



www.nsba.org
Phone: 703.838.NSBA Fax: 703.683.7590
1680 Duke Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314 -3493

August 6, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

Re: Child Nutrition Regulations

Dear Secretary Perdue:

On behalf of our state associations and the 90,000 school board members who govern our country's 14,000 local school districts, I write to request that the Department act swiftly to provide regulatory relief to our nation's school districts by reexamining the major regulations finalized under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010 and promulgating new regulations. This provision was included in the House passed Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (farm bill).

As you know, authorization of the HHFKA expired nearly three years ago and the nation's child nutrition programs await reauthorization by Congress. As we work towards this reauthorization, school districts across this country continue to face unnecessary hardships.

NSBA applauds recent actions taken by the Department and Congress to provide temporary relief from the most onerous HHFKA regulations which include, maintaining the current "Target I" sodium limit through the 2021-22 school year, allowing states to grant waivers to school districts from the law's 100 percent whole grain requirement and allowing schools to serve flavored one percent milk to students.

Unfortunately, even with the added flexibility, many school districts are still struggling under the HHFKA regulations. For example, some school districts, especially those in rural areas, do not have the administrative funding or capacity to apply to their respective state for waivers from the whole grain requirement. These same schools are challenged by the additional hardship of finding 100 percent whole grain products that their students want to eat.

Further, many school districts across the nation are still facing increased operational costs to comply with the bureaucratic overreach from Washington. These operational increases are often passed along to students in the form of increased prices for school breakfast and school lunch or taken out of other limited instructional accounts.

For these reasons, NSBA strongly supports the House passed language in the farm bill to restore common sense to child nutrition programs while also maintaining healthy meals for students.

Finally, NSBA appreciates the increased focus on stakeholder engagement in the House bill along with the opportunity for school boards to weigh in on regulations that will have a far-reaching impact on their school districts as school boards play an integral role in implementing school nutrition programs.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to working with you to bring much need certainty and relief to our nation's school districts. Please contact Whitney Riggs at 703-838-6160 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Gentzel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "T".

Thomas J. Gentzel
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer