



October 11, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, Room H-232
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. Leader:

On behalf of the School Nutrition Association's (SNA) 55,000 members nationwide, I am writing to urge you to take immediate steps to end the Federal Government shutdown.

Every school day, over 31 million students across our country depend on the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs to provide the nutrition they need to succeed in school. The protracted government shutdown leaves many school administrators uncertain of their ability to sustain these school meal programs after November 1, 2013, when programs begin to file federal reimbursement claims for meals served through the month of October. The US Department of Agriculture has not guaranteed that adequate Fiscal Year 2013 carryover funding is available in the midst of the shutdown to reimburse all states for all meals served in October.

School meal programs operate on extremely tight budgets and are permitted to carry no more than a three-month operating fund balance. However, many school meal programs struggle to maintain a positive fund balance. These programs depend on the timely delivery of their federal reimbursements to cover staff wages; reimburse school districts for utilities and custodial services; and pay local businesses, farmers and distributors who provide food, supplies and equipment.

A failure by the Federal Government to provide states with prompt funding to make complete, on-time reimbursements for school meals could threaten the stability of school meal programs, impacting millions of students, many of whom rely on school meals as their primary source of sustenance. The lapse in funding could result in significant economic ripple effects throughout communities nationwide.

Every Monday morning, school nutrition professionals across the country open their cafeteria doors to find children eagerly in line for school breakfast after a weekend with not enough food to eat at home. On behalf of those children, I strongly urge you to end the government shutdown as soon as possible to ensure the continued quality and service of school meals.

Sincerely,

Leah Schmidt, SNS
SNA President