



May 8, 2025

Patrick Griffin, Superintendent  
Council School District #013  
202 Michigan Ave.  
Council, ID 83612

Dear Superintendent Griffin,

On October 8, 2024, Idaho Department of Education Coordinators Jax Dunham and Cambria Steffler conducted an Administrative Review (AR) of Council School District for the following United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs:

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

The site reviewed was the Council Elementary School.

The State agency (SA) would like to commend Mindy Davidson, Carissa Harley, and the entire staff of Council 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 review of 118 student benefits resulted in a 10.17% error rate. Two students must be changed from reduced to paid due to an incorrect application determination. Five students must be changed from free to reduced due to being noted as Medicaid Free instead of Medicaid Reduced. One student must be changed from reduced to free due to being directly certified via Medicaid Free. Additionally, four students must be changed from paid to free, and three students must be changed from paid to reduced. Two applications affecting four students are incomplete and require social security number information.

**CAP:** Gather missing social security information for the required applications and change student benefits as applicable. For students that will be decreasing in benefit, send adverse action letters to the households notifying them that their benefits will decrease in 10 calendar days. Once all information has been gathered and all benefit changes have been made, upload all adverse action letters, completed applications with social security information, and upload a new benefit issuance list from the software showing that the appropriate benefit changes have been made.

**Date of Completion:** Due November 1, 2024; returned for corrections; completed March 19, 2025.

**CAP Response:** The SFA uploaded all adverse action letters, applications showing that missing required information has been received, and a new benefit issuance list showing that all correct benefits are now being issued.

*Based on the administrative error rate over 10% associated with certification and benefit issuance, the SFA will be required to conduct a second review of applications beginning school year 2025-2026, and continuing until further notice. A second review of applications requires a re-evaluation by the Confirming Official of the eligibility determination made by the Determining Official, based on the information provided by the household on the application. Depending on the outcomes of this second review, the SFA may be required to complete this process until the next administrative review. A Second Review of Applications Report will need to be filed as well while this requirement is in place. Please reference the Independent Review of Applications section in the Eligibility Manual, a copy of which is available in MyIdahoCNP Download Forms.*

### Finding 2 – Verification

While reviewing the verification documentation, it was noted that the final notice of verification results letter did not contain the USDA nondiscrimination statement or the notice

of appeals. The nondiscrimination statement (NDS) and notice of appeals must accompany any printed and web-based materials referencing program benefits in an FNS programs.

**CAP:** Upload a copy of the Notice of Verification Results letter with all required language.

**Date of Completion:** Due November 1, 2024; returned for corrections; completed February 20, 2025.

**CAP Response:** The SFA uploaded their new results of verification letter which includes all required language.

### **Finding 3 – Meal Counting and Claiming**

While reviewing the claim for the month of review, there were some discrepancies noted between the claim submitted and the edit check pulled from the electronic point of service. The SFA has been using a report titled "Daily Meal Count Report" and entering those numbers into a spreadsheet. The SA has instructed the SFA to switch to using the "Meal Count Listing" report as it is pulled directly from the POS with correct benefits tied to the students. The claim discrepancies are as follows:

#### **Council Elementary School:**

- Underclaim of 74 free breakfasts
- Overclaim of 13 reduced breakfasts
- Overclaim of 67 paid breakfasts
- Underclaim of 159 free lunches
- Overclaim of 5 free lunches
- Overclaim of 217 paid lunches

#### **Council J.-Sr High School:**

- Underclaim of 5 free breakfasts
- Overclaim of 5 paid breakfasts
- Underclaim of 121 free lunches
- Overclaim of 18 reduced lunches
- Overclaim of 109 paid lunches

**CAP:** Complete the NSLP Corrective Action Procedure form detailing how the SFA will utilize the Meal Count Listing report from the POS software when submitting claims in the future.

**Date of Completion:** Due November 1, 2024; completed November 1, 2024.

**CAP Response:** An NSLP Corrective Action Procedure Form was uploaded detailing that the Business Manager/Claim Preparer will generate the Meal Count Listing Report from the SFA's current software to support the SFA's claim submission each month going forward. The procedure was implemented starting with the October, 2024 claim.

