts have noted a positive increase in participation when cafeteria eating facilities have been modernized.
- Authorize construction of cafeteria facilities where none exist.
 - Many California schools have no covered or inside eating areas and food is prepared and transported from off-site kitchens.
 - California’s students would benefit from construction of such facilities to improve student participation in school meal programs and allow on-site preparation of fresh and nutritious menu items.