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Exploring Sensemaking Of The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act Of 2010

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**EXPLORING SENSEMAKING OF THE HEALTHY HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT OF
2010**

by

TAYLOR MARY BARCZYK

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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**MAJOR: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND POLICY STUDIES**

Approved By:

Advisor

Date

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DEDICATION

To my sweet and kind daughter Edison Deborah Zosia Kelly who joined me on the final leg of this journey. It was my dream to teach you that you can do anything and be anything you dream of, but your presence in my life has been the greatest gift as it has taught me that I can do anything. May you live your fullest life with the heart of gold that you have. I dedicate this to you and all the future children God blesses our family with.

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To my mother, Deborah Ann Barczyk. The greatest educator I have ever had in my life. Your constant wisdom, love, praise, and strength has given me the courage to achieve my dreams. I carry the legacy of education that you have devoted your life to and instilled the passion in me for helping kids reach their fullest and brightest potential. I love you more.

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To my family, Blake Edmund Barczyk, Brock Ross Barczyk, Priscilla Ann Barczyk, Grace (Lou-Lou) Ann Barczyk, Brody Ronald Barczyk, Connor Alexander Barczyk, and all the future nieces and nephews I have. Remember that you can have it all if you just believe in yourself.

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I hope that you are proud of your Mommy. Please know that I am so proud of the baby you are today with your toothless grin (one bottom tooth coming in), happy smiles, positive, sun-shiny personality, and the social butterfly that you are. I am proud of the girl you are going to be who may struggle a bit but will always overcome because you are my daughter. I am proud of the woman you will become one day and the decisions that you will make because they will be bigger and brighter than all the hopes I have for you today. To my future unborn children, I am so blessed with the thought of you coming into our family, even though I do not know you yet, but know that you will be so loved in our family and this paper is written for you. I think about how proud I am of the people you are meant to be and the dreams that you will have for yourself as you dream the BIGGEST DREAMS that you possibly can for yourself because your Mommy and Daddy know you will reach them. I reached this dream with all my obstacles in the way, that means you can do anything sweet angel babies. Mommy and Daddy will always love you beyond words.

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CHAPTER 1 EXPLORING SENSEMAKING OF THE HEALTHY HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT OF 2010

Background

Schools nationwide are faced with an epidemic of hungry students arriving to classrooms each day. Educators are expected to craft the minds of students while their bodies are focused on hunger rather than learning. According to the Kids Count Data Center (2017), during the 2016-2017 school year, educators served 13,353,000 students who were living in poverty, which accounts for 18% of all students in the United States. This massive number of poverty-stricken students points to the notion that the educational system, which is responsible for their learning and achievement, may be hindered by chronic hunger. With 77.2 million students in our schools nationwide (U.S. Census Bureau 2017), there needs to be a way to mitigate the effects of poverty on student achievement. One federal program has been providing free and reduced-price lunch to students in our nation's school system in order to combat child hunger during the school day.

The National School Lunch program is tasked with providing nourishment for the body and brain of students, while the mind is fed by the educators. In the 2015-2016 school year, on a daily basis, this program provided 21.6 million students with a free and reduced-price lunch in the school systems each day (Food Research & Action Center, 2017). In the 2016-2017 school year, that number rose by 1.2 million children and the participation of 2,500 more schools enrolled in the program (Food Research & Action Center, 2017). According to the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (2017), the need for a reliable meal at schools is so essential that more than 100,000 public, nonprofit private schools, or residential child care institutions participated during the 2015-2016 school year. The National School Lunch Program allocates \$13.6 billion dollars each year to the program that provides students with free and reduced-price lunch (United States Department of Agriculture, 2017). The National School Lunch

Program is guided by the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 which regulates and develops the massive economic expenditure of feeding students who are living in poverty in schools nationwide. As the nutrition requirements began to stricken, the program saw an increase in participation for students from low-income households, with a simultaneous decrease in participation from students living in households with higher incomes (Confessore, 2014). This contrast led the program to receive a backlash from students, parents, food producers, and parents.

The increased nutritional requirements of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 diverged between two socio-economic statuses, one that needs the school to provide their only reliable meal and one that selectively chooses to partake in school lunch deciding not to partake. This led to a student-led grassroots social media campaign from students that were unhappy with the less sodium laden meals and the increase in fruits and vegetables, they created social media images with the hashtag #ThanksMichelleOBama and #BrownBagginIt (Confessore, 2014). As school lunches began to become healthier, students began to become resentful of their new lunchroom options. In the political arena, there was a contrast between the policy which aims to feed students in need who are not receiving reliable nutrition and the taste buds of the students. This has led to a huge public backlash in the lunchrooms and school systems across our nation. How the policy has taken shape from the legislature to school systems has been an area understudied and spanned across the nation's school systems.

Research Problem

As the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 has been in effect, it has not been researched about how school administrators and staff make sense of this policy in their local school districts. It is imperative to conduct a study to determine whether the law is meeting its intended goal, improving the lives of students. Students from low-income backgrounds, food insecure

households, and minoritized groups are often times gaining their only reliable meal of the day at school. Whether schools are informing, providing, and placing nutrition alongside the forefront of their culture has yet to be identified in the literature. This is especially key for the 13.3 million students living in poverty in 2016, or about 18% of all students (K-12) in United States school systems (Feeding America, 2017). These students need education on how to create a healthy lifestyle to prevent obesity and create healthy eating choices. In fact, Feeding America (2017) discovered that 84% of households focus on budgeting the cheapest foods for their families in place of the healthiest. This identifies that students living in poverty may not understand the importance of nutritionally dense meals.

When students are not properly nourished, they are unable to perform to their best potential in the classroom. Kleinman et al. (1998) discovered that when students are hungry, they are more inclined to have behavioral, emotional, and academic problems. These issues can become barriers for students to achieve in the classroom. Alaimo, Olson, and Frongillo (2001) discovered that students who have food insecurity have lower arithmetic scores and are more likely to struggle with peers in school and even be suspended. To mitigate the barriers of hunger to learning, the National School Lunch Program provides reliable meals to students each day.

Providing students with at least one meal per day at school can be a reliable source of nourishment. At the federal level, the legislation aims to decrease obesity rates in school-aged students by providing them with proper nutrition in school lunch and breakfast programs. This legislation is then interpreted and implemented at the state and local levels. There is a need to discover how school administrators and staff who work with this policy create sensemaking concerning the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 because this explores the varying degrees of implementation of the federal guidelines at the local level for nourishing our nation's most

vulnerable students. The gap in the literature reveals that there is a lack of information that pertains to how local level school districts create healthy school lunches and whether they are looking to mitigate the larger societal issues of food insecurity and obesity for students living in poverty

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate how school administrators and staff in a suburban school district understand the policy of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. I was also interested in examining whether nutrition provided to students living in poverty is considered in the school district. This is the catalyst for the investigation of how school administrators and staff make sense of the policy that aims to provide students living in poverty healthy nutrition.

I investigated how administrators are implementing healthy eating choices in their local level policy. For the research, an in-depth case study reviewed the schools in the district who have at least 20% of their student population eligible for free and reduced-lunch status. It involved two elementary schools with 21% and 60% eligibility, one middle school with 25% eligibility, and the central office administrators who are involved with the program (Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2017). For the case study, I also interviewed the superintendent of the district, the foodservice directors, executive chef, and cafeteria workers. This gained a vertical perspective of how administrators are understanding, implementing, making sense of, and developing a school culture in regards to their role in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Research Questions

In order to understand the ways school administrators and staff understand the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the following questions guided this research:

1. How do school/district/leaders of the food program describe their role related to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010?
2. How do school/district/leaders of the food program describe their role and the action they have taken related to student nutrition and the obesity epidemic in response to the law?
3. What daily interactions do administrators and focal staff have with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010?
4. How do particular experiences, knowledge frameworks, and/or influences cause students to think about the potential of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 initiative as a vehicle for changing healthy eating habits?

These questions enabled me to engage in a case study design to collect and analyze data at each school building. This information contributes to the larger aspect of the district case study and how the members participate in sensemaking to understand the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Overview of the Literature

Since the early 1930s, and into the 1940s, governmental policy has been concerned with the nourishment of students living in poverty. The need for a public program that provides students who are economically disadvantaged with a reliable meal has taken place in schools since the first Public Law in 1946. The National School Lunch Act was signed in to law to ensure that the younger citizens were provided with proper nourishment in order to create a country that was ready for war (School Nutrition Association, 2016). From the beginning of this policy, federal spending has been allocated to schools for students who are underserved. This policy then became a center of the obesity epidemic in 2010 when it was reauthorized and signed into law in Public Law 11-

296 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010). This law is commonly referred to as the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

It was in the reauthorization of the law that policymakers began to focus on the broader societal issues at hand. For decades, this policy was feeding students in schools, however, simultaneously, childhood obesity was on the rise (Task Force on Childhood Obesity, 2011). This policy was enacted to battle the health risks for students living in poverty which is coupled with food insecurity. The students who are not nourished in the best way, are at a disadvantage of peers who receive healthy, reliable meals at home. This epidemic was addressed when the reauthorization of the policy focuses on providing students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch with nutrient-dense meals at school.

The individuals who interact with this policy on a daily basis are the foodservice directors, administrators, and cafeteria workers in schools that oversee the policy implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. There has not been a study to examine how local level policy implementers are understanding the federal policy. The need to gain a perspective into how school administrators and staff partake in sensemaking to develop their own local level policies is especially relevant in this application. Local policy implementation needed to be studied because the law focuses on the interactions of the school to not only provide healthy meals but to have a culture regarding healthy meal choices. Seeking an understanding of how school administrators and staff use this policy for students who are living in families that are economically disadvantaged provides an opportunity to see how school districts are using this policy.

Another facet school leadership endows is the accountability for the injustices of society. As seen with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, schools are responsible for feeding students who are not receiving proper nutrition at home. The responsibility falls on the school

system for the nourishment of students and especially those that live in poverty. As school leaders navigate the economic barriers, parental barriers, and political barriers of education, the question arises of how they work to ensure an equal education for all students. As school leaders work with all levels of the public, increasingly, their need to understand how to change schools to be a place that is safe, fair, equitable, and truly reaches all learners (Shields, 2011). The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 deems that school administrators work to mitigate the effects of poverty in their schools by providing proper nourishment. How school leaders use and understand this policy still needs to be understood.

Theoretical Framework

The literature that is presented in regards to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 is viewed through the lenses of sensemaking. A theoretical perspective “shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change” (Creswell, 2013, p. 64). Using sensemaking to guide my research provides a lens on how I view the literature and analyze data in my case study. Weick (1995) identifies that sensemaking involves the actors (in organizations) and how they frame or experience the meaning of situations and make sense of what has occurred. In educational policy, this is an important perspective to identify as laws are continuously evolving and changing with less fiscal resources allocated to their development and implementation. In the case of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the federal mandate created a policy for states to interpret, thus local school districts to implement. Using sensemaking to view how superintendents, school lunch directors, school administrators, and cafeteria workers work with the policy provided me with an insight into how policy implementers understand this policy. According to Louis, Fevey, & Schroeder (2005), “when

administrators are confronted with a new policy, their interpretations of it will determine where they engage in significant change, incremental change, or resistance” (p. 178).

This leads to the importance of understanding the perspectives of school administrators and participants on the changes in the school lunch policy. In gaining an understanding of how administrators have worked with the changes in the policy, it helped uncover the sensemaking they have partaken in. Often times, in a district, collective sensemaking occurs by many individuals sharing the same perspective on the policy (Louis, Fevey, & Schroeder, 2005). This is an important theoretical perspective to take on the policy changes and how they have been implemented in both the central office and vertically in a K-12 system. Using sensemaking informed the research and enlighten the ways that local levels have implemented this federal mandate and identify if the core principles of the policy are driving local school districts in regards to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Methodological Overview

This qualitative case study explored the perspective of the school administrators and staff who administer this policy in their school on a daily basis and throughout the district. Through an examination of data from a sensemaking theoretical lens and a case study inquiry, I developed an understanding of how sensemaking of the policy is carried out in school leadership. This perspective formed as I heard the stories of the school leaders and began to understand how they make sense of their purpose in this policy. According to Creswell (2013), “case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case” (p. 14). Using this model of inquiry, I was able to interview school leaders at various levels of education and understand their stories in-depth. This model helped me to further understand how the policy alterations have resulted in an increase in participation rates

for students living in poverty and decline for students in wealthier school districts (Confessore, 2014). Their stories and purpose statements created themes that informed my research to the broader issue of how federal policy is diffused through local level policy implementers.

Limitations

One of the limitations that I experienced is the demographic composition of the students and school leaders. As determined by my case study, I researched a bound system in-depth that analyzed a group of students and administrators that work in the same area. I also was limited by the population of the students. Although I am studied schools that encompass K-8, I was bounded by the racial and ethnic makeup of the students who attended the schools. The case study that is presented is not to be generalized as it is unique to the Edison Public School System¹. In addition, the participants have been selectively chosen and not chosen at random. This creates the chance that the participants have an interest in this topic in their own school culture. I also am limited from the perspective of the foodservice directors and superintendent and their interactions with this policy. In addition, I have not chosen to include the voice and perspectives of the students and parents who are affected by this policy.

Delimitations

Since this case study required multiple visits to the sites of different school buildings, I was bounded by the geographic location of my case study. In addition, I had a bound set of time to work on this research and was not able to research all the schools in the state for a broader case study. As I worked to understand how school administrators and staff make sense of this policy, I was limited in scope as not all of their students are receiving free and reduced-price lunch in their school building.

¹ All proper names and places used throughout this report are pseudonyms in order to protect the confidentiality of all participants in this study.

The Perspective of the Researcher

As this study was developed, I need to identify the biases and roles I have in order to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the viewpoints I have brought into the research. Creswell (2013) argues that researchers need to identify their reflexively in, “their biases, values, and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status (SES) that shape their interpretations formed during a study”(p. 187). This is a relevant factor in my qualitative case study research that was conducted and my relation to the study. I have been a Family and Consumer Science educator for nine years in the district. I have worked at two high schools and one middle school often on a split assignment. In my role, I have worked with students in grades 6-12 to instruct nutrition education and culinary arts.

In my training and education experience, I have been a member of various national committees for Family and Consumer Science and presented at a National conference. In my work educating students about cooking and healthy living, I have a natural bias about healthy choice offerings, nutrient-dense meals, and the need to educate students on proper food preparation. I have an intense passion for social justice in my school system. Currently, I serve in my role on various committees in the district that span from working with general education population, special education, curriculum development, professional development for educators, and leadership both amongst and outside my department

In my role as a female educating students on proper eating and health, I am made aware that regardless of gender, the interest and need for nutrition spans across all age groups. I believe that students need to be well nourished in their bodies in order for their minds to be expanded upon. In my coursework for my Master’s and Doctoral degrees, I have been enlightened with the concept of social justice and the inequities that permeate our society between socioeconomic

statutes. As an upper-middle-class white female, I did not understand the systematic inequities that are realities for many minoritized groups of students and students living in poverty until my extended education. I am now seeking a role in school leadership to transform school systems to become more equitable places through educational policy.

Statement of Significance

This research examined for the first time how school leaders are making sense of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 in their daily practice. With the billions of federal dollars allocated to this program, understanding how school implementations work with this policy is important. The qualitative case study research enabled the data to be rich in-depth and provide the reader with information that spans a whole district. By selecting the superintendent, director of foodservices, executive chef, building principals and cafeteria workers in the district, the study encompassed the various leaders of the school lunch policy. Using sensemaking to view the data enabled me to create a broader understanding of how school administrators and staff understand and enact the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 on a daily basis. This has created implications for future research, future need for policy modification, and the way federal law is diffused into practice at a local level.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this qualitative case study inquiry was to investigate how school administrators and staff participate in sensemaking to understand and implement the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 in elementary school, middle school, and central office. Family socioeconomic status and a byproduct of poverty support students to enroll in this program. This program also serves as a means to battle the obesity epidemic in this country. The daily functioning of this federal policy is conducted by school administrators.

The essential elements this policy has enacted to fix in our nation is the battle with poverty, hunger, and students that are ready to learn. Research has shown that students who are hungry perform at a disadvantage compared to peers that are well nourished (Alaimo et al. 2001). In many poverty-stricken areas, schools are working with populations that comprise all of their students relying on this federal program for a nutritious meal. As legislation has morphed, this policy transitioned from something to help our nation prepare war-ready troops to a policy that works to prepare healthy citizens through healthy food consumption.

This policy has received changes that aim to better the lives of students living in poverty and also increasingly rely on local policymaking to understand the initial intentions of the law. For schools across the nation, administrators are expected to provide students with the skills, tools, and resources to gain nourishment. However, it has been an understudied area to discover how school administrators and staff use this policy to complete that function. The sensemaking perspective on policy implementation is a way for this case study to develop a heightened awareness of the way local school governments are using this policy.

Food Insecurity

One goal of this act is that it will aim to combat childhood obesity with one in three children in America overweight (The White House, 2010). There is a belief that schools should be educating and providing students with the means of being healthy through nutrition. For students who are receiving free and reduced-price lunch and attending high poverty schools, the National Center for Education Statistics (2016) examined that a higher percentage of students who identify as Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native are enrolled in the program. It is in these schools that at least 75% of the students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. The racial division between socioeconomic statuses demonstrates the need for students living in poverty to have access to healthy food, which in turn, creates a lack of obesity for these students. Groups of minoritized students are at a disadvantage economically, and academically when it comes to nourishment. This Act permits students to have access to a healthy meal before and during school hours and minimize the tremendous effects of food insecurity for students in poverty, which include Economic Implications, Impact on Cognitive Development, Breakfast Consumptions and Academic Performance, and Nutrient-dense Food Consumption.

Educational leaders are increasingly held accountable for providing each and every child in the school system with educational opportunities and safety. They are now tasked at providing students with healthy food in schools which points to the notion that “the idea that school, by itself, cannot cure poverty is hardly astonishing, but it is amazing how much of our political discourse is implicitly predicated on the notion that it can” (Taub, 2000, p. 56). This policy tasks the school system with the overall health of the child and works through schools to impact approximately 15 million students or 20% of students who are living in food insecure households in America (Data Center, 2016). Food insecurity is when students come from families that do not have the financial

means to provide food on a routine basis, which can impact the ability of a student to have proper health, growth, and development. In 2017, it is “estimated that 11.8 percent of U.S. households were food insecure in 2017” (USDA, 2017, p. 1). This identifies that many students are arriving to classrooms hungry each day.

When students are not receiving food on a routine basis, it can impact their ability to have proper health, growth, and development. There is a clear link that food insecurity coupled with hunger and poverty can change the brain of the child and create a hindrance in their academic potential in comparison to peers who attain food security (Cook, J., & Jeng, K., 2009). In the classroom, this can create a vast difference in between the achievement of the students. This points to an area of concern for students who are from low-socioeconomic status populations.

The detrimental effects of poverty have plagued the education system for decades and policymakers have created a Head Start program in which eligible students are able to receive free early preschool education. When students are given a chance to go to school early, there have been gains and as Ludwing and Phillips (2005) discovered, “lasting improvements in a range of other key outcomes that society cares about, including health, educational attainment, labor market earning, and perhaps criminal behavior as well” (Haskins & Barnett, 2010, p. 53). Students can benefit from programs that work with students from poverty that aim to alleviate the effects of poverty on children. In fact, when resources are funneled into programs that provide young students who live in poverty with educational opportunity, with quality programs, Ramey & Ramey identify that they receive “school readiness, school achievement, and adult economic and social well-being” (Haskins & Barnett, 2010, p. 61). In order to educate students who live in poverty, school leaders need to work with community members and fight to get the youngest students into their schools in order to produce long-term educational achievement and

opportunities for students. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which places an emphasis on nutrition, creates the philosophy that schools can be a place where students can receive a reliable free breakfast and lunch each day which can minimize the consequences of food insecurity on students living in poverty

One of the reasons that this legislation has been prominent in schools is because of the need to feed students in order to empower them to learn. When thinking of the holistic child in a classroom, it is important that each and every need of theirs is met in order to capitalize on their learning potential. Haskins & Barnett (2010), identify that there is an importance for nourishment as the learning potential of a mind hungry for information will be suppressed by having a hungry body. For the students living in poverty who attend schools across the nation, the reality is they have more on their minds that are occupying them than just learning. If schools can work to maximize the learning potential of the child, then each day can have a different outcome or result. If the student is well fed prior to class, their bodies and brains are more inclined to be academically ready to learn. On the contrary, students who are not in families that are living in poverty can have an ability to thrive each day as they arrive well-nourished and ready to learn. This creates a wide spectrum of students in classrooms that teachers are held accountable for. However, the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 aims to minimize the hunger gaps between students.

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 aims to provide nourishment for students who come from poverty or backgrounds that struggle financially. In this aim for nourishment, the legislation took a turn to create a program that serves students nutritionally dense meals. For some students, experiencing different fruits, proteins, grains, and vegetables, may be a first-time occurrence for their taste buds. This creates a need for the school to become a community that works to better the needs of the most vulnerable population. Sergiovanni (1994), identifies that,

Community of kinship emerges from the special kinds of relationships among people. . . .
 community of place emerges from the sharing of a common habitat or local. . . .
 community of mind emerges from the binding of people to common goals, shared values,
 and shared conceptions of being and doing (p. 219).

In order to nourish students from poverty, a community needs to be created to work towards aiming to minimize the effects of poverty on students in schools. By providing students with healthy meal choices, it is intended to battle the childhood obesity epidemic in our country.

The need for schools to reach beyond just the confines of the classroom comes into play when students come from poverty. Sergiovanni (1994), identifies that communities in schools are structured by ideas and relationships. By providing students with healthy meals for both breakfast and lunch, this policy works to create a school community that works beyond the restraints of the building and into the homes of students. This policy is in response to an epidemic that created a full list of health concerns for the nation over the previous decades this policy was in effect for. If we as a nation can nourish students right, then, perhaps we can work to empower them to build a healthy family in their future as they minimize their struggle with food insecurity.

When examining the link of health and child hunger, it was determined that when a child is hungry, they can develop stunted growth in their development (Cook, J., & Jeng, K., 2009). This development affects all aspects of the child and in turn, can create an early limitation in the child's ability to process cognitively. In addition, it identified that during the most important stages of early brain development, they cannot learn as much or as fast and this causes lower academic achievement because they are not as prepared as counterparts (Cook, J., & Jeng, K., 2009). This sets them apart in the school system from other students who have had the opportunity to develop their brain to the fullest. This implies that the main population that the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids

Act of 2010 impacts is the students from poverty (regardless of their race). The research also suggests that the most important time for students to have access to food security is from birth to three due to the development of the child's cognitive processes (Cook, J., & Jeng, K., 2009). This means that if a student is not offered an equal opportunity to succeed from birth if they do not have proper access to food that is both nutritious and available. When students come from homes that experience poverty and food insecurity, their cognitive abilities can be affected.

It is found that the developmental delays that the children experience from food insecurity can impact their potential to perform at school. This can place them in an academic disadvantage in comparison to their peers. As students from food insecure backgrounds enroll in school, they are more likely to arrive with less knowledge and found to leave with less knowledge (Murphy, Ettinger de Duba, & Cook, 2009). It is demonstrated that this is the beginning point of their struggles in school and into their future.

One item of interest has examined the effects of students not having access to food on a reliable basis. When students do not have a consistent source of food, they are deemed to experience food insecurity. This has been studied to identify if it has an effect on student achievement according to Alaimo et al. (2001), there has been a link between nutrition and achievement which was analyzed in the data of The Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey or NHANES III. This analysis compared food insufficient students WRAT arithmetic scores and food insecurity and discovered it was negatively related (Smith, Oden, & Blake, 2014). The findings from this study identified that the link between the NHANES III and standardized testing scores can be measured and examined on student achievement. It is found that when students have food insecurity, it affects their cognitive and academic achievements (Smith, Oden, & Blake, 2014). This information implies that a student who is given regular access

to nutrient-dense foods will perform to a higher degree than a counter-peer who is not given nutrient-dense foods.

Poverty and Student Achievement

In our democratic school system, we aim at creating an equal environment for all students however, poverty makes that a difficult task. Students from poverty are impacted on their ability to read, recall discrete information, tell stories, and their oral language skills all reported by parent and the NCES data. According to Smith, Oden, & Blake (2014), this study pointed to the “strongest relationship for food insecurity was with the child’s capacity with discrete information such as counting, naming shapes, and colors. No relationship observed between food insecurity and parent assessment of the child’s reading skills” (p. 10). In a school setting, this can impact the level of education a student is able to achieve in a traditional setting as much of the early childhood education is focused on the basic ability to recall discrete information.

The impact of an early educational set back is something that a student has to deal with for the remainder of their time in school. This set back occurs because the foundation for successful education is attained through the mastering of basic skills and the knowledge is built on a continuum (Murphy, Ettinger de Duba, & Cook, 2009). For the single fact that the student does not have access to an equal beginning of cognitive development causes them to learn at a slower rate and they slip further and further behind (Murphy, Ettinger de Duba, & Cook, 2009). In addition, this can cause a student to need special education services. *Reading, Writing and Hungry* examined that children who are not only food insecure but also are hungry are two times more likely to be classified as special education and or repeat a grade (Murphy, Ettinger de Duba, & Cook, 2009). This identifies the link between food insecurity and school performance from

kindergarten to third grade and the implications for the future school career which could be minimized by healthy school breakfast and lunch.

Below expected school performance has been a common issue of students from poverty. However, one way to battle this is to provide students with enough food to not worry about being hungry such as the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 provides. It is found that schools that provide breakfast have higher standardized test scores and attendance (Shedler, 2014). These data examine the link between a few schools that have actually seen positive results from the standardized test scores and attendance. The research examines the School Breakfast Program and how it helps to eliminate the food insecurity that is seen in so many school environments (Shedler, 2014). In addition, this program has been seen as a success for increasing academic and psychosocial functions while simultaneously decreasing hunger in a study for 97 students in Boston grades four to six (Shedler, 2014). The School Breakfast Program has provided students with a reliable meal each day.

Kleinman and colleagues (2002) identify that the Universal-Free School Breakfast Program attributed to higher levels of student achievement. They set out to develop a study to examine the actual effects of the school breakfast program on a small population. This study lasted six months and compared the results of students who were considered to be at risk. It was discovered that of students at risk of poor nutrition, they were less likely to eat breakfast at school than other peers (Kleinman, et al., 2002). Once the free school breakfast programs began, the students improved their grades in math (Kleinman, et al., 2002). In addition, students also made more improvements in behavior than students who did not enroll in the free breakfast program and were at risk for nutrition. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Act allows students who qualify are able to have a free breakfast each and every morning.

In the State of Michigan, approximately 400,000 students participate in the program each morning accounting for federal funding of approximately \$12 million dollars (Food Research & Action Center, 2018). These students are able to start their morning out in a nourishing way that hopefully pays dividends in the classroom. In turn, it is expected that the investment in preventing hunger will yield an increase in student achievement.

Historical Impetus of the National School Lunch Program

The preponderance for students living in poverty to have a reliable meal is something that many nations have addressed through the centuries of policy development that advocates for the underprivileged. School lunch programs are not unique to the United States of America, in fact, they have been around for centuries in other countries such as Germany, France, England, Switzerland, Holland, Italy, Austria, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, and Norway (Gunderson, 1971). Long before the United States was thinking of a school lunch policy, legislation that works to feed students from food insecure backgrounds began in Europe. According to Gunderson (1971),

In England, the passage in 1905 of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act was the culmination of the efforts of 365 private, charitable organizations in attempting to provide meals at school for needy children, and a reflection of national concern over the physical condition of the populace. Shortly before the close of the Boer War, the country became aroused over a statement by Major-General Frederick Maurice that three out of every five men seeking enlistment in the army were found to be physically unfit. (p. 5)

It was then, that the King created The Royal Commission which determined that England needed to nourish the school children and would do so in order to create a viable nation (Gunderson, 1971). As England began creating national policy surrounding school lunches, The United States was still determining their role in nourishment for students living in poverty.

In the United States, policy-making involving school lunch began as a local level policy that was implemented in several school districts throughout the nation often times by charitable organizations. These charities, partnered with the school system and began offering students who came from poverty-stricken backgrounds a meal during the school day. Gradually, local level policymakers began to take notice of the program and its importance on school achievement potential. School districts started to adopt responsibility for policy creation and implementation which created an avenue for states to embrace policy-making with school lunch (Gunderson, 1971). Eventually, states could not maintain the cost and had to reach to the federal government for support of the program as early as 1932 (Gunderson, 1971). Then, the nation went through the Great Depression and malnutrition became a national concern, which assisted in generating the first federal assistance Public Law 320 to be passed (Gunderson 1971). According to Gunderson (1971), this law created a safe market for the prices of crops by enabling government control over the surplus agricultural products. In turn, school lunch programs became the recipients of the extra agricultural products purchased by the USDA (Gunderson, 1971). The success of the school lunch program began to spread across the nation with an increase in school district participation.

The National School lunch policy became a benefit for students in a similar way as England developed their policy for school lunch. The U.S. military became a catalyst for the introduction of school lunch programs in 1946 after turning away many potential draftees for World War II because of malnourishment (Food Research & Action Center, 2016). It was in 1946 that President Truman signed the National School Lunch Act into law (School Nutrition Association, 2016). This landmark policy created a focus of federal spending on the nourishment of students in the nation's schools in addition to other educational programs. Lyndon B. Johnson signed a revision to the law to include The Child Nutrition Act of 1966 which worked to keep students safe and healthy by

meeting their nutritional needs (USDA, 2016). This revision “expanded the School Lunch Program, established the School Breakfast Program, extended the Special Milk Program, and provided federal funding towards non-food school equipment purchases” (NEA, 2014). The change of funding and program form to the to the legislation supported the school lunch program to succeed unaltered for many decades, until 2010.

Rising Obesity Rates Inspire the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

For the years after 1966, the National School Lunch Program continued to be a part of the battle towards childhood hunger, however, simultaneously a new battle supervened, *childhood obesity*. The irony began as school programs were feeding students in poverty, however, at the same time, the number of children who began to experience health concerns with obesity increased. According to the 2011 *White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity Report to the President*, there needed to be a call to action in the legislation to mitigate the threats of this epidemic

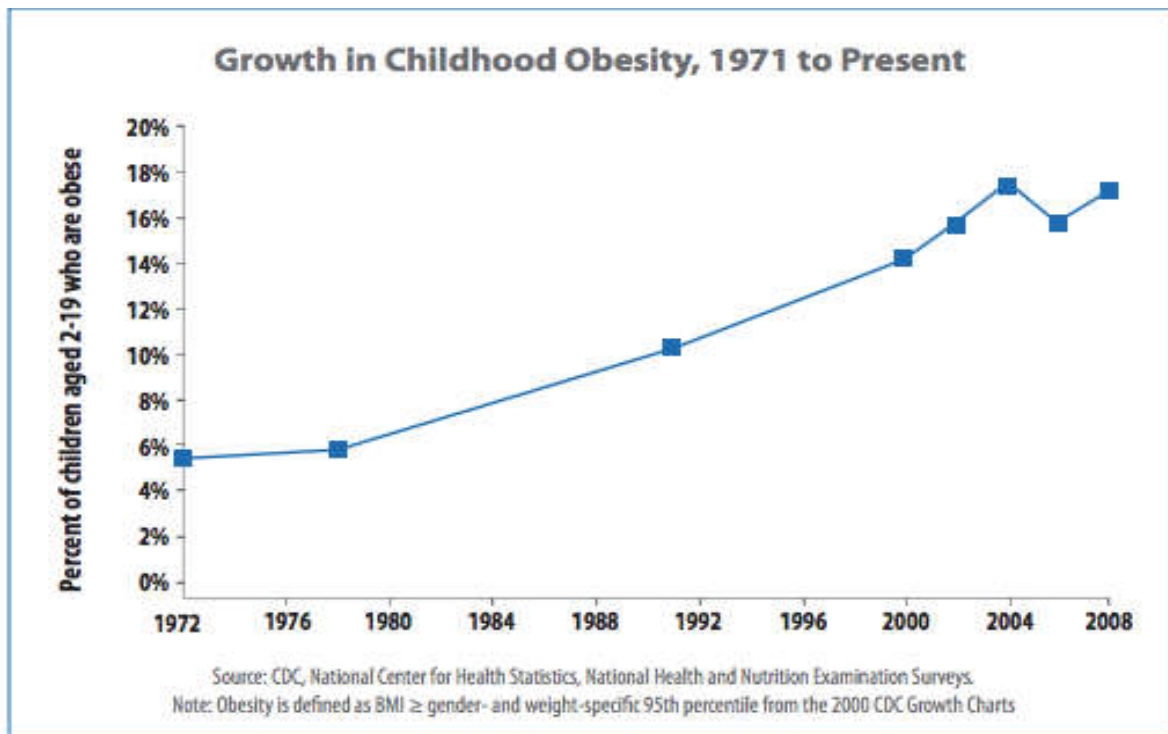


Figure One: Childhood Obesity Growth 1971 to Present

Since the 1966 law was enacted, there has been a rising number of children who are living with obesity in our nation and it reached an all-time high prior to 2010. The government highlighted this as a public concern and created a call to action for schools in the form of Public Law 111-296 being reauthorized and signed into law in 2010, also known as the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010). This law requires all public schools receiving federal funding (which increased under the reauthorization) for the National School Lunch Program around the country to provide students with free and reduced-price lunch that meets *nutritional criteria* set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture.

