



October 5, 2012

Food Research and Action Center
1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 540
Washington, DC 20009

To Whom it May Concern:

As Vice President at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the person responsible for all the feeding and nutrition programs the Agency administers, I write this letter to express my strong support for the new school meal nutrition standards.

Our Catholic Charities agency feeds hundreds of thousands of low-income children and families, providing more than 20 million healthy meals each year, including approximately 600,000 to children in the school meal programs. Low-income children are at higher risk of poor nutrition and obesity because of factors associated with poverty, including limited resources, limited access to healthy and affordable foods, fewer opportunities for physical activity, higher levels of stress, greater exposure to obesity-related marketing, and limited access to health care. Given all of these challenges, school meal programs play a crucial role in improving the health and well being of low-income children.

These new standards increase the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lower fat milk in school meals; reduce the levels of sodium, saturated fat and trans-fat in meals; and meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. They are an important step forward in efforts to remedy nutritional shortfalls in children's diets, and help address the nation's serious obesity problem as well as its serious hunger problem. The new standards are especially important to low-income children, and attempts to discard the nutrition science they represent are shortsighted and harmful.

I urge you not to support any efforts to repeal these standards; to repeal them would be to ignore good sense, and risk the future health of America's school children, particularly those living in poverty.

Sincerely,

Angel Gutierrez
Vice President
Community Development and Outreach Services
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago