

Arkansas:

“In our schools we offer a variety of produce choices each day and are happy that some students choose to take multiple servings. But the older students, especially, know what they want, and some days they simply don’t want a fruit or vegetable with their meals. At about 25 cents a serving, the mandate to serve a fruit or vegetable has us throwing away money and making kids angry with us.” **Dolores Sutterfield, Child Nutrition Director, Harrisburg, AR**

Colorado:

“Under the new rules, our school meal program lost \$20,046 in the 2012-13 school year and \$74,629 in the 2013-14 school year. Costs are up and student lunch participation is down almost 40%, and we continue to see a decline. We are looking at another \$70,000+ loss this year, which will deplete the program’s fund balance and require the school district to contribute \$22,000 from the general fund. As you can see from these photos from our cafeterias, we are committed to offering students a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, and we prepare about 70% of our foods from scratch. But the students are not happy about being forced to take items that they do not want eat, and are needing more options than we can provide under the regulations. Our program needs more assistance!” **Lori Hause, Food Service Director, Platte Valley Schools, CO**

**Georgia:**

“We’ve worked hard to maintain student participation and are fortunate that meal counts have been steady. However, operations costs continue to climb and we’re losing supplemental revenue. Our a la carte sales are down about \$80,000 through March 2015 compared to the same time period last year, prior to implementation of the Smart Snacks in School regulations. My costs for purchased food alone have increased by more than \$500,000 year-to-date in 2015 than in 2014.” **Peggy Lawrence, Director of School Nutrition, Rockdale County Public Schools, GA**

“Costs continue to increase in Georgia as it is everywhere. In the last five years, our schools’ produce costs alone have been greatly impacted – previously we budgeted about \$5,000 to \$8,000 per week for produce; today, the produce costs are anywhere from \$11,000-\$18,000 a week. A whole apple that used to cost 11-14 cents is 24-25 cents or more today.” **Dr. Clea Long, SNS, Bibb County Public Schools, GA**

Indiana:

“Increase set for students’ lunch price”

[The Republic](#), April 17, 2015

“Bartholomew Consolidated School Corp. students and staff will pay more for school lunches starting this fall. Food service director Nancy Millsbaugh said that, during the past five years, the school corporation has been making the meals healthier, causing costs to increase. In 2011, the cost to produce a healthy lunch jumped to \$2.71, in 2012 the cost was \$2.75, and in 2013 it was \$3.29. Millsbaugh said labor isn’t rising significantly, but the food cost is. She said her balance in reserve is in the black, but it is dwindling. School lunch is supposed to have three months in reserve for emergencies, and right now it doesn’t have that. She said last year the food service department budget ended with a \$3,000 shortfall, and a larger shortfall is expected this year.”

Iowa:

“We have seen significant plate waste this year, and have struggled under the additional costs of providing that food. For the early grades, which we plate and serve, it is guaranteed that our cans will be brimming on broccoli or bean day. It is so sad. What pains us most is that we are a small rural community hard hit by the job market, and these kids NEED to be fed. Forcing foods that they will not take is a shame. Hungry children in a land of plenty, who could be fed... I have been proud to be financially solvent for 20 years. After this year, we are looking at perhaps one more year of being in the black, and then will have to go for handouts to the general fund.” **Joyce Johansen, Food Service Director, Clarinda Community Schools, IA**

“We have faced several challenges with all the changes. Our participation at the Secondary level has decreased dramatically over the last two years, yet our costs continue to rise. We find it difficult to find products that meet the requirements AND taste good. In particular, having to have ALL grains whole grain and tasty is a struggle. The rules and regulations are cumbersome and difficult to understand and explain to our customers, and time consuming to implement. I have met with several student groups and they just really don't get it. They do not understand why we have to ration condiments. They really don't like losing control of deciding their own food choices. I believe that our efforts would be better spent on nutrition education, beginning at the elementary level and teaching kids how to make better choices rather than just making all the choices for them. Once they leave the controlled school environment they are faced with a multitude of choices and they need to learn how to navigate through the ‘real world.’” **Jane Svestka, Food Service Director, Benton Community Schools, IA**

Kansas:

“New USDA regulations concern Kansas superintendents”

[The Topeka Capital-Journal](#), July 14, 2014

Increasingly stringent federal regulations for school lunches and snacks are a key concern for Kansas schools, Auburn-Washburn Unified School District 437 superintendent Brenda Dietrich said Monday. “We’re not advocating for meals that aren’t appropriately nutritious,” Dietrich said, “but don’t make the guidelines so restrictive that we can’t afford the food and kids won’t eat it.”

