



Public Schools of North Carolina

School Nutrition Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic



***School Nutrition:
Nourishing student's
bodies, minds and
souls***

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Child Hunger in North Carolina



- Nearly 60% of students (826,000) enrolled in NC's public schools qualify for free or reduced-price meals.
- Approximately one in five or 22.4% of the nation's children live in food insecure households.
- More than one in four or 27.6% of children in North Carolina struggle with hunger.
- Many students struggle with hunger because they live in economically-distressed households, yet they do not qualify for meal benefits at school.



School Nutrition Priorities during the Pandemic

- Providing meals for the most vulnerable, food-insecure children
- Protecting the health and well-being of children, families and employees through social distancing and personal hygiene measures
- Promoting program sustainability



NCDPI is operating under 21 Federal Waivers from the USDA

- ✓ Transition from the NSLP to SFSP/SSO
- ✓ Meals served in non-congregate settings
- ✓ Provision of meals to all students based on “area eligibility”
- ✓ Eligibility for sites outside an “area eligible site”
- ✓ Meal pattern requirements
- ✓ Meal times
- ✓ Parent/guardian meal pick-up
- ✓ On-site monitoring requirements



Snapshot of School Meals under special Waiver Provisions



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

COVID-19

18 million meals served since schools closed March 16

1,000 pick-up/drive-thru meal sites

2,100 yellow buses delivering meals



NC School Nutrition teams nourish children's bodies, minds and souls!



Snapshot of School Meals under special Waiver Provisions

- Grab-and-Go Meals
- Curb-side Pick-up
- Meal delivery by Yellow School Bus
- Meals delivered for weekends
- Many school staff providing meals
- NC National Guard lending support
- Community Organizations engaged
 - Food Banks
 - Boys and Girls Clubs
 - YMCAs
 - Faith-based communities



Parent and Community Outreach



Do you need help finding meals for your child?

TEXT "FOODNC" TO 877-877

Texting powered by No Kid Hungry. This Institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Food and Supplies

- Waivers provided optimal flexibility
- Transition to “delivered” meals changed the menu options
- Main Line distributors indicate adequate food supplies; willingness to work with schools
- Food distribution supplies in short supply in some areas; reaching out to local distributors
- Working with colleagues at NCDA&CS
- **Need projections soon to fill summer nutrition program orders – Food costs will increase**
- Funding to support continued meals during the summer will be necessary



Essential Personnel



Staff support

- School Nutrition and Transportation staff were deemed essential personnel
- Significant number of staff exercised emergency leave
- Limited number of staff for meal preparation/distribution
- Fatigue and fear have been factors in staff decisions
- Minimal COVID-19 diagnoses; rapid public health support
- Anticipate “other staff support” available for summer meals
- Additional LEA staff recruited; paid from their original pay sources
- 75/115 LEAs offered pay incentives for essential School Nutrition personnel (from varying funding sources, predominately existing School Nutrition funds)



Transporting Meals

- Use of yellow school buses enabled greater distribution of meals to vulnerable children

- Executive Order 116 and GS 115C-242 authorize continued use of yellow buses



- Elimination of school buses will produce a reduce meals from 500,000 (avg) per day to 125,000 – 150,000; **funding will be required to keep yellow school buses rolling to provide meals to vulnerable children**

