



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

November 4, 2020

Dear Child Nutrition Director:

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to supporting Texas children and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. You and your team have shown extraordinary strength and resilience in serving nutritious meals for students whether they are learning on campus or at home. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) values our partnership and your efforts to ensure all Texas children have the nutritious meals they need to focus on academic achievement this fall.

A new year arrives soon, and it will be time to plan for connecting children with good nutrition during the summer in 2021. 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 meals to students in need for a minimum of 30 calendar days during the summer months.

As your SFA meets this requirement, you must select one of the following three options and provide the applicable information to TDA no later than January 31, 2021, 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 2021 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, 2020. The notice must include an explanation of the district's reason for requesting a waiver of the requirement.

Enclosed are detailed instructions providing a step-by-step guide to assist you in successfully providing the required information to TDA by January 31, 2021. Should any additional guidance or revised due dates be provided for the summer mandate requirement, you will be notified as soon as possible.

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 working to maintain program integrity while responding to the unprecedented changes brought on by the pandemic. Your commitment to good nutrition and the children of Texas ensures a healthier future for the Lone Star State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Wright-Steele". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Catherine Wright-Steele
Administrator

Enclosure

CWS/MDG/dh

cc: Superintendent