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School Nutrition Association Releases "State of School Nutrition 2009" Survey

School foodservice directors cite funding and cost of food as biggest concerns but are weathering tough economy

More than 77% of the 1,200 school foodservice directors surveyed state that funding and the cost of food/food preparation are the most pressing issues facing cafeteria programs nationwide as they head back to school this fall. According to results released today in the School Nutrition Association's comprehensive "School Nutrition Operations Report: The State of School Nutrition 2009," nearly 60% of districts increased their school lunch prices this year to keep up with the cost of preparation. Just two years ago, only about a third of districts increased prices and the median price increase for school lunch was \$0.15 in 2007 compared to a median increase of \$0.25 today. As families are also struggling in the economy, survey results show increases in free/reduced meal program participation across every grade level since 2005.

This fall, as Congress considers the 2009 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, the School Nutrition Association (SNA) is advocating that school foodservice programs receive an additional \$0.35 for each reimbursable meal served. Current Federal reimbursements equal \$2.57 for each "free" school meal served under the National School Lunch Program, which costs an average \$2.92 to produce. The increase would help programs keep pace with rising costs to providing students healthy, nutritious meals.

The report indicates school nutrition programs have increased prevalence of healthy options with peak gains seen in vegetarian offerings (gain of 12.4% since 2007) and low fat prepared/packaged foods (11.5% increase). Locally-grown fruits and vegetables are included on more menus as 37% indicate they offer these items and another 21% of districts are considering. Additional offerings at districts include:

- fat-free or low fat milk - 99% of districts
- fresh fruits and vegetables - 98.8%
- whole grain items - 96.3%
- salad bars or pre-packaged salads - 91.1%
- yogurt and yogurt drinks - 87.9%
- from scratch-baked items - 74.2%
- vegetarian meals - 63.9%

"These survey results show that despite the

difficult economy, school nutrition professionals nationwide continue to provide children with high quality, nutritious foods and educate them on making the right food choices," stated School Nutrition Association President Dora Rivas, RD, LD, SNS, and executive director of Food and Child Nutrition Services for the Dallas Independent School District in Texas.

Last released in August 2007, the updated State of School Nutrition 2009 was accumulated from a survey of 1,207 school nutrition directors nationwide and benchmarks detailed information impacting school nutrition programs. The State of School Nutrition 2009 covers demographics and operational parameters, programs and policies, breakfast and lunch service types, food safety measures, foodservice budget issues, marketing and customer service and pressing concerns. Among the findings:

* Breakfast is served in more than 96% of districts with traditional cafeteria, grab & go and a la carte being the most popular forms of service. After school snack and summer foodservice programs remain popular, with nearly 51% and 43%, respectively, providing these services.

* As many school districts face significant financial challenges, school nutrition directors are finding alternate ways to raise funds. About 75% of districts provide catering services for events within their schools, while another 27% offer catering outside of schools.

* The variety of ethnic foods served in school continues to grow as more school districts offer entrees that appeal to their students' cultural tastes. Remaining the most popular, Mexican food is offered in 99% of school districts and Asian entrees are featured in 81%.

* Formal policies exist as guidelines on a variety of issues. The following five areas are the most common formal policies, reportedly in place within three-quarters or more of the districts:

- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)

- Nutritional requirements of foods and beverages sold by food service

- Crisis management plan / emergency preparedness plan

- Providing meals and services for students with special dietary needs

- Time of day certain foods / beverages can be sold

* Majority of districts (65.3%) have not banned any foods due to food allergies. Only about one in ten districts have banned certain foods in all of their schools, an additional 22% have done so in some schools. Peanuts are the most commonly banned food item, with nearly 96% of districts with a food ban in place targeting the ban of peanuts.

* Meat, cheese/dairy and fruits and vegetables are the items most commonly purchased with commodity dollars. Meat and cheese/dairy are especially emphasized, with more than nine of every ten districts reporting that they used commodity dollars to purchase those items. Fruits

and vegetables are somewhat less common, cited by 81.9% as being purchased with commodity dollars.

* An increasing amount of districts are allowing parents to monitor or place limits on student purchases, with 78% of districts offering this feature. Most of the districts that do not offer these options plan to implement them in the next 12 months or are considering doing so.

The State of School Nutrition 2009 represents the feedback of over 1,200 school nutrition directors from districts in 49 states. The survey was conducted in spring of 2009. Copies of the full report can be ordered from the School Nutrition Association's online bookstore at www.schoolnutrition.org.

The School Nutrition Association is a national, non-profit professional organization representing more than 55,000 members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the country. The Association and its members are dedicated to feeding children safe and nutritious meals. Founded in 1946, SNA is

the only association devoted exclusively to protecting and enhancing children's health and well being through school meals and sound nutrition education.

Article provided by:



www.schoolnutrition.org

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MySchoolAccount.com is All-New

The user-friendlier MySchoolAccount.com also comes with a new pre-order feature

While your students were busy whiling away the summer months, the team at FSS has been hard at work making improvements to MySchoolAccount.com – both in improved functionality and ease of navigation. With the addition of the new pre-order feature, the website is on its way to becoming the most comprehensive parent-to-school portal on the market.

We value your input, and would appreciate any suggestions you may have on improving the versatility and stability of our website.

Meal Pre-Order Functionality

After several years in development, we are proud to introduce our new meal pre-order feature. This feature allows parents to not only pre-order and pay for their students' meals, but view their students' pre-order history and print lunch menus. Parents are able to make meal selections by student, date, meal

(breakfast, lunch, combined), food type and food quantity.

User-Friendly Navigation

Although we've added new features, MySchoolAccount.com is easier than ever to navigate. We've simplified navigation by grouping all the features into four sections:

Your Students

This section allows parents to view their students' lunch account activity for the past 30 days, add or remove a student account, pay student usage fees and set balance notification preferences.

