



April 30, 2024

Sandra Miller, Superintendent  
Cassia County Jt. School District #151  
3650 Overland Avenue  
Burley, ID 83318

Dear Superintendent Miller,

On February 26-28, 2024, Idaho Department of Education Director Lynda Westphal and Coordinator Jax Dunham conducted an Administrative Review (AR) of Cassia County Jt. School District for the following United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASSP)
- USDA Foods

The sites reviewed were:

- Declo Elementary School (operating ASSP)
- Declo Senior High School
- John Evans Elementary School (operating ASSP and FFVP)

The State agency (SA) would like to commend Angela Rodriguez, Patricia Barksdale, and the entire staff of Cassia County Jt. 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 an alternate 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

A statistical sample of 525 student meal benefits resulted in a 0.57% error rate. One application affecting one student did not have all income noted correctly on the application and was changed from free to paid meal benefits. Another application affecting one student was missing income information that was noted but not filled in accurately. One application noted a FDPIR case number, but case number does not reflect a FDPIR number.

**CAP:** Contact the households to verify income, and make necessary changes to student benefits as applicable. Upload any adverse action letters sent to households with a reduction in benefits, and upload a new benefit issuance list reflecting the correct student benefits. The SFA must follow up with the household to confirm FDPIR eligibility. If FDPIR documentation or a letter provided to the household by the agency administering FDPIR cannot be obtained, the household must fill out a free and reduced application with income to determine eligibility.

**Date of Completion:** Due March 21, 2024; completed March 21, 2024.

**Corrective Action Response:** The SFA uploaded adverse action letters and an updated benefit issuance list reflecting that the appropriate changes have been made.

### Finding 2 – Meal Counting and Claiming

During meal service at Declo Elementary School, a teacher handed a paper to the cashier noting eight kindergarten students that were going through the line. The cashier entered these students after the meal service and had no way to confirm that the students listed went through the line for lunch. This practice must stop as this creates potential for inaccurate claims.

**CAP:** Upload an NSLP Procedure Corrective Action form detailing how all sites will only count students that have been confirmed as going through the line with a reimbursable meal to prevent potential claiming inaccuracies.

**Date of Completion:** Due March 14, 2024; completed March 5, 2024.

**Corrective Action Response:** The SFA uploaded an NSLP Procedure Corrective Action form detailing that all sites will only count students that have been confirmed as going through the

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line and not utilize notes provided from non-nutrition staff. The procedure went into place on February 26, 2024, and the Food Service Director (FSD) will be responsible for ensuring that the procedure is followed by all nutrition staff.

### **Finding 3 – Food Safety**

Daily food storage temperatures logs are required to ensure food is stored within recommended temperature ranges for food safety and to maintain food quality [7 CFR 210.13(d)]. Dry storage should be between 50-70 degrees Fahrenheit. The SA noted there was not a temperature log for dry storage at John Evans Elementary School or a milk cooler temperature log at Declo High School.

**CAP:** Upload a completed NSLP Procedure Corrective Action form addressing the procedure to be implemented to support the requirement of posting and entering temperatures on a daily basis in the dry storage room at John Evans Elementary School and milk cooler at Declo High School.

**Date of Completion:** Due March 14, 2024; completed March 5, 2024.

**Corrective Action Response:** The SFA uploaded an NSLP Procedure Corrective Action form detailing that John Evans Elementary School has included a dry storage temperature log and thermometer. Additionally, it was detailed that Declo High School has started recording milk cooler temperatures on production records. This process at each site was adopted on February 28, 2024, and the FSD will be responsible for ensuring each site follows the procedure.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

- The SFA has excellent record retention and organizational practices. Important records, such as professional standards and verification records, were well documented and included all necessary information in an easy to follow manner. Additionally, the SA was able to review organized records for Supply Chain Assistance funds received by the district. The SA has reviewed all documents, and Cassia County School District is on track to completely expend all funds by the deadline.
- The SFA shows genuine concern for their students and makes additional efforts to ensure their students are provided important nutritional information. The SFA posts the amount of carbohydrates for meals each day at the service line so that students with carbohydrate sensitive diets can make informed decisions on what to select for their meal.
- The SFA posts the fundraising tracking form on the District website listing all of the fundraisers for the school year. This effort shows the District is committed to the Wellness of the students in the district.
- The staff at the child nutrition office were warm and welcoming. They were quick to answer all questions and implement any recommendations that the SA made.
- The program operations are organized at Declo Elementary School. The staff did a wonderful job of meal preparation and had great rapport with the students, and there was an excellent variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. They also do an excellent job of showcasing food safety.

