



## 2021 Position Paper

As of February 2, 2021

### **FSNA Mission**

*To advance child nutrition programs that promote wellness and academic success, while promoting leadership development opportunities to members.*

The school nutrition program in Florida is federally and state funded and consists of the lunch, breakfast and snack programs. Public and non-profit private schools provide great tasting, nutritionally balanced, low cost or free meals to children on school days. School Food Authorities (SFAs) (counties) are reimbursed for meals served based on a formula. SFAs receive about \$3.50 per meal served to cover all food, labor and overhead expenses. Meals must include milk, fruit, vegetable, lean protein and grain. To break even, schools typically rely on additional revenue from a la carte sales and catering. Schools in Florida can also provide meals during the summer, and schools are involved in disaster relief when called upon.

When schools closed or partially closed in early March, nutrition professionals mobilized immediately. School food programs adapted to continue to provide meals in schools, curbside and through distribution means into the community. Expenses drastically increased: extra packaging, PPE and sanitation supplies and the price of food increased. However, fewer children were eating breakfast and lunch at school or picking it up curbside because of remote learning, so revenues are down. Schools across Florida are facing significant losses. School Food Service Directors fear they will have to lay off workers, who've been on the front lines since the pandemic began.

H.R. 133 - The Federal stimulus bill: the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021* distributes emergency relief funds to school meal programs. States will have the opportunity to submit applications to receive funds from the Act. More information is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/emergency-operating-costs-during-covid-19-implementation-guidance>

#### *Title VII Nutrition and Agriculture Relief*

#### *Chapter 3 Child Nutrition and Related Programs*

#### *SEC. 722. EMERGENCY COSTS FOR CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS DURING COVID-19*

*PANDEMIC - Provides emergency relief to help school meal and child and adult care food programs, which are in dire need of financial assistance, to continue serving children and families. Provides as much funding as necessary to carry out these payments.\**

\*[excerpt from a Summary of H.R. 133 House Appropriations Committee Staff]

### **Current FSNA Initiatives**

- Ensure school food service workers who are designated essential workers in Executive Order 20-91 receive COVID vaccination priority along with other school employees.
- School Breakfast supplement funding is maintained at previous year level.
- Continued state allocation of sufficient matching funds to draw down all applicable Federal funds.

## **FSNA Position on Current Bills**

FSNA is monitoring - HB 517/ No Senate Companion: An act relating to school meals; amending s. 595.405, F.S.; requiring district school boards that participate in the National School Lunch Program to provide meals to a student regardless of his or her ability to pay, or his or her unpaid meal charges; prohibiting such a meal from being disposed of based on unpaid meal charges; requiring district school boards adopt certain policies regarding unpaid meal charges.

- The Florida School Nutrition Association proposes that school meals be regarded as an essential component of a child's education, as are books, supplies and lab equipment. Providing a free meal to all students who wish to have it would eliminate the need for most of the cashiers, record keeping and notices about payments and debt and a variety of other related administration. For more detailed information, a full report can be requested from FSNA.
- Unpaid Meal Debt – A Complicated Reality  
Prepared by the Florida School Nutrition Association – March 1, 2019