TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

November 2, 2026

Dear Child Nutrition Director:

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to supporting Texas children. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) values our partnership and your efforts to ensure all Texas children have access to the nutritious meals they need to focus on academic achievement this school year.

Texas law (Agriculture Code, Title-2, Chapter 12, Section 12.0029) requires public school food authorities (SFAs) with 50 percent or more of enrolled students eligible for free or reduced-price meals in the National School Lunch Program to provide a summer meal program for a minimum of 30 calendar days during the summer months. **Your SFA meets this requirement.**[1]

State law provides options for SFAs meeting the requirement. Your district must select one of the following options and provide the applicable information to TDA no later than January 31, 2027, using the Texas Summer Mandate form in TDA's electronic TX-UNPS.

1. Operate a Summer Meal Program as a sponsor during the summer of 2027, for a minimum of 30 calendar days: or
2. Partner or collaborate with another organization or SFA to support their summer program; or
3. Request and receive approval for a waiver for participation, submit the required documentation, and identify a potential alternate provider. If requesting a waiver, state law requires the board of trustees to send written notice of the district's intention to the district's local School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) no later than November 30, 2026. The notice must include an explanation of the district's reason for requesting a waiver of the requirement.

When evaluating these options, TDA encourages districts to be informed of alternative service models now available to rural districts to serve non-congregate meals. TDA has developed a webpage and will continue to develop resources to support districts considering this summer service option. Please visit https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Summer-Meal-Programs/Summer-Non-Congregate-Feeding-Program for these resources.

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TexasAgriculture.gov

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Detailed instructions providing a step-by-step guide to assist you in successfully providing the required information to TDA by January 31, 2027, can be found on the Summer Feeding Programs page on Squaremeals.org. If you have questions about this requirement, please contact your regional Education Service Center (ESC). Additional information can also be found at www.SquareMeals.org/SummerWaivers.

I commend you and your team for responding to the unprecedented changes brought on by the pandemic and returning to standard operations post pandemic. Your commitment to good nutrition and the children of Texas ensures a healthier future for the Lone Star State.

Sincerely,

Catherine Wright-Steele

Catherine Wright-Steele
Administrator
Food and Nutrition Division

Attachment

CWS/DH/mm

cc: Superintendent

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[1] TDA uses free and reduced data from March 2026 to identify school districts impacted by this requirement.