This mandate has increased the access to nutrient-dense foods for students living in poverty and requires schools to provide healthy foods for qualifying students. This act empowers the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) to set nutrition standards for all foods sold in schools during the school day. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act mandates:

Required compliance by which all school food authorities participating in the school lunch program authorized under this Act and the school breakfast program established by section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1773) are required to comply with the meal pattern and nutrition deadlines. (U.S. Government, 2010, p. 32)

With these changes, students in the lunch line are presumed to have eaten meals that are well-rounded and nutritiously focused as opposed to high in sodium, preservatives, and trans fats. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act aims to provide healthy meals for students and an opportunity for schools to create educational programs that emphasize nutrition.

Policy Reauthorization

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 was introduced to the Senate by the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee with strong representation by Senators Lincoln

and Chambliss (Democratic Policy Committee, 2010). Senator Blanche Lincoln, a Democrat, represented Arkansas while Senator Saxby Chambliss, Republican, represented Georgia. They worked with the Agricultural committee to lead to the passing of this act in order to reduce hunger in schools with healthy meal alternatives (Elev8kids, 2014). The actual voting demonstrated a majority of Democrat support for the former first lady, support of 247 Democrats and 17 Republicans, 4 Democrats and 153 Republicans voting against, with 4 Democrats and 9 Republicans, not voting (GovTrack.US, 2010). This identifies that a large majority of the Democrat Congress members were in support of providing healthy meal opportunities to the students who benefit from the act. However, there was also resistance to this federal mandate which increases governmental control on to the local control of school cafeteria programs mainly from the majority of the Republican party.

The passing of the reauthorization of the bill demonstrates the majority of Democratic party members' commitment to combating childhood obesity and providing access and education for healthy nutritious meal choices. However, there has also been non-supporters of the bill who would choose to allocate the federal dollars of the school lunch program to resources other than increasing nutrition standards. This trend is seen again when the Obama administration was overturned by his successor, Republican Donald Trump. This is a reason that the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 has seen a policy shift from the initial goals of healthy meals in all cafeterias in our nation. One of the main goals of this act is to end hunger and obesity for students in schools through a nation-wide school lunch program that focuses on nutrition. The literature suggests that the effect of poverty for students from food insecure homes is a tremendous hindrance to their educational potential, achievements, and outcomes.

All schools that receive federal funding for breakfast and school lunch programs are now held accountable to create meals that work to battle obesity in our nation. This is the first time in over 30 years that more federal funds have been allocated to reimbursement for schools that are meeting nutritional standards (The White House, 2010). The Act requires that states develop improvement plans that target their school lunch programs. Previously, states provided free school lunches to students who had parents file that they needed assistance. With the amendments, states will now report and determine the school lunch program eligibility by “specific measures that the State will use to identify more children who are eligible for direct certification, including improvements or modifications to technology, information systems, or databases” (U.S. Government, 2010, p. 5). This mandate requires that states reconfigure their current school lunch program qualifications into a broader system.

Nationwide, states are required to develop a plan to improve their certification process for the school lunch programs while enabling school districts to determine eligibility based on more elements than parental consent. The White House (2010) suggests that the changes allow states to use data from Medicaid to increase the number of eligible students enrolled in school meal programs. This change impacts the state and local levels in regards to the number of students who will now gain access to nutritious meals.

Each state is mandated to participate in the changes that have happened on the federal level with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. This act has included money from the federal government through grant opportunities. States receive money because the Act “provides grants, on a competitive basis, to State educational agencies for the purpose of providing subgrants to local educational agencies for qualifying schools to establish, maintain, or expand” (U.S. Government, 2010, p. 19). In the State of Michigan for the 2016-2017 school year, over \$300 million dollars

was received from the Federal government for the National School Lunch Program to cover approximately 3,000 school districts (Food Research & Action Center, 2018). Qualifying school districts work with their states to receive money to run the school lunch program, which requires the state and local level to have the manpower to file for these grants. In addition, not every school district will be able to receive the increased funding in grants because the money is filtered from the state through the local districts based on need.

In awarding subgrants under this subsection, a State educational agency shall give priority to local educational agencies with qualifying schools in which at least 75 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches under the school lunch program. (U.S. Government, 2010, p. 20)

The federal government is placing the priority of funding on school districts that have a high need for assistance and are feeding many impoverished students. In order to maintain funding, the states will monitor the local school districts. Each school district will be audited every three years to guarantee compliance with the nutritional standards set forth by the USDA (White House, 2010). The required compliance is impacting local school districts to change their foodservice programs to meet strict, nutrient-dense foods.

Program Cost

One issue that has arisen with this policy is the cost associated with creating healthy meals and the lack of student interest. Some districts are finding that students are placing their food in the trash cans and they cannot sustain the expenses involved in meeting the nutrition standards of the USDA. The 2014-2015 school year was the first school year since the Act was reauthorized that schools began to fully implement the USDA standards. According to Food Navigator,

More than 90% of schools have implemented the school meal nutrition standards, meaning some 32 million public school children on the National School Lunch program are getting more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and less sodium and saturated fat on their breakfast and lunch trays. But beyond that, vending machines and school stores nationwide have traded candy, donuts and sports drinks for healthier snacks and drinks. (Hennessy, 2014)

This implies that four years later, the students are receiving the exact intended results of the act, healthy food choices in school. However, the struggle that is occurring for this Act is that the US House of Representative panel announced that they would like to offer school districts an option to opt-out of the Act for a year until they can begin to afford the cost of implementing the nutrition standards (Hennessy, 2014). Implementing healthy lunch choices is expensive for school districts and companies.

The cost of the Act started to create tensions between federal policy and local policy in regards to school lunches. The National School Board Association (2014) has discovered, “83.7 percent of school districts saw an increase in plate waste, 81.8 percent had an increase in cost, and 76.5 percent saw a decrease in participation by students”. This is an alarming expense for school districts to maintain. The School Nutrition Association and National School Boards Association believe that the students do not like the food that they are receiving in school thus leading to an increase of waste in produce costing companies around \$3.8 billion (Hennessy, 2014). There is a demand for healthy food that tastes good and most importantly that the students from poverty will actually eat in order to obtain necessary nutrients.

Revisions to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

Due to the expenses to the school districts, foodservice programs, and the amount of food waste, The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 received its first modification under the new leadership of the Trump administration which changed the original intention of the policy. Initially, when the policy was created as it states, it was intended to create meals in school that provided densely nutritious foods for students. Under the new policy change according to the proclamation from USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue (2017), states can now file for an extension on meeting the whole grain, sodium, and milk requirements of the policy. These changes have altered the initial goal of the law in phasing meals that were not meeting certain nutrition requirements out over the course of the legislative targets.

The new policy alterations facilitate school cafeterias to scale back on a few strict mandates for grains, sodium, and milk. As far as whole grains are concerned for the 2017-2018 school year, Sonny Perdue deemed, “I will continue to provide States the authority to grant exemptions to schools experiencing hardship in obtaining whole grain-rich products acceptable to students, for any type of grains on the menu” (USDA, 2017). This allows schools to serve meals that are not rich in whole grain to the students. In addition, the policy change has lowered the sodium target levels that had been in place from the initial beginning of the policy that aimed to lower sodium levels for student meals. These levels in middle schools were supposed to transform from 1,520 milligrams of sodium in 2012 to less than 1,360 milligrams of sodium in 2014 to less than 1,035 milligrams of sodium in 2017 and eventually less than 710 milligrams of sodium in 2022 (USDA, 2012). These targets are no longer required for States to this year and they can continue to serve students meals with a higher level of sodium than the initial policy intended for this school year. In addition, the type of milk that the schools serve is determined at a local level and no longer a

national policy as long as it consists of a 1 percent fat milk which can now have flavors (USDA, 2017). These changes have created more local level control of the federal mandate of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

The alteration in the National School Lunch Policy reflects the increasing role of public schools to fix the broad issues that society faces. The policymakers discovered that the place they could fix the rising obesity rates was in schools through the school lunch program. In fact, the focus of the *Task Force on Childhood Obesity* (2011), recommended that nutrition education needs to come from school leaders, local policymakers, and all stakeholders in the community in order to create a real change in the nation's obesity epidemic.

Sensemaking of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 in Local Schools

As federal policy mandates stricter nutrient requirements, state and local governments are expected to follow the policy and to monitor schools. As this policy is interpreted in both state and local policy-making, it is unclear how the intended consequences of providing more nutrient-dense food for students is enacted at a local level. How individuals from school districts at the local level are using the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 mandates to transform the nutritional choices of their students living in poverty is still not well comprehended.

When dealing with school policy, there numerous elements to consider. First, the federal policy, then the state policy, the county policy, and finally the local policy of school districts. All the different aspects of policy implementation and organization can lead to different variations of the same policy in different schools. This is especially important to examine when looking at how schools construct and make sense of federal policy. The theory of sensemaking in organizations involves the ways in which members of the organization make sense of different policies, rules, procedures, and regulations. Weick (1995), discovered, "how they construct, what they construct,

why, and with what effects are the central questions for people interested in sensemaking” (p. 5). This alludes to the notion that in order for a policy to be enacted on the local level, there needs to be an understanding of the people that work with the policy. For, it is those people who will ultimately be responsible for the direction, vision, and implementation of the intended consequences of the policy. One key aspect of sensemaking is that it is grounded in identity construction (Weick, 1995). Essentially, the policy enactors that work with the policy on a daily basis become the mirror of the school and they diffuse the understanding of the policy into the school building and culture (Weick, 1995). In the case study design, the policy implementers have an opportunity to describe their role in the dissemination of information surrounding the school lunch policy. The issue that arises in policy implementation is that different stakeholders in education interpret the public policy in different ways. Weick (1995) identifies this as the focus on retrospect “people can know what they are doing only after they have done it” (p. 24). This means that after a policy has been acted out, only then can the respondents describe the way they enacted the policy. This is pertinent to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 because it requires the respondents to describe the ways they *have* responded to the federal mandate in their current roles. This makes a compelling study because how the policy morphs in a school system will not be the same in every case.

According to Spillane (2004), “local officials understand the message in different ways, not necessarily those that state policymakers intend. They construct their action on the basis of their previous understandings and ideas about local behavior” (p. 2). This then leads to school administrators, boards, and leaders to create different interpretations and understandings of their policies. To the extent of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, it is just as important who is

in charge of working with the school food management as it is to develop nutritionally dense meals for low-income students.

Another construct of sensemaking in organizations is that it is “enactive of sensible environments” (Weick, 1995, p. 30). This describes that the people are part of their environment and as they act, they create the environments around them and are responsible for the school culture in which they breath (Weick, 1995). In correlation of school lunch, the way the central office administrators create policy, what they put attention on, and what they notice and how the policy filters through the buildings is a construct of sensemaking. The importance of examining the administrators’ sensemaking in this policy stems from the need for schools to be combating the nation’s obesity epidemic and seeing if that is something that is engrained in the vision of the district. If school administrators are not clear on the reasoning behind healthier meals, then they will not be able to make health a priority and culture in their school.

The significance of understanding the leadership perspective in sensemaking and policy development is to gain an understanding of how policies are enacted at the local level. Studying sensemaking assists the researcher to develop a perspective on whether the intended consequences of the law are being met at the local level. The role of the administrators in sensemaking is especially crucial in school culture. According to Coburn (2001), “principals often gravitated toward aspects of approaches that reinforced their preexisting understandings, paying less attention to aspects of reform that challenged fundamental epistemological and pedagogical assumptions” (p. 26). This identifies the need for school leaders to have a clear understanding of the nutritional goals of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 in order to encourage students to make healthy choices. Otherwise, principals will have no clear vision of how to make sense of the policy in the

way the legislation intended at the federal level. There has been no empirical evidence linking the sensemaking for school administrators and staff and this policy.

Learning how school leaders make sense of this policy helps to understand if feeding students who are hungry, to develop better nutritional choices, is at the front of the line in local school policy. Another aspect of sensemaking is that it is a social process and decisions that are made by the organization consider the actions of others whether they are there or not (Weick, 1995). As the school district has developed and continues to develop its policies concerning school lunch, the way it is going to impact others is considered. In addition, learning how school administrators and staff make sense of the policy supports a perspective of congruence or incongruous between federal mandates and local laws. “When school leaders had a superficial understanding of policy ideas, they, at times, promoted approaches that were incongruous with policy or with other approaches they were simultaneously promoting” (Coburn, 2001, p. 26). If school administrators and staff are not clear on the aspects of the policy, then they may have a different way that they implement them in school that produces results that are different than the policy intends. “The sense-making process is fraught with opportunities for both misunderstandings and fruitful reconstruction of existing knowledge” (Spillane, 2004, p. 2).

How school policy is shifted from federal to state to local control can vary in and amongst school districts both state and nationwide. Sensemaking involves the construct of being ongoing as the policy has shifted, the way the districts have had to adapt to make sense of the changes has and continues to change and this flow is constant in an organization (Weick, 1995). This is a key to understanding the way in which the organization has chosen to respond to the new policy implementation and what the building principals are doing to encourage healthy eating in their school culture.

This also plays into the aspect of sensemaking being focused on and by extracted cues (Weick, 1995). In the school organizations, “extracted cues are simple, familiar structures that are seeds from which people develop a larger sense of what may be occurring” (Weick, 1995, p. 50). How school administrators and staff interpret what they notice in the policy implementation is a way that they make sense of the policy. How much training and the cues they have in relations to education concerning this policy is dependent upon the fiscal, human, and state resources that are provided in regards to the policy (Spillane, 2004). In order to understand how policy is being developed concerning school lunch, there needs to be a study that aims to understand the sensemaking local school districts have concerning the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

A study of how administrators are making sense of this policy provides a glimpse into the way the facets of the policy have been put into place in school organizations. The question that arises in this policy is if, in fact, there is a coherence between local level enactment and governmental creation. Honig & Hatch (2004) identify that in order for the intentions of a policy to be enacted at the ground level, sensemaking needs to be congruent and in line with the district’s operations and culture. This identifies that the district level administrators need to understand how this policy is intended as ultimately, they are the implementers of the policy. This is relevant in schools as the leadership is distributed in different roles and members of the school district (Louis, Mayrowetz, Murphy, & Smylie, 2013).

How the district divides the roles of the school lunch program, the importance of nutrition education, and the intended implications that are to happen in personal health choices are determined by the way the administrators understand the policy. It is also relevant as it points to the importance of the individuals grasp on the reform determines how they will adapt to the change and the degree to which the change will occur at (Louis, Mayrowetz, Murphy, & Smylie, 2013).

As we look at the change of the policy in the school system, it is important to note that sensemaking is “driven by plausibility rather than accuracy” (Weick, 1995, p. 55). How the policy implementers in the school system worked to clarify the policy intentions can impact the clarity of the school administration team in their role for the policy. As sensemaking happens, Weick (1995) recognizes “the strength of sensemaking as a perspective derives from the fact that it does not rely on accuracy and its model is not object perceptions. Instead, sensemaking is about plausibility pragmatics, coherence, reasonableness, creation, invention, and instrumentality” (p. 57). School administrators’ perceptions of this policy are just as important as the accuracy of their school lunch contents. In seeking how they perceive this policy, the story of the way they understand the mandate can be uncovered.

One of the key reasons to study the sensemaking in this policy as identified by the scholar Weick (1995) is when he states, “what is necessary in sensemaking is a good story” (p. 61). By delving into a case study research, then there will be a story of how a district uses the concepts of sensemaking to carry out this policy. The gap in the literature between the sensemaking of school administrators and staff and the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 needs to be addressed in order to understand how this policy is morphing in everyday school life and provide a good story while doing so.

Role of Educational Leaders in the Broad Societal Picture to Mitigate Poverty and Hunger

Educational leaders are working in a socially unjust society in which learning communities are held accountable. The issue arises that “schools are not, and cannot be, the only instrument of social reform in a democratic country” (Shields, 2009, p. 21). As a nation, this policy encompasses schools as an agent for change in ever-growing obesity epidemic. This implicates school leaders

to work with all stakeholders in the community in order to educate all members with varying socioeconomic statuses, race, and educational attainment.

School leaders need to work to understand the needs of students living in poverty if they want to work for real change in achievement and society. It has been found that regardless of race, socioeconomic status is the main factor in intellectual capabilities (Suzuki & Valencia, 1997). In schools, a gap in achievement is created for students when compared to peers with a higher socioeconomic status and educational systems are held accountable for this discrepancy. On a larger scale, school system stakeholders need to “understand the disparities in educational achievement related to the persistence discrimination that permeates the very structures of American society” (Shields, 2009, p. 21). There is a larger issue at hand when schools ‘fail’ as they cannot be seen as the only means of accountability for poverty. If we want to change the failing system, then we need to work the hardest to improve the failing schools as opposed to the well-achieving schools (Coleman et al., 1966). In a school system with a high population of students living in poverty, educational leaders need to fight for the resources that ensure a more just and equitable system for all students.

As legislation continuously keeps schools accountable, the legislation needs to be accountable for giving schools the resources they need in order to best serve all students. Policies that implicate the importance of student nutrition and nourishment in schools should be coupled with the resources to provide to students, who are not given an equal start with their peers because they live in poverty, with an ability to succeed. In our system, educational leaders are finding now, more than ever, they need to understand their student population and be armed with the ability to “change schools to be more equitable, effective, inclusive, and welcoming for all” (Shields, 2011, p. 11). The broader societal change that schools are working towards with the Healthy Hunger-

Free Kids Act of 2010, is to alleviate the food insecure homes that students from poverty experience which, in turn, creates a cycle of inequities in and amongst students in a classroom. School leaders need to work to transform their systems to become one grounded in political action that as Weiner (2003) claims “gives democratic force and direction to the terms, conditions, purpose, and future of teaching” (p. 97). In order to work towards *real* democratic change in our society, we need educational leaders who work with policymakers to provide the resources that not only identify the inequities in society but also work to fund and change them.

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kid Act of 2010 aims to provide students who are living in poverty with a secure, healthy meal at school each day. This federal policy creates a focus on healthy living for students who live in poverty and health education for educators who work with all students and tasks them with the responsibility of working to reduce the obesity epidemic in our society. Increasingly, for educational leaders, there are more policies that hold schools accountable for larger societal issues and there is a need for educational leaders to work to fight the inequities and inequalities in our educational system. For the future of generations to come, for all students, educational leaders need to combat the problems in our society and work to make schools a place of equality, social justice, and a true democratic vehicle for societal change. In order for this to happen, we need to produce school leaders that become advocates for change at the local, state, and federal policymaking levels. Only then, can we transform the experience of students who live in poverty in our school systems into that of a catapult for educational opportunity.

Summary

Schools have become the place where students living in poverty can receive a nutritious meal that is reliable. For many students, the reality is that they are only receiving a reliable meal

180 days of the year. When the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 was reauthorized, it made a commitment to the students who are less fortunate. This commitment dedicated fiscal resources to create a school lunch program that produces healthy meal choices for students in the cafeteria for the 180 days of the year. For students living in poverty, this may be the only meal that weighs the cost of nutrition over the cost of feeding a family. Often times, in food insecure households, families are choosing the quantity of food over quality which in turn sparks the cycle of the obesity epidemic in this country.

As schools have become increasingly responsible for various federal mandates, this mandate creates a unique responsibility for school administrators. School administrators are working with the local policymaking school boards and determining how to nourish their school population. In addition, school officials are increasingly accountable to foster a school culture that is rooted in academic achievement and equal opportunity for all its students. This identifies the need for research to gain a better understanding as to how administrators are using this policy in their school. This study sought to identify how the administrators participate in sensemaking in this policy and the ways in which they are providing opportunities to nourish students.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I examine the research problem and questions that have guided my study. I then provide a concise synopsis of the methodological approach that has been applied while studying the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Next, I discuss the qualitative inquiry approach that fueled the research. Additionally, the strategies used to collect the data, the participants that were selected, and the member checking that was involved are discussed. I also describe the participant selection process, data collection process in accordance with the Institutional Review Board at Wayne State University guidelines and the data analysis procedures that I engaged with. Finally, the ethics and trustworthiness that this research is grounded in is identified.

Problem and Purpose Overview

The current gaps in the literature suggest that there is a need to understand how school administrators and staff enact this policy at a local level. In using sensemaking to examine their practice, a clear understanding that explores the various facets of the policy's intentions have been brought to light. In doing so, a qualitative case study has been carried out to understand how school administrators and staff make sense of and implement this federal mandate at a local level. This research examined how school administrators and staff are using this policy to create a school environment and culture that incorporates the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Research Questions

In order to explore how school administrators and staff use the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 to inform their practice, the following questions were examined:

1. How do school/district/leaders of the food program describe their role related to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010?

- a. How has sensemaking been engaged in around the legal requirements for increased nutritional eating and nutritional standards in the cafeteria?
 - b. What factors have influenced the sensemaking of this organization and individuals around the requirements of these laws?
 - c. How is the policy understood as it relates to poverty and obesity?
2. How do school/district/leaders of the food program describe their role and the action they have taken related to student nutrition and the obesity epidemic in response to the law?
 - a. What is the role for school leaders in providing healthy food in their school?
 - b. How are quality school meals provided?
 - c. How is local policymaking working to combat childhood obesity?
 - d. Is school culture focusing on:
 - i. Nutrition Education for students and families?
 - ii. Promoting Nutritious Eating?
 - iii. Nourishment for students in poverty?
3. What are the daily interactions with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010?
 - a. How is this policy understood?
 - b. How does this policy take shape at the:
 - i. School Building Level
 - ii. School District Level
4. How do particular experiences, knowledge frameworks, and/or influences cause students to think about the potential of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 initiative as a vehicle for changing healthy eating habits?

Methodological Approach

In order to understand the way school administrators and staff partake in sensemaking in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, I conducted a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a type of research that enabled me to turn the world into representations that create an interpretive approach to the problem at hand (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A qualitative methodology is the best fit for the research when variables that need to be explored have not been identified yet. “This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). The research observes the different viewpoints of school administrators in different buildings, central office members, and cafeteria workers who work with the same cafeteria program, which is funded by the National School Lunch Program. Qualitative research in this case study sought to understand the complex components of this policy in schools (Creswell, 2012). This research approach connected common themes and understandings for school administrators and staff and their role with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

In my use of qualitative research design, I was able to gain an understanding of how administrators in their natural settings interpret the federal policy. Qualitative research delivers an epistemological assumption that the researcher is able to get as close to their subjects as possible and understand the field in which the context is from (Creswell, 2012). A qualitative research design was essential to understand how school administrators and staff enact this policy and make sense of it at a local level where the policy is carried out. This provided a voice to the legislation that has not been enacted yet in research. Qualitative research enables the researcher to understand how participants in this program understand their work and role in the national program (Creswell,

2012). How federal policy is enacted at the local level and the way that policy implementer makes sense of the policies intentions were discovered in this research.

Strategy of Inquiry

This research followed a qualitative case study inquiry approach in order to understand how local policy is being understood and created in regards to the federal mandate of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. As my questions mainly centered around the “how and why questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of a case study, history, or experiments as the preferred research method” (Yin, 2018, p. 10). This led me to select a single case study of the Edison Public School System². This selection of inquiry method best helped me answer my research questions as I began to explore the case. According to Creswell (2012) case study research

Explores bounded systems (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observation, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents), and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 73)

Using one district, with multiple buildings, that service multiple students in various age groups allowed for a view on the different ways administrators are making sense of this policy in the same district. I was also able to obtain various documentation from the state audit that suggested the selection of the district was a unique site to study due to the violations. In addition, the history of the socio-economic disparages yielded a compelling case to be examined. The case study design as identified by Yin (2018) was an

² All proper names and places used throughout this report are pseudonyms in order to protect the confidentiality of all participants in this study.

Empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident. (p. 15)

An in-depth investigation with this policy provided insight into how the policy is implemented and how the local level implementers made sense of the federal mandate. Previously, there was a gap in the literature identifying how sensemaking is occurring with the local inaction of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 policy. I selected a single case design because Yin (2018) identifies that a single-case design is appropriate for an unusual case. This was selected because of the way the district is divided socioeconomically and racially. Choosing this single-case also informed the research as to what is being done at the local level and if it is congruent with the federal policy intentions. Using a case study with different perspectives of administrators on the same issue created a clear vision of how administrators use this policy every day (Creswell, 2012). This permitted me to develop a vertical understanding of the policy as I included central office administrators that create the policy at the local level, to building administrators that carry out the policy in schools, to cafeteria workers who oversee the foodservice program on a daily basis.

This method, viewed through a sensemaking lens, sought to understand the role of school administrators and staff and the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 in a suburban school system. This is seen as “a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases” (Creswell, 2012, p. 74). This proved to be an appropriate research methodology because of the context of the school district setting boundaries and providing a chance to study the demographics of the school communities. According to Merriam (2009), a case study provides “an in-depth description and analysis of a

bounded system” (p. 40). The bounded system of a school district and the inquiry chosen provided a deep understanding of how this policy was enacted in school districts.

One limitation to case studies is whether the case that is being studied is identifiable (Creswell, 2007). When conducting case study research, it is imperative to uphold the ethical and trustworthiness standards in order for the district to not be identified in the research. I upheld this by “maintaining a strong professional competence that includes keeping up with related research, ensuring accuracy, striving for credibility” (Yin, 2018, p. 87). The reason that I selected one school district is so the analysis creates a deep understanding of how policy is implemented in the whole district. Merriam (2009) discusses how with multiple case design, the analysis is diluted because every case provides less depth. I wanted to create a depth that provided an understanding of the central office, building administrators, and decision makers who are involved in policy creation and implementation at the local level. The research enabled me to create an understanding that provides multifaceted descriptions in this case for school administrators.

Site Selection

The Edison Public School System is located in a suburban community with close proximity to a large metropolis in Michigan. The proximity to the metropolis creates a hub for executives, lawyers, doctors and many high-profile families with approximately 70% of residents holding a bachelor’s degree or higher (U.S. Census, 2018). The Edison Public School System serves families that are some of the most affluent in the suburban area. The community borders the main metropolis on one side and a beautiful waterfront on another.

Edison Township is a place that typically has multiple generations of family members living in which gives the township a small town feel right outside the big city. Due to this small-town charm, the schools are a source of pride, nostalgia, and the community. Often times, parents,

grandparents, teachers, and administrators have all been educated at the same school buildings in which they work. For the dominant culture, this creates a sense of belonging for the students and staff coupled with a welcoming embrace from generations of the same family name being recognized throughout town. On the contrary, the Edison Public School System encompasses a boundary of a neighboring community divided by the freeway called Kurmas Village, which harbors a population that is mainly first generation and largely African American. Kurmas Village borders the Eastern edge of Edison Township and is a less affluent community with a population that, on the whole, is the first generation in the village and dominantly African American. This has created an economic and social division between the Eastern and Western side of the school district.

Edison Township is a community that has a history of segregation and oppression for residents who belong to minoritized groups. The township has a long history of affluence and a white dominant culture. This culture spans throughout the private clubs, elite central shopping community, and the school system of Edison Township where the demographics are largely white or black. However, the district has seen a shift in population away from a mainly white school community. In the 2003-2004 school year, the Edison Public School System consisted of two main racial groups: 90% White and 7% African American, while in the 2017-2018 school year, 74% White and 17% African American (Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2017). Edison Township began to have more minoritized students in their public schools as they have increased by 10% of their African American student population over the course of the last decade mainly as neighboring Kurmas Village transitioned from a predominantly white community to mainly African American. That is when the school system at the Eastern end began to serve a completely different racial and economic status population that it serves today.

Edison Township is home to a mildly segregated community by the freeway which divides the town into Eastern and Western halves. The Edison Public School System is a school community that has a distinct Eastern and Western division. These divisions are bounded by the different economic and racial profiles of the citizens. A highway runs through the school system division lines and it also creates a division between the ends of the town. One side of the town has a high socioeconomic status with approximately 4 % of people in poverty, while the other has a medium to low socioeconomic status with approximately 13% of people living in poverty (U.S. Census, 2018). A large amount of people living in poverty in Kurmas Village is on par with the State of Michigan poverty rate being 15% during 2016-2017 (Food Research & Action Center, 2018).

The contrast between lifestyles at each end of town is dramatic and seen in home sizes, neighborhoods, and amenities that are available. In the Western half, many students belong to multiple private clubs and are members of sailing teams. Edison Township is home to a demographic of approximately 92% white residents, approximately 3% African American, approximately 1% Asian and approximately 2% Hispanic (U.S. Census, 2012). The Kurmas Village on the Eastern border of the school system is comprised of modest home sizes, a neighborhood that is not as visually well-kept and homes that border the freeway. The Kurmas Village is comprised of a demographic of approximately 59% African American, approximately 35% White, approximately 2% Asian, and less than 1% Hispanic (U.S. Census, 2018). This creates a distinct racial and economic boundary between the Eastern and Western parts of the school system.

The socioeconomic status differentiation in the school system further divide the two parts of the town. In the township of Edison, the average household income, according to U.S. Census

Data (2018), is approximately 95,000 dollars with a mean property value of 325,500. Kurmas Village has an average household income of approximately 46,000 dollars coupled with a median property value of 67,800 (U.S. Census, 2018). Here, the average person holding a bachelor's degree or higher is 22% (U.S. Census, 2018). This community has a portion of its city encompassed into Edison Township which impacts the school system in polarizing ways for the free and reduced-price lunch population of students.

The school system has had to alter their practices to house a free and reduced-price lunch population for many of its students from the Kurmas Village portion of the school system. Up until 2009, The Edison Public School System had a free and reduced-price lunch population below 1% as indicated in figure two. As a result of the economic downturn, change in demographics changed the landscape of the school system occurred as they served 18% of students in the district free and reduced-price lunches in the 2017-2018 school year as indicated in Figure Two.

