



Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.™

March 5, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary,

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) develops a robust plan to respond to the spread of coronavirus, the School Nutrition Association (SNA) is eager to share suggestions to ensure vulnerable children do not experience a lapse in food security in the event of widespread school closures. Nearly 22 million students each day depend on a free or reduced price school lunch as a key source of their daily nutrition. SNA members, who work on the frontlines in school cafeterias nationwide, are keenly aware that many of these children lack access to adequate nutrition when school is out of session.

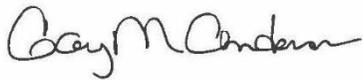
USDA [currently allows](#) eligible School Food Authorities (SFAs) to serve students meals through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) during unanticipated school closures. However, several barriers prevent the effective use of this emergency feeding vehicle in the event of widespread coronavirus-related school closures. At this point in time, based on initial input from SNA members, we encourage USDA to consider extending waiver language and program eligibility to enable SFAs to serve children during unanticipated school closures. Notably, we request that USDA take the following steps:

- Waive requirements for congregate feeding, as USDA has done in cases of [extreme heat](#), to enable grab and go service and minimize the risk of disease spread.
- Extend eligibility to participate in SFSP to all SFAs impacted by coronavirus closures.
- Allow SFSP meals to be served at school sites, in addition to community sites, without requiring SFAs or States to request a waiver.
- Permit delivery of meals to satellite sites, so schools equipped to do so can deliver meals to multiple locations throughout the community, minimizing families' dependence on public transportation to access meals.
- Maximize the availability and use of USDA Foods for emergency feeding operations.
- Minimize complicated or burdensome regulatory requirements for SFAs seeking to launch emergency feeding operations.

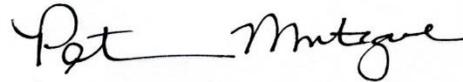
Expanding opportunities for SFAs to serve students during anticipated school closures would help combat food insecurity, prevent massive amounts of food waste and spoilage in school cafeterias nationwide, and ease subsequent financial losses for school meal programs and school districts.

SNA recognizes that USDA must weigh a wide variety of factors in developing its response plan, most notably public health and food safety concerns. We appreciate your consideration of these initial suggestions and welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further as the Department addresses the evolving coronavirus situation. Thank you for your many efforts on behalf of America's schoolchildren, and we look forward to hearing from you on this and many other critical issues during [SNA's Legislative Action Conference](#).

Sincerely,



Gay Anderson, SNS
President



Patricia Montague, CAE
Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable Pat Roberts
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
The Honorable Bobby Scott
The Honorable Virginia Foxx