



Resources to Help You Help Them!

2020-2021 SCHOOL NUTRITION TOOLKIT

School Nutrition Directors: Champions for School Meals

Dear School Nutrition Director,

Thank you for your continuous and unconditional support of our nation's children. As the school year continues, we are here to support you in your efforts to provide nutritious meals to your students, no matter where their learning is taking place.

The American Dairy Association North East has developed and compiled promotional materials in a user-friendly toolkit to help raise awareness of the continuous availability of school meals. The School Nutrition Toolkit can be downloaded at www.nutritionconnection.org and includes the following:

- **Parent and Guardian Letter.** This template letter informs parents and guardians of the continued availability of school meals. Customize this letter to reflect your district's meal service options and locations so families understand how to access school breakfast and lunch. We suggest you share this letter with your school principals to email to parents when they provide information about coursework and other important updates.
- **Administrator Letter (Principal and Superintendent).** This template letter highlights the importance of foodservice and school administrators working together to promote the availability of school meals. As trusted leaders, principals and superintendents can increase access to school meals by championing these programs on a variety of platforms.
- **PSAs.** Many schools have automated call systems to inform parents of school closings or schedule changes. Use these sample scripts and coordinate with schools to place calls about school meal service for remote learners or in-building students. Send scripts to local radio stations and ask them to help spread the word.
- **Tweets & Facebook posts.** Social media is an efficient way to reach students and their parents. We've created some sample tweets and posts for you that can be customized to your location.
- **Resource Page.** Please visit our website www.nutritionconnection.org for valuable resources to help you continue the great work you're doing on behalf of students. Also check here for a summary of materials with links to [USDA Waivers](#), meal distribution suggestions for various learning models, [Bulk Milk Meal Calculator](#), menus and recipes, customizable flyers to add your local site information, and downloadable toolkit materials.

We're still here for you... American Dairy Association North East's ongoing communications support campaign includes traditional and digital media outreach, advertising, virtual events and so much more.

Thanks for continuing to be our partners in preventing hunger.

American Dairy Association North East



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Parents and Guardians, We're Here for You

Dear Parents and Guardians,

School breakfast and lunch are still available for all students, no matter where their learning is taking place. School meals ensure that all students are well nourished and ready to learn. We invite your students to continue taking advantage of this valuable resource throughout the school year.

School Meals Details:

- **Check out our website!** We are constantly adapting to changing circumstances. For the most up-to-date information on where to receive these safe, nutritious, and delicious meals, please check the school district's website
- **School meals** help ease families' tight food budgets
- **Food served is safe, nutritious, and healthy** and follows USDA nutrition guidelines

When you pick up meals you can expect to receive _____ meals per child that cover breakfast and lunch for _____ days.

We are here to serve you and ensure that all students are well nourished and ready to learn. If you have any questions, please contact the School Nutrition Services Department at _____ or email at _____

Sincerely,



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Principals Can Be Champions for School Meals

Dear

As a principal, you have a leading role in caring for students and helping them excel during the school year. As we continue to grow together in this rapidly changing environment, we want to assure you that we share your goal of preparing our students for academic success.

We remain committed to nourishing the students in our district, whether they are learning at home or in school, by providing access to healthy school breakfasts and lunches. Your leadership can help to ensure the success of the school nutrition programs that prepare students to learn and focus throughout the academic day.

Here are some suggestions on how you can promote school meals during this school year, increase participation, and make a difference in the lives of children.

- **Placing a School Meals Banner Ad on your school's website.** Messaging to parents the importance of children having good nutrition during the school day, so they are ready to learn.
- **Encourage your teachers and staff to share information about School Meals availability** on their digital communication platforms (Google Classroom, Clever, etc.) to parents and students. Messaging the importance of healthy nutrition during the academic day is the first building block for ensuring that students are fueled to learn.
- **Utilize sample public service announcements, social media posts and press releases to raise awareness about School Meal Programs.** Schools are a trusted community resource. A message from the leaders in education can help parents know that these meal programs are useful resources for their families.

These programs need champions. Please help us feed more students, whether they are learning in person or remotely. Thank you, as always, for your dedication and commitment to our children.

Sincerely,





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Superintendents of Education Can Be Champions for School Meals

Dear

As a superintendent, you have a leading role in caring for students and helping them excel during the school year. As we continue to grow together in this rapidly changing environment, we want to assure you that we share your goal of preparing our students for academic success. We remain committed to nourishing the students in our district, whether they are learning at home or in school, by providing access to healthy school breakfasts and lunches. Your leadership can help to ensure the success of the school nutrition programs that prepare students to learn and focus throughout the academic day.

Here are some suggestions on how you can promote school meals during this school year, increase participation, and make a difference in the lives of children.

