



CLEVELAND-CUYAHOGA COUNTY FOOD POLICY COALITION

United States Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill “Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act” Overview

Policy: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA)

Level of Policy: Federal

Introduced: 2009-2010

Adopted: 2010

Effective: March 26, 2012 (with compliance dates varying between lunch and breakfast programs)

Focus:

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program food nutrition requirements

- **Who:** All schools that participate in federally subsidized school meal programs (breakfast and/or lunch)
- **What:** Reauthorizes the federal funding that goes to USDA Food and Nutrition Services for free, reduced and full-priced breakfast and lunch meals. Creates nutrition standards for breakfast and lunch meals AND al la carte food¹ and beverages served at school that are aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (more fruits, veggies, whole grains, low-fat milk and decrease in saturated and trans fat and sodium). Increases meal reimbursement from federal government to schools to help fund new requirements.
- **When:** Final rules regarding meal patterns and nutrition standards published in January 2012 and implemented by July 1, 2012 with an additional year for the Breakfast Program to be in compliance to help schools deal with costs. The school lunch reimbursement increase of six cents began in October 2012.
- **How:** Enforced by a school review process every three years, which is conducted by the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Child Nutrition. Six-cent per meal performance-based reimbursement increase for schools (to help with increased cost of meals, estimated to be 2.5 cents more per meal and increasing when Breakfast requirements are phased in).

¹ Currently, the USDA has not published a final rule about a la carte standards.

Looking at both state and federal legislation:

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act and Ohio Senate Bill 210

- **A la carte food and beverage items vs. food and beverages subsidized by the federal government through the National Breakfast and Lunch School Meal Programs**

Ohio SB 210 stipulates standards for a la carte, vending and snack food items sold to students, but NOT breakfast and lunch meals that are federally subsidized. Any food item that can be part of a reimbursable meal is exempt from SB 210 nutrition standards as long as the item is sold in the same size as would be served in a reimbursable meal.

- **Beverage and Food Standards**

HHFKA has published final rules for nutrition standards for reimbursable breakfast and lunch meals. Currently, the USDA has not published a final rule about a la carte standards.

- **Intended Impacts on students**

- Nutrition research indicates that children who eat breakfast are physically healthier and better able to focus and retain information/ideas presented in the classroom.
- Brain research shows that physical activity increases brain cognition and reduces student anxiety.
- Quality health and physical education programs taught by certified instructors help build the critical thinking and interpersonal skills children need to make good decisions about their health and wellness.

- **Opportunities for schools**

By implementing strategies to support SB 210, school districts create healthy and supportive learning environments that promote overall school success reflected in:

- Increased test scores.
- Decrease tardiness, absenteeism & truancy rates.
- Decrease discipline incidences.
- Increase graduation rates.

Glossary of terms related to Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act

“A la carte”- The law defines “a la carte” as an individually priced food or beverage item that is available for sale to students. "A la carte item" does not include any food or beverage item that is part of a reimbursable meal and that is available for sale as an individually priced item in a serving portion of the same size as in the reimbursable meal, regardless of whether the food or beverage item is included in the reimbursable meal served on a particular school day. A la carte items are sold in the cafeteria by the National School Lunch Program Staff and in vending machines located on school property or at a school store. Common a la carte items include bottled water or juice; snacks such as chips or cookies; and alternative entrees which may not meet USDA regulations for entrees served as part of the National School Lunch Program. Entrée items that meet USDA Meal Pattern requirements are NOT subject to SB210 rules. If it can be sold in a school meal, then it is exempt from SB210.

District Wellness Committee- is a group of health, educational and food service stakeholders that create, monitor, evaluate and revise health policies for a school district (even beyond nutrition and physical activity). Congress mandated in 2004 that all schools and districts participating in federal nutrition programs adopt wellness policies. CMSD has Wellness Committee and is currently working on redrafting and implementing an up-to-date Wellness Policy.

Competitive Food Items - are food and beverages that are sold in schools and obtained from contracted vendors (Pepsi, for example) in which a percentage of the sales go back to the school, making them a source of revenue. Competitive foods are offered outside of federally-reimbursed school meal programs and sold through vending machines, snack bars, and a la carte lines in schools. These food items are often energy-dense (high in calories) but nutrient-poor and undermine efforts to promote a healthy diet and prevent obesity

NSLP (National School Lunch Program)- Offered out of the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service agency. The program was established under the National School Lunch Act in 1946, in part in response to the number of young men recruited for World War II who were found to be malnourished. In 2009, over 31 million children participated daily in the NSLP.

Reimbursable meal-Meals offered through the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service agency (National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program) that are paid for entirely or in part (subsidized) by USDA (i.e., the federal government). Any items that meet the meal pattern for USDA reimbursable meals under the National School Lunch Program od Breakfast Program are exempt from SB210 rules.

Federal Reimbursement Rates							
Description	Severe Need Lunch	Regular Lunch	Regular Breakfast	Severe Need Breakfast	Special Milk	Severe Need Snack	Regular Snack
Free	2.7900	2.7700	1.5100	1.8000		0.7600	0.7600
Reduced	2.3900	2.3700	1.2100	1.5000		0.3800	0.3800
Paid	0.2800	0.2600	0.2700	0.2700	0.2050	0.0700	0.0700

School Breakfast Program- Offered out of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service Agency.

School District-an independent special-purpose governing body that runs public schools in a given municipality. They are local governments with power similar to city governments in their ability to tax. Includes elementary, middle and high schools. Our school district is Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD). There are 112 schools in CMSD.

USDA-United States Department of Agriculture. Department of federal government that implements policies and administers programs that affect food, farming/agriculture and school nutrition. The USDA administers the NSLP (National School Lunch Program) and School Breakfast Program through their Food and Nutrition Service agency. Also establishes meal pattern guidelines for reimbursable meals.