



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

February 11, 2013

Dear County and District Superintendents and Direct-Funded Charter School Administrators:

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SUMMER MEALS

More and more children go hungry every day, and I encourage all of you to help ensure that hungry children are fed when school is out for summer break.

As a longtime advocate for students' health, I am committed to helping California students make healthy choices. I launched the Team California for Healthy Kids campaign to focus on making healthy eating and physical activity accessible throughout the day, in schools, before and after school, in early childhood programs, and in communities. The goals of the Team California campaign are to increase physical activity and improve access to water, fresh foods, and salad bars. One of the three core values of the campaign is local participation in all federal child nutrition programs, including the summer meal program. Please help me support the campaign and its core values by ensuring that students have access to summer meal programs in your community.

Research indicates that children's mental alertness and cognitive development improve when they consume nutritious meals. Research also suggests that hunger during the summer is increasing, thus interfering with students' development. Children who eat nutritious meals and participate in safe activities during the summer are more creative and productive in school and at home. Summer meal programs enhance these enrichment activities, which improve student attendance and engagement and help combat childhood obesity and summer learning loss.

Summer Meal Programs

The California Department of Education (CDE) administers two summer meal programs that provide nutritious meals for disadvantaged children: the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Feeding Option (SSFO). It is extremely important that these programs become accessible to our students, and I strongly encourage schools to participate in one of these summer meal programs. Please visit the CDE Summer Food Service Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sf> for detailed information about these programs and to determine which option is best for your district or school.

What can you do to ensure that school-aged children eat nutritious meals this summer?

- Locate your summer school sessions at sites where at least 50 percent of students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. By establishing summer schools at these sites, you will be able to provide meals to students attending summer school as well as children in the surrounding community.
- Offer the SFSP or SSFO at school sites not hosting summer school.
- Expand access to summer meal programs by supporting operators at sites throughout the community as either a program sponsor or a meal vendor. Many schools coordinate with recreation districts and community organizations to provide their students with summer meals in safe settings when local schools close for the summer.
- Share information with students and parents about where and when summer meal sites will operate nearby. Recently enacted federal law (the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010) requires that school food authorities participating in the National School Lunch Program distribute information to parents regarding the availability and location of summer food service program meals.

California Department of Education Resources

The CDE has created a searchable, interactive Web page that lists summer food sites and meal service information. You will find this map on the CDE Summer Meal Service Sites Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/summersites.asp>.

Still not sure which summer option is best for your district or school? Please visit the CDE Summer Food Service Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sf/> for general information about our summer meals programs.

You can also learn or share information about becoming an SFSP sponsor by utilizing our Summer Food Service Program Brochure on the CDE SFSP Guidance, Manuals, and Resources Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sf/mgmb.asp#resources>.

Other Support

For additional information, success stories, and tools for running a successful summer meal program, please visit the California Summer Meal Program Coalition Web site at <http://www.summermealcoalition.org/>.

Thank you in advance for considering what you can do to increase the number of California's children receiving healthy and nutritious meals during the summer months.

If you have questions regarding the SFSP, please contact one of the Summer Food Program staff in the Nutrition Services Division:

Summer Food Staff	Phone Number	Toll-Free Phone Number	E-mail
Melissa Garza	916-322-5885	800-952-5609	mgarza@cde.ca.gov
Dennis Arena	916-324-9073	800-952-5609	darena@cde.ca.gov
Augie Aguilar	916-327-5865	800-952-5609	auaquilar@cde.ca.gov
Tanya McCrae	916-322-8323	800-952-5609	tmccrae@cde.ca.gov

If you have any questions regarding the SSFO or the State Meal Mandate, please contact Donna Reedy, School Nutrition Program Specialist, by phone at 916-327-5866 or 800-952-5609 or by e-mail at dreedy@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson

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