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#### **Finding 4 – Civil Rights**

The district website and letters to households do not contain the USDA nondiscrimination statement. The nondiscrimination statement (NDS) must accompany any printed and web-based materials referencing FNS programs. Web pages associated with program operation should list the full USDA NDS with details on participants' right to file a complaint. The full statement is available on the SA website under Civil Rights. It is recommended that a link to the full statement in a variety of languages be included (FNS Instruction 113-1: Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement).

**CAP:** Provide a link to the website once the USDA non-discrimination statement has been added. Upload a copy of the template letters that are sent to households notifying them of what their benefit is with the USDA non-discrimination statement including the DC notification letter and notification of benefits letter.

**Date of Completion:** Due November 1, 2024; returned for corrections; completed March 19, 2025.

**CAP Response:** The SFA posted the full NDS on their foodservice webpage. Additionally, the SFA uploaded a template approval and denial of benefits letter with the full NDS.

#### **Finding 5 – Local School Wellness Policy**

Per 7 CFR 210.31(e)(2), LEAs must assess their implementation of the wellness policy at least once every three years on the extent to which each school is in compliance with the district policy, the extent to which the district's policy compares to model local school wellness policies, and a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the local wellness policy. LEAs must make this assessment available to the public in an easily understood manner (7 CFR 210.31(d)(3)). The SA located the Wellness Policy in the CSD Policy Manual, however, the policies are not signed or dated by the Board. No Triennial Assessment was provided.

**CAP:** Upload a plan identifying who at the LEA will be responsible for completing the triennial assessment(s), how the assessment(s) will be completed, what steps will be taken to ensure this requirement is met on a triennial basis, and how this assessment will be made available to the public in an easily understood manner. Additionally, indicate when the Wellness Policy will be submitted to the Board for approval.

**Date of Completion:** Due November 1, 2024; completed November 1, 2024.

**CAP Response:** The SFA uploaded a plan detailing that the Foodservice Director (FSD) will oversee the triennial assessment process going forward. To ensure the triennial assessment is completed in a timely manner, the wellness committee will meet quarterly to ensure timelines are adhered to in addition to setting the date of the assessment on an annual basis. To complete the assessment, the SFA will gather quantitative and qualitative data related to the implementation of the wellness policy, review the current wellness policy against best practices and regulations, and compile the findings into a comprehensive report. Once completed, the assessment report will be posted on the district's website.

#### **Finding 6 – Professional Standards**

School Foodservice Authority staff who interact with program applicants or participants (i.e. Cafeteria staff, Free and Reduced Application approval staff) and their supervisors as well

as the Hearing Official must have annual civil rights training. The Hearing Official does not have documentation of completing the annual civil rights training for the school year.

**CAP:** The hearing official must complete the 2024 civil rights training and upload a certificate of completion or an agenda and sign in sheet.

**Date of Completion:** Due November 1, 2024; completed November 1, 2024.

**CAP Response:** A certificate was uploaded showing that the SFA's hearing official has now completed the civil rights training for SY 24-25.

### **Finding 7 – Professional Standards**

While the food service director maintains records of all trainings that have been completed, there is no tracking log with total number of training hours completed. Employee training tracking Logs must include the key area/topics and training subjects completed with certificates, agendas, and sign-in sheets retained for backup. The SA has made available a template tracking log prompting this information and Professional Standards Learning Objectives and Topics with codes which can be found on the USDA Professional Standards Website.

**CAP:** Complete a training tracking log for each kitchen staff member with total current training hours for this school year.

**Date of Completion:** Due November 1, 2024; returned for corrections; completed March 19, 2025.

**CAP Response:** The SFA uploaded professional standards training tracking logs for all current foodservice employees noting current trainings for the school year which have been completed.

### **Finding 8 – 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. Documentation for baby corn from Thailand and olives from Spain were not available during the AR.

**CAP:** Complete the NSLP Corrective Action Procedure form outlining the district's policy for maintaining Buy American documentation for products sourced outside of the United States. Please include in this policy who will be responsible for completing and maintaining these forms and how the backup documentation will be obtained.

