



OUR PLATFORM

This platform represents the *Time for Lunch* campaign's policy position. These are the first steps Congress must take to ensure our schools can provide REAL FOOD for lunch.

The *Time for Lunch* Platform

Every school day, we have an opportunity to build a strong foundation for our children's health by serving them real food at school. Children who grow up enjoying food that is both delicious and good for them learn healthy habits that last throughout their lives. Each year that we fail to satisfy our children's right to real food is another year we deny our children good health, we diminish their ability to learn and we close the door on their opportunity to succeed.

The need for real school food has never been greater. Today, one in four children is overweight or obese, and one in three will develop diabetes in his or her lifetime. In the face of this crisis, our schools are financially struggling to feed children anything but the overly processed fast food that endangers their health. For many children, school lunch is their only guaranteed meal of the day. Right now, those children are forced to choose between going hungry and being unhealthy.

We can do better.

The **National School Lunch Program** provides a meal to more than 30 million children every school day. By giving schools the resources to serve real food, we can grant 30 million children the freedom to be healthy. By teaching children to eat well, we can make a down payment on health care reform. By providing children with locally grown fruits and vegetables, we can support local farmers and create green jobs in our communities. By purchasing local food, we can stop wasting oil on transportation. By raising children who enjoy real food, we can start laying the foundation for America's future prosperity.

This fall, the **Child Nutrition Act**, which is the bill that governs the National School Lunch Program, is up for reauthorization in Congress. By passing a Child Nutrition Act that works for children, our nation can take the first step towards a future where no child is denied his or her right to be healthy and where every child enjoys real food.

That's why it's time for Congress and the Obama Administration to:



1. INVEST IN CHILDREN'S HEALTH.

Give schools just one dollar more per day for each child's lunch. Under the National School Lunch Program, the USDA reimburses schools for every meal served: \$2.68 for a free lunch, \$2.28 for a reduced-price lunch and 25 cents for a paid lunch. Since these reimbursements must also pay for labor, equipment and overhead costs, schools are left with only \$1.00 to spend on food. How can schools be expected to feed our children and protect their health with only a dollar a day? It's time to build a strong foundation for our children's health by raising the reimbursement rate to \$3.68.

2. PROTECT AGAINST FOOD THAT PUTS CHILDREN AT RISK.

Establish strong standards for all food sold at school, including food from vending machines and school fast food. At most schools, children can buy junk food in vending machines, at on-campus stores and in the cafeteria as "a la carte" items. These overly processed, high-calorie "fast" foods sneak under the radar of federal nutrition standards. They undermine the National School Lunch Program's investment in children's health and allow food companies to profit from selling obesity. It's time to take the first step towards making real food the standard by approving Rep. Woolsey's and Sen. Harkin's Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act of 2009.

3. TEACH CHILDREN HEALTHY HABITS THAT WILL LAST THROUGH LIFE.

Fund grants for innovative Farm to School programs and school gardens. This spring, 30 fifth-graders joined Michelle Obama in planting a vegetable garden on the White House lawn. "What I found with my kids [is that] if they were involved in planting and picking it, they were much more curious to give it a try," Mrs. Obama says. Every child deserves the opportunity to learn healthy eating habits at school. In 2004, a section was added to the Child Nutrition Act to provide schools with grants to cover one-time grants that enable them to purchase local foods and to teach lessons on healthy eating in kitchen and garden classrooms – but Congress never appropriated funds for it. This year, it's time for Congress to guarantee \$50 million of mandatory funding for Farm to School programs.



We also ask that Congress and the Obama Administration:

4. GIVE SCHOOLS THE INCENTIVE TO BUY LOCAL.

Establish financial incentives that encourage schools to buy food from local farms for all child nutrition programs. Buying fruits and vegetables from local farms is an economic engine for creating jobs in our communities, rebuilding rural economies, and supporting family farmers. By shortening the distance food travels – from farm to table – it also saves oil and ensures school foods are as fresh and healthy as possible.

5. CREATE GREEN JOBS WITH A SCHOOL LUNCH CORPS.

Train underemployed Americans to be the teachers, farmers, cooks, and administrators our school cafeterias need. We can't serve real food in schools without investing in school kitchens and the people who prepare and serve lunch. This spring, President Obama signed the Serve America Act, which expanded Americorps and reinforced his call for Americans to serve their country. Right now, our nation has an opportunity to train young and unemployed Americans to be the teachers, farmers, cooks and administrators we need to ensure the National School Lunch Program is protecting children's health. President Obama has called for an end to childhood hunger by 2015; let's answer that call by putting Americans to work building and working in school kitchens nationwide.