



Make Your Voice Heard

Mark your calendars NOW! for MdSNA's...

STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION CONFERENCES

State Legislative Conference

FIRST TIME EVER - NEW CONFERENCE

Wednesday, February 8, 2017

Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Board of Education Room

2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, Md 21401

Come learn about state legislation that affects Child Nutrition Programs and take a tour of the state capitol building while the Maryland General Assembly is in session. This promises to be new, educational and exciting to see our Maryland Capitol and House of Delegates in action.

Federal Legislative Conference

Tuesday, April 4, 2017

2664 Riva Road, Independence Room, Annapolis, MD 21401

(Building behind Anne Arundel County's Food & Nutrition Service Office which is right next to the BOE)

As part of the SNA Legislative Action Conference, Marylanders get together to plan a strategy for visits to all 10 congressional offices in Washington, DC. We have been doing this conference for many years and we have had great success with congress because they know us and our story. We are not sure if the Child Nutrition Programs will be Reauthorized by April but we need to go to Washington to talk about it, our issues and the SNA Position Paper for 2017, whatever it may contain.

FOR BOTH CONFERENCES, LUNCH AND TRANSPORTATION TO THE CAPITAL WILL BE PROVIDED.

On February 8th, the Maryland School Nutrition Association held the state Legislative Workshop and tour of the Maryland State House in Annapolis with a hearing on the Breakfast in the Classroom Program, which is strictly a Maryland Program. We want to allow secondary students to pick up a grab and go breakfast in the hallways to take to the classroom instead of our staff taking the food to the classrooms.

As I was listening to the testimony on many bills, not just ours, I started to think how difficult it would be for the Child Nutrition Programs, if they are put into a Block Grant. We would spend lots of time in Annapolis asking for all the things we get now as an entitlement federal program. Currently, all programs in the entire United States are eligible for the same programs and funding. Under Block Grants the Governor of each state would receive an amount of money and it is his/her decision what amount of money each program gets. We would be pitted against SNAP, WIC and other nutrition programs for shared funding. Would Maryland always support every program we have now like breakfast or community eligibility? Would there be sufficient funding for every program if entitlement goes away from Child Nutrition Programs? All decisions are made at the Maryland level. I am very fearful that over time the programs will not look like they do today when there is no longer security of funding through entitlement. That is a lot to absorb and scary to me. We need to do all we can to keep our programs under federal regulations and funding.

We are preparing for the federal Legislative Action Conference on April 4, 2017. The national School Nutrition Association (SNA) will be holding a conference with speakers in Washington, DC on April 1 and 2, 2017 that team leaders and officers will attend to get SNA's position paper and strategy for the upcoming Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Programs.

This should have happened last year but it did not so the whole scenario is now changed with the new Administration and Congress, Maryland has one new Senator, Chris Van Hollen and one new Representative, Anthony Brown, all other members from last year return. We are fortunate that almost all know our programs from prior meetings and all are supportive.

But we have to visit them especially this year to let them know we need to stay a federal entitlement program.

Sonny Perdue, former Governor of Georgia and a farmer by trade has been nominated by the President to be the next Secretary of Agriculture. (Yes, I checked and he is not related to the Maryland Perdue Family) As of this writing he has not been scheduled for a hearing so he is not confirmed to serve in that capacity. SNA has sent two names for consideration for the Deputy or Under Secretary's position, one is a friend of mine from when we served on the SNA Board together. I am hopeful we will have representation in those positions that are versed in our programs and strong in advocating for the programs.

We have a difficult road ahead of us. We defeated the Block Grant threat many years ago and we hopefully can do it again. Chapter Presidents, President-Elects, Legislative Chairs and especially Directors and Central Office Staff are encouraged to attend the Maryland Federal Legislative Action Conference on Tuesday, April 4, 2017 at the ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING, (this is a change from last year), 2664 Riva Road, Independence Room on the second floor, Annapolis, MD 21401. We are limited to 40 attendees at this workshop so please register early. The invitation will arrive via email so you can register to be sure you have a seat and send the check later or hand carry it to the meeting. We hope to see your county and chapter well represented.

