



2009 REAUTHORIZATION ISSUE PAPER

In 1946, Congress passed the National School Lunch Act as a “*measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation’s children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities.*” This remains the purpose of the Act today.

As the Congress considers the stimulus legislation along with the 2009 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, we encourage the Congress to prioritize the critical needs of our children. The economy has adversely impacted child nutrition programs in two ways: Low income working parents are finding it difficult to pay for school meals and escalating food costs have made it even more difficult for child nutrition program administrators to implement the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Therefore, the School Nutrition Association (SNA) urges the Congress to reauthorize all child nutrition programs and take the following actions:

Increase Funding.

- Increase the per meal reimbursement by 35 cents for all meals in order to keep pace with rising costs and implementing the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The current Federal reimbursement of \$2.57 for a “free” school lunch is not adequate as the average cost to produce a school lunch is \$2.92. Reimbursements for meals in other categories should also be adjusted upward to better reflect the true costs of preparing a meal.
- Update the Federal reimbursement rates semi-annually.
- Expand the “free” meal category from 130% of poverty to 185%, consistent with the WIC income eligibility guidelines (eliminating the reduced price meal category).
- Provide 10 cents in USDA commodities for each school breakfast served.

Improve Nutrition Standards.

- Grant the Secretary of Agriculture the statutory authority to regulate the sale of all foods and beverages on the school campus, consistent with the most recent edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (ending the “time and place rule”).
- Require the Department to implement a consistent, science-based national interpretation of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* for all school meals reimbursed by USDA.