

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Free school meals available for all students during 2021-2022 school year

*Garnett, Greeley, Westphalia* — The National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO) waiver allows all Kansas students the option of free breakfast and lunch each school day during the 2021-2022 school year – ensuring students are fueled and ready to learn.

The waiver allows the SSO to operate when school is open during the regular school year – through June 30, 2022. It is a continuation of a commitment to provide safe, healthy meals free of charge to children as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to threaten food and nutrition security of the most vulnerable – our students, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The waiver also will help schools continue to plan for a safe opening in the fall. For example, it will eliminate the need to collect meal payments. This speeds up the service of meals, which reduces contact and potential exposure to COVID-19.

The USDA's National School Lunch Program SSO is typically only available during the summer months. However, extending it allows for a strong emphasis on providing fruits and vegetables, milk and whole grains while allowing schools to serve the meals for free. Schools that choose the SSO option will receive higher-than-normal meal reimbursements for every meal they serve, which will support them in serving the most nutritious meals possible while managing increased costs associated with operational and supply chain challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The USDA covers the cost of the meals for all students. There is no need for families to fill out an application.

Every meal that is served helps *USD 365* food service program financially and keeps local food service staff members employed.

The free meals, which are safe, nutritious and delicious, help extend family food budgets, too.

For more information, contact *USD 365*, p785-448-6155.

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1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
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*(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or*

*(3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).*

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