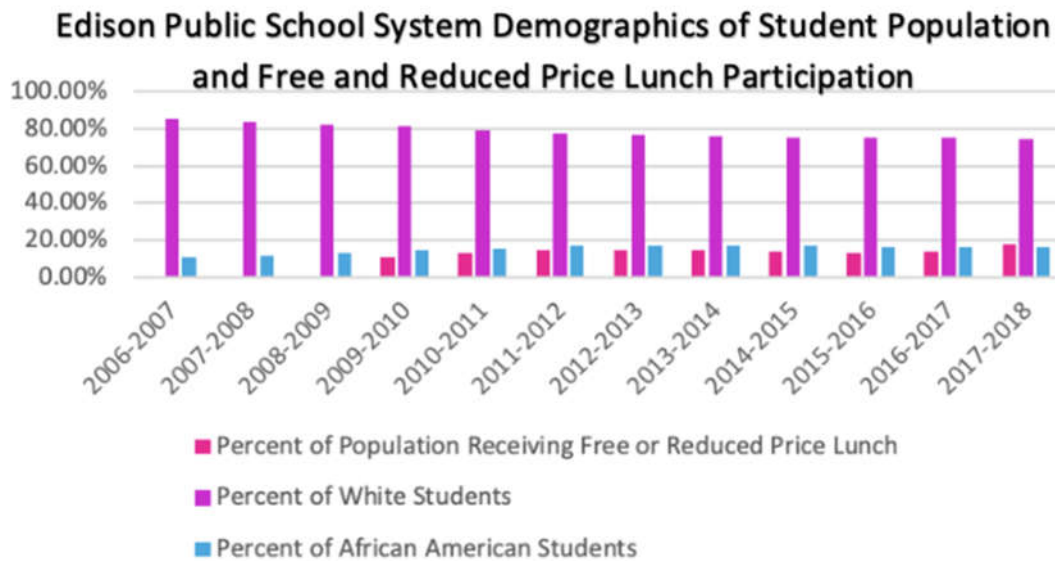


Figure Two: The Edison Public School System Demographics of Student Population and Free and Reduced-price Lunch Participation

The free and reduced-price school lunch program participation increased 18% over the last ten years in the school district (Figure Two). This indicates a shift in the participation rates of students and schools in the program and the district's accountability for maintaining a compliant school lunch program.

Citation of District

The Edison Public School System is an interesting case to examine because they had recently been audited by the State government and found that they were in violation. As outlined in Chapter Two, when this federal policy was reauthorized, it required the state government to audit the school district. In this audit, Certification of Compliance with Meal Requirements (2014) identifies that the school food authority (SFA) is in charge of making sure the compliance with the new meal standards have been met and are continually met throughout the school district, while the state regulates the compliance with administrative reviews. In the administrative review process for the state of Michigan, the Edison Public School system received a violation in their compliance. This violation can impact the district's ability to get the reimbursable funds that follow the school lunch program from the federal government. The violations that they received in regards to their free and reduced-price lunch status revolved around Civil Rights, Verification, and Meal Counting and Claiming (Appendix E). These audits determined that the system was not in compliance if a civil rights infraction was to occur in the district, in order to maintain compliance, the district had to develop documents for individuals to file a civil rights complaint in regards to the foodservice program (Appendix G, H, & I).

This is an interesting case because the school system is comprised of a large percentage of their population being African American who receives free and reduced-price lunch. The district business department had a mistake in the way they were approving applications and had to make

an alteration to be in line with the mandate as determined by the state (Appendix E). In addition, they had to alter their verification letter to have the information they needed (Appendix N). Also, it was found that the line at school with the highest population of free and reduced-price lunch population had a cafeteria count system that was not accurately reflecting the number of meals that were sold that were eligible and the district had to create a revision (Appendix F). When the students come into the cafeteria, they check out using an individualized pin. This pin determines if they are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch or it deducts the money they have on their accounts. The computer system was void of the correct information and in this review, they had to make the changes to accurately reflect the count. The violation from the state with a growing number of students eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program shifted the district's focus onto compliance for the program as more financial resources were allocated to the school lunch program.

The district is aiming for compliance in their changes to receive a portion of the approximately \$111 million dollars allocated from the Federal government to the School Breakfast Program and approximately \$300 million dollars allocated to the National School Lunch Program in the 2016-2017 school year (Food Research & Action Center, 2018). These federal dollars are allocated to the state government agencies and then, as Chapter Two examines, filtered to the local school districts. In the State of Michigan, approximately 3,000 school districts participated in the school breakfast and lunch programs and received the federal dollars in the 2016-2017 school year (Food Research & Action Center, 2018). Of that, the Edison Public School System spent approximately \$1.2 million dollars on School Lunch Program (Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2017). This large expenditure on school lunch indicated the focus of the school on attaining the reimbursements from the State of Michigan for eligible meals. The

administrative review that is conducted by the State of Michigan assures whether the district will receive the selected funds or be in jeopardy if they are not compliant with the State of Michigan's requirements as they implement the federal law.

Participant Selection

The corrective actions that the district has taken to follow the State of Michigan mandates indicated that the district is focusing on the organizational aspects of their school lunch policy. This site selection also provided a perspective on how a citation from the State of Michigan for not following the mandates of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 affects the district and the employees involved with the school lunch program (Appendix E). The school administrators and staff that are involved with the lunch program provide a perspective on how the policy is implemented on a daily basis. Using purposeful sampling for my case study, the Edison Public School System was identified since it has approximately 8,000 students with approximately 1,000 being eligible for free and reduced-price lunch district-wide (Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2017).

To determine eligibility for the study, a review of the Michigan School Data was done to determine the amount of free and reduced-price lunches that were provided by each school in the district. Then, using percentages, the number of schools with 20% or more of students who received these services were selected. The Edison Public School System is comprised of nine elementary schools. Of these schools, the ones that have been identified in this case study were two that are on the Eastern edge of the school system. The reason these were selected is due to the enrollment of the free and reduced-price lunch status population at or exceeding 20% (Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2017). The distribution of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch was not even across schools in the district. One

elementary school is located in Kurmas Village while the other serves half of the students who live in Kurmas Village and half who live in Edison Township. In fact, one elementary school in the district provides free and reduced-price lunch to 21% of its students and the other school services 60% of its school population. These schools also have a more diverse student body than the neighboring schools in the Western end of the school district.

The middle school that serves both these elementary schools was also selected because they have a larger population of free and reduced-price lunch students, serving 25% of the student population each day. The high school was omitted in this study because they have an open campus policy where students can exit the building and eat lunch at neighboring homes or community establishments. The incorporation of Kurmas Village into the school system has created a racial and economic divide in the school system that creates a strong contrast to the other elementary schools in the district. The high level of enrollment in the free and reduced-price lunch program at the two elementary schools out of nine and one middle school out of three schools is why this study concentrated on these buildings.

In choosing this district, I was able to gain a sense of how the leadership team uses sensemaking when enacting this policy in their district from the K-12 continuum. I also interviewed the superintendent of financial services, the central office director of dining services, and the executive chef and assistant director of the school lunch program. In selecting these participants, I gained an understanding of the policy implementers in the continuum of the school district. With qualitative design, researchers are able to collect data in the natural setting of the participants and observe their behavior and actions in their own context (Creswell, 2013). By enacting this research method, I was able to understand the role of the participants and how they implement this policy.

The interviewees spanned from the daily administrative tasks such as serving the food, shuttling the food, and supervising the cafeteria to the financial aspect of pupil accounting for the district program. As included in Figure Three, a summary of the positions, gender, and ethnicities of the participants are noted.

Figure Three: Demographics of Participants

Respondent No.	Position	Gender	Position Category
R1	Elementary School Principal	Male	Building Administrator
R2	Elementary School Principal	Male	Building Administrator
R3	Middle School Principal	Male	Building Administrator
R4	Deputy Superintendent of Educational Services	Male	Central Office Administrator
R5	Deputy Superintendent for Business and Operations	Female	Central Office Administrator
R6	Director of Business Operations	Female	Central Office Administrator
R7	Business Operations and Support Services Manager	Female	Central Office Administrator
R8	Director of Dining Services	Male	Foodservice Staff
R9	Executive Chef and Assistant Director of Dining Services	Male	Foodservice Staff
R10	Elementary School Cafeteria Worker	Female	Foodservice Staff
R11	Middle School Cafeteria Worker	Female	Foodservice Staff

Upon examination of these participants, I gained a better perspective of the vertical alignment or misalignment for the sensemaking in the district of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. By including the various members involved in the school system in this case study, I was able to delve into the various roles that the members have in the policy. This information allowed me to speak with each policy implementer to further understand their roles in this policy.

Data Collection Procedures

While conducting this qualitative case study, I used the various facets of data collection. I collected data from interviews and documents. By combining the various types of data collection, I sought to capture the essence of school culture and community in regards to district policy for school lunch. Using multiple sources of evidence while conducting research provided validity to the study (Yin, 2018). As I researched, I discovered documents that the district had created in response to the citation. These documents enriched the data for this case study along with the interviews. For this research, I was the fieldworker when conducting interviews with the participants using the research questions to guide our interaction.

The interviews are considered one of the most important sources of evidence in a case study (Yin, 2018). I conducted my interviews through multiple comprehensive and open-ended interviews with the school administrators, lunch director, an executive chef, central office administrators, and cafeteria workers. Agee (2009) discovered for interviews, questioning is an “integral part of understanding the unfolding lives and perspective of others” (p. 432). This identifies the importance of using interviews in qualitative research to understand how school administrators and staff use the policy in their own lives and how they understand their role in the policy.

In order to meet the requirements of the human subject study, I gained approval from the Institutional Review Board of the university as well as the school district (Appendix A). Then, I sent the research purpose letter and informed consent form electronically to the potential participants (Appendix B). Next, I interviewed the selected participants at a time of their convenience and arrange this meeting via email. The purpose of interviews was to acquire, “descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect of interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale, 1996, p. 6). In order to understand this, I asked my research questions during the interview to determine how the participants partake in sensemaking in their role of the policy (Appendix C). This was done through semi-structured open-ended interview questions. Merriam (2009) identifies for case studies, interviewing provides in-depth glimpses into the data and is the best technique for conducting research.

With the participants’ permission, an audio recording was conducted on a digital recording device. Then, I transcribed their responses using pseudonyms. Their actual voices have been stored in a secure, locked location so their identity cannot be compromised. The transcript storage has followed the principles for data storage as outlined in Creswell (2007):

Always develop backup copies of computer files. Use high-quality tapes for audio-recording information during interview. . . . Develop a master list of types of information gathered. Protect the anonymity of participants by masking their names in the data. Develop a data collection matrix as a visual means of locating and identify information for a study. (p. 142)

By using these principles, I ensured that the privacy and ethical considerations as outlined in the latter were upheld. The data collection occurred in the natural atmosphere of the participants choosing. This put them at ease and made sure they were speaking from their own perspective.

The actual location of their interview was chosen by them based on their convenience. I wanted the participants to feel natural and that they are able to speak about their own experiences in a comfortable matter so the research I conducted was valid and true to their perspectives.

In conducting interviews, strengths and limitations are found in my study. One of the strengths of interviews is the opportunity to hear from the participants and their viewpoint through open-ended questions (Creswell, 2012). Interviews in case studies also enable the researcher to understand how participants use this policy in their roles and their personal understanding and historical information that they can provide (Creswell, 2012). On the contrary, not all interviewees were “equally articulate and perceptive” (Creswell, 2012, p. 191). In addition, Kvale (2006) as mentioned in Creswell (2007), “questions the warm, caring, and empowering dialogues in interviews, and states that the interview is actually a hierarchical relationship with an asymmetrical power distribution between the interviewer and interviewee” (p. 140).

This was a keynote to point out as I conducted my interviews and made myself aware of the power distribution that is occurring. A way I minimized the power distribution was to base time and location of the interview at the discretion of the participants. This worked to put them at ease in their place of control and power. In spite of the limitations, it is still found that interviews are the major source data that is gathered in a qualitative study in order to understand the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). In addition, as I conducted interviews, I gained some documents that contributed to my qualitative study. These documents provided my data source with a richer background as documents identify what the participants have paid attention to especially the documents containing the violation from the state. Yin (2018) finds that using documents to validate evidence that has been dialogued about in the interviews assists the researcher in creating

a sound case study. By gaining artifacts and documents that are related to local policy implementation, I have gained a deeper research base for my case study.

Data Analysis Procedure

For qualitative research, the process of analyzing the data requires the researcher to create an inductive and deductive analysis pattern. I also analyzed the data to seek how the participants understood their role in this policy. The process of analyzing qualitative data “consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (Creswell, 2007, p. 148). Qualitative researchers build from the bottom up and find themes and patterns based on the raw data they have collected (Creswell, 2007). Using the raw data, I was driven by my theoretical propositions that drove my initial research questions and the literature review that I created (Yin, 2018). The “propositions that shaped my data collection plan yielded analytic priorities” (Yin, 2018, p. 168).

As I began to code my data, within the analytic priorities, themes and patterns emerged in the data set. The themes I noticed were related to policy implementers, roles in nourishment, access to and the consumption of nutrient-dense foods, food insecure students, actions taken to mitigate obesity, and the aspirations for policy implementation. These themes came across all aspects of interviews in the analysis of the research (Creswell, 2007). In this case study, I used the data collected through interviews and document collection from the research as a basis to code and interpret the data in my analysis.

Once the interviews were conducted, I transcribed the information for analysis. The transcription rules I adhered to followed Mergenthaler and Stinson’s Seven Principles for Developing Transcripts as outlined in McLellan, Macqueen, and Neidig (2003):

1. *Preserve the morphologic naturalness of transcription.* Keep word forms, the form of commentaries, and the use of punctuation as close as possible to speech presentation and consistent with what is typically acceptable in written text.
2. *Preserve the naturalness of the transcript structure.* Keep text clearly structured by speech markers.
3. *The transcript should be an exact reproduction.* Generate a verbatim account. Do not prematurely reduce text.
4. *The transcription rules should be universal.* Make transcripts suitable for both human/researcher and computer use.
5. *The transcription rules should be complete.* Transcribers should require only these rules to prepare transcripts. Everyday language competence rather than specific knowledge should be required.
6. *The transcription rules should be independent.* Transcription standards should be independent of transcribers as well as understandable and applicable by researchers or third parties.
7. *The transcription rules should be intellectually elegant.* Keep rules limited in number, simple, and easy to learn. (p. 65)

With these guiding principles, I made sure to transcribe my data accurately and provide data that is relevant to my research. It is found that when transcriptions occur, it is the first time a researcher reduces what will be included in the transcription (McLellan, Macqueen, & Neidig, 2003). In order to best represent my data, I followed the principles and included the data that is relevant to the study. This included the descriptions that identified the understanding, attitudes, values, and beliefs the participants hold (McLellan, Macqueen, & Neidig, 2003). In addition, I used the

transcriptions as a basis for my analysis in determining the ways that different administrators construct the same phenomena and how they experience, frame, and express their role in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (McLellan, Macqueen, & Neidig, 2003). This enabled me to develop a clear understanding of how different administrators in the same school system use the policy in their local school.

When designing data analysis and interpretation for case studies, four main principles need to be applied in order to create the most detailed data. One thing that was identified is a concise background and description of the case and its setting. Then, I sought the data to provide categorical aggregation, or the similar themes that are developing in the cases and the meanings that they evoke (Creswell, 2007). This strengthened my research because it showed how different components of the case experience the same themes. Next, I looked to the direct interpretation of the cases and how they are distinctive and the conditions under which they operate and the experiences that are unique (Creswell, 2007). This permitted me to create a concise framework of each participant in the case study and their perspective roles with the policy. Then, I examined across each case to develop patterns that develop a cross-case synthesis of information that each individual in the study shared (Creswell, 2007). As I coded the data, these similarities and themes emerged which determined results in my study. Yin (2018), refers to this process as pattern matching which takes an empirically based pattern and compares it with a predicted one.

The predictive patterns I orchestrated developed as I set up my research questions, which determined the direction of the data set that emerged. When the information was coded, themes were discovered, and I looked for naturalistic generalizations. The themes that emerged throughout the research were: policy implementers, roles in nourishment, access to and the consumption of nutrient-dense foods, food insecure students, actions taken to mitigate obesity, and

the aspirations for policy implementation. Creswell (2007) argues that this helps the researcher create generalizations that can be applied to other cases or in a broader context. In seeking the way that local schools activate sensemaking to understand this federal mandate, narrowing in on a qualitative case study created a data analysis that provided a detailed perspective of how local stakeholders implement the school lunch policy.

I coded the data and formed a description of the data that I gathered from the interviews with the participants in this case study. As seen in Appendix C, I followed the Interview Guide Protocol that was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Wayne State University. These questions guided the research and enabled me to delve into the life stories of the respondent. Then, I analyzed the data that was received for patterns. Creswell (2007) identifies that qualitative research analysis involves, “coding the data (reducing the data into meaningful segments and assigning names for the segments), combining the codes into broader categories or themes, and displaying and making comparisons in the data graphs, tables, and charts” (p. 148).

As the data was coded, themes and patterns in the data emerged with my transcription of interviews. These themes related to policy implementers, roles in nourishment, access to and the consumption of nutrient-dense foods, food insecure students, actions taken to mitigate obesity, and the aspirations for policy implementation. Once the data was transcribed, I used the information that I gathered to develop descriptions and themes within each case and then themes that connect them across the cases (Creswell, 2012). This enabled me to develop a clear picture of how local policy implementers are using sensemaking at the local level with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Then, I sought a link to the literature to gain a better understanding of how school leaders are working with this policy this pattern matching in my case study helped me determine the

research patterns that emerged. I was interested to see if a certain leadership theory is evident when working with a policy that feeds students living in homes that deal with food insecurity. By studying a case, I gained insight into particular school building levels, central office administration, and how the administrators and cafeteria workers understood this policy. The case study research design also provided me with an understanding of the local sensemaking that occurs between the central office administrators, foodservice directors, an executive chef, cafeteria workers, and building principals. I used the themes to connect to the literature and create an understanding of how local policy implementers have understood their role in the federal mandate.

Ethical Validity in Design

In order to develop a study that is ethical, I used the frameworks that have been created by qualitative researchers that demonstrate the importance of this realm of research. Tracy (2010) distinguishes that “quality qualitative methodological research is marked by a worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence” (p. 839). For this study, the topic was worthy because there is a lack of research on how school administrators and staff partake in sensemaking to understand this initiative in school systems. In addition, case study research as seen through a sensemaking lens creates a study that is rich in rigor. In addition, the sample size of central office administrators, school lunch directors, an executive chef, building principals, and cafeteria workers in elementary and middle school provided a deep sampling of the members involved with the policy. These facets helped to create a study that is worth the time and it contributes to the literature by developing an understanding of the role of school administrators and staff in this policy in action.

This research is sound in credibility, which is an important aspect for qualitative researchers. According to Tracy (2010), credibility is “achieved through practices including thick

description, triangulation or crystallization, and multivocality and partiality” (p. 843). In this research, I showed the experiences that are understood across all participants and sought to understand the themes that are common amongst them using triangulation. In qualitative research, triangulation, according to Denzin (1978), “assumes that if two or more sources of data, theoretical frameworks, types of data collected, or researchers converge on the same conclusion then the conclusion is more credible” (Tracy, 2010, p. 843). This works to minimize bias that the researcher may have and creates a reliable study especially when there are multiple sources of data with the same shared experiences. I also followed high ethical standards that as Yin (2018) identifies,

Includes having a responsibility to scholarship, such as neither plagiarizing nor falsifying information, as well as being honest, avoiding deception, and accepting responsibility for your own work. These also include maintaining a strong professional competence that includes keeping up with related research, ensuring accuracy, striving for credibility, and understanding and divulging the needed methodological qualifiers and limitations to your work. (p. 87)

I conducted the research in the utmost professional manner as contracted with the Institutional Review Board of Wayne State University. The Concurrence for Exemption status was granted and approved by the board which enabled me to conduct a sound study (Appendix A). As I worked to create an understanding with many administrators and the stakeholders involved with carrying out the school lunch policy, a study that is rich in multivocality was created. “Multivocal research includes multiple and varied voices in the qualitative report and analysis” (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). The different perspectives of the participants in this case study research produced multivocality in the findings. This created a multi-faceted perspective of results and approaches of the school administrator’s perspectives with the policy of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

In order to create an ethically sound case study, applied for the Institutional Review Board because I worked with educational leaders and school personnel (Appendix A). Merriam (2009) identifies that “part of ensuring for the trustworthiness of a study- its credibility- is that the researcher himself or herself is trustworthy in carrying out the study in as ethical a manner as possible” (p. 234). I also upheld the trustworthiness of research ethics in order to protect the subjects of this study. In addition, I followed all procedural ethics and relational ethics when working with the test subjects (Tracy, 2010). As seen in Appendix B, the Research Information Sheet and Informed Consent was provided to each participant. This study was a coherent study that as Tracy (2010) recognizes, works to “achieve their stated purpose, accomplish what they espouse to be about; use methods and representation practices that partner well with espoused theories and paradigms, and attentively interconnect literature reviews with research foci, methods, and finding” (p. 848). This was done by continuing to follow the purpose of the study, literature framework, fundamentals of qualitative research, and by conducting best practices while I conducted the research.

I also used member checking to validate my study and took the final themes I discovered to the participants and made sure the transcripts were interpreted correctly with their intended meaning. Member checking can involve a follow-up interview with the participants to make sure that the information gained is congruent with their statements, and an opportunity to comment on the findings (Creswell, 2012). One issue that can arise with member checking is that the data analysis may reveal something that the participant is not proud and their desire to change the results. However, the benefits of member checking in creating a sound research design that is in line with the participants that have willingly agreed to the study outweigh the restraints. I also presented themes that are presented that are not in congruence with the intended implications of

the reauthorization of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. By providing negative information or contrary information, I provided the research with a realistic and valid account of what is happening at the local level in policy implementation (Creswell, 2013). The literature has not created a link between the intentions of the policy and how school districts are enacting the policy at a local level. In providing the themes that align and misalign to the policy, the study is a valid representation of what school districts face when implementing this policy.

Limitations and Delimitations

I would be amiss if I were not to identify the biases that I have in my profession. I brought a set of preconceived notions to this study as I glimpse into understanding how schools are using sensemaking in developing and enacting their school lunch policy. The reflexivity of my study reveals, “how the background of the researchers actually may shape the direction of the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186). For this study, it is important to identify that I have been working as a Family and Consumer Science educator for nine years at both the middle and high school levels. During my time in this role I have developed biases about students and nutritional eating in schools. I have had students participate in action research projects that have determined the nutrition they are receiving each week and analyzed their nutrient intakes. This led me to inquire about the cafeteria meal choices that confront the student each day and then fueled my interest in the broader policy. In addition, I enrolled in my doctoral work and developed a passion for transformative leadership while studying educational policy. I am interested in how schools work to fix the social injustices that occur in society. With my background as an educator and inspiring transformative leader, I bring a certain bias to this research in my data analysis. Creswell (2012) identifies, “experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations, such as the themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data” (p. 186). This is evident in the pattern matching

process that I partook in and the themes I sought in connecting the transcript data across the interviews.

Another limitation of my study was the site and participant selection of the case. I selected only one site based on the violation from the state and the unique setting of high socio-economic status woven with low socioeconomic status. This has limited the perspective of the various school districts or buildings that have a 100% participation in free and reduced-price lunch. However, I was aiming to see how the district works to understand the policy, not just for districts that have 100%. I have also delimited this study by not including the parents and students in my research. I determined that since I sought to understand the role the policy implementations have in the sensemaking process, they were not of significant contribution to this study to answer the research questions.

Significance of The Study

This research can assist current and future school administrators and staff as policies are implemented in their districts regarding school lunch. This study also unveiled the methods that work in policy sensemaking for school administrators and staff members. This is important in our school climate as more and more educational leaders are responsible for the underpinnings of inequities and injustices in our society. This research creates a resonance for school administrators across the country and an opportunity for the educational leaders to have a voice in the federally mandated program in their schools. With these factors in play, this qualitative case study that examined the role of school administrators and staff in sensemaking for the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 produced a trustworthy and reliable study.

Call to Action

The literature points to a gap in research that seeks to understand the way school administrators and staff participate in sensemaking in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 on the local level. This case aimed to understand the role of policy implementers with a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research afforded me an opportunity to delve into the issues and experiences and stories of school personnel who are tasked with carrying out this policy in schools on a daily basis. The methodology that was used inside the realm of qualitative research was a case study that is viewed through a sensemaking lens. A sensemaking lens enables the researcher to develop an understanding of how/if school administrators and staff are working to overcome the nutritional deficiencies that the policy is intended to influence. With this case study, I hoped to develop an understanding for school leaders and their roles in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. I also aimed to determine how school leaders work at a local level to overcome the nutritional deficiencies that the policy is intended to influence.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Every day in the United States of America, students are coming to school hungry and find their only reliable meal in their school cafeteria. In the 2015-2016 school year, 21.6 million students were attaining their school lunch at a free and reduced-price (Food Research & Action Center, 2017). A federal policy grounded in Public Law 11-296 aims to feed students who suffer from food insecurity. This law is commonly referred to as the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. In this qualitative case study, I investigated how school administrators and staff in a suburban school district understood the policy of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This research aimed to determine how school administrators and staff comprehend their role in the policy and how they interact with the policy. The findings of this study are described below with a concluding summary of the findings drawn from this qualitative case study.

Findings

This qualitative case study was conducted to determine how school administrators and staff understood the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Using their lived experiences coupled with a sensemaking perspective, the data has been examined and revealed that the participants shared similar understandings and lived experiences. The themes that emerged were regarding: Policy Implementers, Role in Nourishment, Access to and the Consumption of Nutrient-dense Foods, Food Insecure Students, Actions Taken to Mitigate Obesity, and Aspirations for Policy Implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free Act 2010. Below, each theme is identified and described in more depth.

Policy Implementers

In the Edison Public School System, the responsibility of the school lunch program falls on many employees at the different levels of the system. It is with this filtration that the Healthy

Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 is dispersed. The model the Edison Public School System follows relates to that of a central office concentration that then spans outwards to the various school buildings. In a large district with 14 school buildings, the coordination that is taking place each day for the foodservice is consistent amongst each building in the school system. It is apparent that the foodservice company that has been outsourced is working hard to achieve the desired results of feeding every student, every day. The different participants in the interviews revealed the different ways in which they are responsible for policy implementation for the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Throughout the district, the main decision on who is in charge of the policy comes from the superintendent and the board of education. In the Edison School System, the Deputy Superintendent for Business Operations is tasked with overseeing the program. This is a relatively newer role for the school district, but this person had served in a similar capacity in other districts in the past. This has created a deep understanding of the various facets of foodservice and expertise in this district. The Deputy Superintendent for Business Operations (R5) identified her role as:

The business office, in general, has the overall responsibility for the foodservice program. As you know, foodservice programs are required across the State of Michigan across anybody who is accepting federal dollars. Specifically, to the free and reduced-price lunch program, our office is one responsible to make sure we meet all the healthy guidelines required by the federal government.

The responsibility of the foodservice in the school district is divided up within the business department. The roles of Respondent Six and Seven are described as business director and operations and support services manager within the business department. They identify that as applications to apply for the lunch program come in, they are tasked with recording them in the

county database. This was one of the violations that the district had through the Administrative Review from the Michigan Department of Education. Appendix E identifies “Free and Reduced-price School Meals Family Applications were approved incorrectly. This was corrected on site with the application errors.”

These respondents were in charge of making sure that they changed their systems in order to align with the expectations from the state. Once they approve the applications and record them, the system is then monitored by the pupil accountant. They are consistently making sure the enrollees in the program are indeed eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch status (Respondents 6&7). This eligibility is coordinated through the state program as it is under the Medicare free and reduced status. The business department is constantly monitoring the enrollment of the students and the bills of the students who still owe the money for school lunch. Respondents Six and Seven identify that a role they have in common is to investigate debt that accrues on students’ accounts. Part of the district policy is that they will never turn away a student who needs a lunch regardless of the money that is on their account (R6 & R7). This, in turn, creates a “holding bag for the money. So it’s obviously the school district or just in general, we don’t want any children to go hungry whether it be breakfast or lunch. And so we accrue that debt on the student’s name and call the parents to inform and collect” (Respondent Seven).

The policy implementation that the business services department has is it maintains and develops the financial aspect of the policy and the families that are involved with it. In addition, they handle all the paperwork that is needed for compliance. As the school district employs the financial department the task of compliance with the federal policy, they look to outsource the operations and management of the foodservice to a private company. This is a common practice amongst school systems and a large portion of the job for the Business Operations department.

Each year, they have to make sure they follow the Michigan Department of Education bidding process to ensure that they are complying with the mandates and policies of the law. Respondent Five explained:

We hire the foodservice company by going through the process of bidding for a private company. When you do that, you're making sure that those companies have the expertise that they need to do it. Michigan Department of Education sets up very, very restrictive requirements on how you bid it and how you accept a bid for a foodservice company. They have to prove that they know all of the rules, regulations etc. In addition to that, you have to renew it every year even though it's a three-year contract. We literally go through a process of sending current data to MDE (Michigan Department of Education), MDE approves it sends it back and then our Board of Education has to approve it every year.

In her role, she is overseeing the compliance of the district and the foodservice company. In fact, as previously stated, the violations (see Appendix E) that the district incurred came directly through her office. She was responsible for the alterations to the foodservice system that the district needed to make in order to gain compliance for the foodservice company. As she puts her trust in the company for foodservice, it is also her role to maintain regulations on them to ensure that best practices are being followed throughout the school system.

Another participant in the program is the Deputy Superintendent of Educational Services. He has been serving in the superintendent role the longest of any other superintendents in the district and has a vast experience as a teacher, building administrator, and superintendent in other districts. In his current role, he describes his process in the localized school lunch policy procedures. After the MDE approves the bid, the Deputy Superintendent of Educational Services (R4) explains his role,

I do sit on Cabinet which is the key group of the superintendent, the other deputy superintendent, our CFO all the executive team administrators and we do discuss foodservice matters there. I also do not take a primary role, that's our CFO, but I have a close second role in terms of general finances of the school district and obviously, our foodservices fund is a key component of our district finances. And the third way I touch it is I'm the administrator tasked with both enforcing as well as kind of writing and reviewing board of education policies. And as you know there are many policies that intersect with our foodservice department.

He is responsible for the coordination between what is set at the cabinet meetings and the policy that is written for the administrators and school personnel to follow (Appendix J). He describes his role as central to the financial status of the district as this program deals with an output of approximately \$1.2 million dollars (Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2017). His role as a cabinet member requires him to be aware of the policies that concern the school lunch program. The lunch program is a large expenditure of the district that involves him as he oversees the financial aspects of the district. This large expenditure is a component for the private foodservice companies to bid.

Another aspect of policy filtration in the district involves the foodservice company director. This role is privately held by the company and placed in each school district through its staffing. Respondent Eight has a bachelor's degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management. The world of foodservice and gourmet dining has always been of interest to him. In his current role, he has worked for the foodservice company for the past three years and has worked in another district with a higher free and reduced-price lunch population. In speaking with Respondent Eight, he described that he is employed through the foodservice company but reports to an office in the

central administration building. He works exclusively with the school district so he can make the best use of the resources and understand what the district needs are in-depth and the daily details that come with running a foodservice program for fourteen buildings. It is in his office that he works closely with an executive chef in planning and coordinating the program for the district.

When his company's bid was accepted, his position became the liaison between the foodservice company and the school district. This is his second role in a district and The Edison School System has a larger wealthier student population than he has dealt with in the past. However, he describes that his foodservice company is not as concerned with the number of students on free and reduced-price lunch in their contract and in his position. Rather, they focus more on the nourishment of students. He (R8) responded,

Basically, it's just making sure we have our menus up to date ready to go and that they meet the guidelines for the free and reduced-price lunch program. But like I was saying earlier, a free lunch program is more or less just a lunch program how we look at it. It's how most of our directors will just look at it as just a lunch program. So, I don't technically handle the free and reduced-price lunch applications that come in, that goes through the board office in the business department. Which is for privacy reasons because I am a third party I think that's the main reason why. In my last role, we did do it as a third party but whatever the district is really comfortable with and I think Michigan Department of Education actually prefers it going through the district anyway. So, for the free and reduced-price lunch program, my role is essentially just to develop the menus and staffing and safety to make sure everything is on time ready, good to eat and the kids are happy. I make sure to manage the program for 14 buildings and it can be kind of a juggle. It's especially challenging with the staffing market right now it's pretty low so you can't pull too many

people so it's kind of it's interesting. As long as the kids eat and they're happy with what they are they're eating I'm happy.

Respondent Eight identifies that his role in the policy is the creation of the menu items that are going to be given to students. He also is in charge strictly of balancing the school budget for the foodservice company. In his job, he has to deal with the foodservice company that recommends foodservice suppliers, food issues, and the commodity crops he can purchase. He (R8) stated, “we have commodity items and commodity dollars. It is basically money allotted to the district from the USDA and I need to use up 95% of it”. He describes that the commodity dollars are the monies attached from the free and reduced-price lunch program and determine a set list of items he can purchase for the school system. The set list of items is mandated from the USDA and he suggests that based on the holistic district needs, he has trouble purchasing items because they are not as high quality as other items he can order. As noted, he is concerned with creating the menu for all students in the district, not just the students who are coming from a lower socio-economic status. As he develops the meals and menus, he consults his assistant director, the executive chef.