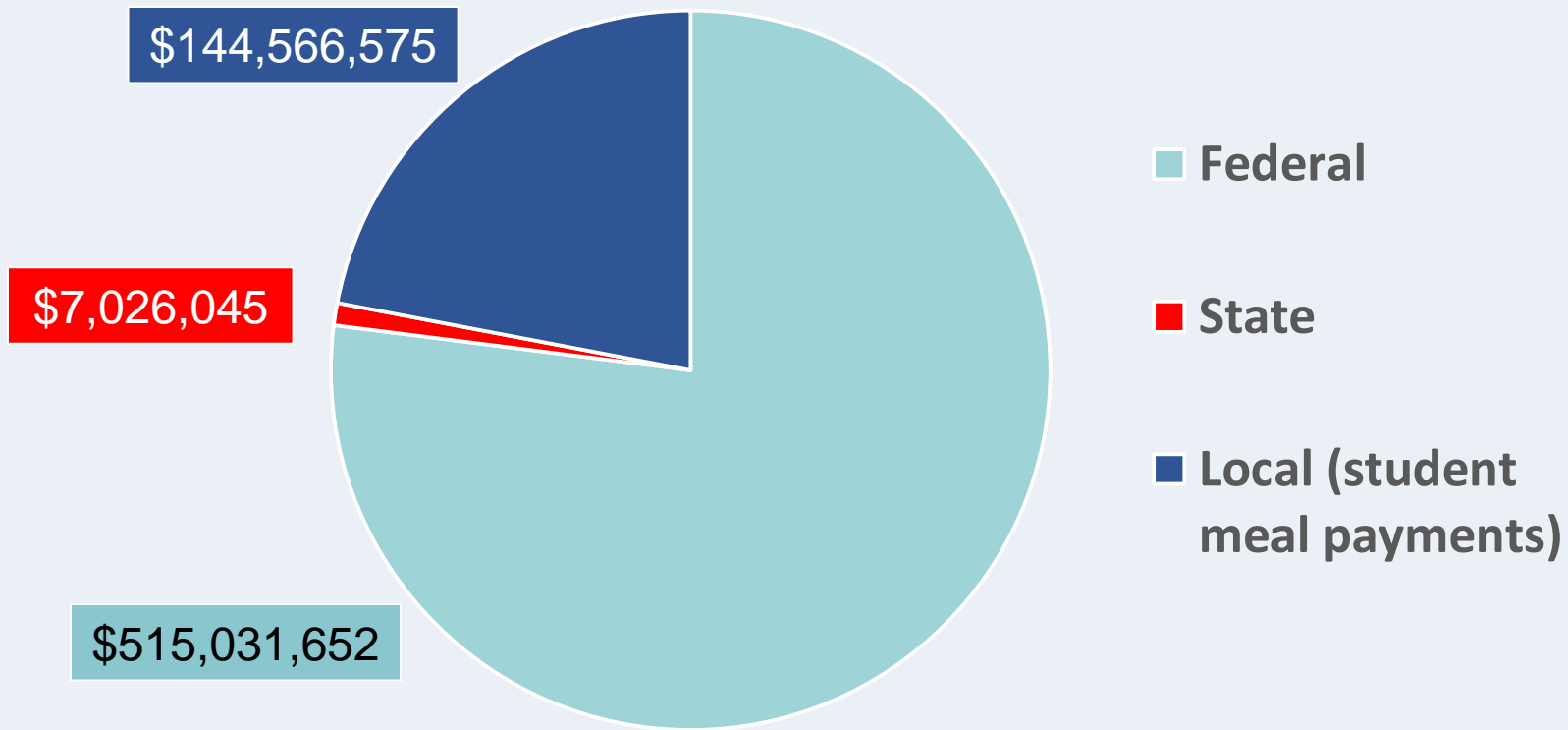
Protecting Staff/Students

- Worked closely with staff from NCDHHS
- Continue to follow CDC guidance
- Issued guidance regularly to support safety of staff, students and families
- Assessing need for PPE for essential personnel
- Continued concern around availability of gloves in food preparation areas
- Continued concerned for hand sanitizer for staff
- Convenience contracts to ensure access to PPE



Funding for School Nutrition Programs

Funding Sources



DPI and LEAs

maximized federal and other funds

DPI facilitated:

- Increased frequency of claims (weekly)
- Approved advances of federal funds to LEAs
- Transitioned all school-based programs to earn maximum Federal reimbursement

LEAs received

- grants
- donations



School Nutrition Sustainability

80% of SFAs indicate they want to continue to provide meals to students through August and transition into re-entry

Meal Counts are down	1.2M/day to 500,000/day
Reduction in Reimbursable Meals	\$4.4M shortfall
Loss of Local Funds (paid meals)	<u>\$3.2M shortfall</u>
Total	\$7.6 M
Total weekly expenditures	\$14M - \$15M/week
School Nutrition Payroll is	\$7.2M/week

Additional State funds are required to sustain School Nutrition Operations from June – August and beyond



\$75 M in Federal Funds

HB 1043

- Proposed allotment is in process
- Allotment will be based on the same proportion of funds as if the districts were reimbursed by
 - School meal receipts (local payments)
 - Federal funds
- State Board of Education will consider the allotment and accompanying allotment policy during their May 21 meeting



***Thank you for your support of
school nutrition programs,
personnel and the children
they serve.***