- **Communicate directly with your schools and share with them the importance of making school meals available to feed children, whether they are learning remotely or on-site.** Children and parents are familiar with schools providing nutritious food in a safe environment. A message from their superintendent can help pave the way for school meal participation by emphasizing their importance in the school day.
- **Placing a School Meals Banner Ad on your district's website,** messaging to parents the importance of children being well nourished, so that they are ready to learn.
- **Encourage your principals, teachers, and staff to share information about School Meals availability for in person students and remote learners** on their digital communication platforms (Google Classroom, Clever, etc.) to parents and students. Messaging the importance of healthy nutrition during the school year ensures that the students' physiological need for nourishment is met, preparing them to learn and keeping them healthy.
- **Utilize sample public service announcements, social media posts and press releases to raise awareness about School Meals Programs.** Schools are a trusted community resource. As the district's leader, a message directly from you to parents can help them know that School Meals Programs are useful resources for their families.

Your support will connect families with School Meals, whether they are learning remotely or in the school building, and will continue to make a difference in the lives of your students as you ensure that they are fueled to learn.

These programs need champions. Please help us feed more children in our community as food insecurity continues to rise by becoming a champion for school meals. Thank you, as always, for your dedication and commitment to our children and for continuing to be our partners in preventing hunger.

Sincerely,



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Sample PSA Script Templates

Note: Following are 30-second and 60-second template public service announcement (PSA) scripts that you can customize and share with schools via Robocall, Robotext, Listserv E-Blasts, Digital Learning platforms and radio stations.

30-Second Script

General:

FREE meals continue to be available throughout your school system this school year to help children get the nutrition they need. Visit

Localized:

Throughout the school year all children can continue to enjoy free, healthy meals with milk. Proper nutrition is key to academic success! To find more information near you, visit

60-Second Script

General:

This school year, together we can make sure all children are getting the nutrition they need to achieve optimal academic performance by continuing to take advantage of free meals throughout your school system. The program provides nutritious and delicious meals with milk and other healthy foods. All children can continue to enjoy free school meals during the school year. To find more information around you contact

Localized:

Continuing throughout the school year, healthy eating continues. We can help make sure all children enjoy healthy meals, including milk. To find a FREE school site in your area, go to





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Social Media Posts

Social media can be an important tool to help promote your school meal program. Not only can it help your school raise awareness around the continued meal service, it can also help participants find information on how, when and where they can receive meals this school year.

Please feel free to personalize the social media posts below to suit your school system by including your site locations, or organization. Sharing a picture or video enhances the message – Instagram, Facebook, Twitter.

Facebook Posts:

- Free, delicious and nutritious meals continue to be available to children throughout your school system this school year! To find a site near you, call
- School is in session whether it is remote or in person, kids can still get free and nutritious meals all year long at locations in your school system. Call
- Breakfast & Lunch are available today for your students, no matter where the learning takes place it is essential for students to have the right nutrition to take on the day! Call or visit

Twitter:

- This school year, there are free, delicious, and nutritious meals available to children in your schools. Call
- Breakfast & Lunch are available today for your students, no matter where the learning takes place it is essential for students to have the right nutrition to take on the day! Call or visit



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Resource Page

Free Downloadable Promotional Materials via the websites below:

Nutrition Connection: www.nutritionconnection.org

- **Promotional Materials**

- Letter Templates (School Nutrition Directors, Principals, Superintendents, Parents)
- Program Flyer - English and Spanish
- Sample Social Media Posts and PSAs
- Downloadable PDF of Signage (Yard Signs, Banners, Bus Magnets, A-frame Signs):

<https://nutritionconnection.org/school-nutrition-toolkit/>

- **Program Planning Materials**

- Bulk Milk Calculator:
<https://nutritionconnection.org/milk-calculator/>
- New Recipes and Sample Menus:
<https://nutritionconnection.org/menu-recipe-ideas/>

- **Find out more about the following programs via the Resource page:**

<https://nutritionconnection.org/resources/>

- Nutrition Program Guidelines
- Webinars & Podcasts
- Professional Development
- COVID-19 Resources & Waivers
- Grants
- Community Eligibility Tools



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SCHOOL MEALS ON THE MOVE

Nutrition is important for fueling students' minds and bodies every day. School breakfast and lunch are continually available for all students throughout this school year. Please see below for convenient meal pickup dates, times, and locations. Order [School Meals on the Move](#) today!

Dates & Times:

Meal Service Locations:

Pickup Details:



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Please review the district's website for ordering details.

Dates, times, locations, pricing, ordering procedures, and other details are subject to change. Children may not have to be present during meal pickup.