As a school district that serves a high percentage of higher income students, it should come as no surprise that the Edison School District employs a foodservice company that carries an executive chef as a member of their team. In this role, the executive chef has gone to culinary school and served with some of the most elite restaurants and hotels in the surrounding metropolis. In addition, he has also gained experience working with healthy, nutrition-based hospital services and private schools. As far as public-school service, he has worked in other districts but this is the one that he has enjoyed the most. In fact, when Respondent Nine examined the role he currently serves in, he stated:

I split my time between the kitchen and being the assistant director. So a lot of what my focus is when it comes to executive chef in the kitchens is making sure that people are doing proper sanitation and cleaning up properly, learning about proper temperatures for storing food properly. We know how long food should be kept for before it should be thrown away. You know the health department tells you seven days, our company will tell you three. That is to keep freshness you know. It's a standard we have. And these are things that I work with. I also hire and educate staff on recipes. If we had to substitute something in a recipe, what could we substitute? I also am involved in menu development. As a company, we work with a program called Webtrition. The foodservice director and I work together a lot on it and put our menu for the day into Webtrition. And this is monitored by our corporate dietician. And she's monitoring this based off of the USDA requirements of what we're allowed.

As he examines his current role, he is working with staff to not only inform them but to increase their culinary competence. It was surprising to discover a chef that has trained with a top chef in the metropolitan area finding his passion in a school system. Through his expertise in mass production, he is making the menu and consulting with the company dietician. Essentially, the menu compliance with the USDA standards falls on his shoulders. As he mentions, he and Respondent Eight work together to develop the menu and order the necessary foods.

As Respondent Nine identifies his role in policy implementation, it is clear that he is the developer of the menus that serve each school building. In speaking with both Respondent Eight and Respondent Nine, it was determined that the school menus are the same across the district regardless of the number of students enrolled in free and reduced-price lunch. This finding suggests that the foodservice company is making the same meals for all students and the menus

must appeal to the students who are living in the highest socioeconomic sector of the district and the lowest. As Respondent Nine creates the menu process, he stated:

It's a stupid simple easy for use. It's a red light, green light system. If you put the menu in it for the day right you get a green light that means you go on. If you get a red light, you've got to fix something, you do this for the whole week. And again, you have a red light, green light. If I get a red light for the week I'm missing something from my menu. Whether it is a starch or a vegetable. You know I think one of the tricky ones is they want corn. They want this yellow, they want the starch. Beans can sometimes be a tricky one. You need to have beans on there a couple times. It will flag you for this stuff. It's not in there. If you don't have that green light you need to stop and fix it there. So what happens is this goes into a system and our dietician can pull up any district that we have and look at anybody's menu and see what they're doing.

In his company, he then is assuring the menus meet their nutritional standards. These standards are developed and implemented by the company dietician. Locally in the Edison Public Schools, the executive chef is tasked with creating all the USDA compliant meals through this program. His menus have a four-week rotating cycle that varies based upon the building level that is to be served. For each menu Respondent Nine describes the next step in his role;

So based off of this program as well I then take this and I build my production sheets off of it. That's what the kitchen gets. Every building will get a production sheet every day. That has the items, what they should be serving with, a recipe number that has a serving amount and tells them the spoon they should use and the temperature. It has the recipes on there. So that tells them what recipe to follow for that item.

As the executive chef examines the production sheets, he also makes sure to align the foodservice team. He oversees that they understand the recipe and also have the right items to implement it. Then, he makes sure that the team of cafeteria workers understand how to prepare the various items and make them in a healthy way. He explains more in-depth,

So I worked with the staff, we have a lead in every building. We work pretty exclusive with Gordon Foodservice. We map out our needs and products with Gordon Foodservice. I get an order guide, it's maybe about 10-15 pages of stuff that I can order. It's not all of Gordon Foodservice, it's what I can order that our foodservice company has given the go ahead (R9).

As he develops the menu, he then works with the cafeteria leads to verify that they have the necessary skill set in order to complete the recipe at hand. The recipes that they work with on a daily basis are formatted with various components that are all in compliance with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. He is also ordering the various products so the schools have the desired needs. Then, he is consulting with the cafeteria workers to guarantee the foodservice plans are put into place.

Two cafeteria workers were interviewed in this study. They both work with the foodservice company in the back of the cafeteria and at the front lines. Respondent Ten is also in charge of driving the food that is produced to the various buildings that are served. The food is cooked in one central kitchen on the Western end of the district and one on the Eastern end of the district (R8). This is to ensure quality control and efficiency as many of the buildings in the Edison Public School System are older and built before the modern-day learning environment. The kitchens that cook all the food are in newer buildings with the appropriate space and materials. Respondent Eight even identified that his foodservice company purchased (as part of the bidding process) new

warmers to keep the items hot and fresh as they make their way across the district. Respondent Ten describes her role in implementing the policy as,

My role is the delivery truck driver. So I give all the schools their meals cooked out of the middle school cafeteria. So everything is cooked at the main school. Then I transport to five different elementary schools. The other four elementary schools in the district are cooked out of the high school cafeteria. They have another delivery truck driver. After I finish four deliveries, my fifth school is the furthest elementary school, I serve lunch there.

She is in charge of delivering the foodservice items to the Eastern end of the district. This is the hub of the larger free and reduced-price lunch population. As she delivers the entrée each day, she also speaks about her role in transporting fresh food. Respondent Ten says,

We all get fresh produce delivered to the main middle school kitchen every Tuesday and Thursday. What I do is I pull everything out of the refrigerator pack it all in the yellow bags that are refrigerator bags and then once it's delivered to them they have a cutting board and knife at their elementary school.

The actual work in the kitchen is shared with the experience of Respondent Eleven. She talks about the number of meals that they cook in a typical day for the middle school alone, “initially we start with 250 meals every day. Sometimes it can go up to 360 meals if it’s one of their favorite lunches” (R11). As she balances her role, she stays in the same building all day juggling both the cooking for the district and her building and the serving of the food.

Both of the cafeteria policy implementers are cohesive in the way they work with the menus and balance the feedback from the students. They consider what the students are willing to try, experiment with, and they encourage healthy decision making. This is something they then consult with the executive chef and foodservice director about. In turn, they help the foodservice team

create meals that are desired and consumed by the students. In advising their feedback, the foodservice team is able to create menu items that work well with the taste buds of the students that are served in this program.

All three school administrators, although they span the K-8 grade levels, share commonalities in regards to their interactions with the policy. All the administrators interviewed shared that they are interacting with the policy in a transactional matter in daily operations. They are the first ones to oversee the daily implementation of the program. In fact, they are responsible for making sure the parents are filling out the applications to apply for free or reduced-price lunch. Respondent Two described this commonality perfectly as he stated,

Part of my work is to educate our parent population as far as how and who can get free or reduced-price lunch. Also, making sure that if we see discrepancies within lunch balances that maybe we talk to them or call them to go over the policy to make sure they understand there is something that they can do if they have fallen upon hard times and need assistance when it comes to their child having food.

The building administrators take pride in knowing their student population and their parents. As they learn about the needs of the school community, they ensure that the available resources are utilized to help the families of the school. This happens through communication with the parents whether it is a phone call or face-to-face interactions. At the elementary levels, the principals find themselves filling in and helping wherever they are needed in the cafeteria. Occasionally, this can mean rolling up their sleeves and passing out the food and doing whatever needs to be done.

Respondent One identifies,

I help with making sure the kids have their lunch, are seated and then dismiss them from tables to get their lunch. I also work with the general operations like guiding kids to make sure that they are throwing their trash away and cleaning up after themselves.

It is common for these policy implementers to handle the daily transactional methods of the lunchroom. The middle school principal, Respondent Three, identifies that he is often in the cafeteria overseeing the foodservice program about 80% of the time. The principals are the first stakeholders involved with the policy that hear feedback from the students. Respondent One has had to advocate how to make his cafeteria run more smoothly. He discusses his interactions with the foodservice director,

I also contacted him quite a bit. I would say a couple of times just before the school year started as we were brainstorming about the potential issues that they had or the issues they had in the past and what our roadblocks would be if we didn't make those types of adjustments that we have made. Also with our staffing here at the building, he and I have had multiple conversations about how to continue to keep good people that like and know our kids, that they make sure that our kids are getting what they order, just keeping good people around your staff. Keeping in line with the standards that are a positive culture. I've had tough conversations with them too. Letting them know when we were running out of food that happened back to back in the manner of a couple weeks. I made sure to have everyone who was involved with the food making process in the same day. I called a meeting and let them know that that wasn't going to be accepted or tolerable here in the building. I also explained what to expect from them moving forward. So different interactions positive and some tougher conversations.

In his dealings with the foodservice director, he is making sure that the transactional items that are needed to run the program efficiently are in place. He works to handle conflicts with all team members involved. Although the foodservice program is responsible for staffing, the needs of his school fall into the staffing realm as he concerns himself with how the foodservice company interacts with the students. The school administrators take whatever steps they deem necessary to ensure that the school lunch program is running smoothly in their school buildings.

One theme that emerged amongst all three principals is the advocacy for the student's lunch quality control. As far as this policy is concerned, the principals are advocates for the foodservice company serving food that keeps their students happy. They will report directly to the foodservice director or assistant director if they have encountered food that has not been given to the students or served cold. Respondent One identified that he has been working with the foodservice director because in his first year as principal of the school, the foodservice team would run out of hot meals for the students or they would not have the item they preordered during the day. He stated,

I interact with them a good amount specifically because my building is different from all the others in terms of the number of students that get a hot lunch or food here at the building. So we've interacted about things that we're noticing about how to make sure that we're efficiently getting kids in and giving them food. Also getting them served what they actually order that they were really helpful because no other building in the district serves food the way we do here. They just don't have the need or demand. They've worked with me on making sure that the amount of stuff that's ordered is what we're planning on receiving. Even padding some extra lunches just in case, we have a kid that shows up later and didn't order one and we don't want any kids to go hungry. They have been responsive to reducing certain things that we felt were being overutilized.

He is the biggest advocate for his program and the students. He even shares that he began to work with the foodservice director and implemented a new card system. This ensures that the item the student ordered is accounted for in the lunch line. He even identified that this year they have only run out of food a couple of times. This is a huge improvement as previously it was happening more frequently. It took over thirty minutes for the food transporters to get the meals to schools to feed the hungry students. In the meantime, students were missing out on instructional time. Making decisions on what occurs on the frontline is what the building principals deal with on a daily basis with the school lunch program.

Another theme that emerged is their work with the students to make sure their voices are heard about their choices in the cafeteria. This is especially relevant as this policy is driven to improve the lives of the students. Respondent Two identified that he led a focus group at the end of the year to share with the foodservice company. In his focus group, he polled students to determine what changes they wanted to see in the lunchroom and the things that they wanted to keep. This principal found it important to have student voices involved in the school lunch program. His work was then shared with the foodservice director to create a better program for the students at his school. Respondent Two even claims that providing the students with healthy meal options is considered a bright spot in his school culture. As he and the other administrators state, the opinion of parents and students on the quality of foodservice matter.

As this policy is federally mandated, nowhere in the law does it mention the team it takes to implement the policy in the school system. This case study has revealed all the various aspects of the policy and the people who have to put them in place in order to ensure that all students are fed healthy meals and remain Hunger-Free in their school buildings. The central office administration is in charge of answering to the state government authorities. Then, they develop

the policies that affect parents, students, and school building administrators. Principals are in charge of being on the front line for both parental and student feedback. Finally, the district hired an outside company to handle all foodservice matters. The foodservice company brings in the foodservice director, executive chef, and cafeteria workers. They all need to orchestrate as a team in order to ensure that the laws are followed and healthy meals are served safely to happy students.

Role in Nourishment

As the respondents were identified to hold various positions across the district, they all shared common themes in their roles with the foodservice program. Depending on their position in the district, their concentration in each of the themes varied. The themes that emerged as their roles were identified centered around their ability and position in informing, encouraging, and advocating for the foodservice program. Each participant in the research suggested that their positions require them to enact this policy at the local level, which deals with the many stakeholders in the school district. All stakeholders interviewed concern themselves with parents and students finding the food program fulfilling.

The central administrations role in advocating for their students and parents is mainly carried out in their responsibility of hiring the best foodservice company for the district. In doing so, they put their trust in the company to deliver food that is meeting the standards set out by the USDA. Respondent Four identifies that “I trust that the foodservice company we hire makes those right decisions and our Deputy Superintendent for Business and Support Services takes care of those things.” He allows this decision to be made and communicated by the business department and feels that the work of their ability to hire an outsourced foodservice company is nourishing the students. In fact, he stated that in his 22 years of education, he perceives the cafeteria today to be “healthier schools with healthier food choices” (R4). From a central office perspective, this is

identifying the trust that they have in the company that is hired. Respondent Five agrees that she has trust in the foodservices as she is the one who handles the foodservice contract. She states that their program is running the correct way and that she is responsible for that. She also stated, “we have the healthy snacks, no pop, and no French fries, all those things have gone away in the last eight years since the Obama administration has made a lot of changes to the healthy foods program” (R5). As she states, she works to inform her administrators about the healthy changes that are occurring and creates Memorandums to communicate the changes in the program (See Appendix D). She has the responsibility to inform the building principals of the changes in the lunch program so they understand how to best meet all the guidelines. In fact, with the findings from the district citation (See Appendix E), there are items that directly impact the local school communities.

As building level administrators interact with this policy, they find themselves in charge of implementing the policy that is developed at the central office and mandated to them. In their interactions, they have to adhere to the local school wellness guidelines, as identified as a need from the citation with the state (See Appendix E). As a result of the review, Appendix E, the document states that there needed to be a local school wellness policy in place. In response to this finding, Respondent Four identifies that as a central office administrator, he worked to develop the board policy on this matter. Appendix J identifies the district Bylaws and Policies in regards to practice 8510- Wellness. It states,

As defined by the laws of the State of Michigan, the Edison School System is committed to creating a healthy school environment that enhances the development of lifelong wellness practice to promote healthy eating and physical activities that support student achievement.

This board policy dictates to the schools that they need to have a healthy environment. Each respondent indicated that they are concerned with how they are informing others about this policy. In addition, they all felt a need to advocate for students and their availability to nutritionally dense choices. How the local wellness policy looks in each interaction with the building level administrators was something that revolved around the ability of informing, encouraging, and advocating for their students.

In the Edison Public School System, it is expected that each school is disseminating nutrition education information. This is largely done throughout the school cafeterias. In each building, the administrators responded that they are in charge of informing the students and parents about the school lunch. They work in a K-8 continuum to communicate the menus to parents, staff, and students. As Respondents One and Two identify, they inform their school communities about the menus by posting them on their websites and putting them in the newsletters. Then, each building administrator stated that they are in the cafeteria every day working with the students with the transactional items like lunch lineups, lunch card systems, table clean up, and general time management. In being in the cafeteria, the building principals explain that is where they have the opportunity to interact with the students on issues concerning the Wellness Policy and nutrition education. Often times they find themselves working on issues such as encouraging students to eat more of the vegetables and fruits that they have taken. Every day in his cafeteria, Respondent Two revealed,

Some students get really fixated on what they want to eat. They want to kind of keep that routine sometimes and anytime we break their routine, with any kind of food, it's hard for them. They are very picky. It's hard to get them to eat fruits and vegetables. We want to know what choices we have that they like. What they would like to see more of that way

we can make sure that they do have an opportunity to eat hot lunch, there is something there they like and will be good for their taste buds. But with our students that are in the cafeteria, we do try to go around to say ‘okay eat your food eat your apple’, you know that way they don't just throw the food away. We actually just had a meeting today where we're trying to work on the amount of waste that we have. We want to cut down on the amount of food waste as far as making sure we have the correct portion size and things like that. However, we wouldn't be able to control that throughout this process because the foodservice company has to give you a certain portion size.

It is on his radar that the healthy food choices that some students have on their plates end up in the trash unless he makes it a point to encourage students to try something new. When he has a discussion with the students, he feels they are held more accountable. Respondent Three uses his interactions with the students and their nutritional eating choices as a way to determine who is eating and who is not. He will then make a phone call to determine if it is because the student doesn't have the money or if it is something else. By being present in the cafeteria and interacting with the students, the principals have a sense of how the foodservice team is nourishing their student population.

As building level administrators are in the cafeteria and in charge of overseeing the lunch hour, they are also advocating for the taste buds of their students. Respondent Two identified that parents give him feedback on the food taste and the options that are available. In addition to the parents' feedback, he has developed a platform for students to advocate for their choices. Respondent Two examines, “last year we did a whole school survey (for the students) that was run by our teachers. They gave us feedback on certain things they were eating and options they wanted to see on the menu.” He then takes this information and communicates with the foodservice

director to share their preferences. This advocacy comes from Respondent One as well when he examines that the foodservice company was missing out on the orders for some of his students. They were not getting their food and ended up missing instructional time a few times last year. This year, he worked with the foodservice director to develop and implement a new system for ordering. He states that this year he has seen positive changes in regards to students having the meals they have ordered. This simple act of making sure there is a grassroots level change in the district has been a result of this interaction. Also, building level administrators have developed their own viewpoints on what is most important with this program.

The building level administrators all identified various concerns with the ability of the students to obtain nourishment from the foodservice team. One area that they concern themselves with is the amount of food waste. Respondent Three says that as students have to take the required items to make their meal a full reimbursable meal, they are sometimes not eating the apple or milk. He then takes them and puts them aside for the students who are really hungry or arrive late. Respondent Two says that he is having meetings with his team and discussing the amount of food waste. The thing that really ties his hands is the rule about having a certain amount of food and portion for each reimbursable meal. Due to this he believes that students would take less food and hence have less food waste if there were not the guidelines of what and how much should be served by the cafeteria workers. He is working to encourage as best that he can that his students do not throw their fruit in the garbage and at least take a bite of their item. Respondent One explained,

I'm kind of concerned myself with some of the nutritional choices not being so nutritional but just the choices overall that kids have when they're selecting their lunch. There are kids who just don't like what we're serving and they won't eat anything at all or they'll take a bite just throw it away. But overall in terms of nutritional choices we're trying to limit

the number of sweet things that kids are eating like the additional stuff that they may purchase afterwards (lunch) like the snacks or fruit snacks. But that's pretty much what we're trying to reduce. I would say we do have a lot of kids who do purchase from school and we have kids bring lunch from home. The kids who are bringing stuff from home are bringing stuff that isn't always nutritional. But we're not preventing those kids from eating it up because that's what they were sent with.

As he works with his school population, he is able to determine that they need to be encouraged to eat a well-balanced meal because some of the choices isolated in the school lunch line are not nutritional. It is the idea of a full balanced plate that is keeping them healthy in his mind. In addition, he mentions that because some students bring items from home that are not nutritional, there is no way to combat those unhealthy choices. As the principal responses identify, the amount of advocacy, information, and encouragement they provide with the lunch program assists in creating a more nourishing program for their school. They are all involved with this program and have concerns that could reach more students and make this program more successful. All the respondents stated that they voice concerns to the foodservice director. It is with this relationship that the building principals are the best advocates for ensuring their students are well nourished.

As a foodservice director, the role entails making sure the nutritional choices that are made available to the students. The idea of making sure each and every student who is educated in the Edison Public School System is well-nourished is something that sits at the forefront of this foodservice director's mind. He is constantly working to change items to meet the needs of the students that the principals advocate for. In addition, he aims to "focus in on which fruits and veggies the younger kids want and then we will pick out four or five of their favorites and just swap out different ones so they can get different nutritional values and try new things" (Respondent

8). In selecting the menu items, he is constantly making sure he has a pulse on the school culture as to what students are wanting. He even advocates for them when he identifies that his company will give him reports as to what they want them serving but if it is a bunch of items that he knows will not be popular with his student population, he does not use them. In his actions, he is showing how he is monitoring his students, their needs, and making a menu that provides them with the right amount of nourishment.

The foodservice director also explains how he often tries to inform the cafeteria workers of the best way to create certain items to make them more appealing to students. For instance, Respondent Eight had the choice of purchasing typical stadium taco meat that is allocated from the USDA commodity dollars for the district. As he did that, he noticed that the students were not enjoying the meat and had negative feedback. In order to advocate for the students, he made the choice to swap to homemade taco meat and it has been a success. He informed the cafeteria workers on their food preparation stance and made sure they understood how to make the new recipe. This requires more work and steps to create homemade taco meat versus just warming it up from the package. From the business end, he has had to change his financial allocations and make alterations, but he said it is worth it in the end. In keeping his mission at the forefront of his mind, he is making sure that the students are happy. That is what he says he aims to do with the lunch program. This also encourages a positive relationship with the building level administrators as they understand that he takes their feedback seriously and makes the necessary changes. In addition, he works with the assistant foodservice director and the executive chef for the district.

In the role of assistant foodservice director and executive chef, Respondent Nine is constantly working to inform, encourage, and advocate for the school lunch program. One way he focuses on nourishment is to provide the students with something they will find appealing. He

creates all the menus alongside Respondent Eight and then informs the cafeteria workers on how to create the items. He describes how he creates USDA compliant and well-rounded meals for the students with the computer program he uses:

It gives you the nutritional breakdown. That's the important part of what I do, making sure all this lines up, otherwise that is completely inconsistent and inaccurate. It is a big part of my role and that goes back to me ordering the food. Am I ordering the correct product because it's going to tell me in that recipe the product that I should be using. So, if I'm doing chicken fingers today it should tell me Tyson's chicken fingers. This way I know that I'm using the right product and it's matching my online menu. So, when the parent is going over there to scroll to say what's in this chicken finger, is their gluten in the ingredients, they're going to see it. If I use a different chicken finger how do I don't know that's correct (R9).

From this role, he then uploads the nutritional content for the menus and the items that are used in the school mirror the website and menu. As previously stated, he consults with the foodservice company dietician to ensure that the compliance of his menu is in accordance with their policy. This consistency is followed throughout the district and he also informs the general public about the nutritional values of the meals that are served. In addition, he needs to communicate with the cafeteria workers to inform them of what they are making so they can interact with the students and encourage healthy eating choices.

Perhaps, the most important aspect of encouraging the students and informing them to eat healthy happens with the cafeteria workers. In the Edison Public School System, the cafeteria workers are employed by the foodservice company. This company is working with their staff to make sure that they know what should be on the plates of the students each day. Both Respondent

Ten and Eleven identified that their companies are communicating to them that they need to make full meals for the students. This is a key for the district as they were cited for not having a reputable way to count and claim meals (Appendix E). It was cited by the Michigan Department of Education that “the meal service line, as observed on the day of review, did not provide an accurate count by eligibility category at the post of service during lunch” (Appendix E). This was something that needed to be resolved by the foodservice team and in doing so, the cafeteria workers have been coached to make sure that they are carrying out the correct practices. Respondent Nine describes,

We were making sure that they take the right food to complete a healthy meal. We have what they called offer versus serve. There are several different options. So there are several different entrees they can choose from. So that way there are several different proteins, types of meat or protein substitute. It could be eggs or yogurt or cheese or something that they get. Then there's the grains. Typically, you know you get your grains through the breading on the chicken maybe it's the pasta, maybe it's a bun. The grain they need, then they need a fruit then they need a vegetable and then it's dairy. So you get the five, they need three out of the five.

Getting the three out of five meal items are divided into categories according to the USDA Choose My Plate program. This program divides food into five categories: vegetables, grains, fruits, meats, and dairy. A fully reimbursable meal for students under the free and reduced-price lunch program means each plate must have three of the five food categories. This is something that the cafeteria workers do to inform students about healthy nutritional choices. Respondent Nine continues to identify the importance of their work,

At the point of service, so my cashiers play one of the most important roles- when that meals walking out, they should have a complete meal. It just has to have three out of the five. That completes a meal and that is how it should be monitored. They should be watching here at the door. And this is what makes a difference in the charging process. If it's an incomplete meal, when it's a free luncher or you pay for lunch it's incomplete. The cashier should then just say if you get an apple, then it is a complete meal. And if they say I don't want that then I have to ring you up a la carte. Then you need to ring up for the entrees and ring them up for the side of fries. Or put the apple on there, it is a meal that costs 3.25 dollars, you are done. Same thing with a free luncher, you cannot ring up a free lunch unless it is a full lunch. From my learning and understanding, that's what when we go through these administrative reviews that comes out basically to say are you guys doing this. That's where so many people are getting in trouble because they are just letting the incomplete meal go.

This information identifies the key component of having a great cafeteria staff working with the students. As Appendix F explains, a corrective action that was taken in regards to the citation from the state about the foodservice program was to identify that “cashiers have been coached to ask students if they would like a fruit if they are missing a meal component...Fruit baskets will be located at each cashier stand giving the students the opportunity to create a reimbursable meal”. By doing this, it eliminates the violation that was occurring when students were not getting the three out of the five required meal components. This corrective action falls on the shoulders of the cafeteria workers to inform the students about creating a well-rounded meal.

As part of the Wellness Policy adopted in the district, it is identified that the nutrition education will happen in the cafeterias. The cafeteria workers are tasked with this through the

nature of their roles in the program. Respondent Eleven identifies that the menu has changed a lot when it comes to providing students with nutritional options as they have eliminated fried foods. Many of the fried food options the students think they are getting are actually baked by her in food preparation. She said that she often talks with students about the food and encourages them to give it a try. Respondent Eleven explains,

With the fruits and vegetables, you learn different ways to prepare it like with broccoli, we roast it. Before, I thought you could just steam it or eat it raw. Sometimes when we roast it, the kids won't eat it if it's too dark or if it's too crunchy. I have to tell the kids, no it's actually good like this, give it a try.

As she navigates the waters of making sure the students are experimenting and trying new things, she is aiming to not only push the requirements of her foodservice company but the Wellness Policy from the district. Respondent Eleven shared,

So we encourage them (to try new things) not so they can throw away a lot of food but we do it so that they can actually get their taste buds of wanting to taste different things rather than just take a look at something. We encourage the kids to actually try it because it can be good for them and they may like it. We do a lot of things with beans. We have different kinds of bean salads that the kids will look at and not want to try. I will say 'trust me, just take a little bit, okay.' Once they have a taste, they will come back to you and say 'this was a good idea to try it, it was really good.' When we do fish sandwiches we tell them if they take the plain potato chips and put some of those on the fish sandwich, it will give them more flavor. They come back and say 'oh my god that was such a good idea!' Now they get excited for fish sandwiches and know that it adds the flavor to it.

As she encourages the students to eat the options, they are willing to give them a try. It is in her energy that she is making sure to advocate for not only the cafeteria program but also encourage students to try something more nutritional than they are used to. Respondent Ten also shares in the advocacy, encouragement, and informative practice for the students as she serves them lunch. She describes “I do try to tell them to make sure to grab food from the salad bar so if they don’t get the vegetable, I say make sure you walk to salad bar and pick something from there” (Respondent Ten). As the forefront of the policy, they are aiming to make sure that the students are receiving a well-rounded meal each day. The foodservice staff makes sure that the district is following the policy by offering the items to have a full reimbursable meal for the district.

As the policy implementers vary in their roles, they each have an active role in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. It is in their roles that they differ, however, they all share the same common core beliefs that have been examined. These beliefs involve them advocating, encouraging, and informing on issues concerning the school lunch program. This relates to the free and reduced-price lunch student population, parents, and staff members. All respondents shared their role in making sure the program was advocated for, implemented appropriately, and that ample participation is encouraged at all levels of the continuum of the policy.

Access to and the Consumption of Nutrient-dense Foods

In the Edison Public School System, the way this policy is layered, each stakeholder and implementer has shared a different viewpoint as to what the access to and consumption of nutrient-dense foods are. In the district, the themes that have emerged regarding nutrient-dense food are centered around the policy implementers role. The central office administrators share a similar perspective about the policy access to and consumption of nutrient-dense food. On the contrary,

building principals have an opposite perspective. The way this policy is viewed for student access and student consumption of nutrient-dense foods is examined more in-depth.

As this policy disseminates throughout the district, the central office administrators share their belief in believing that the policy is working as intended. From their aspect, Respondent Four, Five, Six, and Seven identify that they have confidence that the foodservice program is doing their job to deliver nutritious food to the students. As they are developing menus that are centered around the USDA requirements, they have certain standards that they need to uphold. In fact, it is found that they are making separate menus at all three levels to conform to the interest of the students (Respondent Eight). Then, they are creating choices within the menu that are popular with the students like certain vegetables and fruits that the students always gravitate towards (Respondent Eight). Then, to make sure that there is not a lot of food waste the cafeteria workers are catering to the most popular items in their system by just creating a little amount of the new vegetable or protein they want to introduce the students to (Respondent Eleven). From that, they are then working towards menus that keep students satisfied. This challenge is hard to do in certain situations, however, all central office administrators share the same beliefs; the food is nutritious and better than the food from the past.

When comparing with obesity rates from the past, Respondents (4,5,8,9,10,11) claimed that the food provided to students was healthier than in the 1990s. They shared how school cafeterias now are focused on nutrition and in the past, they did not share the same values. Respondent Nine identified that he had access to sodas when he was in school and conversely how they have been outlawed in the cafeterias today. Respondent Four describes the picture of the cafeteria he first started working in the schools,

So I'll reflect back on when I first became a teacher in 1995 and then the rules around school lunch were much more lax then. I worked in a public school with a very large urban district. Ninety-five percent of the kids at that high school were on free and reduced-price lunch. I remember I had lunch duty my first year and all the kids ever ate were fries or pizza. That was the only thing I ever saw walk out of that cafeteria line. And I can remember thinking to myself (as a person who views myself as fairly healthy), that doesn't look like the right thing to be doing. And I've seen that progression change as you know moving from different schools throughout my career.

Although the cafeterias used to provide students with unhealthy choices they naturally gravitated towards, now, the cafeteria workers are trying to barter and encourage students to try more healthy options. These healthy options are developed in the cafeteria menu planning and found in the food line.

As students walk through the line in the cafeteria, they have the opportunity to eat many different choices. They are given the chance to have items in the salad bar. The building principals, foodservice directors, cafeteria workers responded that this was the most successful item that they sell. Interestingly, they feel that the salad bar is the place that they have the most freedom to introduce items to students and it is the most successful healthy item that they are serving. As Respondent Nine explains, "surprisingly the cucumber at first wasn't as popular but now it's just like we're getting more kids to eat it and it's working really well". By introducing new items, the students are responding by trying them and finding that they like them. He even identifies that in terms of nutrition, the vegetables are being consumed by the students with more limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables,

We noticed at our higher free and reduced schools, we do have a little more participation and we will see more being taken off of our salad bar regularly than other schools. I'm not sure if it's from you know if they're not getting those items at home... it's kind of a thing where we see more kids at those schools I think especially at our highest free and reduced-price lunch school we will see it. They will wipe that salad bar clean like every day. It's pretty consistent with their intake. I know our applesauce that we send over because we have the fun little flavors in the individual cups. It's gotten to the point where that building gets one or two cases a day because they go through one or two cases a day (R9).

As far as the number of fruits and vegetables consumed, the students who are on the free and reduced-price lunch program are consuming them in greater proportions. The building principal (Respondent One) even claimed: “but I wouldn't say it (the cafeteria food) is all encouraging nutritional eating habits but the salad bar absolutely is.” This demonstrates that the central focus on offering nutritional items falls specifically on the salad bar introduction.

The district struggles with creating healthy meal options all students will like. Often times, the items will either not be eaten or not look healthy to some students or building administrators. Respondent Six discussed her son as he tried the new food,

In middle school when it changed, he thought the pizza was gross. It was because of the non-fat cheese or the whole wheat crust and stuff like that. So I found that just hearing from him and his friends that most of the stuff, they were throwing it out because it didn't taste good. So I know it didn't maybe make them say oh wow we've got whole wheat pizza or ‘Mom, can you get a whole wheat pizza at home?’ They were saying that's disgusting we're not eating it.