*Mary Klatko,
MdSNA Federal Legislative Chair*



MdSNA members visiting the state capital on February 8th for the first State Legislative Workshop.

MdSNA Federal Legislative Conference a Success

For the first time ever, the School Nutrition Association (SNA) moved the Legislative Action Conference (LAC) from the beginning of March to the beginning of April - not an April Fool's joke. That date was even early because the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) did not have a Secretary until April 25 at 5:30 PM when Sonny Perdue, former Governor of Georgia, was confirmed by the Senate and the next day sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, also from Georgia.

900 SNA members from around the country, including 6 team leaders from Maryland as well as many MdSNA members and Industry Representatives attended the LAC in Washington, DC on April 2 and 3, 2017.

On April 4, 2017, we moved to our Maryland LAC in Annapolis, MD, where 30 members assembled as 5 teams of 6 members each. In the morning the groups went over the SNA Position Paper and Talking Points and they planned their strategy for the visits to Congress in the afternoon. When the teams got to Washington, DC via bus, one Industry member joined each team for a total of 35 visiting the Maryland members of the House of Representatives and Senate.



MdSNA was represented on April 4th at LAC by members: Gary Childress, Harford County; Kaitlin Russell, St. Mary's County; Holly Haggerty, Cecil County; Tracy Newbold, Charles County; Rebecca Mann, Carroll County; Sharon Bass, Key Impact Sales; Valarie Parmer, Calvert County. Shown with Senator Van Hollen (3rd from right).

Maryland has two *new* members of Congress whose offices were most gracious in setting up the appointments and receiving the groups. New members of the House are Anthony Brown representing the 4th Congressional District, including parts of Prince Georges and Anne Arundel Counties. Congressman Brown is also the former Lt. Governor of Maryland and was instrumental in acquiring funding for the Maryland Meals for Achievement Program, which is exclusive to Maryland and not a federally funded program. Also *new* is Jamie Raskin representing the 8th Congressional District that includes parts of Montgomery, Carroll and Frederick Counties.

Maryland also has a new Senator to replace Barbara Mikulski after her retirement. Chris Van Hollen, who was a member of the House of Representatives and always was a supporter of Child Nutrition Programs as a House member is the *new* Senator for MD.

Our Maryland members of Congress have some very important Congressional committee memberships relative to our programs. First Senator Van Hollen, as a *new* member of the Senate is a member of the Senate *Agriculture* Committee that has jurisdiction over the Child Nutrition Programs and he is on the Subcommittee on *Nutrition*, which recommends policies for the programs and a members of the Senate *Appropriations* Committee that funds the programs. How lucky can we get to have a senator on our side on the very committees that oversee and fund the programs through the United States Department of Agriculture.

On the House sided, Congressman Steny Hoyer is the *Democratic Whip*. What is a Whip you ask since we never had one before? The Democratic Whip is a member of the minority party (Democratic) who assists the minority leader in coordinating the party caucus in its response to legislation and other matters, pretty impressive position! The team that

visited him met with his Chief Policy Advisor, Tom Mohr, who guided them through security to the Capitol Building Conference Room, which again was a first for us to meet in such a prestigious location. Look for a picture of Scott Heckert, MdsNA vice president and his team in the Capitol Building with Tom Mohr.

Also of importance to MdsNA are two House *Appropriations* Committee seats filled by Congressman Harris of the 1st Congressional District representing all of the Eastern Shore of MD plus parts of Baltimore, Harford and Carroll Counties and Congressman Ruppberger, also on the House *Appropriations* Committee representing the 2nd Congressional District which includes parts of Harford, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, and Howard Counties and parts of Baltimore City.

We have some powerful seats in Congress filled by Maryland members who have always listened to us and supported our programs. We need to keep in touch with all of our members but particularly those mentioned above when our issues come forward.

Reauthorization of the programs will not happen this year because the Farm Bill takes precedence. It will however come up next year and we are in a good position to maintain support for our programs.