**Date of Completion:** Due November 1, 2024; returned for corrections; completed January 31, 2025.

**CAP Response:** The SFA uploaded an NSLP Corrective Action Procedure Form detailing that the FSD will utilize the Buy American Exception Form going forward. It is also detailed that the FSD will work with their sales representative to ensure the Buy American Provision is followed going forward.

### **Finding 9 – Water**

Per SP 39-2019, water cannot compete with milk in the meal pattern and cannot be served on the service line. During the lunch meal service, water was served in cups next to the milk cooler.

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**CAP:** Move the water to a new location and provide a picture of the new location.

**Date of Completion:** Due November 1, 2024; completed November 1, 2024.

**CAP Response:** A picture was uploaded showing that the water has now been moved from the serving line and is still accessible for students during meal times.

## COMMENDATIONS

- The district's new greenhouse is a fantastic resource for students to learn about farm to table practices. The Idaho Department of Education has been promoting an expansion of the state's farm to school program to promote Idaho's agricultural industries and to increase student's financial, food, and nutrition literacy. The district's greenhouse is a fantastic representation of what we are promoting around the state of Idaho.
- The food service staff at Council School District are very friendly and have great rapport with the students.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA)

### Verification

- While reviewing the verification documentation for SY23-24, it was noted that the verifying official did not sign the application. The verifying official (either the determining or confirming official) must sign and date the "For Official Use Only" portion of the application at the conclusion of verification. The results of the process should be marked on the application as well as when the notice letters were sent.

### SFA On-Site Monitoring

- Please note that if the SFA ever serves and counts student meals at a site separate from Council Elementary School, SFA on-site monitoring must be completed. According to 7 CFR 210.8 (a)(1) and 7 CFR 220.11 (d)(1), each SFA with two or more feeding sites must perform no less than one on-site review of the meal counting and claiming system and the readily observable general areas of review identified under 7 CFR 210.18(h) in each school operating NSLP and 50% of schools operating SBP under its jurisdiction prior to February 1, each school year.

### Meal Components and Quantities – Breakfast and Lunch

- Independent contractor CN Resource completed the menu review and provided the following TA:
  - Update the menu to reflect the correct milk types offered. The menu showed milk was either 1% or 2% and fat free chocolate or 1% white was served.
  - Production records are a written record demonstrating that a reimbursable meal was served. They also provide valuable information for planning and forecasting menus.

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- Production records with planned numbers for each item should be accessible before each meal service. Served numbers and leftover numbers need to be recorded at the end of meal service to ensure accuracy.
- The milk types offered were not clearly recorded on the production records.
- The fruit types offered were not clearly recorded on the production records. The fruit juice types offered were not clearly recorded on the production records.
- The Child Nutrition (CN) Label submitted for the breakfast stick showed an issue date of 11/2015. The CN number was verified as active on the USDA CN Label Verification Report.
- The Child Nutrition (CN) Label submitted for the breakfast pizza showed an issue date of 05/2017. The CN number was verified as active on the USDA CN Label Verification Report.
- A Child Nutrition Label or Product Formulation Statement was not submitted for the French Toast Sticks. This documentation was secured to confirm meal pattern crediting. A sponsor should maintain this documentation on file to document meal pattern requirements as met.
- The Child Nutrition (CN) Label submitted for the chicken nuggets showed an issue date of 05/2015. The CN number was verified as active on the USDA CN Label Verification Report.

#### **Resource Management**

- Technical assistance was provided during the SFA's Procurement Review noting that Child Nutrition Program funds must be used exclusively for expenses that are directly related to the operation of the program. Any use of these funds for purposes outside the scope of the Child Nutrition Program is expressly prohibited. Should such expenditures occur, they must be fully reimbursed and the reimbursement must be properly recorded in the 290 Fund.

#### **FISCAL ACTION**

Due to meal counting and claiming errors and a certification and benefit issuance error rate of 10.17%, the additional reimbursement due to the district will not be disbursed.

#### **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,

**Debbie Critchfield, Superintendent of Public Instruction**  
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*Jax Dunham*

Jax Dunham, BS, RDN  
NSLP Coordinator

cc: Lynda Westphal, MHS, SNS, Director, Idaho Child Nutrition Programs  
Mindy Davidson, Child Nutrition Director, Council School District #013

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