IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS: PART 1

A SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

ABSTRACT

SNA surveyed its school nutrition directors members from March 12 – March 16 to identify the impact of COVID-19 closures.

School Nutrition Association

SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

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Objectives

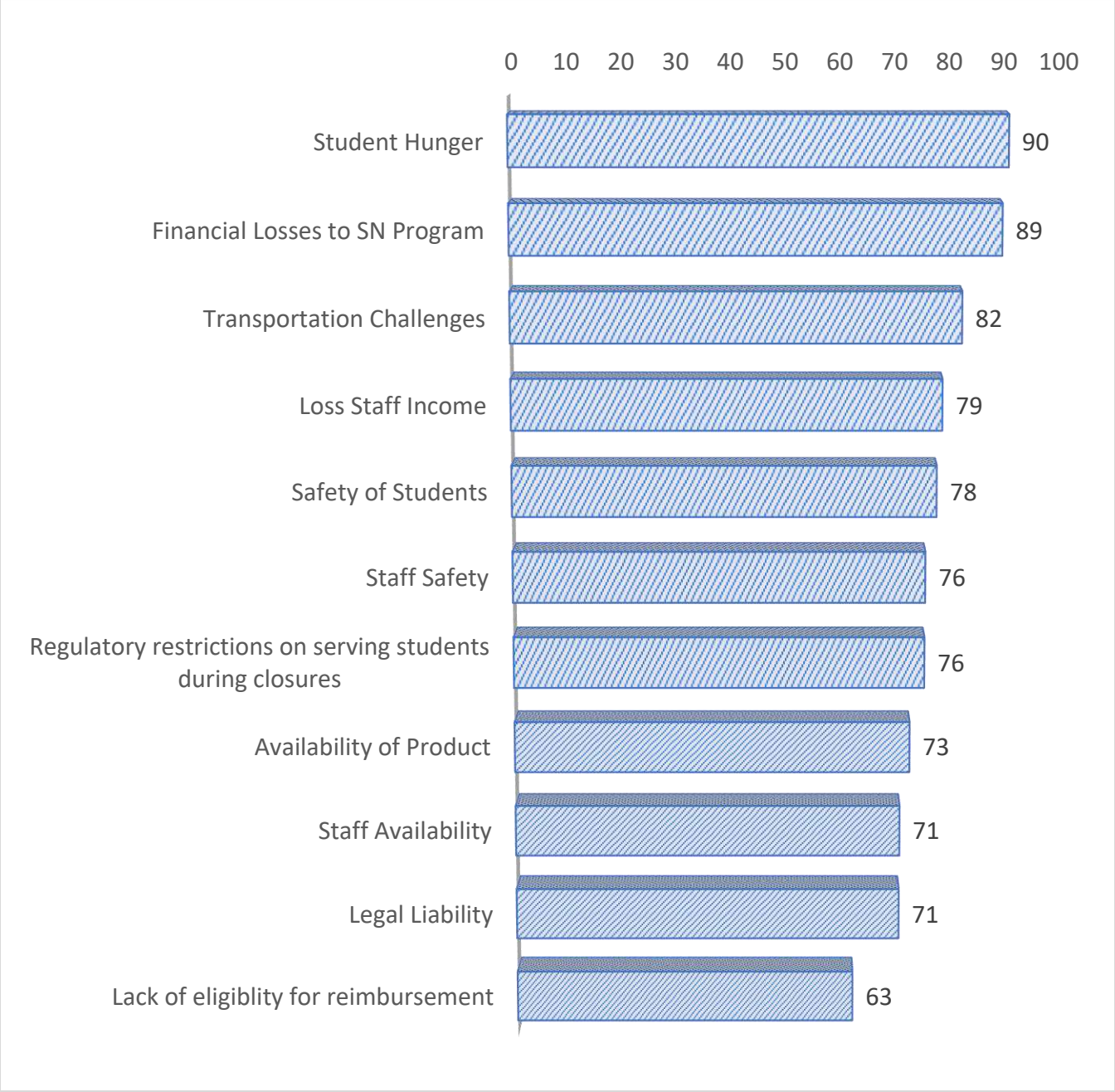
- Identify impact of Coronavirus-related closures
- Capture district plans to provide meals or food assistance during closures
- Determine most pressing concerns and needs of SN operators as they feed kids during Coronavirus-related closures

Background and Sample

Dates survey open	March 12 – March 16
Total unique school districts	1,769
Total schools represented	39,978
Total schools area eligible	14,354 (46% of total schools)
% schools not participating in SFSP or SSO	38%
Total sites operating SFSP and SSO	7,000
Total districts engaged in emergency meal assistance or developing emergency meal assistance plans:	1,211

