



February 1, 2023

Brian Kress, Superintendent
Blackfoot School District
270 E Bridge St
Blackfoot, ID 83221

Dear Superintendent Kress,

On November 14-15, 2022, State Department of Education (SDE) Coordinators Cambria Steffler, Jennifer Butler, Jamie Gibson, and Jax Dunham conducted an Administrative Review (AR) of Blackfoot School District for the following United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- USDA Foods
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASSP)

The sites reviewed were Ridge Crest Elementary School, Blackfoot High School, and Blackfoot Heritage 6th Grade School.

The State agency (SA) would like to commend Jennifer Jacaway, Kimberly Jepperson, and the entire staff of Blackfoot School District for their hard work operating the school nutrition programs.

Overview

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, amended by the addition of Section 201 to the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, requires a unified accountability system designed to ensure that participating school food authorities (SFA) comply with USDA requirements. The objectives of the AR are to:

- Determine whether the SFA meets program requirements
- Provide technical assistance
- Secure any needed corrective action
- Assess fiscal action and, when applicable, recover improperly paid funds

Review Frequency and Scope of Review

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act mandates state agencies conduct an AR a minimum of one time during a three-year cycle, however Idaho has received a waiver to conduct reviews on a five-year schedule to evaluate Critical and General Areas of Review, including:

- Performance Standard 1: Meal Access and Reimbursement
- Performance Standard 2: Meal Pattern and Nutritional Quality
- General Areas of Review: Resource Management, Food Safety, Local School Wellness Policy, Smart Snacks, Civil Rights, Buy American, Professional Standards, and other areas of general program compliance.

These were the SA determined findings and the SFA response to the findings:

Findings and Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

Finding 1 – Certification and Benefit Issuance List

There were a large number of household applications submitted that were denied. Based on the excess amount of applications and signage posted at the schools, there was an unnecessary push for households to complete applications even though a family does not qualify in order to receive school and district funding. Besides being an unnecessary use of resources and time for the approver, it is not allowable (page 76 of the Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual 2017). During the last AR in March 2018, a finding in violation of 7CFR 245.9(f)(4)(iv) was issued for applications being issued at CEP sites. Although the SFA is not providing applications for distribution at CEP schools, some applications were still received. The practice of schools requiring meal application submission for purposes outside of the child nutrition program must stop.

CAP: Provide a narrative on how the district will reduce the amount of unnecessary applications being completed by households. Include in this narrative how the district will incorporate income surveys to report household incomes for program needs outside of child nutrition.

Completed: December 7, 2022

Corrective Action Response: A narrative was uploaded by the Federal Programs Director stating the district will immediately stop distributing free and reduced applications to entire school populations. They will instead be directed to fill out an online or paper application during school registration with no redistribution of forms unless asked for. An income survey will be used to collect necessary financial information needed for other programs.

Finding 2 – Civil Rights

The SA found several errors on Blackfoot School District's website. The Child nutrition program website errors are as follows:

1. The full Non-Discrimination Statement, or link to it, was not included.
2. The income eligibility guidelines for free and reduced eligibility was posted. According to 7 CFR 245.5(a)(1)(i), only the reduced-price eligibility should be available on free and reduced-price application materials.
3. An outdated Request for Meal Accommodation Due to Medical Condition form was posted. An updated form was released in 2020 with additional medical authorities.

CAP: 1. Update the NDS on the website to the full NDS or add a link to the full NDS in addition to the short NDS on the website. Submit the link to the webpage with the NDS to MyIdahoCNP.

2. Remove the income guidelines for free eligibility from the website. Submit the link to the webpage.

3. Replace the Request for Meal Accommodation Due to Medical Condition form.

Completed: December 7, 2022

Corrective Action Response: The NDS was updated on the website, the income guidelines were removed, and the meal accommodation form was replaced with the current version.

Finding 3 – Offer vs Serve

Although all served meals were reimbursable and Offer vs. Serve (OVS) handouts were provided at an annual welcome back training, the SA identified incorrect understanding of OVS. Annual OVS training should specifically cover the differences between OVS at breakfast counting food items and OVS at lunch counting meal components.

CAP: Re-train all staff on breakfast OVS and lunch OVS. OVS training is available through the State agency training portal and a training log is available in MyIdahoCNP Download Forms. Upload a completed agenda and sign-in sheet. When conducting the SFA On-Site Monitoring this school year, be mindful to watch OVS implementation and issue corrective action as needed.

