

Houston Independent School District

Supplemental Information Submitted to the

Committee on Education and the Workforce

U.S. House of Representatives

April 7, 2007

School Meal Standards

There is strong research that when students have a healthy breakfast, they have increased student academic performance. Food is a basic need, and we must do all that we can as stewards of the public to ensure that our students start their day off with a healthy meal.

That is why I advocated for and received strong support from our Board of Education to implement a Breakfast in the Classroom program. In just the last two years this program has been expanded to serve students in 217 of our schools. Through Breakfast in the Classroom, we serve 102,360 meals a day. This school year alone will have served more than 18million breakfasts to HISD students.

In addition, through our 2007 Bond Program, the Houston community invested in the building of a food service preparation and storage facility. HISD prepares school breakfasts and lunches in this facility and delivers prepared, nutritional meals to our school. Last year, HISD serves more than 42 million meals. This year, we anticipate serving nearly 48 million.

Our district has seen a slight increase in the number of students who qualify for free or reduced meals. The chart below is reflective of the increase, with a larger increase in those students who qualify for free meals under the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

Students Qualified for Free/Reduced Meals

Month/ Year	Free Eligible	%	Reduced Eligible	%	Total F/R Eligible	%
Apr-11	148684	74.01%	13426	6.68%	162110	80.69%
Apr-10	142980	71.57%	16199	8.11%	159179	79.68%
Apr-09	136198	68.91%	18101	9.16%	154299	78.07%
Apr-08	134431	68.53%	19455	9.92%	153886	78.45%
Apr-07	136902	69.01%	19327	9.74%	156229	78.76%

USDA has proposed changes to Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. While we are certainly in favor of increasing nutrition for our students, we are concerned about the lack of funding to do so.

To implement the new standards, Congress has approved an additional \$0.06 per lunch served starting in October 2012. Our concern? We anticipate the cost of milk alone will increase by \$0.06 per lunch going into next year. The effect? Food costs will have already outpaced the proposed reimbursement increases going into the 2012-13 school year.

In addition to rising costs of milk and other food items, here is our estimated cost to meet USDA's proposed nutrition standards:

Here is our estimated cost to meet proposed USDA proposed nutrition standards:

- Increased cost to breakfast meals: \$467,000
 1. Increased daily portions of fruit (\$270,570)
 2. Increased daily portions of grains (\$9,082)
 3. Increased daily portions of meat and other protein sources (\$187,677)
- Increased cost to lunch meals: \$783,000
 1. Increased daily portions of fruit and vegetables (\$315,418)
 2. Increased daily portions of grains (\$67,912)
 3. Increased daily portions of meat and other protein sources (\$399,670)
- Additional cost of training hours for kitchen employees: \$400,000
 1. Change from "Nutrient Standard" to "Food-Based" menu planning requires different procedures in meal preparation, serving, and accounting at cash register
- **Total estimated cost: \$1,650,000**

From our analysis believe HISD will have at least a \$1.65M gap between revenue and cost as a result of USDA's proposed rules.

While we are strong advocates for providing children with nutritious meals, we recognize that increased nutritional standards and rising food costs place an increased financial responsibility on school districts. In these times of federal, state and local budget constraints, we cannot afford to have additional unfunded mandates.

Special Education

1. **Houston ISD received in IDEA-B ARRA entitlement \$ 43,556,473** (Formula: \$42,452,708; Preschool: \$1,103,765). In addition to allocating funds to cover personnel and contracted services costs, the following items with corresponding costs were purchased:
 - Districtwide special education data management system to provide a comprehensive, web-based online tool to develop Individualized Education Programs (IEP) for students with disabilities. This system is integrated with the student information and personnel information systems (\$1.5 million).
 - Increased and improved access to technology with new computer workstations for students with disabilities. The Universally Designed for Learning (UDL) workstations align directly with recommendations made in a review of the district's Special Education Program (\$3.5 million).
 - Districtwide access to Kurzweil 3000™, a comprehensive reading, writing and learning software for struggling readers including individuals with learning difficulties such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder or those who are English language learners. In addition, Kurzweil 3000™ supports the principles of UDL enabling students of all abilities to engage with digital text (\$320,000).
 - Districtwide computers and wireless mobile carts for use by students with disabilities in all classroom settings (\$3.3 million).
 - Supplementary reading and mathematics materials that support the district's literacy and numeracy plans (\$2.7 Million).
 - Technology, software and hardware to enhance services for students with disabilities ages 3-5 (\$1 million).
 - Assistive technology and augmentative communication systems such as FM systems (\$270,000).
 - Test kits and protocols to evaluate and identify students with disabilities (\$600,000).
 - Extended school year services for students with disabilities based on IEPs (\$2.4 million).

These expenditures provide access to the district's curriculum to students with disabilities so that they can be ready for college and careers of their choice.

Requirements for additional documentation and meetings

- State legislation in Texas places increased accountability on local school districts beyond the federal legislation and guidelines for serving special education students.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 requires public schools to provide free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to students with disabilities ages 3-21. There are extensive guidelines for identification, eligibility, development of IEP, reevaluation and parental rights. Texas has additional requirements that exceed federal law. The district is a

member of a coalition of school districts in the state that supports proposed Paper Reduction legislation.

- The state's requirements for special education exceed federal requirements with many additional supplements such as ones for services to students with autism, transition services, and extended school year services. In Houston ISD, on average, a student's IEP from start to finish (drafting, scheduling meeting, holding meeting) can take approximately 6 hours per each member of the ARD committee and can run up to 25-30 pages. If the student requires one of the myriad of supplements our state requires for autism, visual impairment, extended school year, etc. we may be looking at 40-50 pages. In the best case scenario, this process takes place once a year. But for many of our more severely disabled students, multiple meetings necessitating additional time and paperwork may be warranted.

Conservatively, here are HISD's calculations:

- Number of students with disabilities enrolled in 2010-2011: 16,380
- Approximate number of ARD Committee members per student per meeting: 5
- Average number of meetings per student per year: 1.3
- Average hours per meeting (including document preparation): 6
- Average hours related to ARD/IEP process for the district: $16,380 \times 3 \times 1.3 \times 6 = \mathbf{638,820 \text{ hours}}$

This does not include paper work required for transfer students, requests for initial evaluations, and three year reevaluations. Our schools are drowning in paperwork and this bill, if passed, will help reduce some of it.