

Dear Superintendent:

School breaks often provide district staff an opportunity to regroup and brainstorm on how to build stronger schools and communities. However, while school doors are closing so is the chance for many of our students to get a free or low-cost nutritious meal.

Nationwide, more than 15 million low-income children participate in the National School Lunch Program. The vast majority of these children will not have access to nutritious meals like the ones they receive during the school year. In fact, only 2 million of the children who qualify for free or reduced-price meals will receive a similar one when school lets out.

Just as our academic responsibilities to the school district children continue through school breaks, our responsibilities to their health and well-being should also continue. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) fills the nutrition gap that many students experience during school vacations. Unfortunately, the SFSP is not available in all of our state's economically-depressed areas where alternatives to school lunches are not readily available or where many children cannot afford them. The result is that many of our children are going hungry. To meet their needs, more schools must offer the SFSP.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which administers the program at the federal level, has passed provisions to streamline program operations and reduce paperwork. One such waiver allows schools to use many of the administrative and monitoring requirements of the school meal programs instead of summer rules.

If you would like to discuss the program further, please contact me at [insert phone number and/or e-mail address].

I urge you to give serious consideration to becoming a SFSP sponsor and/or adding more SFSP sites. Coupled with physical activities and arts and crafts, the SFSP allows school breaks to be an extension of our commitment to our children's education.

Thank you.

Sincerely,