This is a struggle that the foodservice company and building principals are dealing with on a daily basis. If the students do not like the item, they will just refuse to eat it or throw it out creating lots of food waste. In response to situations like these, the foodservice company decides to “change up their menu a few times a year just because they see what’s working and what’s not” (Respondent Eight). As they worked to keep their options open to develop a student-centered program that is also high with nutrition requirements, they found themselves applying for the whole grain waiver to mitigate the issues of food waste and to open their options. Respondent Eight explains,

It got a little different with the whole grain waiver that schools can apply for. I did apply for it. You still need to have a percentage of whole grains, you can't just make it all white dough anymore. Part of it is I don't really have an opinion whether I'm opposed to the waiver or not. As far as meal counts go, I don't think it really made too big of a difference for us. We got it because we want to keep our options open.

The option that he has been able to keep open is a foodservice partnership with Hungry Howie’s pizza. Each week there is a pizza day at the elementary schools. Respondent One says that is the quietest his cafeteria ever is as all the students are finishing their food quickly and are enjoying it. In applying for the waiver, Respondent Eight has been able to outsource the pizza production because it was not profitable with the way that the company structures the central cooking and transporting of food. In fact, they are going through 300-400 slices per school on that day (Respondent Eight). However, even with the whole grain waiver, they have kept everything else whole grain because it tastes better according to the foodservice director. Part of the struggle that is encountered is exposing students to trying new foods.

In his role as executive chef, Respondent Nine is passionate about educating students on nutritious options. Respondents Ten and Eleven identify that students will not try something that does not look visually appealing. In order to mitigate this conflict, Respondent Nine has implemented a program to educate students. Respondent Nine explains,

We have a program called Discovery Kitchen. It's where the chefs will come out and they'll bring food or something and have the kids sample and try different stuff. We did this at the middle school with chicken and waffles. At the time it was not on the menu. So we brought it in something different, new for them to try it's a sample more or less. It is like when you go to the grocery store and get a little sample out there you're like oh that's good you end up buying it. That's the whole idea. I mean part of the idea is you get them on board with us. So we put it on the menu over there. I know she said for a while every time she served them she sold out. You know so it is to get them to try something new and different.

The foodservice company that the Edison Public School System employees is centered around meeting the needs of the students. In addition, the company is working to balance the access to foods that they provide to the students. In place of being content with the same items they have been servicing, they have Discovery Kitchen working to educate the students on new food options. In terms of access to nutrient-dense foods, this serves as a potential platform to introduce students to foods they have not yet tried or have been hesitant towards. Admittedly, chicken and waffles are not the most nutrient-dense although, he explains another food that he has used the Discovery Kitchen program in order to educate students. Respondent Nine describes,

When I first started doing it (Discovery Kitchen) I know we really like went after it like an educational part of it trying to teach them and explain. One of the ones I did kind of goes

along with health and nutrition is infused waters. So we took water and added different fruits and stuff to add some different flavors and put up samples of water for the kids to try. What I did on the side is I took all these favorite beverages- your vitamin waters, your red bulls, your sodas. In a tall, thin shot glass, I measured out all the sugar that actually went into each drink and put it next to the beverage so they could see. This is how much sugar is sitting in this drink that you're drinking. Then they were able to try the water and compare. So it was really cool to put that together. Show the kids and let them see you know some of the stuff like an alternative to it to get them to see something else.

With his platform, he is able to educate students on what is nutritious and why they should make healthy choices that are available in the cafeteria. When he is not doing this program, the cafeteria workers are left to make sure that they are informing and educating the students about the nutritious options in order to get buy-in from the student population. Respondent Ten and Eleven find the items that students like the most and prep more of it while pushing them to try new things. They both explained that it is common for them to barter with students and tell them to try something or just give it a taste. This communication with students often works to expand their taste buds and pallets.

From the building principal end, the nutritional choices that are consumed by students tend to have a different story. All three respondents agreed that the students would take the food items, however, they are not always choosing to eat the healthy ones that they have. It is not uncommon for principals to notice that the students are exposed to healthy options in the lunch line. On the contrary, the exposure does not always lead to behavior change as one principal stated: “some students will still not necessarily gravitate toward the healthier options but it at least gives them those opportunities and those options at lunchtime” (Respondent Three). All the principals

discussed that it is difficult to monitor the items that the students are bringing from home as they are not always the healthiest choices. Even at the menu creation end, some items are not as healthy as others. The executive chef stated that it is hard,

To completely stay away from anything processed and unfortunately as much as I can offer kids healthier options with fresh fruits and vegetables when it comes to commodity items that the government is providing, it's a premade product, precooked like the chicken patties, it is a processed product. Today we had those boneless chicken wings. I could taste the sodium when I ate some. In that aspect, I feel like we could still move forward with things (Respondent Nine).

It is in items like the chicken patties that the principals are questioning how healthy the items are for students based on the processed. As the items that are made available to the students are not deep fried, they still have some processed items in the line. However, compared to the nineties as respondents mentioned, the number of healthy choices in the cafeteria are more prevalent today.

One concern that was widespread throughout the buildings was that principals are unsure of the requirements for the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Most respondents could demonstrate the need for a balanced meal, however, they did not know about the USDA requirements that are supposed to be met each day. That knowledge in this district lies in the minds of the people employed by the foodservice company. One thing that all principals noticed was the importance of fruits and vegetables to be taken and hopefully consumed by students. However, when it comes to the entrée Respondent Three notices,

Kids eat it, I will say that some complain about it. They don't like the pizza because the crust is gross. They will say, I don't see you eating this lunch when I try to convince them, hey guys this is good.

The students give their feedback to the principals of the school. The three respondents who are building principals explained that they hear from students and parents when the meals are not good and the students will explain what they want to see in the lunchroom. Nowhere in this was there a mention about the students commenting on the nutrient density of the meals. Principals shared the same thoughts, as identified by Respondent Three, “by providing them with healthy options at lunchtime, you know like I said, some students will still not necessarily gravitate toward the healthier options but it at least gives them those opportunities and those options at lunchtime.” The principals view the school lunch program as a positive outlet for healthy options in their school. In contrast, they also examine that it is not enough to solely provide nutrition. In fact, they often see unhealthy items that students bring in like Hot Cheetos and things from gas stations. The principals feel that they cannot make the sole change in healthy eating in the cafeteria they have today. One principal identified,

I think certain kids no matter what options you provide them are going to find ways to not be healthy if that is their preference. If their parents allow them to eat that at home then they come to school and you can't force something down their throats (Respondent Three).

When the choices offered in the cafeteria are examined, there are still systematic changes and gaps that the building principals notice in the lunch line. For a system change, there would need to be more options available to students that mirror the success of the salad bar.

Although the Edison Public School System still has a way to go in order to make their meals truly nutritious for all stakeholders, they are following the USDA standards. They have met this compliance after they changed the results from their citations. Still, in terms of creating a truly nutritious meal, they have yet to get every stakeholder to view this to be true. From the central office perspective, the more removed you are from the daily eating of the food, it is seen that it is

nutritious. Mainly this is due to the competency of the foodservice company. In fact, they have been doing a better job than the previous company (Respondent Seven). The central office administrators and the foodservice personnel believe that they are doing a great job providing nutritious content to the students.

There is a disconnect with the students according to the cafeteria workers and building principals. This disconnect comes in the form of eating with their eyes where the students are scared to try new foods or foods that look different than the ones they have at home. Also, the students are hesitant to try new foods and it is found that they then will create lots of food waste in the cafeteria. This is an issue that concerns the school principals as the access to nutrient-dense food is in the cafeteria line but the students will not consume it.

Food Insecure Students

For a majority of the students in the Edison Public School System, food insecurity is not an issue. A compelling reason this district was selected was due to the citation from the state, which included a Civil Rights violation (Appendix E). In this finding, the district was cited for “The School Food Authority does not have a procedure for receiving and processing complaints alleging discrimination with the FNS School Meal Programs” (Appendix E). The findings point to the need for the district to “submit a procedure and supporting documentation, including logs, for receiving and processing complaints alleging discrimination within FNS School Meal Programs” (Appendix E). Due to the smaller amount of the population that participates in this program on a whole, the district did not have a procedure set up for complaints. This relates to the way that the district is both economically and racially divided. This violation led to the district looking at their approach to this component of civil rights system-wide.

In order to have a space for parents and students in the school system to activate their civil rights in regards to the lunch program, the district has responded with a new form. Appendix F identifies the corrective action that the district took:

The District is in the process of adding a new policy to the Board of Education Administrative Guidelines for civil right complaint process that includes the information indicated by MDE. We have reviewed the documents provided on the MDE site and reviewed the MDE tutorial regarding civil rights. We will incorporate the documents into the policy. Forms will be available in an on-line input form, a printable document from the website and hard copies in the office of the District's School Nutrition Program Civil Rights Coordinator (Appendix G, Appendix H, and Appendix I).

This alteration in the Board of Education Administrative Guidelines for civil right complaint process indicates that the district is taking steps to incorporate all students regardless of income. They are aiming to create a place where students whose families are coming from an economically disadvantaged background can be guaranteed to have equal opportunities. Appendix G identifies the ways that families can gain equal opportunities in the lunchroom and the process for the district to report to the state. The complaints can be voiced in the document included as Appendix H. The families can voice their concerns with school lunch officially with this document. Although this applies to a small amount systematically, it does apply to a large amount in certain buildings on the Eastern part of the district.

Even though the system does not have a large number of buildings with free and reduced-price lunch, for the students in the school buildings that were selected, at least 20% of the population deals with food insecurity. Of this 20%, the vast majority of the students live in Kurmas Village. In fact, the elementary school that serves only students in Kurmas Village finds that 2/3

of their population is receiving free and reduced school lunch. In these buildings, the central foodservice company also supplies the students with free breakfast. As their day begins, it has been established that all the respondents view this program to be the one or two reliable meals that the students have each day. In addition, the other themes that emerged are the need for students to be nourished before learning, and school administrators are concerned with their access to food beyond the cafeteria and home environments.

In the Edison Public School system, the business members, school administrators, cafeteria workers, school lunch directors, all believe that this program serves students who otherwise would not have a reliable meal. This makes the school cafeterias the one place that students can achieve a reliable meal each day. Respondent Two identifies that he hopes even though the students do not have adequate food at home, “we’ve given them a nice meal, a nice breakfast and lunch”. As he examines the importance of making sure that the students have a meal, he also notices that some students who are not on free and reduced-price lunch come into the breakfast program they offer and actually pay for their breakfast. By providing food in schools, parents who can afford to pay full price for meals are taking advantage of this opportunity as a way to nourish their students. In addition, the middle school principal finds that the students will come in a half hour early to school to get their breakfast. This is because “for many of our poor students, students, in general, their best chance of getting a solid meal is probably at school” (Respondent Four). These solid meals at school are balanced by having four out of the five recommended categories, but always including a vegetable or fruit for lunch.

In the creation of the healthy meals, the executive chef identifies that “you would hope to think it's teaching them how to put together a proper lunch through routine through habit to see that I should take fruit I should take vegetables” (Respondent Nine). Every day they are exposed

to balanced meals because, in order to be reimbursable, they must have the four out of the five dietary components. Respondents Ten and Eleven identify every day they are looking at the content of the plates of students to make sure they are meeting all the requirements. Then, they do something called offer versus serve where they offer a healthy meal option to complete the meal versus just serving it (Respondent Seven). In these healthy options, it is found that students are gaining access to nutrient-dense foods.

The foodservice director thinks about how families do not have access to reliable meals. He stated,

If it is a family that's struggling and they're not able to provide healthy fruits and vegetables this is just something that can help supplement that nutrition that they do need. They're all growing and they're growing fast. They need to have that nutrition. At least at school, we know that if a kid takes a banana, he's going to get nutrition from that (Respondent Eight). Many respondents identified that it is more expensive to eat healthier. They explained that a family who is living in poverty will tend to try to stretch their dollars with cheaper food options that aren't as healthy. This creates a cycle that offers sodium laden, cheaper, processed alternatives to the healthy options that can be found for more money (Respondent Four). Due to this, many students are not having fruits and vegetables on their table at home every day. In order to alleviate this, schools are the place where students have access to healthy meal options.

As the students arrive at school each morning, an important component in buildings and on administrators' minds is their nourishment. They all point to the importance of being nourished in order to learn. This is something that they are focusing on in their school cultures and district-wide. The Deputy Superintendent of Instruction stated, "think of Maslow's hierarchy, you know you have to take care of your personal needs first. Meaning things like safety, how I feel physically.

If a kid is hungry they're not going to learn well” (Respondent Four). The main central office administrator in charge of student services believes that the students need to have nourishment before they can learn. His thoughts are shared all throughout the building as all the principals stated this is one of their most important priorities. Respondent One stated,

Kids being worried about another need compared to (school) and makes it more difficult to focus on the task at hand. Their survival instincts are really taking place at that point and taking precedence over a math assignment or reading a book. And then once they get some nutrition or substance then they can move forward with attending to a task.

This is something that building principals prioritize in their school culture. They speak about the importance of the school lunch program being the vehicle for change against this issue in their buildings. It is so important that the executive chef identifies that the districts breakfast program has a lot of participation in schools where the free and reduced-price lunch population is dense. Respondent Three states that the breakfast program at his school is key because the students come in hungry and they cannot learn when they are hungry. The principal at the highest free and reduced-price lunch school in the district has found that nourishment is key to starting a successful day so much so that he has thought about students who are living in food insecure homes and how they are impacted in the summer.

For the elementary principal in Kurmas Village, his main concern is nourishment of his student body each day. For him, this concern is not bound by contractual calendars. In fact, he has set up a system that works with a grant program that feeds students when summer school is in session. Respondent One identifies that the school lunch program takes some stress off parents who cannot provide for their families. It is a real benefit he points out to his school community.

He feels so strong that during the summer, he wanted to implement a school lunch program for the participants. He explains,

This summer we have a summer school program that's going to be running for a couple weeks and the lunch program, a separate one that we applied to a grant for, is feeding all of the students that will be here for breakfast and lunch during that time. We're hoping to even expand that to not just our building and our students in poverty but the entire city (of Kurmas Village) and maybe even the surrounding cities or additional families that might be living nearby that might need a food pantry or free lunch during summertime.

He has taken this action step on his own accord in response to meeting the needs of the food insecure population at this school. In this example, it is seen that building administrators have a lot of interaction with this policy as it relates to students living in poverty. Due to his action, the students and families that are coming to the summer program will attain a reliable meal that they are used to having in the school day. Another issue concerning the building principals is general food access.

At each building, principals have noticed that their school population is showing up hungry and sometimes missing that breakfast window. For the middle school, it is not uncommon for the older students to walk their younger siblings to school in the community that does not have a bus system (Respondent One). Then, they are left having missed their breakfast. That is why Respondent Three keeps items that are not eaten in the cafeteria like apples, bananas, and milk and gives them to hungry students. This loosely coupled system is found in the main office and students who are hungry know about where to go to attain it. In a more formalized system, the principal with the highest free and reduced-price lunch population created a whole food pantry. He explains,

One of the things that we're doing additional is we're stocking up on additional food. We have breakfast bars from Costco along with something like Cheez-its or we buy bulk food. Essentially, we'll have something ready to go just in case that a family need might need some food. We've also had donations from a church nearby that had collected a canned food drive that we are currently storing (in a school pantry) in a separate location upstairs in our building. So when we have a family expressing a need then they can't even go shop for their own food. Up there (in the pantry of the school) the district had received a donation from another fundraiser at a church. The district ended up passing the money along to us because we were spending our general supplies funding which is supposed to be for pens, pencils, and paper on food instead. So instead of us spending our money on food that should be for other things, we're going to have a separate account that we can just purchase food for kids who are in need.

This dedication for nourishing students from food insecure backgrounds devoted a whole room in his school to be a pantry for students who are hungry.

Respondent One is also making sure that when they come to the office if they are late, they are getting something in their stomachs before they are able to nourish their minds. This was such an important item for the principal that he chose to allocate his general building supply money towards it. Then, he was able to receive a donation and team up with a local community organization who also identified this as a main concern in the school culture. Through his efforts, students and their families are able to have a reliable meal over the weekend by coming into the pantry. It is a movement like this that points to the realities of hunger in school and the focus of the building principals on this matter. They are focused on this because they know that in order to best reach all students, they need to have the nourishment in their bellies. This theme emerged

across all of the administrative and foodservice respondents as a concern with students who are living in poverty.

Actions Taken to Mitigate Obesity

As the respondents reported, the foodservice program that is currently implemented is providing nutrient-dense meal choices for both breakfast and lunch for students that are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch status. These meals are bounded by the USDA guidelines and as Respondents Ten and Eleven discuss, portions cannot be increased based on the students' desire. This guarantees that the meal that is posted on the website not only follows the nutritional guidelines as deemed by the foodservice dietician but also by the USDA. These guidelines must be present in every meal that the district cooks which is how the district gets reimbursed for the meals that are consumed. Due to the strict guidelines and dietary restrictions, all respondents feel that the meals being offered to the students in the cafeteria doesn't contribute to rising obesity rates.

From the district perspective, they have adopted a Wellness Policy (Appendix J) that implements a systemic focus on nutrition. In this policy, it is determined that "the District shall ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutrition standards found in federal regulations. The District shall encourage students to make nutritious foodservice" (Appendix J). Within these guidelines, it also states that the district will work to promote nutrition education and physical activity. Interesting enough, all building administrators shared the same response when it came to obesity. They focused on the theme of the buildings offering different physical activity avenues. In the elementary schools, this looks like a gym class rotation for all students. At the middle school level, it is not mandatory that students have gym class. In middle school, students have an option to enroll in a Family and Consumer Science elective. In these

electives, nutrition education is coupled with the skills to prepare healthy meals and menu plan (Respondent Three). These classes are in high demand at the school with a large free and reduced-price lunch population. The principal determined that he feels that all the students enrolled are learning enough about nutrition to set up a healthy lifestyle. In addition, Respondent Three mentioned that the district offers nutrition education K-12 often in the health classes they have. In one elementary school, the principal sees his teachers implementing daily brain breaks coupled with kinesthetic learning modalities sprinkled throughout the lesson plans in their classrooms (Respondent Two). The students at all schools have the option to participate in various after school activities that are centered around movement. This includes running club, basketball, baseball, track and field, yoga, and other various options for students to maintain activity. The principals feel small steps have been made towards minimizing obesity through physical activity in the classrooms and school community.

Another way that respondents identified they are working to or need to improve to minimize obesity beyond the foodservice program is with the limitation of sweets in the school. From a central office perspective, they are contributing to obesity with the current trends implemented in the district. The foodservice contract that they have entered in as a district requires all the foodservice that is sold in the schools to be handled by the food company as a way to regulate. If all food that is sold runs through the same company, then the company can attest to the nutritional components found in the district. In the Edison Public School System, this is an unregulated system. Respondent Four argues that,

We've really had a struggle in this school district and we continue to have a struggle with how we allow access to food in our schools. This district compared to all the other ones I've worked with allows more outside food access and we provide our kids access to less

healthy food than most districts I've been a part of. In the sense that first, we have open campus lunch. You know when we think about the other high schools' districts that I have worked at, you kind of control what the kids are eating. They either bring it from home or we provide it for them. But in this district, we allow open campus lunch. And as you know, at one of our high schools, right across the street are a variety of food options which are unregulated from a health perspective and so we allow more access that way than most districts do.

He explains that in the high schools, the students are able to eat whatever they want because they can travel during the school day. This unregulated issue is why the high school was not selected as part of this case study. It also points to the issue that the students cannot be regulated as to what they are consuming. They can eat fast food every day if they have transportation to do so. Respondent Four also examines the foodservice contract when he stated,

The other way that we do allow more access is for years as a district, while we had a contract with our former foodservice company that forbid us from selling food during the school day other than what comes through the cafeteria, we routinely ignored it. The number of food sales and bake sales that would go on before or after school or during lunchtime. And then, we also in this district, which I still find interesting is we allow food as an incentive in many classrooms. I'm talking about anywhere from elementary on up that we still have food-based incentives that I find surprising as a school.

As a central office administrator, he is able to see from a broad perspective what is occurring in the district. When he couples that with the policy, he is able to see that the policies are not being followed. The food that is being served across the district for bake sales, fundraisers, or general classroom celebrations is not in conjunction with the contract. However, there was no mention of

this in the interview with the foodservice director. It appears that as a district, they tend to look the other way when it comes to food selling. Not everyone in the district is choosing to ignore the unhealthy snacks and treats that the students bring into schools.

The principals of the elementary schools identify that they want to work to eliminate the unhealthy items that come through the school every day in the classrooms. Whether it be birthday party celebrations, class parties, food rewards, they are seeing way too many sweets. They use this as a way to understand and think about how students should be eating in schools and the messages it conveys. Respondent Two identifies that he started to think about the food-based incentives when parents of a few of his students brought up their health concerns because their child has diabetes and allergies. In using this parental communication as a basis, they determined that they are not going to continue to move forward with so many unhealthy rewards for students. Respondent One even thinks about the classroom birthday parties and the number of sweets that students are getting each year as they are able to indulge in cupcakes and sweets as part of their celebrations. He is encouraging staff and parents to bring books as rewards in lieu of sweets. At the middle school level, the snack line is regulated to open after all students have attained their lunches from the cafeteria line. Building level administrators are taking small steps to work to mitigate obesity in their school systems.

Aspirations for Policy Implementation of The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

As far as the policy is implemented, all respondents shared that nothing is being done at the district level in order to communicate to families beyond the foodservice program. Any work done to communicate is done at the individual level by choice. The foodservice program offers information on their website with links to the menus (Appendix O and P). These menus are in a four-week rotation and are tailored to meet the needs of the USDA requirements. In addition, they

will offer some health blurbs occasionally on their website. The district relies on the foodservice company to handle nutrition education for parents. They have trusted the foodservice company to do the right job and in doing so have selected a company that is motivated to go beyond foodservice. Respondent Four explains “we do a few different things as a company. They want us to be more than just the food items that are on the serving line.” In explaining, he says that he has implemented programs that outreach to the community including a community garden at an elementary school. He coordinated and planted the garden with the classroom. In addition, he has lectured to a high school Family and Consumer Science classroom about his role in foodservice. Also, he has created a partnership with the special needs classroom and offers employability skills and opportunities in the cafeteria. He finds this to be one of the most enriching aspects of his job; giving back to the community. As this is filtered in, the Edison Public School System is fortunate the foodservice director does have the desire to create a community of nutritious food and provides the community with his own outreach agenda.

The building level administrators and central office staff understand that the students need a free and reduced-price lunch policy but do not grasp the intricacies of the law. Their understandings stop at the changes to the cafeteria food in becoming nutrient-dense. Respondent Five explains that “didn't the law change though because initially, it was like very strong and then because there was so much waste and sales were down, they did lighten it up a little bit?” In her understanding, she was made aware the policy was altered because, in the business side of the policy, there was a downturn in sales when the policy was first enacted. Aside from her understanding, no other respondent could identify specific alterations to the policy aside from the initial portion requirements as identified earlier. They all responded that they would like to know more about the law. They also claimed that the district has not provided them with education or

training on the policy. The building principals, in dealing with the policy every day respond that they would like to have the opportunity to learn more. In the Edison Public School System, the policy implementers have minute background of the intricacies of the policy. This is due to the trust the district has in the foodservice company.

As they move forward with the school lunch policy, the policy implementers would like to gain more knowledge about the requirements of the law. They state in an ideal environment, the link between what is healthy for the students would be clearer aside from the fruits and vegetables. Respondent One summarizes this point when he says,

I know some of the options though might be contributing towards obesity only because we have food like French fries that come with a burger that students are eating. Once a week on Thursdays there's pizza that served. So that could be contributing towards students making worse choices at home at a later point.

It is hard for him to understand, on the whole, how nutrition is working in the foodservice realm because he is not familiar with the policy that is in place. He speaks to wanting to learn more about what is necessary for this policy in order to move his building forward with more nutrition education for students, staff, and families.

One thing that has been brought up in the district is the lack of money directed towards implementing this program at the federal level. The respondents would like more education on the policy and more information to share with families. It was also examined that some students are cut off from the program because they do not qualify and if they were to widen the requirements for the law, the district could feed some of the students to border on the lines of eligibility. If this were to happen, then more families could attain a free and reduced-price lunch status in the Edison Public School System.

Summary and Conclusion

Throughout the Edison Public School System, the key respondents share the mission of carrying out the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 in the school system. This policy is disseminated throughout the school district. Although it is controlled at the central office, it is also outsourced and diffused throughout the levels of administration in the buildings. The various roles and tasks that the respondents share all surround creating a nourishing environment for students. The team works to guarantee that the children in the district are fed each and every day. They pride themselves on being the consistent meal(s) that the students encounter each day. Many of the students from Kurmas Village are serviced in the school system lunch program.

As a district, they received a citation from the state about not conducting the foodservice program in various ways. This was an interesting facet of the Edison Public School System as it is a district where high affluence clashes with poverty. This clash is separated by the freeway which divides the Eastern and Western parts of town. This divide created an interesting case for the policy to be viewed. As the policy is disseminated, one of the compelling facts about the foodservice program is that the free and reduced-price lunch population is always served the same items that are served in buildings with little to no participation in the program. The foodservice director guarantees that no matter the income of the child, they are given the same nutrient-dense foods in the lunch line.

In the Edison Public School System, the policy is created to help the students living in poverty. One of the largest benefits of the school lunch program is access to a breakfast program. This breakfast program enables all students who qualify and those who want to pay an opportunity to come to school and receive a healthy start. This opportunity is something that all administrators deem an important aspect of their school system. The focus from the top-down is that students

need to have their basic needs met in order to learn to their fullest potential. In the school with the highest free and reduced-price lunch population, it has been the case that even the teachers hold off on instructional time in order to have their students well nourished. Fiscal resources are devoted to students who are not attaining reliable meals and come in the form of food pantries at the school. All respondents view this program as a way to prevent food insecurity.

Another issue the foodservice program is working towards is to mitigate obesity in the school system. For the respondents, they notice that the students are eating the vegetables and fruits that are in the cafeteria. This focus on eating healthy foods is a point of pride for the foodservice team each day. If a student is not taking fruit to complete a meal, they are being offered fruit at the checkout. This action guarantees that access to nutrition is available. One concern that has been identified is the amount of food waste because although the students will take the fruit, it does not mean that they will indeed eat it. A way that principals have cut down on this is saving the items that are not eaten and preventing them from being thrown away. In fact, that food is put aside and used as a snack for the students who have missed their breakfast. As policy implementers are working with the foodservice program, they are aiming to minimize obesity through fruit and vegetable access. Another way is to offer physical activity options, clubs, and recess throughout the day.

The respondents all share that they wish they had more education on this policy. Ironically, the people who work with the policy implementation the most, seem to know the least about the specifics. Each respondent was aware that the policy has morphed to include a healthy food focus in the cafeteria. They were not aware of the specifics policy of the policy. In addition, they did not identify that this policy was implemented to combat childhood obesity. In the Edison Public School System, they have a desire to have more education on the basics of the policy as they

implement it on a daily basis. In addition, there is not a district program that specifically works to educate parents on nutrition. They offer this via the website which is managed by the foodservice company.

This qualitative case study examined the Edison Public School System. By interviewing the respondents, I was able to gain a deep understanding of the way the policy is disseminated in the district. The interviewees encompassed: Central Office, Foodservice, Building Level Leadership, Business Services, and Cafeteria Workers. Their lived experiences gave voice to the issue of food insecurity that this policy is aiming to combat in the lunch line every day. How they understand this policy was also divided into the different themes that emerged as a result of this study. It was revealed that the respondents are concerned with: Policy Implementers, Role in Nourishment, Access to and the Consumption of Nutrient-dense Foods, Food Insecure Students, Actions Taken to Mitigate Obesity, and Aspirations for Policy Implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free Act 2010. The respondents have provided me with a deeper understanding of how this policy takes shape in a school district.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how school administrators and staff make sense and implement the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 on a local level. Using a sensemaking lens, I explored how the school administrators and staff use the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids act of 2010 to inform their practice guided by the following questions:

1. How do school/district/leaders of the food program describe their role related to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010?
2. How do school/district/leaders of the food program describe their role and the action they have taken related to student nutrition and the obesity epidemic in response to the law?
3. What daily interactions do administrators and focal staff have with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010?
4. How do particular experiences, knowledge frameworks, and/or influences cause students to think about the potential of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 initiative as a vehicle for changing healthy eating habits?

To answer the main questions of this case study, I interviewed members who are involved with the administrative aspect of the policy. The policy implementers that were interviewed consisted of the central administrative team, the foodservice director, executive chef, building principals, and cafeteria workers. The building principals spanned a K-8 range throughout the district. These policy implementers provided documents to enrich the data set as seen in the Appendix section spanning Appendix D through Appendix P. These documents ranged from the citation that was given by the district to the corrective action it has taken to the menus that are available to the students. The interview data was transcribed and coded for common themes that emerged within

the data set. The themes that emerged were then fused with scholarly literature and viewed with the lens of sensemaking.

In Chapter Four, the data set that was collected provides the story of the Edison Public School System. This story is central to the sensemaking lens as it develops a descriptive picture of the case of this school system. This description involves a district that has been cited in regards to their foodservice program from the Michigan Department of Education. In this citation, findings listed concerns about the functionality and accessibility of the free and reduced-price lunch program. These findings created a focus for the district on changing the free and reduced-price lunch program to gain compliance with the state. It is a compelling case because the district is racially and economically divided into an Eastern and Western part of town. Edison Township is a small community with families residing in it for generations. Contrarily, Kurmas Village is comprised of families that are the first generation and includes most of the Eastern half of the district's free and reduced-price lunch population. In this area, the affluence is non-existent and many students are living in poverty. How the district has responded to its implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 has been examined in Chapter Four.

Upon the examination in the Edison Public School System, it was found that themes emerged in and amongst the interviewees. As driven by the research questions, the participants revealed themes in their interactions that included: policy implementers, role in nourishment, access to and consumption of nutrient-dense foods, food insecure students, actions taken to mitigate obesity, and aspirations for policy implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

In this chapter, I analyze the themes that emerged in chapter four to determine how school administrators and staff understand their role in the implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free

Kids Act of 2010. In this analysis, I fuse the dataset with the principals of the sensemaking lens. As supported by scholarly literature, how school administrators and staff best understand policy implementation is discussed. Then, I offer the recommendations that emerged from the study, my personal reflections on the research process, and finally the concluding remarks.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in the research reveal how school administrators and staff make sense of The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. In their sensemaking, they are implementing the policy on a daily basis and the priorities and values the administrators have of the policy have affected the school culture. In addition, the central office focus of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 filters into the school buildings as there is a top-down model of this policy filtering into the district. It is in the work of the principals, that they decide how they will align and move beyond the central administration directive. In this study, all building principals found it in their mission to move beyond the directives and use the foodservice program as their platform for offering students a nourishing meal.

The nourishment for students in the Edison Public School System largely depends on the encouragement, advocacy, and information that the building principals and foodservice personnel enact. On a daily basis, the principals are speaking with the students as they monitor the cafeterias and encouraging nutrient-dense eating choices. In their encouragement, they are moving beyond the policy and aiming to give all students a fair and just education. The leadership uses the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 as a platform to enact social change in their school communities and nourish all students.

Purpose of the Policy

As this policy is filtered throughout the district it is revolving around a few key components: nourishing students from poverty, healthy meals, and combating obesity. The policy aims to help students who are from economic backgrounds that cannot afford to provide the students with a reliable meal. As outlined in Chapter Two, the food insecurity is a real issue concerning the Edison Public School System. As the students arrive to school each day, Respondent Eight shares that they are given the option for a free and reduced-price breakfast. This supports the literature as outlined in Chapter Two that examines the roles of student achievement for those living in poverty. These meals can serve as a way to start their day so they are not focused on their hunger and can concentrate on their studies.

