



North East Independent School District

8961 TESORO DRIVE - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78217

Sean Maika, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

August 30, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary,

On behalf of about 28,000 children in North East ISD who access the reduced and free school breakfast and lunch program, I am submitting comments on the USDA's proposed "Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program." My primary concern is the elimination of SNAP benefits for vulnerable, at-risk students who rely on nutritious school meals.

The current direct certification process for students in qualifying households offers an advantage: no child misses a meal even if the school meal application was not returned or completed improperly. Automatic eligibility also ensures that struggling families and districts are not suffering from unpaid school meal fees. Last year, the District had 14,862 students directly certified via SNAP.

Additionally, the proposed changes will have a direct impact on our ability to use the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). North East ISD, the second largest school district in San Antonio, has 29 campuses on CEP for the 2019-2020 school year. Our School Nutrition Services staff believes that reducing the number of children who are certified through SNAP will result in fewer schools qualifying for CEP and higher operational costs for our breakfast and lunch programs.

I implore you to consider carefully the impact of the proposed revisions on working poor families and school districts. Most importantly, please consider the impact on school children who may not be ready to learn if they are not receiving adequate nutrition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Sean Maika", written over a horizontal line.

Sean Maika, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent