

Hunger Doesn't Take Track Breaks: The Impact of Year-Round Education on Household Food Security in Clark County, NV

Abstract:

Background: Federal child nutrition programs provide meals to students in conjunction with the timing of the traditional school year, including a program that provides meals during the summer break. Year-round education (YRE) scheduling redistributes the weeks of the summer break as multiple, shorter “track breaks” throughout the school year. Many students lose access to federal meals during track breaks, and this loss of access has implications for food security among Clark County School District (CCSD) students and their families.

Methods: CCSD’s federal meal claims for August 2015 through March 2016 were analyzed to determine the number of meals students miss during track breaks and the financial costs shifted to households during track breaks. CCSD’s meal menus were analyzed to determine the average calories provided through CCSD’s meals. CCSD student demographics provided some insight into the types of students whose food security was affected by YRE.

Findings: YRE affects access to 358,980 meals among 11,820 students. Shifting the cost of these meals from CCSD to students and families creates a financial burden of about \$1.1 million among these households. Furthermore, approximately 60% of these households are low-income households (less than 185% of the federal poverty level) and consist predominantly of racial minorities (67.4% non-White).

Recommendations: Federal child nutrition programs that can meet the needs of year-round school students should be implemented in more locations. Doing so will provide increased food security for CCSD students, avoid shifting unfair financial burdens to financially distressed households, and ensure social justice in federal meal programs.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the names of key federal child nutrition programs
- Understand how year-round education impacts household food security
- Identify at least one solution for improving food security among students and their households

Presenters:

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Regis Whaley is the Research Specialist at Three Square Food Bank. He is also a student of UNLV's School of Community Health Sciences, where he is completing his Master's degree in Public Health. Regis is a lifelong resident of Las Vegas and hopes to use his knowledge and skills to improve public health in his hometown. Regis is married to his wife, Jennifer, and has a two-year-old daughter, Katherine.

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