



Position of the School Nutrition Association on the 2012 Legislative Issue Paper

Position Statement:

Since 1946 the National School Lunch Act has functioned successfully as a grant-in-aid program. Continuing the historic support for child nutrition, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296) made a number of important changes to strengthen the programs. The statute, among other things, limited indirect expenses, established professional standards and required nutrition guidelines for all competitive foods and beverages sold in schools.

Issue

The Legislative Issue Paper of 2012 includes five areas of concern SNA members have in regards to strengthening nutrition programs for school children through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Background

The Public Policy and Legislation Committee drafted the Legislative Issue Paper in January 2012. The PP&L Committee is requesting Congress to make modifications to further allow school nutrition professionals to better serve school children.

Implications and Recommendations

SNA is asking Congress to further amend the HHFKA, in this fiscally challenging environment, by considering the following five changes:

- I. Unpaid meal charges owed to the School Food Authority (SFA) by families participating in the program have increased significantly. Congress should require USDA to establish a consistent, national policy on how to address the debt incurred by the unpaid meal charges.
- II. Each year, the School Food Authority collects and verifies income data that is used by a number of school and non-school programs. The cost of collecting

this data is borne most often by the SFA. Therefore, USDA, in coordination with the Secretary of Education, should establish a mechanism for sharing these costs equitably by all programs using this data.

- III. Breakfast is often recognized as the most important meal of the day for academic success, but it is not supported with USDA Foods (commodities). Therefore, as a part of the 2012 Farm Bill, SNA requests ten cents per breakfast in USDA commodities to support the School Breakfast Program.
- IV. SNA requests that the Congress require the Secretary to develop a standard contract that school districts may use between local school districts and food service management companies. SNA also requests that Congress give USDA the authority, in coordination with the states, to review and monitor compliance of all bids and contracts between local school districts and for-profit food service management companies.

V. Section 307 of P.L. 111-296 requires the Secretary to determine which expenses (“indirect costs”) incurred by a local school can be charged to the nonprofit school food service account. While the Department plans to conduct a study regarding indirect costs, SNA requests that the Congress follow up with the Secretary to guarantee that only those expenses “necessary to provide meals under the Act” are paid from the school food service

account, and that appropriate regulations are implemented to ensure compliance.

History

As in years past, the School Nutrition Association will continue to advocate for issues important to our members that have yet to be implemented. Ongoing issues include: advocating for USDA Foods for breakfast and indirect costs guidance.

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