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# News Release

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## **L.A. UNIFIED TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH FREE MEALS THIS SUMMER**

*Program begins June 20 at 341 School Sites*

LOS ANGELES – Officials from the Los Angeles Unified School District Food Services Division today announced its summer meal services program.

The District is working toward making sure that no students in the community go hungry when schools close for the summer. More than 440,603 students in L.A. Unified qualify for free or reduced-price meals during the school year, but many lack nourishment when the school year ends. The Summer Food Service Program ensures that all children continue to benefit during the summer from good nutrition.

“Students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, often go hungry during vacations to the detriment of their health,” according to Dr. Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana, CEO of the District’s Office of Educational Services. “This summer, youngsters may get nutritious meals at no charge at more than 450 locations. They will benefit immediately, and also be ready to learn when they go back to school.”

The Food Services Division, in collaboration with the Beyond the Bell Branch, the District’s afterschool program, will operate the summer food program at 341 sites (see attached current list). Anyone between the ages of 1 and 18 may receive free meals. The District also is partnering with the city of Los Angeles - Recreation and Parks to provide meals for 106 sites. Additionally, the District is partnering with the YMCA of the Metropolitan Los Angeles “Get Summer” initiative to provide meals to participating children at selected locations.

“We want to do everything we can to be there for our students in the summer, just as we are in the regular school year. We know students don’t stop growing and learning in the summer, so Food Services wants to be there continuing to provide access to meals. We are also partnering with the YMCA this year and will be there to provide meals to students to support them during their summer enrichment and physical activities,” said Food Services Interim Co-Director Laura Benavidez.

“The students of L.A. Unified are like our children, and their need for healthy nutritious meals doesn’t end when the regular school year ends,” said Food Services Interim Co-Director Timikel Sharpe. “As child nutrition professionals, we accept the role of providing the thousands of children in the communities around Los Angeles with healthy meals during the summer months. Food insecurity issues continue to grow, and we want to positively affecting the movement to feed hungry children.”

For the majority of participating schools, the summer program runs from June 20 through

July 29. Depending on participation, the program may be extended at select schools. The program is operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered by the California Department of Education.

For more information about the summer food program, contact the Food Services Division at 213-241-6419 or 213-241-6422.

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