Results

Concerns during school closures (%)



List of Concerns During Closures Ranked

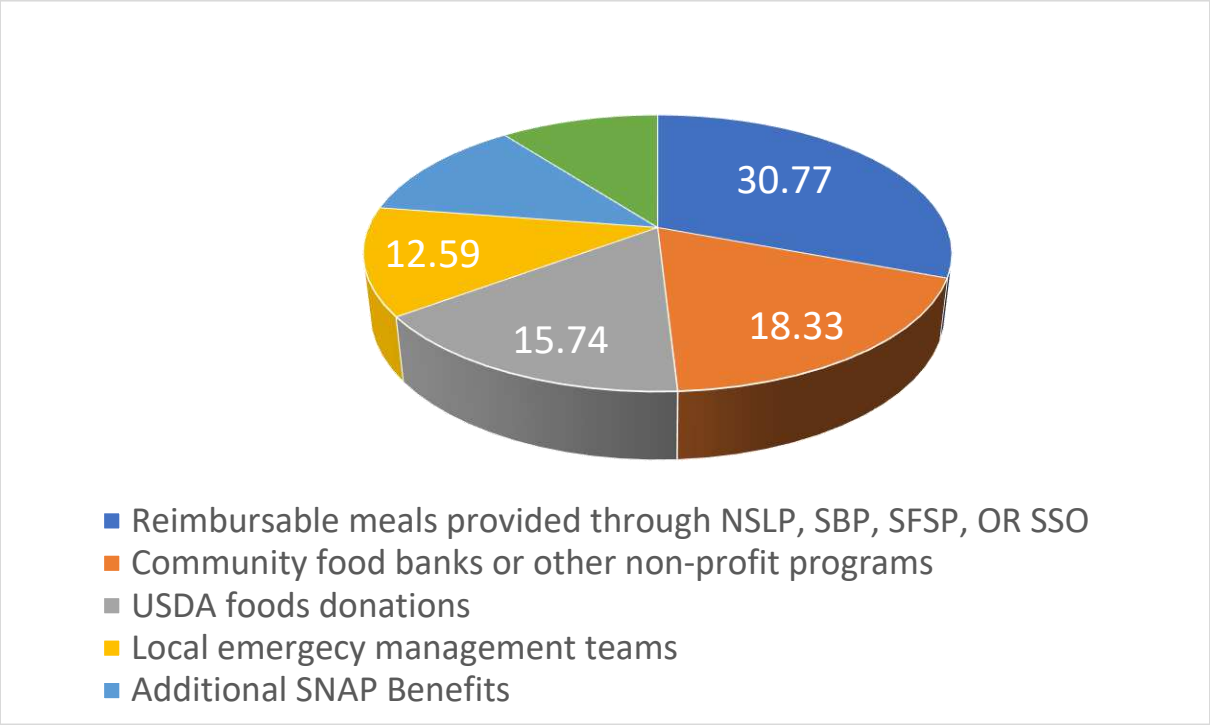
Concern	Rank	Serious/Mod Concern	%
Student Hunger	1	1326	90
Financial Losses to SN Program	2	1311	89
Transportation Challenges	3	1206	82
Loss Staff Income	4	1155	79
Safety of Students	5	1141	78
Staff Safety	6	1112	76
Regulatory restrictions on serving students during closures	7	1111	76
Availability of Product	8	1072	73
Staff Availability	9	1046	71
Legal Liability	10	1045	71
Lack of eligibility for reimbursement	11	919	63

Concerns During Closures, Write-In Responses:

Write-In 'Other Concerns'	
Necessity of Receiving USDA and state waivers	113
Regulations limiting who can be served/50% F-R restriction	97
Safety of staff and kids	89
Maintaining and Paying SN staff/Financial health of program	73
Transportation issues and costs	67
Meeting meal pattern guidelines	33
Distribution/Supply chain issues	28
Ability to provide more than 1 meal at a time	25
Reimbursement	24
Food Safety	15
How long it will last	12
Food Waste	10
Making community aware of availability of food	9
Providing adult meals	6
USDA foods commodity processing	3
Allergies and special dietary needs	3
School site/community area site closures	2

Note: Open-ended write-in responses were coded and counted.

