

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO  
MAGA'HÅGA • GOVERNOR



JOSHUA F. TENORIO  
SIGUNDO MAGA'LÅHI • LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

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### **More Federal Funding Headed to GDOE**

*USDA Approves increase in Federal Reimbursement for National School Lunch Program*

Hagåtña, Guam – Thanks to the assistance of former Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo during her time in Congress, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) will now be receiving more federal funding for its school meals programs.

The USDA approved a 17% increase in Guam's reimbursement rate for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) effective July 1, 2019.

**"Every mother knows a hungry child can't learn; without the reimbursements we receive from the USDA, that would be the reality for too many of Guam's children,"** said Governor Lou Leon Guerrero. **"I am pleased that GDOE will have more resources to ensure no public school student goes hungry at school."**

In June 2018, former Congresswoman Bordallo and U.S. Virgin Islands Representative Stacey Plaskett penned a joint letter to Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue seeking a reconsideration of the reimbursement rates for their respective territories under in-school meal and child nutrition programs. At the time, Guam and the USVI were the only two outlying jurisdictions participating in the NSLP receiving reimbursement rates similar to that of the continental United States. Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico received more favorable rates.

**"School meals in areas outside of the continental U.S. are more expensive to deliver. This is reflective of the higher cost of living in the territories, Hawaii, and Alaska. Data from the USDA backs this as well. I appreciate the hard work of GDOE Superintendent Fernandez for pursuing this matter. I also want to thank the USDA for granting the higher reimbursement rate,"** Bordallo, who now serves as the Governor's Washington D.C. Liaison, said.

**"We are excited that our efforts over the years have paid off and that Guam will finally receive an increased reimbursement rate reflective of our unique location in the Western Pacific,"** Superintendent Jon Fernandez said. **"We have committed to providing no-cost meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision, and this change will ensure that we have the resources to continue these efforts in the years to come."**

In its findings to consider Guam's request for an increased NSLP and SBP reimbursement rate, the USDA noted that higher food costs are evident in other Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) programs. The USDA noted that the Guam Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

allotment levels are about 50% higher than the continental US, and almost 90% higher than the average food package cost for the Women, Infants, Children (WIC) program.

**“For some children, a school meal is the only thing they will eat for the day. If we want our students to succeed, we have to be able to provide them with all the necessary resources for a comprehensive education—and that starts with a healthy breakfast,”** said Lieutenant Governor Joshua Tenorio.

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For inquiries, please contact Janela Carrera, Director of Communications, at 472-8931 or [janela.carrera@guam.gov](mailto:janela.carrera@guam.gov)

RICARDO J. BORDALLO GOVERNOR'S COMPLEX · HAGÁTÑA, GUAM 96910  
P.O. BOX 2950 · HAGÁTÑA, GUAM 96932  
671.472.8931 · 671.472.8932/6