Completed: December 7, 2022

Corrective Action Response: A copy of the OVS training PowerPoints, agenda, and sign in sheet were uploaded. The training PowerPoints covered the breakfast and lunch meal patterns, required components for a reimbursable meal, and practice examples.

Finding 4 – Food Safety

A food safety manual (HACCP) was located in the kitchen but was not customized to the service site. The manuals at Blackfoot High School and Ridge Crest Elementary School were the 2016 sample SOP's which includes old references to the 2013 Food Code. An updated ICN version is available at [Standard Operating Procedures – Institute of Child Nutrition \(theicn.org\)](http://theicn.org) that includes other required elements, not available in the previous version. An employee exclusions policy was also not included. Technical assistance was provided during the 2018 AR to update the outdated manuals, but this did not occur.

CAP: Upload a narrative identifying the steps taken to obtain and distribute a current HACCP manual to each kitchen. Include dates for each action and explain processes for kitchens to ensure the manual is customized to each site and how training on the manual will occur. When reviewing the manual, be sure to include the date each section was reviewed and implemented.

Completed: December 7, 2022

Corrective Action Response: A copy of the signature sheet indicating the kitchen manager received the updated HACCP manual was provided. A written narrative was provided stating each site's kitchen manager will review and sign their HACCP manual yearly and the procedures will be trained on monthly. The kitchen managers will be trained by the food service directors on a HACCP procedure and then train all kitchen staff on the site-specific procedure. These trainings will have a sign in sheet and be documented in the Employee Training Log binder.

Finding 5 – After School Snack Program (ASSP)

For the month of October, the Ridge Crest ES ASSP was overclaimed by 185 snacks. It was observed on at least two days two components were not selected as required for a reimbursable snack. On 11 days, the required snack meal pattern was not met. Fruit and vegetables must be at least 3/4 cup and servings were only 1/2 cup. Additionally, some grain items did not credit as a minimum of 1 oz. eq. as required to count as reimbursable. The co-directors identified correct understanding and explained expectations of ASSP operators providing two grain items or two fruit/veg items to meet daily minimums, but acknowledge where the production records do not support the daily minimum being served as required.

CAP: Retrain all ASSP program operators at all 5 sites using the ASSP Training Certification located in Download Forms. Use completed production record examples to provide examples of how the daily minimums were not met. Upload a narrative identifying training steps taken to ensure that all students take two components for a snack and all snack items credit at the required minimum portion size. Include an explanation of steps taken when reviewing submitted production records to verify reimbursable snacks before claiming.

Completed: December 7, 2022

Corrective Action Response: A copy of the training PowerPoint, agenda, sign in sheet, and signed ASSP training certifications were provided. The training PowerPoint covered documenting a reimbursable snack on the attendance sheet, the components of a reimbursable snack, and example snacks. A written statement was provided stating the production records will be checked for snack components and serving sizes before submitting a claim for reimbursement.

Finding 6 – Food Safety

The most recent food safety inspection report must be posted in a location visible to the public. (7 CFR 210.13(b)) While the SA was on site, the most recent food safety inspection was posted, but it was not in a visible location.

CAP: Move the food safety inspection report to a visible public location. Upload documentation that the inspection report has been posted in a new location to MyIdahoCNP.

Completed: December 7, 2022

Corrective Action Response: A picture of the food safety inspection report was provided showing it was visible to the public.

Finding 7 – Food Safety

Each SFA is required to purchase domestic agricultural commodities or products that are produced and processed substantially in the United States or territories, as applicable (7 CFR 210.21 (d)). If a product from another country is sourced, then the food service must have proof that the domestic product is significantly higher in price or not available in sufficient quantities. Include the Buy American provision in SFA solicitation documents for the purchase of commercial foods. The SFA should require suppliers to attest that their final food products are either 100% domestic commodities or a food product containing over 51% domestic food components, by weight or volume. Products must be checked upon receipt and not accepted if the products do not comply with the Buy American provision, unless there is documentation to justify the exception (exorbitant pricing or product shortages). The SFA must keep

documentation justifying the limited exception(s); make use of the document available in Download Forms. The out of compliance products observed were canned jalapenos from Mexico, canned green chili peppers from Mexico, and grape tomatoes from Mexico.

CAP: Complete a Buy American Exception form for the out of compliant foods. Upload completed forms to MyIdahoCNP.