Kentucky:

“Even in my district, where Community Eligibility Provision has increased daily revenue, I am continuing to experience a decline in my program’s reserves for critical expenses like equipment replacements, marketing and nutrition education initiatives and emergency expenditures. Higher costs on a tight budget have forced our program to cut back on the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables we serve. This year, I reluctantly added juice back to my high school lunch menus as a cost saving measure. I haven’t served juice at lunch in 15 years, in an effort to serve more fiber-rich whole fruits.” **Julia Bauscher, SNS, Director of School and Community Nutrition Services, Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, KY**

Michigan:

“Ever since the implementation of the new HHFA regulations, Bloomfield Hills School's food service department has seen a decrease each year in the number of students buying lunches. In addition we have seen a decrease in our a la carte sales after the Smart Snacks rule went into effect. The students need more time to adjust to the new foods that meet the new regulations. If we were allowed to have more flexibility with the regulations we could find the items our students want to eat. They vote with their wallets and their vote is no without flexibility.” **Mandy Sosnowski, Food Service Director, Bloomfield Hills Schools-Aramark**

Minnesota:

“District 11 looks to raise meal prices”

[ABC Newspapers](#), May 4, 2015

“Child Nutrition Director Noah Atlas addressed the [Anoka-Hennepin School Board] April 27, proposing a 10-cent increase to breakfast and lunch prices with tightening federal guidelines and soaring grocery expenses. Food and drink cost 16 percent more last year than it did two years earlier in 2011-2012, in part because new federal guidelines came into play. A la carte sales have been critical in offsetting meal costs – until this school year when the Smart Snacks in School mandate went into effect. The district has lost \$15,000 a month because many healthy snack options are not appealing to students, Atlas said.”

Mississippi:

“As a Child Nutrition Director who is a dietitian, I would like to say that I totally agree with many of the changes that have come down the pike for us as Child Nutrition professionals; however, I would just like to say that the sodium restrictions are the hardest to do, quite simply, you cannot serve many real breakfast foods to students under these restrictions. One month I struggled for a full week trying to meet the sodium requirements and be able to serve a student staple and favorite, Sausage biscuit. If you put biscuits on the menu, it pretty much throws your sodium off for the week. It has been driving me crazy and our students do not understand why they cannot have the sausage and biscuits that they love. Our MS State Dept. went out and found us a reduced sodium whole grain biscuit and it is a little easier to menu now, but the biscuits are just not good. I am all about eating healthy, whole grain and lowering our sodium, but in my professional opinion, the sodium restrictions are ridiculous. It is also a problem when you force children to pick up something just for the sake of a rule. I did not think too much about it until I was in a school one day at lunch and a student came through without a serving of fruit or vegetable on their plate at lunch. The cafeteria manager sent the child back for something and he got so upset about it that he sat there and cried through his lunch period and did not eat one thing off his tray. This is a problem. Believe it or not, there are certain children out there, who have issues and this is a real problem for them, if they do not want something on their plate.” **Wanda K. Salley, M.S., R.D., Child Nutrition Director, Harrison County School District, MS**

Nebraska:

“School snacks getting healthy makeover”

[KETV](#), September 7, 2014

Local nutrition experts fear the changes are too strict and remove student choice from the equation.

“I think we’ve gone too far, too fast. And I don’t think it’s a real-world environment. We might have changed the school but we haven’t changed the child or our world,” said Diane Zipay, director of nutritional services for the Westside School District. Zipay said Westside cooks can’t make a turkey sandwich that complies with the guidelines because the sodium is too high.

