

**C12. GROUP 3—PRINCIPAL PRE-VISIT ADVANCE LETTER**

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<DATE>

<P\_FN> <P\_LN>  
<School>

Dear <P\_FN> <P\_LN>:

Again, thank you for your participation in the School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study (SNMCS) for the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The study will examine the food and nutrient content of school meals, as well as meal costs and revenues. The study comes at a critical time as child nutrition continues to be a pressing issue faced by educators and policymakers.

As part of this study, data collectors will be visiting your SFA during the week of [DATES]. We plan to be on-site at your school on [DATE]. We will work with the designated school liaison to coordinate data collection activities.

At this time, we would like to request your assistance with the following three aspects of data collection:

- 1) Set up a time to complete the **Principal Cost Interview** over the phone. This interview will address the full cost of food service in your SFA, including indirect and administrative costs.
- 2) Complete the **Principal Survey**. You will receive a link to this survey after completing the cost interview. This survey will include questions needed to characterize district policies, the school environment, and food service operations.
- 3) Support your food service manager in the following data collection activities during the target week.

**Menu Survey and School Nutrition Manger Survey.** Food service managers will be asked to complete a web-based survey during the target week. The Menu Survey collects detailed information on the foods offered and served in reimbursable lunches, breakfasts, and afterschool snacks (if offered). Included with the Menu Survey will also be a separate, brief questionnaire that asks about food service operations in each school.

Online training tools will be available within the Menu Survey to instruct respondents on how to complete it correctly. A project staff member will also be available throughout the target week to answer questions and offer assistance. It is critical that the menu survey be completed as fully and accurately as possible and during the agreed-upon target week.

We will provide a \$50 check for food service managers who complete the Menu Survey and the School Nutrition Manager Survey, in recognition of their conscientious efforts and important contributions.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 3 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection.



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**Competitive Foods Checklists.** A staff member appointed by you will be asked to complete a simple set of forms detailing the availability to students of vending machine items and other sources of food such as school stores.

**School Nutrition Manager Cost Interview.** We will conduct in-person interviews with your food service manager to learn about the full cost of food service, including indirect and administrative costs.

**Cafeteria Observations.** Data collectors will observe one lunch and one breakfast period (if the school participates in the School Breakfast Program) in each sampled school to document characteristics of food service operations.

**Plate Waste Observations.** Data collectors will estimate the proportion of foods wasted by students in order to assess the nutrient and food group composition of foods wasted, and to assess the relationship between plate waste and characteristics of students, school food environments, and school food service operations.

Participation in the study by selected states, districts, and schools is required under Section 305 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). Your participation in this study is extremely valuable and we appreciate the time and effort that you and other school staff will devote to the study. If you have any questions, please feel free to call a member of our project team at 855-###-####, or e-mail [SNMCS@abtassoc.com](mailto:SNMCS@abtassoc.com). We look forward to working with you on this important study.

Sincerely,

Maria Boyle  
Project Director (Abt Associates)  
Abt Associates



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