



July 15, 2014

Dear School Nutrition Professional:

I am writing to encourage your participation in the School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study (SNMCS). This study combines important elements of the School Nutrition and Dietary Assessment (SNDA) and School Lunch and Breakfast Cost (SLBC) studies that have been conducted in the past. As you know, these studies have provided critical information to policy makers, program managers, and others about the nutritional quality and costs of school meals across the nation, and about the characteristics of food service operations. The combining of these two study series will only increase the value of the research and the SNMCS occurs at a critical time as school meal programs are challenged to meet historic changes to the meal pattern, upcoming nutrition standards for competitive foods, meal price equity requirements and other regulatory changes. The support of school nutrition professionals has been important to the success of these studies previously, and I hope that you can provide the same assistance and support for this one.

Mathematica Policy Research and its research partners Abt Associates, Agralytica, and Relyon Media are conducting SNMCS for USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The study will examine the food and nutrient content of meals offered and served, and meal costs and revenues in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. It will also provide needed information on food service operations under the new nutrition standards and will gather information about a range of other issues important to the school meal programs, including student participation and dietary intake, the amounts and proportions of foods served that are wasted, and the availability of competitive foods.

Data will be collected from school food authorities (SFAs), schools, and students and parents primarily between January and June 2015. The study will include a national sample of 500 SFAs and 1200 schools.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. I hope that you agree with me that the data collected and analyzed through SNMCS will provide critical information in setting policies and program changes that can truly support schools in serving meals that contribute to a healthy future for our children – a goal we all share.

Sincerely,

Leah Schmidt, SNS
SNA President

cc: SNA Board of Directors