

Mike Miles  
Superintendent of Schools



The Honorable Kevin W. Concannon  
Under Secretary  
Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, USDA  
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October 5, 2012

Dear Kevin,

Dallas ISD is in support of the new Nutrition Standards. The NSLA **requires** schools participating in the program serve nutritious lunches that meet requirements set by the USDA including being consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. *Recommendations were taken from the Institute of Medicine by USDA and meal patterns developed. Changes were essential to make our programs credible to our parents and students. Although, many school districts have done a great job for many years exceeding the existing standards and including meeting the USDA HealthierUS School criteria, more guidance was needed to assure that **all** districts were consistent with good menu planning principles. As a result of the new standards, we have received numerous compliments as a result of the required variety of fruits and vegetables and the increased focus on creative recipes to achieve the new goals.*

*It has not been easy and we like many districts have struggled in the implementation process; however, it's too early to throw out the baby with the bath water. We feel very good and are proud of our new menus. Our community has a greater confidence that our district is doing what's best for their children. Our focus now is educating our students about the importance of healthy eating and increased physical exercise. I recently talked to one of our student leaders and he agreed that the greater focus on healthier lifestyle was what was best for them.*

*We recognize that our meals are designed for the average student. To achieve the needs of ALL of our students, our district is promoting breakfast and programs like "Breakfast in the Classroom" as well as promoting healthy a la carte snacks. Breakfast promotion and the availability of healthy snacks can keep very active students from feeling hungry. At the high schools, we are piloting "bistro" type bars called the "EXCHANGE" that along with offering a reimbursable meal features fruit smoothies and a la carte items that meet Healthier US School guidelines.*

*It is possible to meet the needs of our students and help them lead a healthier lifestyle both nutritionally and physically. We must stay focused on promoting nutrition education and initiatives like "Let's Move" to get them there.*

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Dora Rivas".

Dora Rivas, MS, RD, SNS, Executive Director