



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 9, 2016

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Kyle L. Guerrant, Deputy Superintendent *KG*

SUBJECT: Summer Meal Programs Letter from Secretaries Vilsack and King

Respectfully Forwarding

Because of the difficulty many families have feeding their children during the summer months, the following letter from Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack and Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr. discusses opportunities for children to receive free meals through U.S. Department of Agriculture summer meal programs.

June 7, 2016

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to you as educators on the front lines ensuring that America's children grow up and become our Nation's future leaders. No one knows better than you that children must have the proper tools to succeed, including proper and consistent nutrition to grow up healthy so they can learn and reach their full potential. During the school year, with your help, millions of children from low-income families can count on getting healthy meals at school. However, we want to make certain that essential nutritional support remains available during the summer months, and we are asking for your leadership again this year to make sure that children do not go hungry in your community this summer.

Each day, more than 22 million children receive free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program. But, when school is out, many children who rely on these meals go hungry. USDA's Summer Meal Programs help children get the nutritious meals they need even when school is not in session. Unfortunately, these Summer Meal Programs currently reach fewer than four million children nationally.

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We need your assistance so that every family whose children need meals this summer knows how to find a summer meal site in their community. Here are some ways you can help:

1. **Provide summer meals to children at your schools this summer.** Local schools make great summer meal sites. Children and parents are familiar and comfortable with local schools providing nutritious food in a safe environment. Schools in low-income areas can be summer meal sites and fill an important meal gap for students, even if summer school is not offered at the school. For a comprehensive outreach toolkit, please visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-toolkit-summer-meal-sites>.
2. **Ask principals, teachers, and staff in your schools to share information about nearby summer meal sites.** Schools communicate regularly and effectively with their students' families. Please encourage principals, teachers, and staff to connect their school families with summer meal locations by visiting <http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks> or by calling 1-866-348-6479 or 1-877-842-6273.
3. **Champion the USDA Summer Meal Programs in your community.** As a recognized leader, please share with other community leaders the importance of USDA's Summer Meal Programs to ensure children have the resources they need to succeed. Encourage local organizations to become summer meal sponsors or sites. Distribute flyers, postcards, and bookmarks about USDA's Summer Meal Programs and promote summer meals on your schools' Web sites and in your schools' e-mails. Digital and printable summer meals materials can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/raise-awareness>.

To learn more about the USDA Summer Meal Programs, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program>. In addition, the Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office staff are available to provide technical assistance and answer any questions you may have on USDA Summer Meal Programs. Find contact information for your Region at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>.

Thank you, as always, for your dedication and commitment to our children. By working together, we can ensure our children have the food and nutrition they need to grow and succeed.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture

John B. King, Jr.
Secretary of Education

cc: Michigan Education Alliance