Completed: November 15, 2022

Corrective Action Response: SFA completed Buy American Exception forms during the review for all non-compliant forms, and SA reviewed on-site.

Finding 8 – Meal Components and Quantities - Breakfast

Independent contractor CN Resource (ICN) completed the menu review and identified that for the week of menu review, the K-5 breakfast menu did not meet the minimum daily 1-ounce equivalent requirement for grain.

CAP: Provide a written statement and supporting documentation that the daily grain requirements are now met. Include a detailed statement to describe what specific changes were made to the menu.

Completed: October 27, 2022

Corrective Action Response: A production record and a statement outlining the correction to provide 1 oz. equivalent of grains is included every day.

Finding 9 – Meal Components and Quantities - Lunch

ICN identified that for the week of menu review, the K-5 lunch menu did not meet the minimum weekly requirement for the bean/legume vegetable subgroup. Beans/legumes were offered, but not in large enough quantities to meet the weekly requirement.

CAP: Provide a written statement and supporting documentation that the weekly beans/legumes vegetable subgroup requirements are now met. Include a detailed statement to describe what specific changes were made to the menu.

Completed: October 27, 2022

Corrective Action Response: A production record and a statement outlining the correction to provide ½ cup of the bean/legume vegetable subgroup per week.

Finding 10 – Meal Components and Quantities - Breakfast

ICN identified that for the week of menu review, the 9-12 breakfast menu did not meet the minimum daily 1-ounce equivalent requirement for grain.

CAP: Provide a written statement and supporting documentation that the daily grain requirements are now met. Include a detailed statement to describe what specific changes were made to the menu.

Completed: October 27, 2022

Corrective Action Response: A production record and a statement outlining the correction to provide 1 oz. equivalent of grains is included every day.

Commendations

- CNR identified great job during meal service, very observant staff helping students meet meal requirements and all storage compartments were orderly with items dated and temperature logs taken daily.
- The implementation of pre-portioning the vegetables at the high school was attractive and well received by students while making it easier for staff in monitoring adequate portion sizes.
- The co-directors were very open to feedback, eager to learn, and were agreeable to implement changes based on observations and input.

Technical Assistance (TA)

Certification and Benefit Issuance

- Remove the statement on the eligibility notification letters that advises the determined benefit is good until a specific date in October of the next school year. A student's eligibility is either good for up to 30 operating days during the subsequent school year or whenever a new determination is made, whichever comes first.
- The SFA's online free and reduced application software only flags an error-prone application if the application is at risk for changing to a lower benefit (free to reduced and reduced to paid). The SFA should contact the software vendor to ensure that those that are error-prone for changing to a greater benefit (reduced to free) are flagged as well. Enabling this function will ensure that all applications within \$100 per month of the applicable Income Eligibility Guidelines are correctly identified as error prone.
- The SA's direct certification list includes students which are categorically migrant. When directly certifying a student as migrant status, the state's direct certification match must be used.

Meal Components and Quantities

- ICN completed the menu review and provided the following TA:
 - The federal regulations require daily minimum amounts of grains to be served. The daily minimum of 1 oz. eq. was not met on 2 days for grades 9-12.
 - The federal regulations require daily minimum amounts of grains to be served. The daily minimum of 1 oz. eq. was not met on 2 days for grades K-5.
 - Subgroups of vegetables must be met for each grade group. The ½ cup weekly bean/legume vegetable subgroup requirement was not met for grades K-5.
 - Technical Assistance to have signage posted for what constitutes a reimbursable breakfast for the applicable age group for the school. Note: Breakfast signage was found after breakfast and placed on the wall.

Food Safety

- While the SA was on-site, it was noted that the freezer temperature logs were reaching temperatures of -20 F. This is significantly cooler than the recommended temperature of 0-10 F for the freezer. Storing foods outside the recommended temperature may impact

the quality of the food. The SA also noted that the recommended temperature range printed on the temperature log is incorrect. The SA has a temperature log template on MyIdahoCNP that all sites should use to record temperatures on future dates.

