

BREAKFAST IN EVERY SCHOOL

(Adopted by Convention Delegates May 2003)

Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2013

- WHEREAS,** The California State PTA since its founding has been committed to good nutrition as an essential ingredient in every child's health and readiness to learn; and
- WHEREAS,** A recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report shows that more than 2,000,000 children in California are hungry or at risk of hunger; and
- WHEREAS,** The California Department of Education Nutritional Services Division (NSD) also indicates that more than 2,000 (24%) of schools in California that provide the National School Lunch Program do not offer the School Breakfast Program, and that 549 schools that enroll more than 20% of the low-income children and offer the National School Lunch Program do not participate in the School Breakfast Program; and
- WHEREAS,** Reports published by the California Department of Education Nutritional Services Division (NSD) and by the Food Research and Action Center show that more than 1,200,000 (60%) of the low-income children in California who are eligible for free and reduced-priced school meals do not participate in the School Breakfast Program; and
- WHEREAS,** Recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) studies demonstrate that the nutrition quality of the reimbursable school breakfast, which supplies more than one-fourth of a student's Recommended Daily Allowance (RDAs) for all targeted nutrients, now satisfies most standards contained in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and continues to steadily improve; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to advocate that every child in the California public schools has access to the School Breakfast Program; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to educate families about the availability of the School Breakfast Program; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to work with local school districts and schools to encourage them to participate in the national School Breakfast Program; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts advocate for continuing implementation of and adequate funding for School Breakfast Programs; and be it further

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- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work with local and statewide task forces, commissions and organizations that promote student nutrition and School Breakfast Programs; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts work to advocate for healthy and nutritionally balanced meals provided by the School Breakfast Programs; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage other state PTAs to adopt a similar resolution.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Childhood hunger is an extremely serious problem. In 1999, a survey by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) showed that ten percent of all United States households representing 19 million adults and 12 million children were “food insecure.” Of the 10.5 million households that were “food insecure,” 3.1 million suffered from food insecurity so severe that the USDA classified them as “hungry.” Five million adults and 2.7 million children lived in these “hungry” households.

California, with one of the highest rates of poverty in the country, cannot ignore one of the most basic barriers to learning: hunger. There are currently 2.8 million children in California qualified for free or reduced priced meals. These children come from families living at or below the federal poverty level. Even though nutrition plays a vital role in preparing children to learn, in 2001 only 41% of low-income children who ate lunch at school also ate breakfast at school.

Last year in California over 2.7 million students received a nutritious lunch through the National School Lunch Program. Over 900,000 students received a nutritious breakfast through the School Breakfast Program. For many students the meals they receive at school are the only meals they can depend upon.

The School Breakfast Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in more than 72,000 schools and institutions nationwide. The program was established under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to ensure that all children have access to healthy breakfast at school, to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free breakfasts to 7.8 million children each school day. The program is designed to provide 25% of a child’s dietary needs and more importantly can fill an important nutrition gap for hungry children.

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In addition to these benefits, recent research from around the nation links participation in the School Breakfast Program with improved academic success. Studies show that children who eat breakfast at school – regardless of their family income level – have higher test scores, are less tardy and absent, have fewer visits to the school nurse and exhibit better behavior than those who do not eat breakfast.

Currently, the California State PTA is participating in the statewide California's Child Nutrition Task Force, chaired by California's First Lady Sharon Davis. The purpose of this task force is to explore the issue of hunger in California and to promote programs that would alleviate hunger, particularly in children. Furthermore, the California State PTA has made childhood hunger a focus of its 2003 convention. It is imperative that the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts recognize and assume the responsibility of ensuring our children's access to adequate nutrition. The School Breakfast Program, along with other federal child nutrition programs would help to eliminate hunger in children and promote achievement for all students.