



**T**he U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently issued a proposed rule that would roll back important aspects of the current school meal nutrition standards and significantly unravel the progress made under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The Act ensures the nearly 30 million children who eat school lunch and the 14.4 million who eat school breakfast have the nutrition they need for their health and learning. About two-thirds of the children who eat school lunch live in low-income households and rely on free or reduced-price school meals.

This proposed rule would weaken nutrition standards, eliminate the guarantee that all children will receive a balanced and healthy school meal regardless of school setting, and diminish the nutritional value of other foods sold in the cafeteria. School meals should be consistent with the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), including serving a variety of fruits and vegetables at breakfast and lunch. Yet, in schools that use breakfast after the bell models, the amount of fruit served at

breakfast could go from one cup to just a half cup, and under certain circumstances schools could reduce the amount of red and orange vegetables served at lunch.

This rule also would create loopholes in the current nutrition standards to allow for more pizza, hamburgers, and other foods that are high in calories, saturated fat, or sodium to be sold a la carte (sold separately from foods included in the federal school meals programs).

This ill-conceived proposal is a continuation of the Trump administration's efforts to [dismantle key components of nutrition standards](#) for school meals. The [first rule](#), finalized in December 2018, weakened whole grain, milk, and sodium standards.

Healthy school meals help combat childhood obesity and improve overall health, particularly for low-income children. USDA's [own research](#), as well as other research, shows that school meals have improved children's diet and health. Now is not the time for a roll back.

### Resources to Assist Constituents With Submitting Comments

FRAC has a web-based [platform](#) ([frac.org/nutritionstandards](https://frac.org/nutritionstandards)) that provides information and resources to help facilitate the submission of comments on the proposed rule.

Submit a comment at: [frac.org/nutritionstandards](https://frac.org/nutritionstandards).

The deadline to submit a comment is March 23, 2020.

Please contact FRAC's Director of Nutrition Policy and Early Childhood Programs Geri Henchy at [ghenchy@frac.org](mailto:ghenchy@frac.org).