

Healthy School Food Committee

Child Nutrition and Wellness Priorities

for Los Angeles Unified School District

Imagine schools where every child is ensured a high quality, tasty, farm fresh, sustainably grown,¹ nutritious, and affordable lunch, every day. Imagine students of all socio-economic backgrounds enjoying foods of the highest quality. Imagine schools where every child feels respected and cared for, as demonstrated by the food they are served and the gardens they grow. Imagine connecting student nutrition to curricular standards and behavioral outcomes. Imagine school food that is prepared by cafeteria staff who are trained and invested in the health of their students. Imagine a healthy community, where children are meeting their maximum potential intellectually and physically and the community is welcome to assist in school site and district decisions regarding student health.

Los Angeles Unified should adopt the following policy priorities and actions related to child nutrition:

- 1. Serve foods that are of maximum nutritional value and freshness, culturally appropriate and meet dietary needs by:**
 - ◆ establishing nutritional standards that surpass USDA minimal requirements, including seasonally grown produce, non-genetically engineered and minimally processed foods
 - ◆ incorporating tasty food selections that reflect student diversity through utilization of vendors who will make more culturally specific items available
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- ◆ reflecting consideration of dietary needs and practices related to food allergies, vegetarianism, veganism, lactose and gluten intolerance, etc.
- ◆ posting or making available information on nutritional content

2. Ensure equity among all students by:

- ◆ ensuring that all students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, breakfast or after school snacks will feel encouraged and willing to participate, thus guaranteeing full entitlement to Title 1 resource funds
- ◆ establishing high food quality and abundant selection for students in *all* schools
- ◆ eliminating stigma around free or reduced meals by implementing a uniform payment method for all students

3. Eliminate commercialism and control competitive foods in our schools by:

- ◆ defining and articulating what foods and beverages should be available to students, by adopting acceptable healthy food standards that would determine vendor access into the district
- ◆ working to find healthy alternatives to brand name labeling and commercial products on school grounds, including the cafeteria
- ◆ establishing and adopting healthy food standards for a la carte and vending machine items

4. Provide for formal, strategic partnerships between cafeteria staff, teachers, parents, students and administrators, in order to connect child nutrition to the district's education mission by:

- ◆ ensuring that every child can have an experience gardening and harvesting foods by supporting the expansion of the "Garden in Every School" program
- ◆ providing cafeteria staff with comprehensive training and professional development to become a part of the educational mission where it relates to food and nutrition

5. Take a proactive, responsible and responsive role in community and environmental issues by working towards:

- ◆ ensuring that every school that has a kitchen will be used to the maximum extent possible during and after school hours
- ◆ creating eating environments that are clean, pleasant, stimulating, well maintained, nurturing, and provide ample seating and time for students to eat and enjoy their food
- ◆ ensuring that well maintained and clean drinking fountains are available for students
- ◆ creating a system of site based decision making and district level advisory by parents, teachers and community members regarding menu preparation and selection, with an accountability mechanism in place
- ◆ adopting fair bidding and procuring practices that would emphasize family scale farmers and prioritize procurement of local and sustainably grown foods whenever feasible
- ◆ utilizing biodegradable or reusable materials, eliminating excess waste generated in cafeterias and by recycling and composting of all reusable materials
- ◆ formally working on policy advocacy issues that affect child nutrition and wellness at the state and national level

¹ An agriculture whose methods do not deplete soil, water, air, wildlife, or human community resources. Sustainable agriculture is a term used worldwide to refer to farming practices that strive for this ideal, as opposed to methods that rely heavily on petroleum products (like gasoline, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides) and/or exploited labor. Source: California Alliance for Family Farmers <http://www.caff.org>