

SNA Releases 2015 Position Paper Calling for Greater Funding and Flexibility for School Meal Programs

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD – The School Nutrition Association (SNA), representing 55,000 professionals who prepare and serve school meals, has released its [2015 Position Paper](#), outlining the Association’s advocacy efforts as Congress prepares to reauthorize the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 this year.

“SNA supports strong federal nutrition standards for school meals, including calorie caps and mandates to offer a greater quantity and variety of fruits and vegetables,” said SNA CEO Patricia Montague, CAE. “However, some of USDA’s regulations under the law have unnecessarily increased costs and waste for school meal programs and caused many students to swap healthy school meals for junk food fare. SNA is asking Congress to provide schools adequate funding and flexibility, allowing school nutrition professionals to plan creative, appealing menus that will entice students to eat healthy school meals.”

[USDA data](#) show that since the new rules were implemented, 1.4 million fewer children chose school lunch each day. Declining student participation reduces meal program revenue for schools already stressed by higher food and labor costs under the new regulations. [USDA estimates](#) the new rules add \$1.2 billion to the cost of preparing school meals in Fiscal Year 2015 alone. As a result, only half of school meal program operators anticipate their programs will break even at the end of this school year, according to a recent [SNA survey](#).

Schools have struggled with availability of foods that meet the new standards and student acceptance of new menus. For instance, Cornell and Brigham Young University researchers found that the new mandate forcing students to take a fruit or vegetable with every meal, even if they don’t intend to eat it, has increased waste by 100%, with an estimated \$684 million of fruits and vegetables thrown in the trash each school year.

SNA’s [2015 Position Paper](#) will be the focus of SNA’s 43rd annual [Legislative Action Conference \(LAC\)](#), which runs from March 1-4, 2015 in Washington, DC. Approximately 1,000 school nutrition professionals from across the nation will descend on Capitol Hill as part of LAC’s “Charge to the Hill,” allowing SNA members to meet with their representatives to discuss school nutrition issues.

[Click here](#) to read *SNA’s 2015 Position Paper, including details about each request.*

[Click here](#) for a short printable version.