New York:

“Healthier options in school lunches lead to more waste, fewer children participating”

[Watertown Daily Times](#), January 19, 2015

North country public school food service directors are reporting more of the healthy foods being served at school are being passed up for a brown bag lunch or thrown out by students who used to clean their plates. Canton Central School Business Manager Judy A. Rienback said that since the healthier school meal standards were implemented at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, lunch sales dropped 10 percent. Before the 2013-14 school year, she said, the district had about 57 to 59 percent school lunch participation; that has dropped to about 46 to 48 percent. “Our purchase costs haven’t fallen. What we serve now tends to cost more,” Ms. Rienback said. “Yes, it has hurt us. Less people participate and healthy foods cost more.”

North Carolina:

“School District Losing Millions in School Lunch Sales”

[WLOS](#), March 25, 2015

Thousands of students have now stopped buying lunch each week in Buncombe County cafeterias. The district says it all started when schools were forced to implement the USDA's Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act. Over the last two years, Buncombe County says they've lost about \$1.2 million in sales. It's downsized its staff, equipment is getting old and the current menu has less options. "North Carolina was the third state in the nation to be in compliance with the USDA regulations of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act and we have been punished severely with declining participation," Buncombe County nutrition director Lisa Payne said.

North Dakota:

Finding flavor: Schools react to new nutrition rules

[The Bismarck Tribune](#), December 26, 2014

Bismarck High School students lament the limited soup selection in the cafeteria this year. Mixed comments can be heard in cafeterias throughout the nation as schools change their menus to comply with new federal requirements mandating stricter sodium levels this year, as well as more whole grains. “That was my favorite part of lunch — all of the soups — and now they’ve taken them all away,” added junior Jaksen Perrin.

Ohio:

Ky. school district drops federal lunch program

[The Cincinnati Enquirer](#), August 10, 2014

"We've looked at the option (of dropping the program) every year," said [Ohio's Lakota Local Schools] Food Service Director Chris Burkhardt. "We definitely see kids throw food away. We try to educate them ... but we're having a tough time changing a mindset that's been around since the beginning of time to just take what you're going to eat," he said. Participation has gone down about 5% since the standards came along. Right now dropping the program doesn't make economic sense. Someday, though, it may, Burkhardt said.

Pennsylvania:

“Manheim Central High School exits federal lunch program”

[LancasterOnline](#), June 25, 2014

Food services director Gavin Scalyer said Manheim Township based its decision on declining lunch participation and coming restrictions on a la carte items. He said the school offers more than 10 "restaurant-quality salads," which students purchase as entrees. Since they are classified as a la cartes, though, some of the salads wouldn't meet calorie restrictions designed to apply to side items. At the Manheim Central meeting, Ludwig criticized the new rules as a one-size-fits-all approach and speculated that if the district follows the new rules, it would lose student participation in its meal program.

“Chester County school district to forgo U.S. lunch guidelines”

[The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), June 27, 2014

Saying stricter federal nutrition guidelines are too much to swallow, the Unionville-Chadds Ford School District has decided to remove its 1,300 high school students from the program that is to go into effect next school year. The district calculated that under the new guidelines, its revenue would decrease from \$2.32 per high school student per day to \$1.73, since the students would be buying fewer items. That represented "a significant financial impact on the food-service operation," said Marie Wickersham, the district's supervisor of food services.

South Dakota:

“In the area in which I live it is very hard to get good whole wheat or whole grain products. We are a very small school and do not have the luxury of having several suppliers. We do need flexibility on several products we use. We are trying to comply with all the rules and regulations, but we need to give companies time to come up with the products we need so they can hold [in the serving line] and still taste good.” **Shelly Anderson, Big Stone City, SD**

Vermont:

“I struggle daily with the overwhelming waste of fresh fruits and vegetables. Students take them because they have to, then I see whole, untouched items in the compost every day. It is difficult to get students to take 1/2 cup each meal. Increasing this would certainly make more waste. I feel our country wastes enough as it is. I wish there was some leniency in this matter.” **Dot D'Avignon, Shoreham, VT**