# SNP Memo #2021-2022-08


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: September 29, 2021

TO: Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons Addressed

FROM: Sandra C. Curwood, PhD, RDN, ***Sandy***

## SUBJECT: National Supply Chain Disruptions and the Impact on School Nutrition Programs

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, food manufacturers and distributors have responded to situational challenges like the need for increased sanitation, product shortages, and changes to product packaging. These challenges have been compounded by worker shortages and rising production and transportation costs. Increasingly, school nutrition programs across the country are experiencing supply chain disruptions which, in turn, has a direct impact on food costs.

School divisions should be prepared for their food service budgets to increase throughout the school year, as school nutrition program staff may have to pay more for products needed to meet meal pattern requirements. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods will also likely be impacted as distribution costs rise. The USDA responded to these challenges by issuing nationwide waivers, including a waiver to allow schools to operate the Seamless Summer Option of the National School Lunch Program during school year 2021–2022. These meals are being reimbursed at Summer Food Service Program rates to help offset the increased costs of sanitation, labor, preparation, and food purchasing. School nutrition programs may also use their USDA Emergency Operating Cost funds to supplement their budgets at this time.

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs (VDOE-SNP) provided guidance and resources related to supply chain issues, nationwide waivers, and emergency procurement regulations. Supply chain disruptions have already begun to impact school menus; the VDOE-SNP encourages divisions to proactively communicate to students and their families how supply chain interruptions and staffing shortages impact school meals. Now is also a great time to consider asking parents and community leaders to volunteer with their school nutrition programs if such assistance is needed.

Students and their families depend on school nutrition programs for access to nutritious meals; these meals and snacks set students up to learn and support healthy bodies and minds. The VDOE-SNP continues to work with the USDA on supply chain disruption solutions and encourages school nutrition directors to communicate any challenges to their SNP Advisory Council representative and assigned regional specialist.

SCC/CEJ/rd