

**Student Nutrition Program Response**  
**to**  
**IDEAS Independent Program and Project Analysis**  
**Prepared by**  
**Mary Ann McCann**  
**Student Nutrition Coordinator**  
**August 17, 2009**

The Student Nutrition Program portion of the IDEAS Report submitted to the Board of Education on July 8, 2009, is filled with inaccurate and misleading information. This response will provide accurate information so not only the Board, but the Superintendent and school community will be have a clarified report regarding this federal supported program.

1. IDEAS Statement - Page 92, Paragraph 3:

Incorrect: Nutrition requirements are tied to the recommendations of the 1995 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and are stated as a limit to the percentage of calories coming from fat and saturated fat and a requirement to provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium and calories.

Correct: The nutrition requirements for the National School Lunch and National School Breakfast Programs are tied to the recommendations of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Revisions regarding consumption of sodium and whole grains are still being developed.

2. IDEAS Statement - Page 93, Paragraph 1, Sentence 5:

Incorrect: The district owns two delivery vehicles, one of which has a hydraulic lift gate, and recently purchased powered meal delivery cabinets that can be plugged in during transport to maintain meals at temperature.

Correct: Both delivery trucks have hydraulic lifts so meal delivery cabinets may be loaded onto each vehicle. Only one of the trucks has the capacity to plug in meal delivery cabinets.

3. IDEAS Statement – Page 93, Paragraph 1, Sentence 6

Incorrect: These (trucks) are used to deliver meals for satellite locations such as the Chrysalis Alternative School, charter schools, which purchase meals from the district, La Escuela, etc.

Correct: Chrysalis Alternative School and charter schools do not purchase meals from the district. Chrysalis Alternative High School is a district school and charter schools are public schools within our district and are identified as part of Taos Municipal School

District. Meals served which are eligible for reimbursement are submitted to NM Public Education Department; Student Nutrition Bureau web based system and paid as per the federal reimbursement rates. Llano Quemado YDI, Head Start is the only food service establishment that purchases meals from the district.

4. IDEAS Statement – Page 93, Paragraph 1, Sentence 7

Incorrect: On their rounds, the Student Nutrition delivery drivers also pick up recycling, which is consolidated at the Student Nutrition Warehouse.

Correct: The only site where the Student Nutrition delivery drives pick up recycling is at the Celestino Romero Administration Building, which is immediately delivered to the Town of Taos Recycling Center on Bertha Road. There is no consolidation of recyclables at the Student Nutrition Warehouse.

5. IDEAS Statement – Page 93, Paragraph 3, Sentence 2

Incorrect: TMS also has access to Albuquerque Public Schools' bulk contracts, which have discounts available to the largest district in the state, and the Coordinator also worked hard to exploit the commodities program, under which she received a "commodities dollar budget" that is over and above the meal reimbursement amount, but can only be redeemed by requesting delivery of commodities through the Human Services Department (HSD) Food and Nutrition Services Bureau.

Correct: The only Albuquerque Public Schools' (APS) bulk contracts that TMS has access to are the contracts for commodity processing. These contracts are open to all school districts in New Mexico for processing commodity products. The NM School Nutrition Cooperative contracts with Zanios Foods to provide food, non-food and supply and materials to TMS, which is no way connected to APS.

Correct: Taos Municipal Schools Student Nutrition does not request redemption of USDA Commodities. The Food and Nutrition Services Bureau (FNS) allocates commodities annually of \$.2075 (2008-09 rates), based on the March average daily participation for National School Lunch meal participation for the previous school year. Commodities are allocated based on surplus commodities purchased by the USDA. Commodities are delivered monthly by the FNS. Commodities diverted for processing are either delivered by the FANS or direct ship from the manufacturer to our warehouse.

6. IDEAS Statement – Page 93, Paragraph 4, Sentence 3

Incorrect: The amount of the subsidy, that is, how much the federal government will reimburse a district for each meal varies by the percentage of qualifying families in a district and whether a meal is paid for in full, at the reduced rate or not at all.

Correct: The amount of the per meal subsidy for free, reduced-price and free meals do not vary and are established annually by USDA.

7. IDEAS Statement – Page 93, Paragraph 4, Sentence 4

Incorrect: A district that has over 60 percent free and reduced price students qualified for the maximum (“severe need”) reimbursement rates.

Correct: Severe need schools are schools that have 40% or higher free and reduced price students in the second preceding year and applies only to breakfast meals. Severe need payments are up to \$.28 higher than the normal reimbursements for free and reduced-price breakfasts. Safety-Net Rates apply for lunch meals and pay an additional \$.02 cents per meal for schools that have 60% or higher free or reduced price students. See Attachment A

8. IDEAS Statement – Page 94, Paragraph 1, Sentence 1

Incorrect: A New Mexico School District, like TMS, has at least 85 percent free or reduced price students may apply to PED to implement Provision 2 of the NSLP (7 CFR, Part 245.9) as an alternative method for counting and claiming meals.

Correct: School districts may determine their own appropriate and applicable percentage rate of free and reduced price students to apply to PED for Provision 2. Neither USDA nor NM PED, Student Nutrition Bureau has established a percentage of eligibility for Provision 2, which is left to the discretion of the school district.