In addition, as this policy is enacted, it is related to providing students with meals that are nourishing. Based on the federal regulations and evident in Appendix O and Appendix P, the meals that are served to the students meet the requirements that have been deemed healthy. This policy intends to provide students healthy choices in the cafeteria. The healthy requirements are met by the outsourced foodservice company, as the menu options are reviewed by the corporate dietician (R8). This ensures that the meals served to the students are nutrient-dense and nourishing as the policy dictates as an intention to battle obesity.

As outlined in Chapter Two, the policy was reauthorized as part of the nation's taskforce on childhood obesity. It is thought that in providing the students with meals that contain fruits, vegetables, protein, whole-grain, and low fat dairy products, then healthy decisions can be made. In the Edison Public School System, all meals are nourishing and they provide compliant meals so they do not contribute to the rising obesity rates. However, the food that arrives in classrooms and the cafeteria from outside sources is not monitored. Often times, students, with their

propensity to unhealthy items, will bring in items that are sugar, sodium, and fat inundated.

There is no way to control this in the cafeterias and school systems however, the lunches that are provided to the students are always compliant with the government restrictions.

The Roles of Policy Implementers in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

The data set that emerged was analyzed using the sensemaking perspective. In choosing this perspective, the themes that have emerged help to understand how school administrators and staff understand the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This policy aims to develop healthy options in the cafeteria for students who are living in poverty. This study examined the actions school administrators and staff are taking in the policy. The reason the sensemaking perspective is used in this data is that it is more concerned with plausibility than accuracy (Weick, 1995). In the Edison Public School System, this research is not concerned with how accurate the school administrators and staff were in their knowledge of the policy but rather their implementation. All of the interviewees shared a commonality; they are the policy implementers.

As sensemaking is developed, it is about “plausibility, pragmatics, coherence, reasonableness, creation, invention, and instrumentality” (Weick, 1995, p. 57). As the participants were interviewed, they all made sense of their roles in their own ways. This research supports what Coburn (2001) identifies as principals making sense of the policy that supports their vision and understanding while ignoring the parts of the policy that challenge it. There was a variation in the ways that each group of respondents made sense of their participation in the policy because the ways they view the world were different. The credibility that they provide in their implementation serves as an important facet to the policy dissemination. This study found that the participants viewed their roles in the school lunch program to be of value to the district and the students that are served as a result.

The ownership that is evident in this program spans from the central office administrators down to the cafeteria workers. In their policy implementation, it is evident that they care about creating a school environment that serves meals to students who are underserved. The actual access to food for students was the most important thing for interviewees in their policy implementation role. As sensemaking is more concerned with the ways in which the respondents create their understandings, each of their stories was vital to this study (Weick, 1995). By examining their understandings, the research paints a descriptive picture of the ways this policy has morphed in the district.

As the respondents shared the facets in which they carry this policy out, the themes emerged of how they implement the policy. In the district, the policy is created from the top and filtered down. This top-down approach is interesting in the Edison Public School System because it points to the way that sensemaking is grounded in identity construction (Weick, 1995). How the system adopted the federal mandate was important in how the policy implementers viewed their role in the policy. The identities of the implementers are equally important as they span the system because they are the mirror of the school (Weick, 1995). The behavior, feelings, and what they focus on is what the district mirrors in their vision. Louis, Mayrowetz, Murphy, & Smylie (2013) identify that sensemaking is always on going and when information disrupts their routines and procedures, then it is prominent. In this case, this was most evident when they received a citation. The system was not a cohesive system with everyone sharing understanding. Rather, the top-down approach left the system disjointed in a few facets. One result of this appeared in the citations (Appendix E) the district attained from the state governing body. When the district was cited, the policy implementer at the central office level then developed a document to address the issues system-wide (Appendix D). Once this document was created, it was clearly communicated to the

administration what was going to change and the foodservice personnel made the necessary changes. This shifted the focus from the 'top-down' to the key players in a clear, concise vision for the policy. How the policy implementers make sense of the changes is a result of how the district communicates and views the school lunch program importance.

Another component of identity construction regarding the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 is the ways in which the district structures the program. The main respondent who feels the most involvement in the lunch program is the foodservice director. In his role of policy implementation, he is meeting with cafeteria staff, his corporation, building principals, and central office. The sensemaking that he develops is a vital role as Weick (1995) describes it as a social process and how others behave are based on what others are doing. He is responsible with how the policy is constructed in the school and what he chooses to focus on filters in all the other policy implementers perspectives. I found it compelling when he mentions that the free and reduced-price lunch program operates more like a lunch program than a free and reduced-price lunch program (Respondent Eight). In saying this, it shows that the district is working to keep the free and reduced-price lunch program appeal to the masses, not just the students who are financially at a disadvantage.

I believe this viewpoint puts a sort of secrecy on the foodservice program and it is because the district does not want the community to know how many members are receiving this lunch status in the schools that are on the Eastern half of the district. The way that the central office administration hides the free and reduced-price lunch status for the computer system at checkout also serves in a polarizing matter. It is either because they do not want to embarrass the students or because they do not want people to know that free and reduced-price lunch is happening in the elite district of Edison Public Schools. In fact, the Deputy Superintendent of Business and

Operations was hesitant to provide the citation document for this research study. I believe her hesitance came as a result of the district working to hide this program. Spillane (2004) examines how when the people responsible for the policy do not have a lot of training and education concerning it, then they can have a different level of success in implementing it. The secrecy surrounding this policy is an example of the lack of information and education that the Deputy Superintendent of Business and Operations attained in regards to this policy while being tasked to oversee it.

One important aspect of sensemaking they share is the concentration on making sure all eligible families have an opportunity to join the free and reduced-price lunch program. In the community outreach, all levels of administrators concern themselves with the responsibility of making sure families have the information about the programs that are available to support them when they cannot have a reliable meal on their families table. The district has placed a priority on this as a result of the citation they received (Appendix E). As Weick (1995) identifies, sensemaking is inactive of sensible environments. The actions that each policy implementer in the school system takes, determines the environment in which determines the actions that are needed to be taken (Weick, 1995). The data mirrors this in the focus for the district on the application process. Appendix K is the document that parents fill out in the district to apply for free and reduced-price lunch. Appendix L has the questions that parents often have in regards to the policy. Appendix M involves the website from the business support team that explains the process of free and reduced-price lunch in the district.

The findings support the research of Hoing & Hatch (2004) which identifies that the district needs to have an operation and culture that is congruent in order to carry out the intentions of the policy. The district worked on their operations in the system as a result of the citation document.

With the citation document driving decision making, the environment surrounding the free and reduced-price lunch program is weighted in application importance. This is because the violation stated that the district was not collecting the correct applications and they were not including all the information on the letter to inform parents about the program (Appendix E). The central office administrators determined that it would be their focus to shape the system and task building administrators in seeking out students who would qualify by contacting parents. Respondent Two examines his role, “educate our parent population as far as how and who can get free or reduced-price lunch.” In this examination, he is acting as part of the environments which is demanding that principals are to communicate with parents that qualify.

The central office staff expects that the building principals carry out their requests in regards to this policy as noted in the Memorandum in Appendix D. Appendix D identifies the correspondence from the Superintendent of Business and Operations to the building administrators. This document states,

As you know public schools in Michigan participate in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast program (also known as School Nutrition Program or SNAP). As a result of participation in a required Federal program, the District is subject to Federal rules and guidelines as we implement our foodservice program. Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is charged with oversight of the program (Appendix D).

This document highlights the focus of the district with the school lunch program; compliance. The compliance of the governing bodies is the most important aspect to the central office administrators which is evident in the sensemaking being ongoing. As they are cited, the district stakeholders determine that they need to change as they are interacting with the policy (Weick, 1995) and their reactions are ongoing. The policy implementers at the central office both describe their roles in

the compliance. Respondent Four stated, “I’m the administer tasked with both enforcing as well as kind of writing and reviewing board of education policies.” While Respondent Five stated, “specifically, to the free and reduced-price lunch program, our office is one responsible to make sure we meet all the healthy guidelines required by the federal government.” Once they were cited by the Michigan Department of Education, compliance became the central aspect to maintaining the policy in the district. In identifying their shared roles, they are explaining how the system then filters down with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, compliance. For the nature of sensemaking, in this study, the administration was selected as participants because they embody the organization in their actions.

As the policy is filtered from the federal government to the state government, certain procedures need to be followed at the local government level. These procedures in the Edison Public School System are monitored by the governing body, the Board of Education. Then, the Deputy Superintendent for Business and Operations, and finally the foodservice company that is outsourced. However, one thing the district has flexibility on in the policy is their concentration on what the values, priorities, and clarity that is provided to the members of the organization which is referred to as retrospect in sensemaking (Weick, 1995). The retrospective nature of sensemaking focuses on the ways in which the school district places value on the school lunch program. The themes that emerged in this study demonstrate how this district values student achievement and success. They believe in order for a student to achieve at their fullest potential, they need to be nourished and it is a top priority in the school system. The respondents claimed that students need to be well nourished in order to be a success in school. I examined in Chapter Two, the linkage between feeding a child and enabling them to meet their learning potential. In this linkage, the respondents felt a moral need to make sure that their students were nourished first and foremost.

For the policy implementers in the district, this is emulating how sensemaking is focused on and extracted by cues (Weick, 1995). The small things that are happening each day with building principals exemplify what is important to the district. In the buildings, these principals are demonstrating how important they believe the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 is to the success of their student population.

With this program, the district believes it nourishing students in need each day. One of the most central aspects of this belief is that the district is providing meals that are compliant with state and federal regulations. Although it is a federal mandate as stated in Chapter Two, the states are responsible for carrying out local level compliance. The Edison Public School System was found to not comply with some of the regulations and as a result, the ways the policy implementers make sense of this policy has been shaped. The policy implementers take their cues from the central office administrators who are responsible for policy creation and implementation on a local level. This filters throughout the district and into the buildings and finally the cafeterias where it reaches the students. The central office leads the education of the policy implementation and the building principals each shared a common belief, the need to nourish students.

Student Nutrition, Mitigating Obesity, and the Policy Implementers

As identified in Chapter Two, this policy was adopted to minimize the effects of the obesity epidemic in this country. The obesity rates in this country have been on the rise for decades leaving one in three children in America overweight (The White House, 2010). The high number of students who are overweight coupled with the fact that more students who are minoritized are participating in the free and reduced-price lunch program created a natural connection between the two programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). In the reauthorization of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the government found an avenue to provide nutrition to

its students and hopefully decrease the growing rate of obesity. School administrators and staff are concerned with student nutrition and obesity rates beyond the USDA compliant meals served in the lunchroom.

When the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 is funneled into local government control, how the district places emphasis on nourishment is important. This emphasis comes in the form of fiscal responsibility that the district has to have in order to prioritize nutrition. The respondents viewed the school lunch program as a reliable tool to provide nourishment for students who struggle with food insecurity. This supports the literature as it suggests that well-nourished bodies are essential for well-nourished brains. In fact, many participants viewed the school lunch program and the offer of nutrient-dense foods as a showcase on how they are minimizing the effects of food insecurity in their school buildings. In a broader sense, the literature did not reveal how local school districts were to meet the demands of feeding all students regardless of payment status.

In this legislation, the district needs to prioritize providing students a nutrient-dense meal through their personnel. As the executive chef noted, the program still covers a full lunch for students if they do not have money on their accounts (Respondent Nine). Murphy, Ettinger de Duba, & Cook (2009), identify that when students arrive and leave hungry in the school day, they are less likely to learn. To minimize the effect of the students who are living in poverty, the district is tasked with the responsibility of organizing the program policies. Coburn (2001) identifies that when an organization has a clear vision and understanding of the policy, then the policy implementers understand how to respond to the policies.

This legislation is void of the role the personnel place in this policy, however, people are essential for the success of the legislation. The district's focus on nutrition is evident in the number

of people employed to carry out the policy. The respondents noted that nutrition and the lunch program are items that they are concerned with. In the literature on sensemaking, Weick (1995) identifies this as retrospect in the organization. The values and priorities that are focused on by the policy implementers produce a clear explanation of the vision and mission the organization has for the school lunch program (Weick, 1995). In this case, the respondents feel a need to nourish students which sensemaking discovers is a direct result of the districts' emphasis on nourishment for students in poverty. The priority of nourishment comes at the expense of the district as they will feed students who do not have the funds which the business department monitors.

The business respondents are the example of the district's communication with families in addition to the policies and documents that they have put into place to support their lunch program which nourishes students. As the respondents make sense of the school lunch policy, they are constantly referring to the documents developed by the district. This is important for districts to note as Spillane (2004) discovers how people make sense of policies leaves a lot of room open for interpretation and misunderstandings. However, when school districts have documents that align the expectations, then the policy implementers can carry out the nourishing of students in similar ways. This congruency is seen in Appendix M and Appendix N which identify the program requirements for enrollment and bill repayment for the district as stated on their website. Appendix M describes the conflict the district has between feeding all students who are hungry and the financial responsibility. The document states,

The purpose of having a meal charging policy is to establish consistent clear meal account procedures throughout the district. There is a fine line between considering the fiscal integrity of the district and the solvency of the foodservice program while also meeting the nutritional needs of students (Appendix M).

This policy clearly communicates to all implementers and constituents that it matters more for students to attain nourishment than to have the funds available. The literature is void of how a district should handle the cases of students who are not eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program but do not have money. This research identifies that the district determines its unique case of how they value the nourishment of students. It is the local policy that drives the decision of nourishing at any cost for all students.

The only way this policy can serve as a potential for nourishment is through the personnel behind the program. The literature on the policy suggests that this program will provide nutrient-dense meals. The literature is void of the role the policy implementers take in this decision. It has been found that the personnel regarding policy implementation are the main driving force behind providing nourishing meals. The way the district is assembled enables a loosely controlled position for the foodservice director. Weick (1995) describes how control in an organization inhibits creativity and innovation. When a district is set up with a foodservice company that has the flexibility to empower a foodservice director to create menus and healthy meals, then the district has an ability to create a program that is learning and understanding healthy meal choices that are given for students. When a program has a foodservice director that is focused on exposing students to healthy meals, they are able to provide students with a rich array of nutrient-dense options (U.S. Government, 2010).

The respondents that are employed by the foodservice company ultimately are responsible for the nourishment that happens in the cafeterias through the way they choose to implement the policy. Weick (1995), described organizations as social forms that create and preserve innovation. In the case of preserving innovation, the foodservice director is making sure to provide healthy nutrient-dense meal options to the students. Initially, as stated in Chapter Two, the policy was

created to provide healthier meal options for students in the cafeteria. These requirements were to get stricter year after year as the policy was implemented, however, under the new administration, the requirements became less strict as in an option for the district to apply for a whole grain waiver (USDA, 2017). Despite applying for this waiver which enables districts to offer students less whole grain options, the school district was still providing whole grain items (Appendix O & Appendix P). The foodservice director implements a menu that goes above the current level of nutrient compliance. When the respondents describe the healthy choices that are offered, it is because the organization enables and empowers a foodservice director to have control over the menu options and he views nutrition as important. In turn, the respondents view this program as a means of providing access to nutrient-dense items for students. Without a leader in the organization who focuses on the nourishment of students, this program would not have as many healthy options available to students.

The literature suggests that just providing students with enough options that are healthy is enough to suffice the nutritional needs of students, however, that is not enough. The literature states as outlined in Chapter Two that students who come from food insecure homes just need to be provided with healthy foods and opportunities to eat in order to become well-nourished and prepared for school (Shedler, 2014). When Respondent Eight is seeing that the salad bar items in the schools with a high free and reduced-price lunch population are vanishing off the shelf, he wonders if it is a reason of access and they are not getting the items at home. This case examined that it is not enough to just provide healthy options in order for students to eat the nourishing food and make real change, the personnel behind the students attaining the food needs to encourage healthy eating. The foodservice director shares his vision on why students need nourishment and how he actually works to provide it.

The kids need the food to focus and they need the energy too. So it's kind of sometimes I laugh with some of the kids who come through and grab a sandwich and apples and you say, 'don't you want anything else?' They are like 'no'. I'll be like 'anything? Just take a couple other things. I know you're going to be hungry later, just do it for me because I don't want you to suffer in the classroom later. I want to make sure your full, you're good.' Sometimes if I had a chance and I'm like come on grab something else for me, most of the time they will. They will go grab another thing like just try the celery (Respondent Nine).

If left alone to make healthy eating decisions, the students would not eat the foods that are presented to them. Respondent Three argues,

Sometimes they stop at the gas station and bring a bunch of junk food and that's what their lunch is. I think that there's great intention behind the healthy food laws. I think we provide healthy options for kids. But I think certain kids no matter what options you provide them are going to find ways to not be healthy if that their preferences. If their parents allow them to eat that at home, then they come to school and you can't force something down their throats.

In his work with middle school students, he sees how hard it is to change a culture of eating for students without the necessary education. This evidence discovers that although the policy has the intentions of providing deeper nourishment, it is not happening without the school administrators and staff to encourage healthy eating.

The principal notices what inhibits health and control of healthy items in the cafeteria. However, the choices that are available to the students are regulated by the USDA and fall under their nutritional guidelines so they are healthy as far as the policy deems necessary (Respondent Nine). Although the food that is provided in the cafeteria fits the model of health, the cafeteria

workers, principals, foodservice director, and executive chef state that they need to advocate, inform, and encourage students to make the healthier meal choices.

Part of the role of encouraging healthy choices lies in the ways the building principals integrate obesity-fighting methods into their school culture. In addition to walking around and encouraging students to try new foods and eat their vegetables in their cafeterias, building principals are supporting programs that aim to fight obesity. Weick (1995), describes that as people have routines and habits that are predictable, they began to form a common language and set of values. The research reveals, in a school system, the values that are upheld in regards to minimizing obesity derive from local policy implementers and not the federal compliance from this mandate. The research reveals that this policy missed its mark in fully combatting obesity in schools because it does not include any information on activity. When this is void in the documents pertaining to the lunch program, schools are not necessarily enacting a physical activity component to balance out nutritional choices in the cafeteria. When discussing the obesity epidemic, a central office administrator believes, “if someone is overweight or obese it's for one of two primary reasons that are interrelated. Either they're not eating healthy or they're not active enough” (Respondent Four). This policy is aiming to fix the healthy eating aspect of obesity but not the activity level. When this is left out, then the way the local policy is developed can vary across the country and have different degrees of activity options for students in the schools.

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 is aiming to mitigate obesity but it is leaving another essential element out of the policy that has the potential to combat obesity. The law is void of requirements of activity levels in the school systems. This creates a variance in local level policy in regards to activity levels. This is something that the policymakers missed as a real way to change the obesity epidemic. As identified in *Figure One: Childhood Obesity Growth 1971 to*

Present, the White House Task Force identified the need to battle the growing rates of obesity in the nation. In doing so, they developed the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 which as outlined, is missing a crucial element in order to create systemic change from the federal mandate. The local school districts are creating their own policies about school nutrition and activity. This leaves a variance nationwide that cannot leave the policy combating obesity in eating alone. In the research, it was revealed that the school district had to organize themselves in their own philosophy of health in order to claim to combat obesity. As stated, the administrative respondents claimed they were working towards lowering obesity rates through their own special programs such as Family and Consumer Science classes, recess, and extracurricular activities. Weick (1995), identified that when organizations make the most sense to members, they have a strong context that is highly visible, depicts what they desire to happen, and irrevocability. This research identifies that since there is not federal compliance, the principal respondents did not have a clear understanding of what they are doing at the district level to mitigate obesity. This is a missed opportunity and the policy should have worked to include a component regarding physical activity in order to truly use this as a function to battle obesity in the nation.

Daily Interactions of Policy Implementers in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

It is evident that in order to carry out a successful program that nourishes students, there needs to be a relationship developed with the students. This relationship encourages students to eat meals and attain nourishment. When relationships are at the basis of creating a healthy eating mission, this leaves a level of variance based on the quality of the personnel that the foodservice company hires. The respondents that are cafeteria workers, administrators, the executive chef, and foodservice director cite their advocacy for students to eat the items that are available. In this advocacy, a variance can occur across cases which examines that the policy is not implemented in

the same ways across all districts or even school buildings. The foodservice program director is responsible for the vision of the program and he encourages the students to eat healthy meals through the lunch and breakfast program. The vision of the foodservice program director recognizing the importance of breakfast is in line with the literature as it suggests that students who have poor nutrition are less likely to eat breakfast (Kleinman, et al., 2002). In providing students with a proper meal and aiming to achieve items that meet their pallets, he is creating a positive experience for the students that filters throughout the foodservice staff and administrators.

The school administrators who work with this policy on a daily basis know the least about the legalities of the policy. This is an alarming situation as the law, as it is written, expects that the intentions of the policy will be carried out on the local level. There is no way to carry out the policy to the best of intentions if the policy implementers are not clear on the intricacies. It was unexpected that the policy implementers that become the face of the school lunch program know the least of the intricacies of the law. The principal respondents become the face and voice of this policy in their school buildings. Respondent One explains, “the fact that kids can pick and choose what they're receiving and it's taking some of that stress off of those parents who might not be able to provide that part for their child is a huge benefit to our school.” They handle the applications, reach out to parents, field complaints about the school meals from students and parents, yet they are unaware of the specifics of Public Law 111-296.

I was surprised by the lack of specificity that they have in the policy that they are responsible for carrying out based on the viewpoints of the students and staff. Weick (1995) identifies how people are inactive of their environments and their actions create the environments around them and develop the opportunities and constraints. For school administrators, how they think of this policy is how the policy is developed around them. When there is a lack of

communication surrounding the intricacies of the policy, the policy implementers can vary in the degree of accuracy that they implement for the policy. This creates a need for the state government to govern the local control as the variance in policy implementation occurs at local levels throughout the nation. Public Law 111-296, when developed, was void of the importance of the school administration in their role in the policy.

The culture of the school in regards to this policy is largely impacted on the basis of the building principal. Weick (1995), describes that as people are given more information to process, they take strong steps to manage it. In regards to the policy, school administrators are already tasked with so many procedures, missions, strategies, rules, and safety concerns that they tend to be in a state of information overload. This information overload was evident as the respondents were unaware of the policy requirements beyond providing students with healthy meal options. The respondents claimed that they need to do more with nutrition education and community outreach for their families. I found it concerning that the administrators are tasked with providing healthy options and they are not communicating beyond a simple newsletter on ways families can be healthy. Weick (1995) examines that “people create and find what they expect to find” (p. 35). As the literature suggests, if the school principals were providing families and students information on the policy and how to be healthy, then they would discover how students and families could make healthy decisions. This is a missed opportunity that the policy does not provide and the district is not taking. If it was a mandate, I believe there would be a better sense of compliance from the district as in the case of the citations they received.

School districts determine their program focus based on following the mandates that are given to them by the state government. When central office administration received a citation for not complying with the state mandates, then the shift of focus came into view of the school district.

The other facet of policy implementation in the district is on the central administration track. In addition to hiring the foodservice program, the central office is also responsible for sharing the policy with the building principals.

As the literature discovers, the reauthorization of the policy met some backlash from legislators because of the increase of government control over the local levels of governance. This conflict has played out in the ways that the district received a citation. In getting an audit from the Michigan Department of Education, they were seen to not be following all the necessary steps for the school lunch (Appendix E). With these results, the central office administrators altered their local policy to incorporate the corrections (Appendix F). In their communication with the school administrators, the central office examined what the building principals were to focus on in their schools: count and claiming for the school lunch program. This emailed correspondence is a reason why the building principals are unclear of the main policy. Power and social influence are the ways in which people can create clarity and it is lost with technology (Weick, 1995). However, the policy is mainly concerned on compliance and that is what building principals focus on. This research discovers when schools focus on mainly compliance, they miss opportunities that can be created to enhance policies in their district.

This program provides a divergence between public schools that are not for profit and for-profit companies. The role of outsourced food companies was void in the literature on school lunch policy implementation. The foodservice company draws a curtain over the real intentions of profitability. At first glance, it appears the goals of the foodservice company and the district are completely aligned. When describing their intentions of the foodservice program, they each share that they are student centered. Respondent Four explains, “if a kid is hungry they're not going to learn well. For many of our poor students, kids, in general, their best chance of getting a

solid meal is probably at school.” This was the clarity that has permeated the administrators and staff that deal with the foodservice program. However, the program director Respondent Eight, explains his goal,

I just want to make sure that the kids that are still coming through (the cafeteria line) like it and they're happy with it. That's really all it really is it's just trying to offer new things and it's up to the kids and the parents to decide. But I know I can't make anybody, just like a restaurant, you can't make anybody come in. Who you have is who deserves to have your best every time. That's what our role is just trying to push that and make sure that nutritional eating is just in our menu with our quality and then with our salad bar just being full and ready.

Although initially, he states the need for students to be nourished and happy with the healthy menu options he provides, he is actually aiming to gain more participation.

Upon further review, it is revealed that foodservice companies really have numbers of students participating and financial gain as their main goal in implementing the policy. An unintended consequence of this policy was the lack of participation foodservice programs began to see in cafeterias across the nation. Outsourcing foodservice companies produces a voice in the policy that is centered around fiscal gain and participation to drive more money to the company which is kept hidden. On the contrary, the central office administrators believe they are providing students with a meal that is nourishing in the hands of a company that is also mirroring the same ideals. Although there is mention of the need to feed students, there is also an underpinning of the need for more participation which yields more income for the foodservice company. This is part of the extracted cues that organizations have and the people in power can choose where the attention is directed to (Weick, 1995). In this case study, the outsourcing of the foodservice

company is directing the attention of the district to the USDA compliant meals that are offered. This subtlety is a result of what happens when corporations enter the space of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The policy does not mention the role of the foodservice companies in feeding children and I believe it could be coming at a cost to the intention of the policy as financial gain is valued over nourishment.

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 Impact on Healthy Eating Habits

The literature suggests that when organizations have shared practices, they understand how the policy is enacted (Weick, 1995). The shared practices that happen in this district reflect the understanding of the policy in regards to eating habits in the cafeteria. When examining the potential of this policy in changing eating habits, the amount of food not eaten is as important as the amount that is eaten. As the literature suggests, one issue that arises in the development of health-conscious school lunches is food waste. The more removed the participants were from the daily operations, the more likely they were to report that the students were receiving nutrient-dense meals. However, when the principals were polled, they stated that they noticed a large amount of food waste unless they intervened. Often times, respondents indicate they are having conversations with the students about trying something or eating what they have placed on their plate. Respondent Two explains, “we're educators, our job is to teach. I think teaching about what you should put in your bodies is something that we have to focus on with the students in the classroom but also in the cafeteria as well.” His philosophy is shared with the cafeteria staff and foodservice personnel. They are constantly encouraging students to receive a well-rounded meal with the components they need to attain a reimbursable meal. However, in the cafeterias, 100% of the building principals identified that food waste is a concern of theirs.

The driving force to minimize plate waste comes from the personnel in the cafeteria. The policy implementers are the main aspect that attributes to the real change in the lives of the students. The literature examined that as this policy went from conception to birth, the amount of plate waste rose in cafeterias across the nation (The National School Board Association, 2014). Although the Edison Public School System did not see a decrease in participation, they have seen the issue in plate waste which cuts into the funds of the foodservice company. To battle this waste, the district has an offer versus serve policy that is described in detail in Chapter Four. In the district, they offer the students an apple in place of serving them the item which indicates that the student may not want that specific item. That is one way the foodservice program is attempting to eliminate the automatic waste of students and increase profitability, however, unless they are encouraged, students are still choosing to throw out their food.

Respondent Two explains, “with our students that are in the cafeteria we do try to go around to say ‘okay eat your food, your apple’ you know that way they don't just throw the food away.” The principals are taking it upon themselves to work towards encouraging healthy meal consumption. In no way is food waste a central office administrator concern or directive. In this action, the principals are working to battle the food waste that occurs with the encouragement of eating healthy options like apples. It is in a moment like this that the principals do offer a hope that the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 can serve as a vehicle to change eating habits.

Without personnel sharing the vision of this program becoming the avenue for systematic change, the lunch program would just be a lunch program. This research identifies that the way policy implementers react to the law largely influences how it is carried out in schools. As this policy was mandated by the federal government, it declared that the schools were the places that the obesity epidemic should be addressed. The issue that arises is “schools are not, and cannot be,

the only instrument of social reform in a democratic country” (Shields, 2009, p. 21). In suggesting that schools are the place where students who are coming from food insecure backgrounds not only attain nutrient-dense meals but learn about healthy eating is to do the policy a disservice. The students need more than just the school cafeterias to learn how to make healthy choices. However, the research indicates as highlighted in Chapter Four, when you have a dynamic leader at the helm who cares about nourishment, then the change of healthy eating can happen.

The actions of the foodservice director and executive chef spanned a leadership style that worked beyond merely checking boxes. On the contrary, at the central office perspective, the Superintendent for Business Services and Operations was mainly focused on developing a program that provided compliance with the federal and state laws. As the foodservice director and executive chef prove, their work above just creating a foodservice program spanned into a systemic change for the policy. This change worked to actually change the eating habits of students. Whether it was creating a school garden (Respondent Eight) or developing a nutrition education program in the cafeteria (Respondent Nine), they were working to make sure that the students were understanding the reasons why they should change their eating habits. In their quest to develop and implement a program that inspires real change, their leadership is creating equality for the students who are disadvantaged.

It is in the way the foodservice director is centered around creating a program that has equal opportunity for all students that this leadership is disseminated from him to the staff. He and the executive chef are constantly thinking about how to expose students from backgrounds that are less fortunate to new foods and vegetables. The work beyond the foodservice program for building principals alike creates a sense of responsibility for the students. The principals and foodservice director feel responsible to provide a healthy reliable meal to hungry students. The individual

accountability principals need to concern themselves with is just to have the families who are eligible apply for the free and reduced-price lunch program. However, as noted in Chapter Four, the roles they take to move beyond compliance and into the social responsibility they feel for the students in their buildings.

The findings reveal the building principals responded about the importance of serving food to the students on the Eastern end of the district. These students consist of 20% or more in each building that receives free or reduced-price lunch status. Being tasked with creating a program that services the highest of affluent students with the lowest is something the foodservice director encounters. However, the most important thing to him is that the lunch program is just a lunch program and it serves all students (Respondent Eight). When he looks to this program to solve the problems in the district like hunger and nutrient exposure, he is displaying the sense of greater need he has for the program. This is displaying a sense of moral courage that leaders display when they are addressing the voices and needs that people who are marginalized have (Shields, 2009). The foodservice director has stood up for the students in regards to ordering higher quality meat that they enjoy and to provide them with the foods they like. He has also worked on training the foodservice personnel to maintain positive relationships with the students and encourage more nutrient consumption. The building principals have become the advocates for their students in the lunch lines. They work with the foodservice director to ensure the needs of the students are being met. In their actions, the ways the leaders address the needs of the students is centralized in their policy implementation.

This case study takes place in a school system that has a polarized school population. It is so polarized that it has been cited for not upholding civil rights. Appendix E identifies that the district “does not have a procedure for receiving and processing complaints alleging discrimination

with the FNS School Meal Programs.” This led the district to develop as demanded by the state, a Grievance Procedures for Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity/Access (Appendix G) and the School Nutrition Programs Civil Rights Complaint Procedure (Appendix H). These documents were a result of the needs of the minoritized individuals in the district not being met in regards to the foodservice program. In order to meet the state policies, the district complied. Weick (1995), identifies how people choose to act is molded on their environment and their environments are molded on their actions. This explains how districts need to work on social injustices like civil rights especially when their demographics shift and change to encompass a more diverse student body. Building principals have the ability to create their organization and environment through their actions and how they act determines how this policy is filtered into the school culture. Moving beyond simple compliance, principals are displaying moral courage as they advocate for change in the menu options and the foodservice. Some principals have even created better card systems to account for meal ordering to ensure students receive what they prefer and focus groups to determine what is selling and what students want to see more of.

In their work, the building principals are maintaining high standards for their students when they advocate for warmer meals, quicker serving times, and better food quality. Respondent One even questions the health of the meals made available to the students although they are USDA compliant. The building principals are taking actions beyond their roles of working with the applications and caring about the overall food quality so that students can truly have a nutritious meal. The focus on building relationships with students enables the building principals to advocate for them to the foodservice director. In turn, he works to create a program that meets the nutritional needs of all students.