Offer versus Serve (OVS)

- The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste in the school meals programs while permitting students to decline foods they do not intend to eat. Prior to each meal service, staff should review the meal and discuss what constitutes a reimbursable meal under OVS based on the portion sizes, creditable amount, and daily menu offered. The crediting amount listed on the production record will guide this conversation.
- Train staff on OVS annually. All staff training should include an agenda and sign-in sheet and training documentation should be maintained on file at the SFA for three years plus the current year. It is recommended that the staff training agenda and sign-in sheet specifically identifies that "OVS breakfast" and/or "OVS lunch", as applicable, was part of the training agenda.
- While on-site, the SA noted that there was not clear signage on what a reimbursable meal is. There was signage in the cafeteria about the requirement to take a fruit or vegetable at both breakfast and lunch, however there was not any signage about how many other meal items or components that need to be selected at breakfast and lunch.
- While on-site, the SA noted that serving sizes were not measured out for the vegetables and grains causing serving sizes to be inconsistent. Using measuring scoops or pre-portioning food prior to serving will fix the serving sizes inconsistencies.

Afterschool Snack Program (ASSP)

- The first ASSP monitoring review for Ridge Crest ES occurred as required, but the serving size for the grain was not recorded nor were the meal counts. The form should be completed in its entirety. Had those areas been completed and attention focused on serving sizes and snack counts, claiming errors may have been avoided.

Local School Wellness Policy

- Per Public Law 111-296 as clarified in 7 CFR 210.11, "All Foods Sold in School," vending, school stores, and fundraising need to comply with specific nutrition standards. These Smart Snacks standards can be found at the State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, School Meal Programs, Smart Snacks website. While on-site, the SA reviewed vending machines and noted several drinks containing caffeine. These drinks meet Smart Snacks standards, but are out of compliance per the School District's Local Wellness Policy (LWP). The district's LWP states "All beverages sold in schools must be caffeine-free with the exception of those containing trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine."

Water

- A drinking fountain was available for students at Blackfoot Heritage 6th Grade School to use during meal service, however, with the boil order in effect, the drinking fountain was covered to prevent use and no water was made available to students. When brought to the attention of the directors, they identified a solution to ensure water will

be available to students and discussed the need to create a district-wide foodservice policy to cover requirements under 7 CFR 220.8(a)(1) and 210.10(a)(i) when a boil order is in effect.

Resource Management Comprehensive Review

- The SFA's SY22-23 USDA Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool identified a required weighted average price of \$3.31 (rounded to \$3.30) for student paid lunches. The SFA's prices are below equity with an approved \$2.95 weighted average price. The current \$2.85 and \$3.05 prices were approved because they were increased at least 10 cents from the last approved prices. Consider an increase greater than 10 cents next year in order to catch up to your weighted average requirement.
- Revenue from Nonprogram Foods
 - If the SFA only plans to sell milk and/or adult meals for at least the minimum recommended price during this school year, then the Alternate Assessment may be completed to identify compliance. However, if any a la carte items are sold during the year, the NPFRT must be completed. Completing the NPFRT during the Administrative Review is to your benefit as a NPFRT will need to be uploaded during the renewal process for the 23-24 school year. All SFAs will be required to upload a complete NPFRT or Alternate Assessment for this school year (22-23) during renewal starting mid-April.
 - The SFA states they are only serving milk and adult meals this year as they transition their CN systems to a new software program. The alternate assessment was completed and found to be out of compliance. It is recommended that the price of milk should be increased. The FSD completed the NPFRT and submitted it to the SA. There were several errors with the tool and most of them relate back to the recipe calculator. The FSD is not using correct units of measurement to price the entrees and the meal. The age/grade groups should be included on one NPFRT and not in four separate spreadsheets. The SA did offer some tips to the FSD. Due to the fact that the SFA is not serving A la Carte items this year the alternate assessment is all that is required. The recommendation is to raise the price of the milk.

Procurement

- A procurement review was previously completed. Please follow the guidance provided by Procurement Specialist Kat Forstie in a separate closure letter.

Fiscal Action

Due to ASSP claiming errors, fiscal action results in \$199.80. However, since this amount falls under the \$600 threshold, the fiscal action will be disregarded and no financial adjustment will occur.

Your review is now closed.

There is no fiscal action resulting from this review.

If you wish to discuss any of these findings, please contact me at (208) 332-6861.

Thank you for your continued support of the Child Nutrition Programs.

Sincerely,

Cambria Steffler

Cambria Steffler, MS, RD
NSLP Coordinator

cc: Lynda Westphal, MHS, SNS, Director, Idaho Child Nutrition Programs
Jennifer Butler, MEd, SNS, Lead NSLP Coordinator, Idaho Child Nutrition Programs
Jennifer Jacaway, Child Nutrition Director, Blackfoot School District
Kimberly Jepperson, Child Nutrition Director, Blackfoot School District

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

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