9. IDEAS Statement – Page 94, Paragraph 3, Sentence 4

Incorrect: Bulk commodities that require processing such as ground beef, chickens or turkeys, can be processed into patties or nuggets or roasts by a bulk processor contracted through HSD, but the district may pay the processing charge in real money to the bulk processor.

Correct: Bulk processing is not contracted through HSD. Albuquerque Public Schools develops a bid for products that are available through processing which NM Schools have access. Schools may purchase process commodities directly from the manufacturer based on contract prices obtained from the APS bid. Processed commodities are either delivered through the HSD Warehouse or direct shipped to schools.

10. IDEAS Statement – Page 94, Paragraph 4

Incorrect: TMS also participates in the USDA Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program (FFVP), which provides grants to elementary schools only to purchase fresh products. The program was authorized under the Farm Bill, and is offered in collaboration with the Department of Defense (DoD), which acts as a purchasing and distribution agent. In New Mexico DoD fresh fruit and vegetable distributions are aggregated to HSD commodities distributions for greater efficiency.

Correct: Enos Garcia Elementary School is the only elementary school in the district which received Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant monies during the 2008-2009 school year. The DoD does not at this time provide for the purchase and distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables for the FFVP. The Food and Nutrition Bureau (commodities) does allow for about 3% of our commodity allocation toward the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables for the National School Lunch and National Breakfast Programs, and this allocation is purchased through a local vendor which has been awarded the DoD contract for New Mexico.

11. IDEAS Statement – Page 94, Paragraph 4, Sentence 3

Incorrect: USDA has also worked with schools to help promote connections with local small farmers who may be able to provide fresh produce.

Correct: Advocacy to promote connections with local small farmers has been provided by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, not USDA. Additionally I have worked extensively with local growers for the past 18 years to buy locally grown or produced fresh fruits and vegetables.

12. IDEAS Statement – Page 96, Paragraph 5, Sentence 1

Incorrect: In addition to meals served during the school year, TMS operated a summer food program that feeds 22 sites out of the middle school kitchen using a simplified 3 cycle menu because the Finance Department will not accept POs between April 15<sup>th</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup> and so the menu must rely to a great extent on prepared foods.

Correct: TMS does operate approximately 22 sites in the TMS district plus Angel Fire Resort Day Care Center. Meals are prepared at Taos High School using a two week cycle menu. The Finance Department does not have any input regarding the menu items served for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The cycle menu is developed to meet federal meal pattern guidelines with guidance from the Family Nutrition Bureau of CYFD. While the Finance Department directs all district programs to have all purchase orders processed by March 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, the Student Nutrition Program works with the Finance Department to encumber funds for the remainder of the school year and SFSP. Prepared foods are primarily used to expedite meal preparation and have food products that are prewrapped to ensure safe and sanitary foods transported to all 22 sites. Fresh fruits and vegetables are used regularly to promote healthy eating as long as price is appropriate for purchase. The Finance Department in no way dictates the foods we are to use.

13. IDEAS Statement – Page 96, Paragraph 6

Incorrect: The Student Nutrition Coordinator is also the District Safety Coordinator.

Correct: The Student Nutrition Coordinator is not and has never been the District Safety Coordinator. I have served as Co-Chairperson of the TMS School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC).

14. IDEAS Statement – Page 96, Paragraph 8, Sentence 5

Incorrect: There have been issues in the past getting a PO for special foods approved rapidly enough to provide meals for a child immediately following the identification of a special nutrition diet.

Correct: There have been no issues where getting a PO for special foods approved rapidly enough to get the food needed for a special diet. In fact, the Student Nutrition staff works with teachers and parents to provide meals that are already on the menu. In rare situations, students will require special foods, which are purchased directly from existing vendors without the need for a special PO.

15. IDEAS Statement – Page 97, Paragraph, 4, Sentence 1

Incorrect: There are opportunities that are not being exploited to integrate Student Nutrition services with the curriculum and involve students with food preparation and growing food for their own consumption.

Correct: The author of the IDEAS report has a ambitious notion that food grown in school gardens will support the Student Nutrition Program. It is more prudent to consider that food grown in school gardens could be used in nutrition education or culinary arts classes. It is not possible to grow and sustain the amounts of foods necessary for meal production in the student nutrition program, because of the labor factor involved to tend to the garden.

Subject: Reimbursement rates SY 2008-2009  
Date: July 09, 2008

**ATTACHMENT A**

**REIMBURSEMENT RATES**

**JULY 1, 2008 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2009**

**NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Regular Rates</b> (Less than 60% Free/Reduced Price)	<b>Safety Net Rates</b> (60% or more Free/Reduced Price)
<b>Paid</b>	\$0.24	\$0.26
<b>Reduced Price</b>	\$2.17	\$2.19
<b>Free</b>	\$2.57	\$2.59
<b>The maximum that can be charged for a Reduced Price Lunch is \$0.40</b>		
<b>The USDA Commodity Support for each lunch is \$0.2075</b>		

**SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Regular Rates</b> (Non-Severe Need)	<b>Severe Need Rates</b>
<b>Paid</b>	\$0.25	\$0.25
<b>Reduced Price</b>	\$1.10	\$1.38
<b>Free</b>	\$1.40	\$1.68
<b>The maximum that can be charged for a Reduced Price Breakfast is \$0.30</b>		