



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Department of Education**

April 26, 2013

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Nutrition Options for Students in the Summer**

The purpose of the memorandum is to present program options available to school divisions for feeding children in the summer months.

Good nutrition is essential for good health and effective learning every day, all year long. During the school year, students receive meals while they are in school; however, when school is out, many students lose access to nutritious meals. For many children, summer vacation exposes them to an increased risk of hunger and developmental decline. Hunger is one of the most severe roadblocks to the learning process. Lack of nutrition during the summer months may set up a cycle for poor performance once school begins again.

In 2011, Governor Bob McDonnell joined the Federation of Virginia Food Banks and Share Our Strength to launch the Virginia No Kid Hungry campaign, a public-private partnership working to end childhood hunger in Virginia. The No Kid Hungry campaign is working to connect children to federal food and nutrition programs including summer meals and afterschool meals programs.

Schools have three options to help children bridge the nutrition gap in the summer. School divisions are encouraged to consider participating in one of the following programs to meet the nutritional needs of students during the summer months:

- 1. Academic Summer School Programs-National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Programs (SBP).** Schools that offer academic summer school sessions can serve breakfast and/or lunch to students and receive federal reimbursement for the meals served through the regular National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs as they do during the school year. Only those students enrolled in the summer school session can participate in the school meals programs. Schools wishing to participate in the summer NSLP and summer SBP must request approval through the Virginia Department of Education's School Nutrition Programs Web software (SNPWeb).
- 2. USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).** School divisions can apply to participate in the USDA SFSP as an open site, if they plan to offer meals to children in the community. Schools that 1) are located within the attendance area of a school where at least 50 percent of the children are eligible for free and reduced price meals; 2) open their programs to neighborhood children; and 3) serve all meals at no cost to participants, can qualify as an open site and earn higher reimbursement for meals served under the SFSP. There is no academic requirement for participation. The SFSP is ideal for recreational, enrichment, or activity programs over the summer. A school may be a sponsor for the SFSP, prepare its own meals, and receive federal reimbursement or can provide meals as a vendor to sponsoring organizations such as the local parks and recreation department, the YMCA, or others.

The SFSP is a U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) federally funded child nutrition program administered by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Food Programs (NuPAFP). If the school division chooses not to provide meals during the summer months, there may be several sponsors in the school's neighborhood that do participate and provide meals to children. We encourage you to provide information about the SFSP to all families to ensure they are aware of the availability of access to nutritious meals for their children throughout local communities.

Schools can work with their PTA, send electronic announcements to parents through the school notification system, or provide written communication to inform families of the availability of summer meals. Attachment A can be used for this purpose. Families can also call 2-1-1 (Virginia's information and referral search tool) to find a feeding site closest to their neighborhood. Site information is available on the VDH Web site at <http://www.vahealth.org/NuPAFP/General%20Info/sfsp.htm>, or the No Kid Hungry Web site at [NoKidHungry.org/Virginia](http://NoKidHungry.org/Virginia). Families may also use their mobile phones to text "SummerVA" to 877-877 and find the feeding site closest to their home. All these services provide up-to-date information on Virginia summer meals at no cost. If you have any additional questions about the SFSP, please contact Pat Reddington, Virginia Department of Health SFSP Liaison, by telephone at 1-877-618-7282 or by e-mail at [Pat.Reddington@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Pat.Reddington@vdh.virginia.gov).

3. **Seamless Summer Option (SSO).** This option combines features of the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Under the SSO, schools with at least 50 percent of students eligible for free or reduced price meals remain in the regular National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and serve meals to all children at no charge, including those from the neighborhood. All meals are reimbursed at the free rate for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. There is no academic requirement. Meals are served to all children in the neighborhood at no cost and the site must be open to anyone under 18 years of age.

For more information about the Summer NSLP, Summer SBP or the SSO, please contact the school nutrition program specialist assigned to your division or the office of school nutrition programs at (804) 225-2074.

PIW/CDG/idl

Attachment:

- a. [How to find a feed site flyer](#) (PDF)