



Food and
Nutrition
Service

March 11, 2021

Braddock
Metro Center

1320
Braddock
Place
Alexandria
VA 22314

Dear Mrs. Shannon Solomon,

Thank you for your extraordinary commitment and hard work in planning, preparing, serving, and distributing safe and nutritious meals, while setting students up for success. Your community's school nutrition story was shared recently with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) by your State agency as an exemplary representation of how local program operators were empowered to ensure that no child goes hungry during this time.

The USDA remains steadfastly committed to empowering schools and communities to feed children through the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency. USDA has issued unprecedented flexibilities that support social distancing, streamline program access, and allow for flexible meal service options. These flexibilities help to ensure that families are receiving meals when they need it most and protect the health and safety of both schoolchildren and you, as valued child nutrition professionals.

As COVID-19 continues to change approaches to education, regular access to nutrition assistance resources, and how you operate your CNPs at the local level, we recognize that you have been - and are continuing to face a changing environment that often requires quick thinking and innovation to adapt. At the same time, it is abundantly clear that those that work in school nutrition have emerged as local heroes as you navigate an array of challenges and create solutions to meet the nutrition needs of your community. Through it all, you have leveraged program innovations like alternative meal service models and novel community outreach strategies to ensure those you serve are fed and engaged. And, no matter where children are spending their school day, school nutrition professionals are there to support the health and academic readiness of students.

On behalf of FNS, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for your hard work and a heartfelt thanks for going above and beyond to ensure our Nation's children continue to receive safe and nourishing meals. You are true school nutrition heroes. We are grateful for your perseverance, ingenuity, creativity, and immense dedication to the mission of the Child Nutrition Programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Long".

Cindy Long
Acting Administrator
U.S Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service