This happened when Respondent One identified they needed more items in the salad bar because the students were consuming lots of them. In his advocacy with the foodservice director, they then made sure to ship more vegetables to the elementary school (Respondent Eight). This shows that the food is actually being consumed and the students want more of the healthy items. The foodservice director even states that he is trying new vegetables and it is catching on with the students that did not eat them before like cucumbers (Respondent Eight). The nourishment needs that are obtained for the students create school cultures which identify the need to eat the vegetables taken, and minimize food waste. That coupled with the principals' individual mission in creating healthy options for students, the students of the free and reduced-price lunch population have a voice and are able to consume healthy food choices that the leaders hope will make a lasting impact on their personal nutrition.

This policy has served as a vehicle for healthy changes in eating habits as outlined in the cafeteria. This policy is only able to change if the leadership behind it believes in using it as a tool for change. Every respondent that works directly with the students identified the importance of a well-nourished student and the encouragement it takes to nourish them. They hope to instill in the students from food insecure backgrounds how to select a healthy meal that mirrors the cafeteria's well-balanced plate. It would be amiss if it was not identified that without these leaders going above the mandate of the policy and acting from their sense of moral purpose, real changes in eating would not occur as a result of this policy. In using this policy as a vehicle, they have enacted their leadership to aim to decrease unhealthy eating in their cafeterias. It takes a leadership team that is disseminated throughout the district that aims to make a real change to students living in poverty by providing them nourishment.

Recommendations

This qualitative case study sought to determine how school administrators and staff enacted The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. In this mission, sensemaking was used as a lens to view school leadership and their understandings of this policy. The research has revealed how principals create school cultures that concern The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. It is in the roles of the various stakeholders that are charged with administering this policy that students are able to have a healthy, well-balanced meal that is reliable each day. As school leaders are increasingly held accountable for the injustices in society and programs are developed and filtered through schools, it is found that school leaders are in charge of the social reform that needs to happen to provide students a democratic education (Shields, 2009). The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 does just that; schools are the place where students from food insecure backgrounds are fed reliable, healthy meals.

The following recommendations are offered for all school systems as they implement this policy. The recommendations are for central office administration, foodservice programs, and building level principals.

1. The sensemaking for this policy with each policy implementer determines the success of the policies goals. In a large district, it is important for central office administrators to share their vision for how the building principals should interact with the policy. The principals are the mirrors of the school policy and how they understand the policy implements the whole school culture.
2. It is not enough to have a policy like The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 to change the nourishment of students and battle obesity. Each stakeholder in the educational environments needs to advocate, encourage, and inform students on best

- eating practices and movement. In order to battle obesity, there needs to be a leadership team that advocates for movement in the classrooms, special programs, and active clubs that students can participate in.
3. As The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 is diffused from federal conception to local levels, there is a fine line between compliance and actual change. In order to spark actual change, the stakeholders need to work beyond compliance and see the driving force that aims to better the lives of students living in poverty.
 4. In order to encourage students to use The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 as a vehicle for real change in their eating habits, a school leader needs to work beyond the policy. In their interactions, they have to mitigate the underpinnings of a socially unjust society in regards to healthy eating choices. The school leader needs to engrain healthy eating into the interactions they have with students.

These recommendations identify the importance of the school administrators and staff members in selecting a foodservice program, hiring personnel who are working to better the lives of students, and the need for schools to create healthy eating habits that go beyond the cafeteria. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 is a policy that needs stakeholders to not only enact sensemaking but to also work towards real change for students. If there is real change that the system is working to combat, while offering nutritious food and healthy movement options, only then can the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 work towards combating obesity as it intends.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, I focused specifically on how school administrators and staff understand The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. I used a sensemaking lens to view the data from the qualitative case study. In selecting the administrators who work with the policy, I was able to view

how the policy is implemented in a school system. By selecting schools with a free and reduced-price lunch population of 20% or more, I was able to understand how schools interact with this policy. Other researchers could select another district and conduct a multiple case study comparing the data set from the Edison Public School System with that of a 100% free and reduced-price lunch school system. This could offer a compelling comparison and integration of the aspects discovered in this study.

I encountered a limitation in the demographics of the leadership team and the students. This case study only applies to this unique district as it has a large economic barrier. In another study, the researcher could aim to encompass a more homogeneous group of students who are experiencing a higher volume of food insecurity and poverty. This would give a voice to building administrators about their focusing concerning the nutrition of the students. In addition, I believe this research would be enhanced by learning from the students and their parents. Having their voice to see if the work the building principals believe they are doing is actually making a difference would enrich this study.

This study was largely impacted by the role of the foodservice director and his team. They are from an outsourced company. Future research could compare multiple foodservice companies and see if they are working beyond compliance with the program and with the same social justice lens of the foodservice director in the Edison Public School System. In addition, another researcher could select a like district that has not had a citation from the Michigan Department of Education and see how their program is being constructed.

Conclusion

The National School Lunch Program was born out of the need to nourish students who were living in poverty to prepare a nation to be ready for war. As the draftees were turned away

because they did not have the strength to fight, the nation determined schools were the place that nourishment for food insecure students would take place. Decades later, the National School Lunch Program has become a domestic battleground with the obesity epidemic. To mitigate the rising costs and concerns of students who are obese, The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 was signed into law. As described in Chapter Two, this policy aims to combat obesity through nutrient-dense meals in the cafeteria. As this policy is filtered into the schools, this case study examined how school administrators and staff are making sense of the policy and the ways in which they are held accountable to implement it.

As the policy was reauthorized, it received some backlash from different parties. With the new administration, the USDA policies became less strict for school lunches on whole grains, sodium, and fat content of the school milk. Districts could apply for waivers that rolled the nutrition standards back. This was after the conceptual period of the 2012 year and the requirements intended to become stricter in the 2017-2018 school year. This policy has seen a backlash from political parties as it increases the federal control over a local program as the goals of education conflict. The individual consumers of this policy did not appreciate the new nutritional standards that were mandated federally. On a district level, the state government began to become increasingly involved with the nutrient contents of the meals. In the Edison Public School System, this led to a citation from the Michigan Department of Education.

The citation from the state government determined what the policy implementers at the central office focus on in regards to this policy. In the Edison Public School System, they outsourced the program to a foodservice company. The foodservice company aligned to the district's Wellness Policy (Appendix J) and focused on nutrition for students. Not only does this company provide nutritious meals, but they work to expand the palates of the students. This data

revealed that it is important for a school system to hire an outside company that shares a mission that is in line with their vision. As the policy implementers interacted with this policy, it was a direct result of the sensemaking the foodservice director partakes in. The sensemaking that is shared amongst administrators in regards to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 determines how the school conducts the policy. The school personnel that is behind this policy is just as important, if not more important, than the policy itself in filtering through the school system as intended.

The school principals become the mirrors of the policy as it is implemented in the district. They are the stakeholders that deal with the student and parent population that this policy serves. How the school administrators integrate health and nutrition into their school environments determines if the students will be more willing to try the nutrient-dense meals. The foodservice personnel who serve the food also matter as they encourage healthy eating choices. They become the program's biggest advocate when they are informing and encouraging students to eat meals. How the school leaders work beyond their roles to inspire change with this program is what can create a systemic change. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 was created to help students living in poverty by nourishing their bodies. What this research reveals is that the most important component of the nourishment taking place is the work that the respondents choose to undertake beyond complying with the policy. It is in the hands of the leaders who work to create a school environment that is truly democratic and supports the needs of all learners to be nourished in their bodies in order for their minds to be fulfilled.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Concurrence of Exemption Approval

**WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

IRB Administration Office
87 East Canfield, Second Floor
Detroit, Michigan 48201
Phone: (313) 577-1628
FAX: (313) 993-7122
<http://irb.wayne.edu>

CONCURRENCE OF EXEMPTION

To: Taylor Barczyk
Administration & Organization Stud

For
From: Dr. Deborah Ellis M. Tancer, MD / Sc
Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

Date: April 02, 2018

RE: IRB #: 033618B3X
Protocol Title: A Case Study Exploring Sensemaking of The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010
Sponsor:
Protocol #: 1803001286

The above-referenced protocol has been reviewed and found to qualify for **Exemption** according to paragraph #4 of the Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations [45 CFR 46.101(b)].

- Revised Social/Behavioral/Education Exempt Protocol Summary Form (revision received in IRB Office 03/20/2018)
- Research Protocol (received in the IRB Office 03/13/2018)
- Medical records are not being accessed therefore HIPAA does not apply
- Research Information Sheet (revision dated 03/19/2018)
- Tentative Interview Guide

This proposal has not been evaluated for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human subjects in relation to the potential benefits.

-
- Exempt protocols do not require annual review by the IRB.
 - All changes or amendments to the above-referenced protocol require review and approval by the IRB **BEFORE** implementation
 - Adverse Reactions/Unexpected Events (AR/UE) must be submitted on the appropriate form within the timeframe specified in the IRB Administration Office Policy (<http://irb.wayne.edu/policies-human-research.php>).

NOTE: Forms should be downloaded from the IRB Administration Office website <http://irb.wayne.edu> at each use.

Notify the IRB of any changes to the funding status of the above-referenced protocol.

APPENDIX B

Research Information Sheet and Informed Consent

Barczyk Exploring Sensemaking of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act ... 1

Research Information SheetTitle of Study: *Exploring Sensemaking of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010*

Principal Investigator (PI): *Taylor Mary Barczyk*
 Ph.D. Candidate Wayne State University
 (248)766- [REDACTED]

Purpose:

You are being asked to participate in a research study in order to determine how sensemaking of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 occurs in a school district. You have been selected because your school serves a population of at least 20% of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch status. This study is being conducted at Wayne State University and in your home school system.

Study Procedures

If you choose to partake in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a recorded interview that will remain confidential. This interview will take place at a location and time of your choosing and will take approximately a half hour to complete and you do not need to answer any questions you do not want to respond to. Identifying information such as your name, school, or district will not be included in this study.

Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future. In a broader context, your participation will contribute to the understanding of how this policy is disseminated in school systems. It is intended the information gained from this research study will enhance understanding and further the policy implementation of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010.

Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

Costs

- There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

Compensation

- You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality:

- You will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. There will be no list that links your identity with this code.

Submission/Revision Date: March 19, 2018
 Protocol Version #: 1

Page 1 of 2

Form Date: 04/2015

Barczyk Exploring Sensemaking of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act ...

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part in this study, or if you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Taylor Barczyk at the following phone number (248) 766- [REDACTED]. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the Wayne State Research Subject Advocate at (313) 577-1628 to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

Participation

By completing the interview, you are agreeing to participate in this study.

APPROVED

APR 02 2018

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARDSubmission/Revision Date: March 19, 2018
Protocol Version #: 1

Page 2 of 2

Form Date: 04/2015

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide

Barczyk Exploring Sensemaking of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act ... 1

Tentative Interview Guide for Study

Exploring Sensemaking of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010

1. Please describe your role in operating the free or reduced lunch program
2. How does nutritional eating happen in the cafeteria?
3. Do you concern yourself with the nutritional choices involved in the cafeteria?
4. How is the menu communicated to you?
5. What do you know about the nutritional requirements that are needed for school lunch?
6. In what ways may school lunch be related to obesity?
7. How does this program help students in poverty?
8. What is your role/ action you have taken beyond the food program in student nutrition?
9. This law has been created to minimize obesity in schools, how has your school system used the school lunch program to work towards lowering childhood obesity rates?
10. How is local policy making working to combat childhood obesity?
11. What are you doing in your school culture to focus on:
 - i. Nutrition Education for students and families
 - ii. Promoting Nutritious Eating
 - iii. Nourishment for students in poverty
12. What are your daily interactions with the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010?
 - a. How do you understand this policy?
 - b. How does this policy take shape in your:
 - i. Building Level
 - ii. District Level
13. Do particular experiences, knowledge frameworks, and/or influences cause students to think about the potential of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 initiative as a vehicle for changing healthy eating habits?

APPROVED

APR 02 2018

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPENDIX D

Memorandum of Citations From Central Office to Building Administrators

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Administrators

DATE: March 6, 2017

RE: Food Service Program

As you know public schools in Michigan participate in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program (also known as School Nutrition Program or SNP). As a result of participating in a required Federal program, the District is subject to Federal rules and guidelines as we implement our food service program. Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is charged with oversight of the program.

MDE conducts an Administrative Review (AR) of all school districts as part of their oversight responsibilities. The AR for _____ was conducted in January, 2017 at certain schools in the District. The good news; overall our processes and procedures have significantly improved from prior years. However, there were some findings in the AR that need to be corrected. MDE believes that in order to promote the most accurate count and claiming procedure, every student must enter their identification number or utilize their card at the point of sale (cashier), for any food items, regardless of whether they are purchasing a complete lunch or ala carte items. This must be implemented whether student is using cash or charging their purchase.

The following procedures need to be implemented immediately at the point of sale (cashier):

FOOD SERVICE POINT OF SALE

- **Regardless of method of payment, all students purchasing lunch will utilize their card or student identification number at the point of sale. This is true for all sales, cash or charge, and for all food choices, lunch or ala carte items.**
- **Student cards that are lost or unavailable to students will be replaced within one week.**

- **_____ will be assisting and training staff at each school to implement these procedures.**

We appreciate your patience in learning new processes and procedures and the changes put in effect this year. We know it takes time to implement and integrate changes.

Please let me know directly if you have any questions or concerns or how we can assist you in this process.

We have been very pleased with _____ this year and look forward to a successful year in Food Service. Thank you for your help in getting the new program working for the students of _____.

APPENDIX E

Citation from the Michigan Department of Education

Office of School Support Services
School Nutrition Programs
Administrative Review



Findings Report

The Administrative Review (AR) is a comprehensive evaluation of your school nutrition program and includes both Critical and General Areas of Review. The Critical and General Areas of Review are intermixed across four primary sections: Access and Reimbursement, Meal Pattern and Nutritional Quality, General Program Compliance, and Other Federal Program Reviews.

Certification and Benefit Issuance

- ① **Finding:** Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Applications were approved incorrectly.
Corrected On-Site: Applications errors were corrected on site. No further corrective action is required.

Verification

- ② **Finding:** The School Food Authority's Verification notification letter does not contain all of the required information.
Corrective Action Required: Update the Verification notification letter so that it has all the required information. Submit a copy of the new notification letter. Ensure the Hearing official does not initially receive verification information.

Meal Counting and Claiming

- ③ **Finding:** The meal service line, as observed on the day of review, did not provide an accurate count by eligibility category at the point of service during lunch.
Corrective Action Required: Develop and implement a new procedure for point of service that will ensure an accurate count by eligibility category is taken at all lunch meal service periods. Provide training to staff on the procedure. Submit a copy of the procedure. Ensure that every student, regardless of method of payment, enters their student number into the POS.

Meal Components and Quantities

No Findings Identified.

Offer versus Serve

No Findings Identified.

Dietary Specifications and Nutrient Analysis

Office of School Support Services
School Nutrition Programs
Administrative Review



No Findings Identified.

④

Civil Rights

Finding: The School Food Authority does not have a procedure for receiving and processing complaints alleging discrimination with the FNS School Meal Programs.

Corrective Action Required: Submit a procedure and supporting documentation, including logs, for receiving and processing complaints alleging discrimination within FNS School Meal Programs.

SFA On-site Monitoring

No Findings Identified.

Local School Wellness Policy and School Meal Environment

No Findings Identified.

Smart Snacks

No Findings Identified.

Professional Standards

No Findings Identified.

Water

No Findings Identified.

REMOVED 2.1.17

Food Safety, Storage, and Buy American

⑤

Finding: Food products of non-domestic origin were found in the food storage areas and documentation supporting the item(s) were eligible for an exception was not available.

Corrective Action Required: Submit a written assurance that the Buy American regulations will be met for all procurement transactions moving forward.

Reporting and Recordkeeping

No Findings Identified.

SBP and SFSP Outreach

**Office of School Support Services
School Nutrition Programs
Administrative Review**



No Findings Identified.

Afterschool Snacks

No Findings Identified.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

No Findings Identified.

Special Milk Program

No Findings Identified.

Community Eligibility Program

No Findings Identified.

**Office of School Support Services
School Nutrition Programs
Administrative Review**



SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The following Technical Assistance was provided to ensure compliance with the School Nutrition Programs and includes both Critical and General Areas of Review.

Certification and Benefit Issuance

Discussed MiStar system. Updates to the application system were made on-site. Continue performing edit checks to ensure all Free and Reduced applications are approved correctly.

Verification

Verifying and Hearing officials must be different.

Meal Counting and Claiming

Individual sites should report meal counts by benefit category for consolidation.

Point of service system should not overtly identify student's eligibility.

Second meals should be charged as a la carte sales. Second meals cannot be claimed for reimbursement.

It is recommended that Elementary uses key pads for student ID. While on-site, reviewer noticed 25% of students missing ID cards which held up the rest of the students in line. Students are also able to walk behind the cashier without giving their ID card. There should only be one Point of Service to ensure all students are counted properly. It is recommended that students and teachers are trained in lunch line process to help keep order.

Meal Components and Quantities

The following link can be used to help gather all the required labels for the review. USDA Child Nutrition labels database:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/usdausdc-authorized-labels-and-manufacturers>

Encourage reimbursable meals be taken instead of simply charging a la carte. Noticed at [redacted] when students in line did not have a fruit or vegetable, they were not asked if they wanted to grab something else. Possibly put a fruit basket at the check out line (as is done at [redacted] High School).

Offer versus Serve

No TA Provided.

Dietary Specifications and Nutrient Analysis

Recommend severely limiting or omitting the following items (bacon, bacon bits, pepperoni, chow mein noodles, pickles, olives, packaged crackers and/or croutons) from food and/or salad bars.

Consider replacing these items with low-fat, low sodium items. For more information review program regulations and nutrition standards at the following link:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>.

Civil Rights

**Office of School Support Services
School Nutrition Programs
Administrative Review**



Limited English Proficiency services: SFA must have LEP process. Applications in different languages and an adult interpreter must be made available upon request. Following is the link to USDA Limited English Proficient (LEP) website www.LEP.gov

SFA must have a procedure in place for receiving and processing complaints. Following is the link that provides the required documentation: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-66254_50144-194532--,00.html

SFA On-Site Monitoring

No TA Provided.

Local School Wellness Policy and School Meal Environment

SFAs participating in the School Meals Program must have a written Local Wellness Policy containing the required elements. Below is a web link that will provide the most current local wellness policy requirements:

https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/wellness_committees_policies/

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tr/local-school-wellness-policy-outreach-toolkit>

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tr/local-school-wellness-policy>

Smart Snacks

The SFA must have label documentation or use the Smart Snack Calculator tool to determine compliance of these items. The Smart Snacks Calculator tool is available at the following web link: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-66254_50144-327975--,00.html

Professional Standards

No TA Provided.

Water

No TA Provided.

Food Safety, Storage, and Buy American

Ensure all products purchased and utilized in the School Nutrition Program comply with the Buy American requirement. Keep any documentation relating to purchasing of goods which do not comply.

Reporting and Recordkeeping

No TA Provided.

SBP and SFSP Outreach

The SFA must inform families and students of the availability of summer meals prior to the end of the school year. The method of outreach must be documented annually. This can be accomplished by providing a link on the District or organization website to the list of sites providing summer meals: <http://www.mogil.state.mi.us/schoolnutrition/>.

Afterschool Snacks

**Office of School Support Services
School Nutrition Programs
Administrative Review**



No TA Provided.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

No TA Provided.

Special Milk Program

No TA Provided.

Community Eligibility Provision

No TA Provided.

APPENDIX F

Edison Public School System Response to Citations to Michigan Department of Education

March 9, 2017

Michigan Department of Education
Office of School Support Service
School Nutrition Programs

Re: Response to Findings Report - Administrative Review

This letter is in response to the Findings Report dated 2/1/2017.

Verification

Finding:

The School Food Authority's Verification notification letter does not contain all of the required information.

Corrective Action Required:

Update the Verification notification letter so that it has all of the required information. Submit a copy of the new notification letter. Ensure the Hearing official does not initially receive the verification information.

Response:

The District has revised and updated the Verification notification letter. The letter is sent from the Business Operations & Support Services Coordinator and it is clear that the hearing official is not the same individual that initially received the verification information. The hearing official is the Director of Business Services. A copy of the revised (sample) letter is attached for your review.

Meal Counting and Claiming

Finding:

The meal service line, as observed on the day of review, did not provide an accurate count by eligibility category at the point of service during lunch.

Corrective Action Required:

Develop and implement a new procedure for point of service that will ensure an accurate count by eligibility category is taken at all lunch meal service periods. Provide training to staff on the procedures. Submit a copy of the procedure. Ensure that every student, regardless of method of payment, enters their student number into the POS.

Response:**Elementary:**

Stanchions were purchased to prevent students from walking behind the cashier and allowing for a single file line directing the students to the cashier. A fruit basket has been placed at the register and cashiers have been coached to ask students if they would like a fruit if they are missing a meal component. If a student does not have their ID card, a new card can be produced through the POS system. This student's name will be written down and the list will be used weekly to print new ID cards.

All Schools:

All cashiers have been retrained and cashiers will have students enter their ID number or scan card before any meal transaction takes place. This will avoid any overt identification of student status. The District will continue to work with each school to make sure the process of meal counting and claiming is accurate and reflects the appropriate processes and procedures. Fruit baskets will be located at each cashier stand giving the students the opportunity to create a reimbursable meal.
review.

Response to Civil Rights*Finding:*

The School Food Authority does not have a procedure for receiving and processing complaints alleging discriminations with the FNS School Meal Programs.

Corrective Action Required:

Submit a procedure and supporting documentation, including logs, for receiving and processing complaints alleging discrimination within FNS School Meal Programs

Response:

The District is in the process of adding a new policy to the Board of Education Administrative Guidelines for civil right complaint process that includes the information indicated by MDE. We have reviewed the documents provided on the MDE site and reviewed the MDE tutorial regarding civil rights. We will incorporate the documents into the policy. Forms will be available in an on-line input form, a printable document from the website and hard copies in the office of the District's School Nutrition Program Civil Rights Coordinator. Attached is a draft of the proposed policy and appropriate forms. As indicated, we will send MDE any complaint within five days and we will begin a process of keeping a log of any complaints. New or revised Board of Education policies must be read at two Board of Education meetings to be approved by the Board. This process has begun and will be incorporated in the next few months.

Please let me know if there is any additional information that you require at this time. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Deputy Superintendent

APPENDIX G

Edison Public School System Grievance Procedure for Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity/Access

DRAFT

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/ACCESS

Section I

Any person who believes that s/he has been discriminated against or denied equal opportunity or access to programs or services may file a complaint, which shall be referred to as a grievance, with the District's School Nutrition Program's Civil Rights Coordinator,

Deputy Superintendent of Business Services

Forms may be found on the District's website ([link](#))

The District will alert the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) of any complaints made within five days.

The individual may also, at any time, contact Michigan Department of Education or U.S. Department of Agriculture at the following:

Michigan Department of Education, Office of School Support Service
School Nutrition Programs
Civil Rights Consultant
PO Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,
1400 Independent Avenue SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410
Fax: 202-690-7442
Email: program.intake@usda.gov

Section II

The person who believes s/he has a valid basis for grievance shall discuss the grievance informally and on a verbal basis with the District's School Nutrition Program Civil Rights Coordinator, who shall in turn investigate the complaint and reply with an answer to the complainant. S/He may initiate formal procedures according to the following steps:

Step 1

A written statement of the grievance signed by the complainant shall be submitted to the District's Civil Rights Coordinator within five (5) business days of receipt of answers to the informal complaint. The Coordinator shall further investigate the matters of grievance and reply in writing to the complainant within five (5) business days. Forms are available by

contacting the School Nutrition Program Civil Rights Coordinator or on the District's website (link):

Step 2

If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision of the District's Civil Rights Coordinator, s/he may submit a signed statement of appeal to the Superintendent within five (5) business days after receipt of the Coordinator's response. The Superintendent shall meet with all parties involved, formulate a conclusion, and respond in writing to the complainant within ten (10) business days.

Step 3

If the complainant remains unsatisfied, s/he may appeal through a signed written statement to the Board of Education within five (5) business days of his/her receipt of the Superintendent's response in step two. In an attempt to resolve the grievance, the Board shall meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within twenty (20) business days of the receipt of such an appeal. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within ten (10) business days of this meeting.

Step 4

If at this point the grievance has not been satisfactorily settled, further appeal may be made to:
 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,
 1400 Independent Avenue SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410
 Fax: 202-690-7442
 Email: program.intake@usda.gov

The District Coordinator will provide a copy of the District's grievance procedure to any person who files a complaint and will investigate all complaints in accordance with this procedure. The District Coordinator will maintain a log of all complaints.

A copy of each of the Acts and the regulations, on which this notice is based, may be found in the Civil Rights Coordinator's office.

APPENDIX H

School Nutrition Programs Civil Rights Complaint Procedure

Michigan Department of Education
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909

Office of School Support Services
School Nutrition Programs
Phone: (517) 373-3347
Fax: 517-373-4022

Email: mde-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov

School Nutrition Programs
Civil Rights Complaint Procedure

Civil Rights Complaint Received by Sponsor (Verbal or Written)
Civil Rights Complaint Documented in Civil Rights Complaint Log
Sponsor gives complainant Civil Rights Complaint Form and/or Sponsor Completes Civil Rights Complaint Form with complainant
If Complainant Returns Civil Rights Complaint Form to Sponsor Sponsor forwards Civil Rights Complaint Form to MDE School Nutrition Programs within 5 working days

Send Civil Rights Complaints to: Michigan Department of Education
Office of School Support Service
School Nutrition Programs
Civil Rights Consultant
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909

End of Document

MDE-SchoolNutrition@michigan.gov

APPENDIX I

Civil Rights Nutrition Discrimination Complaint Form

Civil Rights Nutrition Discrimination Complaint Form

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Street Address

Apt./Unit #

City

State, Zip Code

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Best time of day to reach you: _____ Best way to reach you: Phone Email Other: _____

Who do you believe discriminated against you? Name(s) or person(s) involved in the alleged discrimination (if known):

Please name the program you applied for (if known/if applicable):

What happened to you? Please use additional sheets and include any supported documentation that would help show what happened.

When did the discrimination occur? Date (and time if known):

Where did the discrimination occur? Address of school or location where incident occurred (city, state, zip):

If the discrimination occurred more than once, please provide other dates:

Civil Rights Nutrition Discrimination Complaint Form

It is a violation of the law to discriminate against you based on the following: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, and political beliefs. (Not all bases apply to all programs). Reprisal is prohibited based on prior civil rights activity.

I believe I was discriminated against based on my:

Remedies: How would you like to see this complaint resolved?

Have you filed a complaint about the incident(s) with another federal, state, or local agency or with a court?

Yes No

When did you file?

What agency or court did you file?

Month, Day, Year

Signature:

Mail to:

Civil Rights Nutrition Discrimination

(Faint text)

(Faint text)

(Faint text)



APPENDIX J**Edison Public School System Bylaws and Policies 8510- Wellness****Schools
Bylaws & Policies**

8510 - WELLNESS**Wellness/Healthy Lifestyles**

As defined by the laws of the State of Michigan, the District is committed to creating a healthy school environment that enhances the development of lifelong wellness practices to promote healthy eating and physical activities that support student achievement.

Nutrition Education

All students shall receive nutrition education that is aligned with the Michigan Health Education Content Standards and Benchmarks. Nutrition education that teaches the knowledge, skills, and values needed to adopt healthy eating behaviors shall be integrated into the curriculum. Nutrition education information shall be offered throughout the school campus including, but not limited to, school dining areas and classrooms.

Nutrition Standards

The District shall ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutrition standards found in Federal regulations. The District shall encourage students to make nutritious food choices.

The District shall monitor all food and beverages sold or served to students during the school day. The District shall consider nutrient density and portion size before permitting food and beverages to be sold or served to students.

The Superintendent shall regularly evaluate the District's vending contracts.

Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness

The District may implement other appropriate programs that help create a school environment that conveys consistent wellness messages and is conducive to healthy eating and physical activity.

Implementation and Measurement

The Superintendent shall annually monitor the implementation of effectiveness of this policy taking into consideration the recommendations of the Wellness Committee. A report shall be provided to the Board of Education on an annual basis.

42 U.S.C. 1751, Sec. 204
42 U.S.C. 1771

APPENDIX K

Edison Public School System Free and Reduced-price lunch Application

2018-2019 Prototype Household Application for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals (click on apple icon)
Completed one application per household. Please use a pen (not a pencil)

Definition of Household Member: Anyone who is living with you and shares income and expenses, even if not related. Children in Foster care and children who meet definition of Homeless, Migrant or Runaway are eligible for free meals. Read How to Apply for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals for more information. PLEASE PRINT

Child's First Name MI Child's Last Name Student? School Grade Foster Child Homeless, Migrant, Runaway
1) 2) 3) 4) 5)

If NO > Go to STEP 3. If YES > Write a case number here, then go to STEP 4 (Do not complete STEP 3) Case Number: (Write only one case number in this space.)

Unsure what income to include here? Flip the page and review the charts titled, 'Sources of Income', for more information. The 'Sources of Income for Children' chart will help you with the Child Income section. The 'Sources of Income for Adults' chart will help you with the All Adult Household Members Section.

A. Child Income: Sometimes children in the household earn or receive income. Please include the TOTAL income received by all Household Members listed in STEP 1 here. How Often? Please put an X: Weekly Bi-Weekly 2x Month Monthly

B. All Adult Household Members (including yourself): List all Household Members not listed in STEP 1 (including yourself) even if they do not receive income. For each Household Member listed, if they do receive income, report total gross income (before taxes) for each source in whole dollars (no cents) only. If they do not receive income from any source, write '0'. If you enter '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

PLEASE PRINT: Name of Adult Household Member (First and Last) Earnings from Work How Often? Public Assistance Child Support/Alimony How Often? Child Income \$ Per Person/Statement How Often?
1) 2) 3) 4) 5) Total Household Members (Children and Adults) Primary Wage Earner or Other Adult Household Member

I certify (promise) that all information on this application is true and that all income is reported. I understand that this information is given in connection with the receipt of Federal Funds, and that school officials may verify (check) the information. I am aware that if I purposely give false information, my children may lose meal benefits, and I may be prosecuted under applicable State and Federal laws.

Street Address (if available) Apt # City State Zip Daytime Phone and Email (Optional)
Printed name of adult signing form Signature of adult Today's date



Sources of Income for Children	Sources of Child Income	Examples(s)
Earnings from work		A child has a regular full or part-time job where they earn a salary or wages
Social Security		A child is blind or disabled and receives Social Security Benefits.
- Disability Payments		A parent is disabled, retired, or deceased, and their child receives Social Security benefits.
- Survivor's Benefits		A friend or extended family member regularly gives a child spending money.
Income from person outside the household		A child receives regular income from a private pension fund, annuity, or trust.
Income from any other source		
Sources of Income for Adults	Sources of Adult Income	Examples(s)
Earnings from Work		Salary, wages, cash bonuses / Net income from self-employment (farm or business) / If you are in the U.S. Military / -Basic pay and cash bonuses (do NOT include combat pay, FSSA or privatized housing allowances)
Public Assistance / Alimony / Child Support		-Allowances for off-base housing, food and clothing -Unemployment Benefits -Workers compensation -Supplemental Security Income (SSI) -Cash assistance from State or local government -Alimony payments-Child support payments -Veteran's benefits -Strike benefits
Pensions / Retirement / All Other Income		-Social Security (including railroad retirement and black lung benefits) -Private pensions or disability benefits -Annuities -Regular income from trusts or estates -Investment income -Earned interest -Rental Income -Regular cash payments from outside household

We are required to ask for information about your children's race and ethnicity. This information is important and helps to make sure we are fully serving our community. Responding to this section is optional and does not affect your child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

Ethnicity (check one): Hispanic or Latino Not Hispanic
 Race (check one or more): American Indian or Alaskan Native Asian Black or African American Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander White

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced-price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. The last four digits of the social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Program of Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (PDIPIR) case number or other FDIPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. We MAY share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) where they apply for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-6992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Fax: (202) 690-7442
 Email: program.intake@usda.gov
 This institution is an equal opportunity provider

Annual Income Conversion: Weekly x 52, Every 2 Weeks x 26, Twice a Month x 24, Monthly x 12

Total Income: _____ Weekly _____ Bi-weekly _____ 2x Month _____ Monthly _____ Household Size: _____ Categorical Eligibility: _____ Eligibility: _____ Free _____ Reduced _____ Denied _____

Determining Official's Signature _____ Date _____ Confirming Official's Signature _____ Date _____ Verifying Officer's Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX L

Edison Public School System Frequently Asked Questions About Free and Reduced Price School Meals

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Edison Public School System offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$1.75; lunch costs (Elementary \$3.10, Middle and High School \$3.35). Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is .30 cents for breakfast and .40 cents for lunch. This packet includes an application for free or reduced price meal benefits, and a set of detailed instructions. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from **Food Assistance Program (FAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)] or Family Independence Program (FIP)**, are eligible for free meals.
- Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
- Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.
- Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- Children may receive free or reduced price meals if your household's income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

FEDERAL INCOME ELIGIBILITY CHART for School Year 2018-2019

Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	22,459	1,872	432
2	30,451	2,538	586
3	38,443	3,204	740
4	46,435	3,870	893
5	54,427	4,536	1,047
6	62,419	5,202	1,201
7	70,411	5,868	1,355
8	78,403	6,534	1,508
Each additional person:	7,992	666	154

2. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY? Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these criteria and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail edison@edisonpsd.org.
3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. To fill out an online application go to gpschools.org, click on the apple icon labeled Free and Reduced Lunch or obtain a paper application from your school and return the completed application to: edison@edisonpsd.org or call [734-233-7000](tel:734-233-7000).
4. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact edison@edisonpsd.org immediately.

