

The introduction of the Let's Move campaign against childhood obesity is timely for children in the District of Columbia and is bringing some much needed attention to a health epidemic that is imminently solvable. Obesity rates have tripled in the past 30 years, a trend that means, for the first time in our history, American children may face a shorter expected lifespan than their parents. One third of all individuals born in the year 2000 or later will eventually suffer from diabetes over the course of their lifetime, while too many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma. Given that most American children consume more than 50% of their daily caloric intake from school meals, focusing on improving the quality of nutrition provided in school breakfast, lunch, and snack has to be the first step in the process of reducing the prevalence of childhood obesity.

We have to remember that a lot of the kids we serve are used to eating processed foods, so it's almost about re-introducing what a balanced meal should look like. The District requires a food based approach to menu planning for school meals. This means planning based on the offering of daily food servings from each food group. When we talk about getting protein into school meals, we should be thinking about lean meats, beans, seeds and hormone-free dairy products (cheese, yogurt, etc.). Likewise when we talk about breads and grains, we should be focused on whole grains in place of highly refined white flour products. Studies have shown that students who consume whole fruits and vegetables with their school lunch consume fewer calories throughout the day. Fresh fruits and vegetables contain the vitamins and minerals important for kid growth and development, and are important for disease prevention as adults (heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke). In order to get the most nutritional value from whole fruits and fresh vegetables we have to focus on serving produce in a fresh minimally processed form. The best way to do this is to leverage the rich supply of locally sourced produce that the mid-Atlantic region has to offer.

Revolution Foods believes that many schools know the right thing to do and many have proven that they are willing to make the investment in improving nutrition for their students. However, we cannot expect them to dramatically increase their offerings if we aren't willing to provide them with the support and resources they need to reach these new higher standards. Many States have partnered with school authorities to help them meet this challenge head-on by supplementing the meager per meal reimbursements currently provided by the USDA through the National School Breakfast and the National School Lunch program. In January the Alaska Senate introduced a bill that would provide an incremental \$.35 cents per meal for every school lunch. The state of California currently provides an additional \$.2195 cents for every meal served to a student qualified for free or reduced lunch. New York state provides an additional \$.0599 cents for every lunch and varying supplements for breakfast depending on the need level of the student. There are a few states, like Pennsylvania, that tie their supplemental reimbursements to local education authority's (LEA) ability to meet higher nutritional standards.

The Healthy School Lunch Act currently provides a supplement to the USDA reimbursements for lunch only. The Act ties the supplement to the LEA's ability to realize increased nutritional standards and is

silent with regards to support for breakfast or after school snack. Revolution Foods believes that the current supplement proposed in the Act is a good start but is ultimately insufficient. We encourage the committee and the broader Council to consider increasing the supplement for middle schools and high school without regard to increased nutritional standards and to consider increasing the supplement for all schools based on the following enhanced nutritional standards:

1. Provide increased reimbursement for 7-12 lunches: Current program reimburses high schools and elementary schools the same amount but requires 7-12 meals to provide an average of 33% more calories. Reimbursement rates should be relative to the number of calories required, so a 7-12 meal reimbursements should be, at a minimum, \$0.25 higher than a K-6 meal.
2. Provide incentive for schools to serve fresh, locally sourced, and minimally processed fruit with every breakfast, lunch, and after-school snack: Fresh fruit is high in fiber and packed with vitamins and minerals. District funding to schools should be increased by \$0.10 for meals (breakfast, lunch, and snack) served with a serving of fresh, locally sourced, and minimally processed fruit.
3. Provide incentive for schools to serve meals low in fat and free of artificial sugar: Current Food Based menu planning sets a target of < 30% kcal from total fat. This system encourages schools to add sugar to decrease the fat calorie percentage but achieve total meal calorie requirements. Revolution Foods recommends increased funding of \$.05 for meals served free of artificial sugars like high-fructose corn syrup, saccharin, or aspartame.
4. Provide incentive for schools to serve lower fat or fat free rBST-free and organic milk: Organic milk contains fewer chemicals that are detrimental to our children's health. rBST-free milk is free of growth hormones shown to be dangerous for humans. District funding should provide a supplement of \$0.05 per meal that provides 1% or skim rBST-free milk and a supplement of \$0.15 per meal that provides 1% or skim organic milk.
5. Promote the consumption of organic snack foods: Organic foods contain fewer chemicals that are detrimental to our children's health. District funding should be increased by \$0.15 per student served an organic product in after-school snack program. Policy should allow reimbursement of grain components in meals if the main grain ingredient is organic. Current regulations limit reimbursable items to grains that are enriched or whole.
6. Promote universal breakfast: Studies show that providing universal breakfast can increase school attendance. Further studies have shown that children that eat breakfast perform at higher levels academically both in the class room and on standardized tests. District funding should be increased by \$.10 for schools that provide universal breakfast as part of their school day.