ALIMENTOS ESCOLARES EN MOVIMIENTO

La nutrición es importante para alimentar la mente y el cuerpo de los estudiantes todos los días. El desayuno y almuerzo escolar están disponibles, de manera continua, para todos los estudiantes durante este año escolar. Vea a continuación, las fechas, horas y lugares convenientes para recoger los alimentos. Solicite hoy mismo los [¡Alimentos Escolares en Movimiento!](#)

Fechas y Horarios:

Ubicación del servicio de comidas:

Detalles de recogida:



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Por favor, revise la página web del distrito para ver los detalles sobre cómo hacer su pedido.

Las fechas, horas, lugares, precios, procedimientos de pedido y otros detalles están sujetos a cambios. Los niños no tienen que estar presentes durante la recogida de alimentos.



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Successful Practices from the Field

Hot Now, Cold to Go!

Some districts provide a hot meal at the time of pick-up. The rest of the meals provided are shelf-stable or cold meals, so families do not have to reheat at home. This combination helps schools to use their inventory of hot meals while keeping meal prep simple for families at home.

Communications & Supporting Materials

- **Include menus.** A printed copy of the menu will instruct families on what belongs in each meal, when to serve it, and how to properly store and reheat the food if necessary.
- **Translate as needed.** Provide instructions in the languages commonly spoken by families in the district.
- **Share food safety tips.** Include a printed card or sheet with essential food safety instructions, like this sample from the Minnesota Department of Education:

Keep Hot and Cold Foods Safe

- Consume hot foods within 2 hours.
- Consume or refrigerate cold foods within 2 hours.
- Foods for other days should be stored in the refrigerator until eaten or reheated. If re-heating foods, ensure they are cooked to an internal temperature of 165 °F.
- Discard all refrigerated foods after 7 days of receiving it.

Individualized vs. Bulk Meals

Issued on April 11, 2020 in question 18 of memo [SP 13-2020](#), the USDA's nationwide child nutrition program waivers permit the distribution of bulk items in conjunction with non-congregate feeding situations in which multiple meals are provided at one time. These bulk foods, including milk, must include the proper minimum amount for each reimbursable meal being claimed.

- **Provide menus with clear directions** for the proper use and portion size for these bulk foods.
- **Consider household appliances & storage.** Families without refrigeration, ovens, and/or microwaves may not be able to safely store and properly reheat certain menu items.

Keep it Simple.

Send home foods that only require minimal preparation. Families should not have to chop, mix, or bake ingredients for recipes.



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Strategies to Increase Meal Participation

Accessibility	Awareness	Menu Support
Diversify Your Distribution: Use school buses or food trucks to drop off meals at bus stops or homes, or find local partners with trucks for distribution.	Communicate with Stakeholders: Our template letters help inform families, principals, and superintendents of the importance and availability of meals.	Create Variety with Temperature: Offer a hot meal or hot chocolate milk at pick-up, even if the rest of the box contains cold menu items.
Add New Service Times: Offer late afternoon/evening hours and open every day for pick up. Tell families if you offer flexibility upon request.	PSAs and Social Media: Use our sample scripts and social media posts to ensure that students and families know how to access school meals.	Recipes and How-To Videos: Share a 1-pager or video of suggested recipes like fruit & yogurt smoothies using take-home meal box contents.
Open More Locations: Opening more school buildings for meal distribution increases access, especially for families on foot or bike.	Local Partners Can Help: Anti-hunger organizations, government officials, pediatricians, and other trusted messengers can help spread the word.	Innovative Packaging: Bento boxes or multi-compartment trays create interactive meals like build-your-own parfaits, walking tacos, or pizza kits.
Inclement Weather Ahead: Prepare to switch to bulk meals during inclement weather. Communicate your plans to families in advance.	Build Hype with Events: Hosting monthly themed events can promote meal pick-up and incentivize participation.	Safe Delicious Food: Provide a food safety information sheet to help families store and reheat foods properly for the best quality and safety.
One-Stop Shop: Partner with local food banks or organizations that provide groceries for families. Partner organizations help with outreach, too!	Live Cooking Demos: Enlist school chefs or administrators to cook a featured menu item on Facebook Live or other social media platforms. Remember to share meal pick-up info.	Eat with Your Eyes: Make your menu come to life by sharing photos, a video, or a TikTok of the take-home meal box contents.
Combined Celebrations: Special themed events like book bag giveaways or festive school orientation events can be combined with meal pick-up.	Cross-Promotion: Food suppliers, vendors, or other organizations offer free promotional items, like school supplies or activity kits, at meal pick-up.	Picture Pages for Staff: Staff can pack meal boxes easily with visual instructions showing what to pack in advance and what must stay cold.
Provide a Hot Meal: Try offering hot meals, like pizza on Fridays, when families are picking up meals for the week.	Banner Ads: Post a banner ad on virtual learning platforms and district websites to advertise menus, pick-up hours, featured recipes, and more!	Find New Revenue Streams: Consider offering a family meal kit, birthday bundles, or prepackaged a la carte items for purchase at meal pick-up.

Be sure to check with your State Agency before implementing any changes to your program.