School Lunch Accounts

This is where parents are able to deposit money into their students' lunch accounts, view their deposit history and transfer funds between their students.

Account Options

Parents can access the Account Options section to make changes to their personal information, email address, password and notification preferences.

Pre Order Menus

As mentioned earlier, this section allows parents to order their students' meals, view

their pre-order history and print lunch menus.

We invite you to visit the all-new MySchoolAccount.com. We're confident that the improvements we've made will not only encourage parent enrollment, but allow you and your staff more hours in your day to do what you do best – providing healthy, well-balanced meals.

The crew here at FSS will continue to add to and improve the services offered by MySchoolAccount.com. We value your comments, and would appreciate any suggestions you may have on improving the versatility and stability of our website. Thank you.

New to MySchoolAccount.com? Learn how MySchoolAccount.com can allow your school to "go cashless," increase mealtime revenues as well as significantly cut administrative and labor costs by scheduling a free online demo with an FSS representative. Call toll free at 800-425-1425.

**The New Look of
MySchoolAccount.com**





Student Information



Student ID	Name	School	Account Balance
26056726	Christopher Alanah	Coffee High School	\$3,316.67
591311418	Lance Beloney	Coffee High School	\$839.50
251633553	Amy Busby	Coffee High School	\$7.00
263730532	Marius Horton	Coffee High School	\$1,324.48
255619988	John Roberts	Coffee High School	\$0.00

Your Students

- ❖ View Lunch Account Activity
- ❖ Add a Student
- ❖ Remove a Student
- ❖ Pay Student Usage Fee
- ❖ Set Balance Notification Preferences

School Lunch Accounts

- ❖ Deposit Money to your Student's Lunch Account
- ❖ View your Deposit History
- ❖ Transfer Funds Between your Students

Account Options

- ❖ Change Personal Information
- ❖ Change Email Address
- ❖ Change Password
- ❖ Change Notification Preferences

Pre Order Menus

- ❖ Order Meals
- ❖ View Pre-order History
- ❖ Print Lunch Menu

School Breakfast Fuels Kids' Imagination

Before lifting off on a space mission or sitting down to write a story, astronauts and authors alike must eat a balanced breakfast. To help boost breakfast participation in schools and excite students about fueling their bodies to power their minds, the School Nutrition Association (SNA) has launched the "Fuel Your Imagination" campaign.

School breakfast provides the necessary fuel to start a day of learning and achievement, providing 25 percent of the recommended daily allowance of protein, calcium, iron, vitamins A and C and calories and meeting the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Research has shown that children who eat breakfast at school:

- * Score better in standardized tests
- * Have fewer health issues
- * Behave better in class

Furthermore, research indicates that kids who skip breakfast rarely make up for missed nutrients later in the day so skipping breakfast could also affect students' performance in after-school activities.

For National School Breakfast Week, March 3-7, 2008, school cafeterias nationwide will be transformed into rocket launch pads and students will be writing and sharing their creative short stories about how nutritious school breakfasts fuel their days. The three winning stories from the "Fuel Your Imagination" creative writing contest, along with the results of an ongoing 'rocket

race' between three popular breakfast items, can be found at the official "Fuel Your Imagination" Web site: <http://www.schoolbreakfast.org>.

From breakfast-themed classroom door-decorating contests to celebrity servers on the breakfast line, schools are celebrating the power of school breakfast. Special breakfast menus featuring "Blast Off Burrito with Rocket Wedges" and "Molten Space Cereal with Asteroids and Space Dust" and out-of-this-world décor in the cafeteria set the stage for important nutrition education messages about the positive impact school breakfast has on concentration and test scores.

School meals are served in age-

appropriate portion sizes and schools have many different serving techniques - from 'grab and go' bags and hallway kiosks to breakfast in the classroom and traditional cafeteria service. Many schools are offering breakfast at no cost to students because of the proven value of eating breakfast. School breakfast today includes whole grains found in cereal, cereal bars and bagels, as well as fruit and low fat dairy including milk and yogurt.

The positive effects that eating breakfast has on students' performance in school continues to grow as more schools are serving breakfast. The School Breakfast Program has been in place for about 40 years and today about ten million children eat school breakfast everyday.

The School Nutrition Association launched NSBW in 1989 to raise awareness about the availability of breakfast for all students at school and to draw attention to the link between eating a good breakfast and cognitive growth. SNA's National School Breakfast Week promotions are made possible with support from the National Dairy Council and General Mills Foodservice.

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Article provided by:



www.schoolnutrition.org

GAO Releases Report on Elimination of Reduced Price Programs

The Government Accountability Office released a report on Friday, July 17th that detailed the findings of a study it conducted on states and school districts that eliminated the reduced price category (ERP) for school meals. The report found that in most cases, participation in the school nutrition programs increased among students who are eligible for reduced-priced meals when

the \$0.40 fee was eliminated. Implementing ERP also caused a decrease in the burden placed on staff to collect unpaid meal fees.

While the states and districts that implemented an ERP program were required to absorb the cost of the reduced price fees, the study found that increased participation brought in additional funds from

federal reimbursements. Those funds offset the costs of providing the program.

To view a full copy of the report, please visit the link below.

www.gao.gov/new.items/d09584.pdf

...WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

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SIMPLE, RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE

Food Service Solution's ability to develop creative solutions to make our customer's job easier, more profitable, and better managed has made us a leader in our industry. With over 85 years of combined experience in institutional food services, our staff is dedicated to providing our customers with state-of-the-art software & hardware systems that are fully integrated to meet the unique needs of food service professionals.

www.foodserve.com - www.planyourprofit.com - www.biometricsolution.com