



National School Meal History and Financial Information

Prepared 2/3/11

History

School meals have a long history. School meals first began in Europe in the 18th century and came to America in the late 19th century. In all cases, charitable people and organizations first supported and provided school meals, but these transformed into government programs over time.

In the United States, federal support for school meals began in 1932. The staggering number of young men disqualified for military service due to malnutrition led to the passage of The National School Lunch Act of 1946. The Act reads: "It is hereby declared to be a policy of Congress, as a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children...by assisting the States, through grants-in-aid and other means, in providing an adequate supply of food and other facilities for the establishment, maintenance, operation, and expansion of nonprofit school lunch programs."

The Child Nutrition Act of 1966 saw the establishment of a pilot School Breakfast Program, and this program was permanently authorized in 1975.

The National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program have been in continuous operation since their inception, and both have grown steadily through the years. 31.3 million American children received lunch and 11.1 million children received breakfast in FFY2009. The Healthy Hunger-Free Act of 2010 expands and improves these two programs, cutting red tape, improving nutritional standards, and increases the federal reimbursement per school meal by \$.06.

Finances

Below are the current per-meal rates of federal reimbursement for the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

**Federal Reimbursement
for 2010-2011**

	Free meal	Reduced price meal	Full-paid student meal
School Breakfast Program	\$2.36	\$2.06	\$0.39
National School Lunch Program	\$4.41	\$4.01	\$0.42

Below are the approximate costs incurred by Alaska schools to prepare and serve a school lunch. *(provided by the Alaska School Nutrition Association – 2011)*

From the Alaska School Nutrition Association - the cost to provide school lunch in Alaska:	Cost	Difference between cost and federal reimbursement:	
		Free meal	Reduced Price meal
On the Road System	\$4.90	\$0.49	\$0.89
Off the Road System	\$7.35	\$2.94	\$3.34

Below is the history of reimbursements received by Alaska through the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program from 2006 to 2010 *(USDA website: fns.usda.gov)*

USDA Data as of January 31, 2011

Federal reimbursement of school meals in Alaska

Year	School Lunch reimbursement	School Breakfast reimbursement	Total
2010 (preliminary)	\$28,183,074	\$6,906,411	\$35,089,485
2009	\$25,873,292	\$6,108,476	\$31,981,768
2008	\$24,067,965	\$5,350,937	\$29,418,902
2007	\$23,446,316	\$5,063,950	\$28,510,266
2006	\$22,790,882	\$4,862,847	\$27,653,729