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- The food service staff at John Evan Elementary School gives friendly, efficient service to students during meal times and work well together. The maintenance staff also quickly cleans the lunchroom between meal service times to get ready for the next group of students.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA)**

### **Certification and Benefit Issuance**

- Households receiving benefits under Assistance Programs must list a case number when submitting an application to establish categorical eligibility. Determining officials must ensure the Assistance Program's case number or identifier listed on the application is consistent with the format used by the Assistance Program in the State. If the case number seems incorrect, the LEA should contact the household or the local Assistance Program agency to confirm the household's eligibility or verify the application for cause. When a household submits an application indicating an Assistance Program, the applicable Assistance Program must be identified and the program case number must match the applicable Assistance Program. The child must be given free meals, and the LEA official should compare the applications with case numbers to the direct certification list to determine if any children listed on the application are on that list. When a match is found, the original application must be disregarded, the household must be placed on the direct certification list, and Categorical eligibility must be extended to all children in the household. When a match is not found, the LEA should contact the household for further clarification or verify the application for cause [page 34 of the Eligibility Manual for School Meals].
- When making edits or changes to an application, the best practice is to use a different colored pen. Be sure to always initial and date changes with a note of why change occurred and who in the household provided the new information.
- Two households noted on their free and reduced applications a baby that is not yet born and added this to the household member total. These did not result in a change in benefit, but if there is a baby that has not been born, this cannot count toward the household member number until the birth of the baby.

### **Meal Counting and Claiming**

- There is currently a procedure that the Child Nutrition Administrative Assistant waits 10 days after the month closes to submit a claim in order to account for any retroactive changes to student meal counts due to voided meals or new student meals. However, staff at John Evans Elementary School added an additional three free breakfasts for a new student, and staff at Declo Elementary School voided one free breakfast later than ten days after the close of January. The SFA should ensure the procedure in place is followed by all sites to ensure claims are accurate to meal counts in the SFA's software system.

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## Meal Components and Quantities – Lunch

- Independent contractor CN Resource completed the menu review and provided the following TA:
  - Production records are a written record demonstrating that a reimbursable meal was served. They also provide valuable information for planning and forecasting menus.
    - The products listed on the production records did not always match the label and/or portion that was planned along with meal contribution.
      - Fresh Peaches are listed on the production records on 1/10/24. According to sponsor, peach cups are going to be served instead.
      - Pineapple Chunks (3/4 cup) are listed on production records on 1/11/24. Pineapple tidbit cup labels were provided as a replacement with crediting of 1/2 cup fruit per cup.
      - The salad bar does not have vegetables listed on production records in correct portions and meal contributions. Total portions of vegetables offered to students and the vegetable subgroups are incorrect according to the sponsor. All vegetable servings (other than the salad mix) are offered in a minimum amount of 1/8 cup. Vegetable subgroups for the salad bar (including the salad mix) should be credited as the following:
        - 7/8 cup (other)
        - 1/4 cup (red/orange)
        - 1/8 cup (dark green)
        - 1/8 cup (legumes)
    - Appropriate grade groups should be listed on Production records. For Delco grades 9-12, the grade group should be listed as 9-12 not K-12.
  - The Child Nutrition (CN) Label submitted for the following showed an expired CN number. The CN number was verified as active on the USDA CN Label Verification Report.
    - Advanced Pierre Beef Patty
    - Foster Farms Chicken Corn Dogs

## Civil Rights

- Ensure all civil rights binders/folders are up to date to include current documents. The civil rights binder at Declo Elementary School had outdated complaint forms and complaint logs in addition to the current versions of the documents.
- The number of denied applications suggest that schools may be requiring families to complete an application. This practice must cease as food service staff must approve every application received and leads to an inefficient use of resources. LEAs may not require households to submit an application (page 76 of the Eligibility Guidance for School Meals).