Not Reauthorizing the programs this year isn't a concern at this time. The programs will continue to be funded, which is good news.

When Sonny Perdue, the new Secretary of Agriculture, was asked a question by the Senate, which pertained to the Child Nutrition Programs, his response was **“give school districts more power over decisions on students’ meals.”** Great response, Mr. Secretary!



Shown above from left to right: Tom Mohr, Chief Policy Advisor to Rep. Steny Hoyer, Democratic Whip; Della Eiche, Harford; Scott Heckert, Cecil; Geoff Sudzina, Cecil; Ingrid Ramos, Dorchester; Michele McLaughlin, Anne Arundel.

And then a big surprise happened and the news report is as follows:

USDA Takes A Scalpel to School Lunch Rules: Agriculture Secretary Sonny Purdue has his first big policy rollout today, and it's on a thorny topic: school lunch. The newly minted secretary will join Senate Agriculture Chairman Pat Roberts at an elementary school in Leesburg, Virginia, during the lunch hour to unveil a new interim final rule that's expected to relax sodium limits and whole-grain requirements as well as allow 1% fat flavored milk back into school cafeterias nationwide.

Please continue to look at the website during the summer where we will post any new information pertaining to the Child Nutrition Programs.

Happy Summer Break Everyone!

Mary Klatko
MdsNA Federal Legislative Chair

Federal Legislative Update

Since the last article in the *Serving Spoon* there haven't been any new legislative efforts at the federal level. There has been no movement on any legislation for the entire month of August with Congress on summer recess. The Farm Bill is not a high priority given all the other issues that are being discussed on the national level. The Farm Bill does not affect the Child Nutrition Programs but it precedes discussion of the Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Programs that were delayed until next year. There is no harm to the Child Nutrition Programs because of the delay. Payments will still be received for meals served.

As I mentioned in the last edition of the *Serving Spoon*, the new Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue from Georgia, had his first big policy rollout on school lunch.

"...that underscore USDA's commitment to assisting schools in serving healthy and appealing school meals..."

At an elementary school in Leesburg, Virginia, he unveiled a new interim final rule that is expected to relax sodium limits and whole grain requirements as well as allow 1% low fat flavored milk back into school cafeterias nationwide.

In the Proclamation issued by Secretary of Agriculture Perdue, he specifically directed the Food & Nutrition Service of USDA to begin the process to amend the regulations for the school meals program with respect to sodium, whole grains and flavored milk.

A memo issued May 22, 2017, by Angela Kline, Director of the Policy and Program Development Division for Child Nutrition Programs at USDA, explains several menu planning flexibilities that underscore USDA's commitment to assisting schools in serving healthy and appealing school meals.

That process has not begun so basically every regulation that was in effect last school year is still in effect this school year. School districts can apply to the state for a waiver for whole grains and/or 1% flavored milk, if the



state is willing to grant waivers for those two parts of the regulations only. The Sodium limit stays in effect at the Target 1 level until 2020. The Target 2 level is not due for implementation until 2020 giving USDA time for research into the impact of the Target 2 sodium level on children's health before it becomes final. The regulations for the grains, milk and sodium levels will be issued prior to 2020. There will be the opportunity for public input in the comment period. Stay tuned. We will be sure to let you know when the comment period is open for you to respond to the final regulation.

The national School Nutrition Association (SNA) said they are planning to send a memo Tuesday, September 5, 2017 to USDA asking when they plan to start the process to amend the regulations. This is probably going to be a long drawn out process. It does not affect this school year unfortunately. All regulations from last year remain in effect this school year unless there is a waiver per school district. The secretary meant well and we appreciate his effort but regulations are complicated and not easy or quick to amend.

Hopefully, we will be responding to proposed regulatory changes at the next Legislative Action Conference (LAC) at the beginning of March, 2018. Save the date, Tuesday, March 6, 2018, for the MdSNA federal Legislative Action Conference (LAC).

Have a great school year! Thank you for all you do for the Children of Maryland each and every day.

Mary Klatko, MdSNA Federal Legislative Chairperson