



National Alliance for Nutrition & Activity

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) represents a major step forward in our nation's effort to provide all children with healthy food in schools. Over 31 million children participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and children consume a third to a half of their daily calories at schools. With one out of every three children in America considered overweight or obese, schools must ensure school foods are healthy. This law makes significant improvements to school nutrition and other child nutrition programs to provide children with more nutritious food options and teach children healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Establishes National Nutrition Standards for All Food Sold in Schools

Existing standards for vending, a la carte and other foods sold outside the meal programs are 30 years out of date and do not reflect current nutrition science or address key concerns about children's diets.

The HHFKA allows the U. S. Department of Agriculture to update national nutrition standards for all foods sold on the school campus throughout the school day. Strong nutrition standards in schools will support nutrition and health education for children, parents' ability to help their children eat healthfully, and national investments in school meals. National nutrition standards will apply to food sold through vending machines, a la carte lines (foods sold individually in the cafeteria, outside reimbursable meals), school stores, and fundraisers on campus during the school day.



Strengthens Local School Wellness Policies

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Congress established the local school wellness policies, which help school districts foster an environment that supports children eating well and being physically active. As a result, many schools have adopted policies for foods sold on campus, strengthened physical education, and expanded nutrition education. However, implementation across the country has not been uniformly strong.

The HHFKA strengthens standards for school wellness policies while still permitting flexibility to tailor policies to local needs. HHFKA requires school districts to:

- Provide students, parents, and others in the community with ready access to wellness policies and their implementation plans;

- Permit parents, students, teachers, school stakeholders, and the public to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of school wellness policies; and
- Periodically assess implementation and measure school district compliance with the goals of the local wellness policy.

USDA, in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Education, will provide schools and States with resources, training and technical assistance to develop, implement, and evaluate their local school wellness policies. USDA also will identify model polices and best practices to help guide schools to implement strong policies.

Improves the Nutritional Quality of School Meals

Over the last 20 years, the [nutritional quality of school meals](#) has been improving. The majority of schools offer breakfasts and lunches that meet the standards for key nutrients, such as vitamins A and C, calcium, protein, and iron. However, many school meals are still too high in saturated fat and sodium and too few children are choosing meals with enough fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

The HHFKA provides significant resources and opportunities for schools to continue to improve the nutritional quality of the meals they serve. It:



- Requires USDA to update the school meal program standards to be consistent with current nutritional science;
- Provides an additional 6 cents per lunch to schools that meet these updated nutritional standards. This historic investment is the first reimbursement rate increase, over inflation, in more than 30 years and will incentivize and help schools serve meals that meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*;
- Provides schools with training and technical assistance on purchasing, processing and preparation of more healthful USDA Foods (commodities);
- Establishes minimum requirements for education and training of school foodservice directors and staff to help them run more effective and healthful school nutrition programs;
- Allows schools to serve only low-fat or non-fat milk, as is recommended in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*;
- Expands access to drinking water in schools, particularly during meal times; and
- Helps communities establish local farm-to-school networks, create school gardens, and ensure that more local foods are used in the school meal programs.

Strengthens Accountability of School Meals

In 1993, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) implemented the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI) to improve the nutritional quality of school lunches and breakfasts and to provide school foodservice personnel with technical assistance and resources to help them meet school meal nutrition standards. Under the current SMI system, reviews of the

nutritional quality of school meals occur in too few schools, do not occur frequently enough, and do not review the full array of foods sold in schools.

As a result of the HHFKA, USDA will develop a unified accountability system to address nutrition quality, program management, accuracy, and financial integrity of the meal programs. The unified system will:

- Add compliance reviews for the nutritional quality of school breakfasts(lunches will continue to be reviewed);
- Require more frequent audits (3 year intervals, up from the current 5 year review cycle); and
- Improve transparency by reporting results to the public and to USDA.



Improves Meal Financing to Support Healthy School Meals

The school meal programs have long been funded through a partnership between the federal government, states, localities, and parents.

The HHFKA renews this commitment and includes a strong package of provisions designed to reduce financial barriers to providing high-quality school meals. Implementation of these provisions will increase revenue to school food programs and free up a larger percentage of existing funding for healthy foods for low-income children. The HHFKA:

- Provides a 6-cent performance-based increase in reimbursement rates for school lunches, adding up to \$3.3 billion over 10 years to improve school meal quality;
- Requires the prices charged for foods sold through vending machines, a la carte lines, and school stores to cover the costs to produce and sell them. USDA estimates implementation will bring an additional \$7.2 billion in revenue to school foodservice accounts over the next 5 years and will result in over 900,000 more children participating in the school meal programs.
- Requires USDA to study and provide guidance on the types of expenses (“indirect costs”) local school districts can charge school food service; and
- Requires school districts to gradually begin closing the gap between paid meal revenues and free meal revenues to keep funds meant for providing healthy foods for low-income children from being diverted to other purposes. States and localities have flexibility to increase revenue through any nonfederal sources or by gradually raising paid meal prices, with a cap of 10 cents per year. USDA estimates that closing this gap would raise \$323 million for school meals programs over the next 5 years.



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