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### Buy American Provision

- SFAs are 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 SFA must have documentation that the domestic product is significantly higher in price or not available in sufficient quantities. It was noted in a procurement review that although the SFA had backup documentation from the vendor, they did not complete the Buy American Exception Form that is required. The SFA developed a procedure as a result of the procurement review and had Buy American Exception Forms for all appropriate products for the NSLP Administrative Review. The SFA's process ensures that the FSD is responsible for reviewing nondomestic food items, making the decision for acceptance based on a justifiable exemption, and completing and retaining the required documentation.

### Food Safety

- A food safety manual (HAACP) was located in the kitchen of Declo Elementary School and the SFA is in the process of customizing it to reflect the needs of the High School since they are transporting foods to this location. All staff should be trained on HAACP procedures to ensure the service of safe food [7 CFR 210.13(c)].
- All storage areas must have a temperature log. This includes all milk coolers, refrigeration, freezer, and dry storage. Ensure there are internal and external thermometers to note any inconsistencies in temperatures. This ensures food is stored within recommended temperature ranges for food safety and food quality in addition to providing an indication of equipment beginning to fail [7 CFR 210.13(d)].

### Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

- At John Evans Elementary School, the food service staff drops off the fruit and vegetables by 7:00AM for the FFVP, and the fruits and vegetables stay unrefrigerated until the children consume the food later in the day. When the fruit and vegetables are cut, a food safety issue is presented, and bacteria can multiply exponentially while waiting to be consumed. Each classroom does not have its own refrigerator, so a procedure to get the food to the children closer to the time when children eat is needed to ensure students are not subjected to potential foodborne illness. It is recommended that the classroom send one student to pick up the fruit/vegetable, but not between the hours of 10:30AM-12:55PM during the lunch preparation and service time to avoid confusion. Consider having teachers read and sign-off on the FFVP Training Quick Sheet located in MyIdahoCNP's Download Forms. This should help ensure they are aware of FFVP requirements to help avoid food safety violations and the unallowable practice of serving FFVP at the end of the school day as students leave the classroom. It was also noted that one teacher was not enthusiastic about the program. The FFVP is a voluntary program, and the school may discontinue the program at any time if there is contention around the operation and implementation of the program.

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## Resource Management

- While reviewing the nonprofit food service account (NPFSA) ledger, it was discovered that several items were purchased with CNP funds that would be considered unallowable costs. Per 7 CFR 210.14, SFAs must observe the restrictions on the use of nonprofit food service revenue so that all revenue is used for operating the meal service and/or improving its quality and efficiency. Revenue may be used for food, supplies, equipment and personnel to operate the meal service. Per 2 CFR 200.430(f) such incentives (such as staff appreciation gifts or incentive compensation bonuses) must be agreed to before services are rendered and should be a part of the SFA's normal compensation policy. The SFA would need to have a clearly documented compensation practice prior to distributing any gifts using the NPFSA funds. Compensation (to include any staff gifts) needs to be built into the budget in advance as part of the operational cost and not decided on an ad hoc basis. Similarly, costs of holiday gifts may be allowable under 2 CFR 200.437 and 200.430 as long as the SFA has documented policies to do so and deems such practice to be beneficial for the operation of NSLP. The costs must be reasonable and be applied in a consistent manner to all food service employees, unless the gift is based on individual performance with a documented evaluation criterion.

## FISCAL ACTION

Due to benefit issuance errors, fiscal action for NSLP results in \$197.85, and fiscal action for SBP results in \$35.25. However, since both of these amounts fall under the \$600.00 threshold, the fiscal action will be disregarded and no financial adjustment will occur.

## YOUR REVIEW IS NOW CLOSED.

If you wish to discuss any of these findings, please contact me at (208) 332-6820.

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

Sincerely,

*Jax Dunham*

Jax Dunham, BS, RDN  
NSLP Coordinator

cc: Lynda Westphal, MHS, SNS, Director, Idaho Child Nutrition Programs  
Angela Rodriguez, Child Nutrition Director, Cassia County Jt. School District #151

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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](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

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