



2018 Position Paper

Each school day, Texas child nutrition professionals serve more than 1.8 million healthy breakfasts and 3.2 million healthy lunches to Texas children. The child nutrition programs that are responsible for providing these meals directly contribute to the health and academic success of Texas school children. In addition, these programs create jobs in communities across our great state and provide a market for Texas produce.

The Texas Association of School Nutrition (TASN) represents 5,551 professionals who are responsible for making sure that our programs are financially sustainable while continuing to meet ever-increasing federal regulations. Our members desire to continue providing high quality, nutritious meals to our students, but we face pressures resulting from increased regulation, declining participation and no meaningful increases in federal funding. Child nutrition programs are supposed to be reauthorized every five years. The last reauthorization occurred in 2010. We do not expect that a reauthorization (and needed program changes) will occur this year. We look to our legislators in Austin to help us address the following issues which will enable us to continue to provide healthy meals and positively impact our students' health and academic success.

Require LEA's to include a definition of "sufficient time, conducive atmosphere, and safe environment to eat nutritious meals" in their Local Wellness Policies. The Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM) contains the preceding phrase. Unfortunately, there is no definition for these concepts. One of the biggest challenges facing child nutrition programs is that students do not have enough time to eat meals. If LEA's were required to address this in their Local Wellness Policies, school administrators would have to take a look at this issue.

Provide a per meal commodity allotment to SFA's that purchase Texas agricultural products. Currently SFA's receive federal commodity allotments that can be used to purchase domestic agricultural products. The partnership between child nutrition programs and the United States farm community has benefitted children and farmers. Texas could lead the way by extending this partnership and securing a relationship between Texas farmers and Texas children.