Preferred Method of Providing Food Assistance (%)



Method	n	%
Reimbursable meals provided through NSLP, SBP, SFSP, OR SSO	1271	31
Community food banks or other non-profit programs	757	18
USDA foods donations	650	16
Local emergency management teams	520	13
Additional SNAP Benefits	503	12
State Disaster Management Programs	429	10

How Meals/Food Are Being Distributed, Write-In Responses

Please describe how meals/food are being distributed and indicate any federal program (e.g. SFSP, SSO, NSLP, USDA Foods, etc.) your district is utilizing as part of this effort.	
SFSP	153
Curbside Pickup	136
Grab N Go	114
SSO	112
Delivery to community sites or direct to houses	93
Area Eligible or Community sites	84
NSLP	45
Not sure how to claim reimbursement/Waiting for Answers about Waivers	38
USDA Foods	23
No federal help/no reimbursement	21
Partnering with community organizations or actors	15
Meals limited to Free and Reduced students	3

Note: Open-ended write-in responses were coded and counted.

Appendix A. Survey Instrument

Impact of Coronavirus on School Food Programs

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Please participate in this very brief survey to assist SNA in identifying the impact of Coronavirus-related closures and ways the Association can help.

Q4 Please enter the name of your school district.

Note: Please use the **full district name**, and not an abbreviation.

If you provide school nutrition services to multiple districts, please list your **primary district**.

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Q5 How many schools are in your district?

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Q6 How many of your district's school sites are **Area Eligible** (*at least 50 percent of the children are eligible for free or reduced price school meals*)?

Note: Please provide the actual number of schools, not a percentage.

_____

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Q7 In 2019, did your district participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or Seamless Summer Option (SSO)?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If In 2019, did your district participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or Seamless Summ... = Yes

Q8 How many **school** sites operated SFSP and/or SSO in 2019?

_____

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Q9 Is your school district currently experiencing any Coronavirus-related school closures?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Is your school district currently experiencing any Coronavirus-related school closures? = Yes

Q10 Has your program or district taken steps to provide meals or food assistance to students during these closures?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Has your program or district taken steps to provide meals or food assistance to students during t... = Yes

Q11 Please describe how meals/food is being distributed and indicate any federal program (eg SFSP, SSO, NSLP, USDA Foods, etc) your district is utilizing as part of this effort.

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Display This Question:

If Is your school district currently experiencing any Coronavirus-related school closures? = No

Q12 Is your program/district currently planning/discussing ways to provide meals or food assistance to students during coronavirus-related school closures?

- ○ Yes, we have already created a plan (1)
- ○ Yes, we are currently developing a plan (2)
- ○ No (3)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Is your program/district currently planning/discussing ways to provide meals or food assistance t... = Yes, we have already created a plan

Or Is your program/district currently planning/discussing ways to provide meals or food assistance t... = Yes, we are currently developing a plan

Q14 Please describe how meals/food would likely be distributed and indicate any federal program (eg SFSP, SSO, NSLP, USDA Foods, etc) your district intends to utilize as part of this effort.

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Q15 Please indicate how significant a concern each of the following presents as you consider ways to serve students during Coronavirus-related school closures.

	Serious Concern (1)	Moderate Concern (2)	Little Concern (3)	No Concern at all (4)
Safety of staff preparing/distributing meals (1)	○	○	○	○
Staff availability/willingness to work during closures (2)	○	○	○	○
Loss of income for staff furloughed by closures (3)	○	○	○	○
Safety of students/families when accessing meals (4)	○	○	○	○
Transportation challenges for students & staff (5)	○	○	○	○
Availability of product/distributor challenges (6)	○	○	○	○
Regulatory restrictions on serving students during closures (7)	○	○	○	○
Lack of eligibility to seek reimbursement for meals served (8)	○	○	○	○
Financial losses for the school meal program (9)	○	○	○	○
Legal liability (10)	○	○	○	○
Potential that students will go hungry during closures (11)	○	○	○	○

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Q16 Are there any other concerns you have as you consider ways to serve students during Coronavirus-related school closures?

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_____

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Q20 What would be your school district's preferred method for providing meals or food assistance to students during a coronavirus-related school closure?

Please select your **top three** preferred methods.

- [ ] Reimbursable meals provided through NSLP, SBP, SFSP or SSO (1)
- [ ] Additional SNAP benefits (2)
- [ ] USDA Foods Donations (3)
- [ ] Community food banks or other non-profit programs (4)
- [ ] Local emergency management teams (5)
- [ ] State disaster management programs (6)

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Q17 Would you or other school district officials be willing to share additional information about your emergency feeding plans with SNA?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Would you or other school district officials be willing to share additional information about you... = Yes

Q18 Please provide your contact information:

- ○ Full Name (1) _____
- ○ Email Address (2) _____
- ○ Phone number (optional) (3) _____

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Q19 Thank you for your participation!

End of Block: Default Question Block