



July 28, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

At Northside ISD, our Child Nutrition staff remain committed to serving healthy meals to over 64,000 students in need, especially during this difficult time caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) decision to issue waivers for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) in response to the pandemic. These waivers ensured that school districts could continue to provide meals to students during forced school closures.

As we quickly approach what will be a very complex 2020-2021 school year with many students attending classes virtually and again without direct access to meals at school, continued flexibility in how school districts are able to feed those children is critically important. Many of these families, who were already economically disadvantaged, have endured additional financial burden due to the COVID-19 pandemic and rely on free school meals now more than ever.

Requiring school staff to check student eligibility and collect payments for meals as required by NSLP and SBP is not practical at a time when we are prioritizing to keep students and staff safe from the pandemic. With that said, I ask that you please consider extending the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) through next school year. By allowing school districts to continue distributing meals to all students for free, we can be sure that needy families will have better access to obtaining meals through an expedited and safe process. The last thing we want is to complicate the system for schools responding to and feeding those students who are hungry.

On behalf of the largest public school system in the San Antonio area and the fourth largest in the State of Texas, I appreciate the USDA's careful consideration of extending the NSLP, SBP, SFSP, and SSO COVID-19 waivers into the 2020-2021 school year. By doing so, students will have equitable access to healthy meals and can concentrate on advancing academically.

Sincerely,

Brian T. Woods, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Cc:  
Senator John Cornyn  
Senator Ted Cruz  
Congressman Joaquin Castro, 20<sup>th</sup> District  
Congressman Will Hurd, 23<sup>rd</sup> District

**Brian T. Woods, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

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