Georgia Department of Education receives USDA approval for school meal flexibility during COVID-19 outbreak

More information: gadoe.org/coronavirus

MEDIA CONTACT: Meghan Frick, GaDOE Communications Office, 404-416-2286, mfrick@doe.k12.ga.us

**Please follow phone calls with a text message if possible.*

March 13, 2020 – Late last night, the Georgia Department of Education received word from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that two waivers have been approved to extend alternate meal service flexibility in the case of extended closures due to COVID-19.

This will allow schools to serve students' meals through USDA-approved meal service options, at state-approved sites within the community. This is similar to the way schools and districts offer student meals during the summer months.

District superintendents and school nutrition directors were notified last night and GaDOE School Nutrition staff held a call with school nutrition directors this morning to answer questions about the process. Local communities could begin seeing alternate meal service options as soon as the beginning of next week.

"We know food insecurity for students who rely on school meals is a major concern during school closures," **State School Superintendent Richard Woods said**. "We are going to make sure there are options available for students as long as they're needed, and state and district school nutrition staff are working round-the-clock to get this up and running for Georgia's kids."

"We appreciate the work our local school nutrition directors and their staff are doing to provide these meal options to Georgia students," **GaDOE School Nutrition Director Dr. Linette Dodson said**. "Please contact your local district for information about meal availability in your area."

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