8. **CAN I APPLY ONLINE?** Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. **to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact:** **telephone** **if you have any questions about the online application.**
6. **MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW ONE?** Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year, through **October 15, 2018 at midnight**. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. **If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals beginning October 16, 2018.**
7. **I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS?** Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please send in an application.
8. **WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?** Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
9. **IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER?** Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed may become eligible for free and reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
10. **WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION?** You should talk to school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to:
11. **MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN?** Yes. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply for free or reduced price meals.
12. **WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME?** List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.
13. **WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT?** Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application, or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.
14. **WE ARE IN THE MILITARY, DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY?** Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
15. **WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY?** List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper, and attach it to your application. Contact **to receive a second application.**
16. **MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?** To find out how to apply for **Food Assistance Program (FAP)** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **1-855-275-6424**.

If you have other questions or need help, call

Sincerely,

Deputy Superintendent for Business and Operations

APPENDIX M

Edison Public School System Meal Charging Policy



Business and Support Services

Home	Contact Information	Buildings and Grounds
Food Services	Budget Planning	Budget Archive

Nutrition Services Department

MEAL CHARGING POLICY

Students may use their lunch account to purchase meals and A La Carte items, when there is a positive balance. Lunch is available at all buildings. Breakfast is available at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. The meal charging policy comes into play when a student does not have enough money on their lunch account to cover the cost of their purchase.

The purpose of having a meal charging policy is to establish consistent clear meal account procedures throughout the district. There is a fine line between considering the fiscal integrity of the district and the solvency of the food service program while also meeting the nutritional needs of students.

GOALS:

- o To ensure that students have a healthy meal and that no child goes hungry.
- o To treat all students with dignity and confidentiality in the serving line.
- o To foster clear positive communication among staff, administrators, teachers, students and parent/guardian.
- o To establish fair practices that can be used consistently throughout the district regarding meal charges and the collection of charges.

- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of their child/student.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

The Nutrition Department:

- Responsible for maintaining meal account records.
- Responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian with phone calls or written documentation after credit limit has been reached.
- Responsible for working with households toward a reasonable resolution.

The Parent/Guardian:

- Responsible for immediate payment.

MEAL ACCOUNTS:

We strongly discourage meal charges, but understand that it occasionally happens. Meal charges are a temporary solution and are not intended to address broader issues of a parent/guardian's inability to pay for a meal for his/her child. In those instances, an application for Free or Reduced Meal Benefits should be completed. Free and Reduced Meal Applications are available on line at [www.mnps.edu](#) or in your school office.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to make meal payments in advance. Personal checks and cash deposits are accepted at the student's home school. For convenience, deposits may also be made by credit/debit card after setting up an account for the student on [www.mnps.edu](#).

All students have personal accounts regardless of paying status (free, reduced or full pay). Similar to a bank account, each student has a school ID number which stays with them for their duration in the school.

When using the MiStar ParentPortal for [www.mnps.edu](#) link: [www.mnps.edu/parentportal](#) parents/guardians can access cafeteria purchases and account balances at any time.

MEAL CHARGING POLICY:

Although not required by law through the National School Lunch Act or the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, limited meal charging will be allowed, as a courtesy to families, under the following conditions:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS:

- Only reimbursable meals may be charged (a reimbursable meal is a full meal – see definition below).
- No a la carte purchases may be charged (a la carte items are individual items – see definition below).
- Elementary students may charge any combination of meals (breakfast and lunch) up to a total of \$6.00 negative balance.
- Parent/Guardians will be notified by telephone and/or by email when their account balance is low, specifically the dollar value of two lunches or lower.
- When a student charges a meal, their meal balance becomes a negative balance.
- Parents/Guardians will be notified by telephone and/or email when there is a negative balance on the account.
- Repayment is expected for all charged meals.

- After the fourth occurrence, the parent will receive written notification.
- No charging will be permitted 2 weeks prior to the end of the school year.
- All unpaid charges will be added to the list of any outstanding fees or unpaid fines at the end of the school year. Payment must be made in full to the Nutrition Service Department.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:

- Only reimbursable meals may be charged (a reimbursable meal is a full meal – see definition below).
- No a la carte purchases may be charged (a la carte items are sold as individual items – see definition below).
- Secondary students may charge any combination of meals (breakfast and lunch) up to a negative \$6.50.
- Parent/Guardians will be notified by telephone and/or by email when their account balance is low, specifically the dollar value of two lunches or lower.
- When a student charges a meal, their meal balance becomes a negative balance.
- Parent/Guardians will be notified by telephone and/or by email when their account balance is negative.
- Repayment is expected for all charged meals.
- No charging will be permitted 2 weeks prior to the end of the school year.
- All unpaid charges will be added to the list of any outstanding fees or unpaid fines at the end of the school year. Payment must be made in full to the Food Service Department.

Payment must be made in full to the Nutrition Service Department or grades, report cards, diplomas, walking at graduation and other privileges may be withheld. Please see district policy for bad debt.

Definitions:

- A reimbursable meal is a full meal that requires these five components are offered: milk, fruit, vegetable, meat (or approved alternative), and grain.
- A la Carte food items are ordered separately, not as a meal. Examples may vary by school or season but often include items such as fruit snacks, granola bars, muffins, popcorn, chips, yogurt, and water.

APPENDIX N

Edison Public School System Verification of Eligibility Form for Free or Reduced-price Lunch

{Applicant_Firstname} {Applicant_Lastname}
 {Applicant_MailAddress1}
 {Applicant_MailCity}, {Applicant_MailState} {Applicant_MailPostalCode}

Dear Parent/Guardian Of:

Student ID	Student Name	Birth date
{AppStudents()_StudentId}	{AppStudents()_StudentName}	{AppStudents()_Birthdate}

Thank you for responding with information for the verification of Eligibility for free and reduced price meal benefits. We checked the information you sent us to prove that names of child(ren) stated above are eligible for free or reduced price meals and have determined that:

- Your child's/children's eligibility has not changed.
- Starting _____ your child's/children's eligibility for meals will be changed from reduced price to free because your income is within the free meal eligibility limits. Your child/children will receive meals at no cost.
- Starting _____, your child's/children's eligibility for meals will be changed from free to reduced price because your income is over the limit. Reduced price meals cost 30 cents for breakfast and 40 cents for lunch.
- Starting _____, your child/children are no longer eligible for free or reduced price meals for the following reason(s):
- ___ Records show that you did not receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation (FDPIR) benefits.
- ___ Records show that the child/children did not meet the criteria for homeless, runaway, or migrant.
- ___ The household income is over the limit for free or reduced price meals.
- ___ The household did not respond to our request.
 Meals cost: \$1.75 for Breakfast at all levels.
 \$2.75 for Elementary lunch
 \$3.00 for Middle and High School Lunch

If your household income goes down or your household size goes up, you may apply again. If you did not provide proof of current eligibility, you will be asked to do so if you reapply. If you were previously denied benefits because no one in the household received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Food distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), you may reapply based on income

eligibility: If you did not provide proof of current eligibility, you will be asked to do so if you reapply.

If you disagree with this decision, you may discuss it with the Director of Business Services at [redacted] or the Deputy Superintendent at [redacted].

You also have the right to a fair hearing. If you request a hearing by [date], your child(ren) will continue to receive free or reduced price meals until the decision of the hearing official is made. You may request a hearing by calling or writing to:

business Operations & Support Services Coordinator

Privacy Act Statement: The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last 4 digits of the social security number of the adult household member signing the application. The last 4 digits of the social security number are not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information is available in languages other than English. To file a complaint alleging discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 Fax: (202) 690-7442; or Email: program.intake@usda.gov This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

APPENDIX O

Edison Public School System Elementary School Menu

Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breaded Chicken Drumstick	Chicken & Cheese	Chicken Tenders	Classic Cheese Pizza	Pancakes
			Classic Pepperoni Pizza	
Whole Grain Dinner Roll	Seasoned Corn	Blue Raspberry Lemon Frozen SideKick		Turkey Sausage Link
Green Beans	Mexican Rice	Corn		Hash Brown Patty
				Syrup
Cereal Fun Lunch	Muffin & Goldfish Fun	Hummus	Turkey Ham & Cheese	Turkey Ham & Cheese
		Soft Flour Tortilla		
		Low Fat Mozzarella String Cheese, 1		
		Blue Raspberry Lemon Frozen SideKick		
Fresh Chopped Romaine	Fresh Chopped Romaine	Fresh Chopped Romaine	Fresh Chopped Romaine	Fresh Chopped Romaine
Fresh Carrots	Fresh Carrots	Fresh Carrots	Fresh Carrots	Fresh Carrots
Fresh Celery Sticks	Sliced Cucumbers		Sliced Cucumbers	Fresh Celery Sticks
Baked Beans	Green Peas	Baked Beans		Baked Beans
Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit
Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit
1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa	1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa	1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa	1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa	1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa
			Skim Milk	
Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk
Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram	Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram	Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram	Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram	Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram
Mustard, Ind	Mustard, Ind	Mustard, Ind	Mustard, Ind	Mustard, Ind
Fat Free Ranch Dressing	Fat Free Ranch Dressing	Fat Free Ranch Dressing	Fat Free Ranch Dressing	Fat Free Ranch Dressing

Week 2				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks	Macaroni and Cheese	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Classic Cheese Pizza	Whole Grain French Toast Sticks
			Classic Pepperoni Pizza	
Marinara Sauce, 2.5 oz, Red Gold RED	Savory Green Beans	Seasoned Corn		Turkey Sausage Patty
Seasoned Mixed Vegetables	Dinner Roll	Kiwi Strawberry Frozen SideKicks, 4.		Apple Cinnamon Slices
				Syrup
Cinnamon Cream Cheese Stuffed Bagel,	Cereal Fun Lunch	Three Cheese Pretzel Sandwich	Nachos Fun Lunch	Nachos Fun Lunch
Strawberry Banana Yogurt, 4 oz, Dann		Kiwi Strawberry Frozen SideKicks, 4.		
Fresh Chopped Romaine	Fresh Chopped Romaine	Fresh Chopped Romaine	Fresh Chopped Romaine	Fresh Chopped Romaine
Fresh Carrots	Fresh Carrots	Fresh Carrots	Fresh Carrots	Fresh Carrots
Fresh Celery Sticks	Sliced Cucumbers		Sliced Cucumbers	Fresh Celery Sticks
Baked Beans	Green Peas	Baked Beans		Baked Beans
Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit
Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit
1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa	1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa	1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa	1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa	1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa
			Skim Milk	
Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk
Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram	Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram	Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram	Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram	Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram
Mustard, Ind	Mustard, Ind	Mustard, Ind	Mustard, Ind	Mustard, Ind
Fat Free Ranch Dressing	Fat Free Ranch Dressing	Fat Free Ranch Dressing	Fat Free Ranch Dressing	Fat Free Ranch Dressing

Week 3				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Classic Chicken Sandwich	Baked Tortilla Chip Scoops, 0.875 oz	Boneless Chicken Wings	Classic Cheese Pizza	Turkey Corn Dog
			Classic Pepperoni Pizza	
Vegetarian Baked Beans	Seasoned Beef Taco Meat	Seasoned Corn		Oven Baked Curly Fries
Seasoned Potato Wedges	Creamy Cheddar Cheese Sauce	Blue Raspberry Lemon Frozen SideKick		
Cereal Fun Lunch	Muffin & Goldfish Fun	Hummus	Turkey Ham & Cheese	Turkey Ham & Cheese
		Soft Flour Tortilla		
		Low Fat Mozzarella String Cheese, 1		
		Blue Raspberry Lemon Frozen SideKick		
<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>	<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>	<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>	<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>	<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>
<i>Fresh Carrots</i>	<i>Fresh Carrots</i>	<i>Fresh Carrots</i>	<i>Fresh Carrots</i>	<i>Fresh Carrots</i>
<i>Fresh Celery Sticks</i>	<i>Sliced Cucumbers</i>		<i>Sliced Cucumbers</i>	<i>Fresh Celery Sticks</i>
<i>Baked Beans</i>	<i>Green Peas</i>	<i>Baked Beans</i>		<i>Baked Beans</i>
<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>
<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>
<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>	<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>	<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>	<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>	<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>
			Skim Milk	
<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>
<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>	<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>	<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>	<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>	<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>
<i>Mustard, Ind</i>	<i>Mustard, Ind</i>	<i>Mustard, Ind</i>	<i>Mustard, Ind</i>	<i>Mustard, Ind</i>
<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>

Week 4				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Chicken Nuggets	Taco Bowl	Classic Cheeseburger in	Classic Cheese Pizza	Waffles
			Classic Pepperoni Pizza	
<i>Breadstick</i>	<i>Seasoned Beef Taco Meat</i>	<i>Oven Baked Curly Fries</i>		<i>Sweet Potato Tots</i>
<i>Savory Green Beans</i>	<i>Shredded Cheddar Cheese</i>	<i>Kiwi Strawberry Frozen SideKicks, 4.</i>		<i>Turkey Sausage Link</i>
	<i>Mexican Style Refried Beans</i>			<i>Breakfast Syrup, 1.4 oz, Smucker's 5</i>
Cinnamon Cream Cheese Stuffed Bagel,	Cereal Fun Lunch	Three Cheese Pretzel Sandwich	Nachos Fun Lunch	Nachos Fun Lunch
<i>Strawberry Banana Yogurt, 4 oz, Dann</i>		<i>Kiwi Strawberry Frozen SideKicks, 4.</i>		
<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>	<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>	<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>	<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>	<i>Fresh Chopped Romaine</i>
<i>Fresh Carrots</i>	<i>Fresh Carrots</i>	<i>Fresh Carrots</i>	<i>Fresh Carrots</i>	<i>Fresh Carrots</i>
<i>Fresh Celery Sticks</i>	<i>Sliced Cucumbers</i>		<i>Sliced Cucumbers</i>	<i>Fresh Celery Sticks</i>
<i>Baked Beans</i>	<i>Green Peas</i>	<i>Baked Beans</i>		<i>Baked Beans</i>
<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>
<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>
<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>	<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>	<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>	<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>	<i>1% Low-fat Milk, 8 fl oz, Prairie Fa</i>
			<i>Skim Milk</i>	
<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>
<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>	<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>	<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>	<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>	<i>Ketchup Packet, 7 Gram</i>
<i>Mustard, Ind</i>	<i>Mustard, Ind</i>	<i>Mustard, Ind</i>	<i>Mustard, Ind</i>	<i>Mustard, Ind</i>
<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Fat Free Ranch Dressing</i>

APPENDIX P

Edison Public School System Middle School Lunch Menu

Middle School Lunch Menu

Week 1				
MONDAY-12/31/18	TUESDAY-1/1/19	WEDNESDAY-1/2/19	THURSDAY-1/3/19	FRIDAY-1/4/19
Create				
Toasted Three Cheese Sandwich	Seasoned Beef Taco Meat	Mashed Potato & Chicken Bowl	Macaroni and Cheese	Pancakes
	Fajita Style Chicken			
Campbell's Tomato Soup	Tortilla Chips	Roasted Broccoli	Steamed Broccoli Florets	Turkey Sausage Patty
	Soft Flour Tortilla	Whole Grain Dinner Roll	Whole Grain Dinner Roll	Hash Brown Patty
	Cilantro Lime Brown Rice			Syrup
	Seasoned Black Beans			
	Queso Cheese Sauce			
	Shredded Romaine Lettuce			
	Sliced Jalapenos			
	Low Fat Sour Cream			
	Salsa			
	Cool Ranch Doritos, 1.75 oz, PC			
Pizza				
Hawaiian Pizza		Cheeseburger Pizza		Veggie Pizza
Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza
Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza
	Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks		Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks	
	Marinara Sauce, 2.5 oz, Red Gold RED		Marinara Sauce, 2.5 oz, Red Gold RED	
Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend
Grill				
Ham & Cheese Panini	Hot Dog Twist	Toasted Three Cheese Sandwich	Italian Meatball Sub	Greek Chicken Sandwich
Seasoned Potato Wedges	Baked Crinkle Fries	Seasoned Potato Wedges	Baked Crinkle Fries	Seasoned Potato Wedges
Classic Chicken Sandwich	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Classic Chicken Sandwich	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Classic Chicken Sandwich

On the Go				
	Turkey & Swiss on Pretzel Roll		Turkey & Swiss on Pretzel Roll	
Mixed Greens Salad with Cheese		Mixed Greens Salad with Cheese		Mixed Greens Salad with Cheese
	Peach Parfait with Granola		Peach Parfait with Granola	
Berry Parfait with Granola		Berry Parfait with Granola		Berry Parfait with Granola
Whole Grain Dinner Roll		Whole Grain Dinner Roll		Whole Grain Dinner Roll
Sides				
Homestyle Potato Salad		Homestyle Potato Salad		
	Fresh Celery Sticks		Fresh Celery Sticks	
Sliced Cucumbers		Sliced Cucumbers		Sliced Cucumbers
Fresh Carrots		Fresh Carrots		Fresh Carrots
Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit
Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad
Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit
	Baked Beans		Baked Beans	
Fresh Broccoli Florets		Fresh Broccoli Florets		Fresh Broccoli Florets
1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk
Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk
Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing
Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing
Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard
Ketchup	Ketchup	Ketchup	Ketchup	Ketchup
Mayo	Mayo	Mayo	Mayo	Mayo

Week 2				
MONDAY-1/7/19	TUESDAY-1/8/19	WEDNESDAY-1/9/19	THURSDAY-1/10/19	FRIDAY-1/11/19
Create				
Teriyaki Chicken Noodle	Seasoned Beef Taco Meat	Chicken Alfredo Pasta	Boneless Chicken Wings	Beef Gyro
	Fajita Style Chicken			
Crunchy Asian Tortilla Strips	Tortilla Chips	Broccoli	Sriracha Honey Mustard	Oven Baked Curly Fries
	Soft Flour Tortilla		Breadstick	
	Cilantro Lime Brown Rice	Grated Parmesan Cheese		
	Seasoned Black Beans	Breadstick		
	Queso Cheese Sauce			
	Shredded Romaine Lettuce			
	Sliced Jalapenos			
	Low Fat Sour Cream			
	Salsa			
	Cool Ranch Doritos, 1.75 oz.			
Pizza				
Aloha Pizza		Buffalo Chicken Pizza		Veggie Pizza
Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza
Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza
	Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks		Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks	
	Marinara Sauce, 2.5 oz, Red Gold RED		Marinara Sauce, 2.5 oz, Red Gold RED	
Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend
Grill				
Seasoned Potato Wedges	Oven Baked Curly Fries	Seasoned Potato Wedges	Oven Baked Curly Fries	Seasoned Potato Wedges
Spicy BBQ Chicken Wrap	BBQ Rib-B-Q Sandwich	Toasted Three Cheese Sandwich	Buffalo Ranch Chicken Wrap	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun
Classic Chicken Sandwich	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Classic Chicken Sandwich	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Classic Chicken Sandwich
On the Go				
	Turkey Ham & Cheese Hoagie		Turkey Ham & Cheese Hoagie	
Turkey Ham Chef Salad		Turkey Ham Chef Salad		Turkey Ham Chef Salad
Peach Parfait with Granola	Blueberry Parfait with	Peach Parfait with Granola	Blueberry Parfait with	Peach Parfait with Granola
Dinner Roll		Dinner Roll	Dinner Roll	Dinner Roll

Sides				
Homestyle Potato Salad		Homestyle Potato Salad		
	Fresh Celery Sticks		Fresh Celery Sticks	
Sliced Cucumbers		Sliced Cucumbers		Sliced Cucumbers
Fresh Carrots		Fresh Carrots		Fresh Carrots
Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit
Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad
Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit
	Baked Beans		Baked Beans	
Fresh Broccoli Florets		Fresh Broccoli Florets		Fresh Broccoli Florets
1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk
Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk
Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing
Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing
Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard
Ketchup	Ketchup	Ketchup	Ketchup	Ketchup
Mayo	Mayo	Mayo	Mayo	Mayo
Week 3				
MONDAY-1/14/19	TUESDAY-1/15/19	WEDNESDAY-1/16/19	THURSDAY-1/17/19	FRIDAY-1/18/19
Create				
Crispy Chicken Breast Tenders	Seasoned Beef Taco Meat	Philly Cheese Steak	BBQ Shredded Pork Sandwich	Toasted Three Cheese Sandwich
	Fajita Style Chicken			
Oven Baked Curly Fries	Tortilla Chips	Sauteed Mushrooms	Carolina Slaw	Campbell's Tomato Soup
Apple Crisp	Soft Flour Tortilla	Sauteed Peppers & Onions	Oven Baked Curly Fries	
	Cilantro Lime Brown Rice			
	Seasoned Black Beans			
	Queso Cheese Sauce			
	Shredded Romaine Lettuce			
	Sliced Jalapenos			
	Low Fat Sour Cream			
	Salsa			
	Cool Ranch Doritos, 1.75 oz,			

Pizza				
Hawaiian Pizza		Cheeseburger Pizza		Veggie Pizza
Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza
Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza
	Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks		Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks	
	Marinara Sauce, 2.5 oz, Red Gold RED		Marinara Sauce, 2.5 oz, Red Gold RED	
Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend	Roma Herb Blend
Grill				
BBQ Shredded Pork			Spicy BBQ Chicken Wrap	
Oven Baked Curly Fries	Seasoned Potato Wedges	Oven Baked Curly Fries	Seasoned Potato Wedges	Oven Baked Curly Fries
	Classic Chicken Sandwich	Greek Chicken Sandwich		Chicken Cordon Bleu Sandwich
Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Toasted Three Cheese Sandwich	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Toasted Three Cheese Sandwich	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun
On the Go				
	Turkey & Swiss on Pretzel		Turkey & Swiss on Pretzel	
Mixed Greens Salad with Cheese		Mixed Greens Salad with Cheese		Mixed Greens Salad with Cheese
	Peach Parfait with Granola		Peach Parfait with Granola	
Berry Parfait with Granola Whole Grain Dinner Roll		Berry Parfait with Granola Whole Grain Dinner Roll		Berry Parfait with Granola Whole Grain Dinner Roll
Sides				
Homestyle Potato Salad		Homestyle Potato Salad		
	Fresh Celery Sticks		Fresh Celery Sticks	
Sliced Cucumbers		Sliced Cucumbers		Sliced Cucumbers
Fresh Carrots		Fresh Carrots		Fresh Carrots
Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit	Fresh Whole Fruit
Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad	Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad
Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit	Assorted Chilled Fruit
	Baked Beans		Baked Beans	
Fresh Broccoli Florets		Fresh Broccoli Florets		Fresh Broccoli Florets
1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk
Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk	Chocolate Low Fat Milk
Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing	Light Ranch Dressing
Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing	Light Italian Dressing
Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard	Yellow Mustard
Ketchup	Ketchup	Ketchup	Ketchup	Ketchup
Mayo	Mayo	Mayo	Mayo	Mayo

MONDAY-1/21/19	TUESDAY-1/22/19	WEDNESDAY-1/23/19	THURSDAY-1/24/19	FRIDAY-1/25/19
Create				
Jamaican Jerk Chicken Hoagie	Seasoned Beef Taco Meat	Strawberry Yogurt & Granola	Crispy Chicken Breast Tenders	Chicken Alfredo Pasta
	Fajita Style Chicken	Vanilla Yogurt & Granola		
<i>Spicy Jamaican Jerk Marinade</i>	<i>Tortilla Chips</i>	<i>Sliced Fresh Strawberries</i>	<i>Waffles</i>	<i>Broccoli</i>
<i>Seasoned Waffle Fries</i>	<i>Soft Flour Tortilla</i>	<i>Blueberries</i>	<i>Tater Tots</i>	
	<i>Cilantro Lime Brown Rice</i>	<i>Pineapple Tidbits</i>	<i>Syrup</i>	<i>Grated Parmesan Cheese</i>
	<i>Seasoned Black Beans</i>	<i>Sliced Banana</i>		<i>Breadstick</i>
	<i>Queso Cheese Sauce</i>			
	<i>Shredded Romaine Lettuce</i>			
	<i>Sliced Jalapenos</i>			
	<i>Low Fat Sour Cream</i>			
	<i>Salsa</i>			
	<i>Cool Ranch Doritos, 1.75 oz.</i>			
Pizza				
Aloha Pizza		Buffalo Chicken Pizza		Veggie Pizza
Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza	Classic Cheese Pizza
Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza	Classic Pepperoni Pizza
	Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks		Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks	
	<i>Marinara Sauce, 2.5 oz, Red Gold RED</i>		<i>Marinara Sauce, 2.5 oz, Red Gold RED</i>	
<i>Roma Herb Blend</i>	<i>Roma Herb Blend</i>	<i>Roma Herb Blend</i>	<i>Roma Herb Blend</i>	<i>Roma Herb Blend</i>
Grill				
Spicy BBQ Chicken Wrap	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Toasted Three Cheese Sandwich	Buffalo Chicken Wrap	Toasted Three Cheese Sandwich
<i>Oven Baked Curly Fries</i>	<i>Seasoned Potato Wedges</i>	<i>Oven Baked Curly Fries</i>	<i>Seasoned Potato Wedges</i>	<i>Oven Baked Curly Fries</i>
Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Classic Chicken Sandwich	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun	Classic Chicken Sandwich	Classic Cheeseburger in Bun
<i>Oven Baked Curly Fries</i>	<i>Seasoned Potato Wedges</i>	<i>Oven Baked Curly Fries</i>	<i>Seasoned Potato Wedges</i>	<i>Oven Baked Curly Fries</i>
Sides				
<i>Homestyle Potato Salad</i>		<i>Homestyle Potato Salad</i>		
	<i>Fresh Celery Sticks</i>		<i>Fresh Celery Sticks</i>	
<i>Sliced Cucumbers</i>		<i>Sliced Cucumbers</i>		<i>Sliced Cucumbers</i>
<i>Fresh Carrots</i>		<i>Fresh Carrots</i>		<i>Fresh Carrots</i>
<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>	<i>Fresh Whole Fruit</i>
<i>Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad</i>	<i>Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad</i>	<i>Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad</i>	<i>Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad</i>	<i>Lettuce & Tomato Side Salad</i>
<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>	<i>Assorted Chilled Fruit</i>
	<i>Baked Beans</i>		<i>Baked Beans</i>	
<i>Fresh Broccoli Florets</i>		<i>Fresh Broccoli Florets</i>		<i>Fresh Broccoli Florets</i>
1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk	1% Low-fat Milk
<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>	<i>Chocolate Low Fat Milk</i>
<i>Light Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Light Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Light Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Light Ranch Dressing</i>	<i>Light Ranch Dressing</i>
<i>Light Italian Dressing</i>	<i>Light Italian Dressing</i>	<i>Light Italian Dressing</i>	<i>Light Italian Dressing</i>	<i>Light Italian Dressing</i>
<i>Yellow Mustard</i>	<i>Yellow Mustard</i>	<i>Yellow Mustard</i>	<i>Yellow Mustard</i>	<i>Yellow Mustard</i>
<i>Ketchup</i>	<i>Ketchup</i>	<i>Ketchup</i>	<i>Ketchup</i>	<i>Ketchup</i>
<i>Mavo</i>	<i>Mavo</i>	<i>Mavo</i>	<i>Mavo</i>	<i>Mavo</i>

ABSTRACT**EXPLORING SENSEMAKING OF THE HEALTHY HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT OF 2010**

by

TAYLOR MARY BARCZYK**MAY 2019****Advisor:** Dr. Ben Pogodzinski**Major:** Educational Leadership and Policy Studies**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 was reauthorized to create school environments that provide nutrient-dense meals to students who are living in poverty. The free and reduced-price lunch program helps 19% of students who are living in poverty in America (Kids Count Data Center, 2017). These students arrive at school hungry and often times are more concerned about their hunger than the content they need to learn. In order to assist them in learning, the school lunch program has been established. With the policy reauthorization of Public Law 11-269, students have been able to receive nourishment in the school cafeterias that meet USDA guidelines for a healthy meal. The guidelines that were developed were intended to fight the obesity epidemic that has been growing for decades. As schools were housing the nation's plan for combating hunger and obesity, the leaders were mandated to follow the policy.

The literature had yet to examine sensemaking in regards to the administrators who carry out the policy in the school system. This qualitative case study explored the ways in which school administrators and staff understand the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This case study enacted the voices of the multiple stakeholders this policy impacts including foodservice directors,

the executive chef, cafeteria workers, and building principals. This study upheld sound research ethics as it delved into the lives of the policy implementers.

The results of the data indicate that administrators engage in sensemaking with the policy. How they feel about the policy and the engagement they have with the law dictates the way in which the policy filters through the school system. Each building principal found their role to mirror that of an advocate for students when it came to the foodservice company. They also worked to encourage healthy eating choices in the cafeterias. As policy implementers, each respondent viewed their role as a way to enact nutritional eating in the cafeterias. The themes the administrators share are policy implementers, role in nourishment, access to and consumption of nutrient-dense foods, food insecure students, actions taken to mitigate obesity, and aspirations for policy implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

It was in the work of the leaders with a sense of working above compliance that the policy was able to work as intended. The building principals and foodservice director used the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 to aim to create a more democratic community in their school system in regards to nourishing students. When the administrators had a passion and vision for healthy eating, they shared it with the students. Whether through osmosis in the food choices or through relationships, the building level administrators were found to be the real change in healthy eating in the cafeteria. When they shared healthy choices as their mission, the way they engaged with sensemaking and this policy, their actions with the program were enriched and enriched the lives of the students they serve.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

As a Family and Consumer Science Educator for the last nine years, I have had the opportunity to instruct students in the 6-12 grade continuum. It is in this role, that I have discovered the most fulfilling part of my life, being a teacher. Being a teacher is a dream that my mother always had for herself until she was talked out of it by an advisor at Michigan State University. My mother raised her family and went back and juggled her roles and responsibilities to become a teacher. The passion she felt and the love she had for the job was something that I always shared. When I was an undergraduate at Michigan State University, they attempted to talk me out of being a Family and Consumer Science teacher. Learning from my mother's experience, I was determined to not let the voices and opinions of other's visions get in the way of my dreams. I transferred to Central Michigan University and gained the skillset to become an amazing educator. I live each day with the fullest life because of choosing to build America through the youth in this country.

As a Highly Effective educator for over half of my career, I have been able to reach the lives of many students and colleagues. I bring a sense of passion and enthusiasm to my role because teaching is my life's calling. I strive every day to develop relationships and make the students feel as though they matter in the world. I also work to be a positive influence in their life and try to inspire them to become the best that they can be. In my work for my Master's Degree, I was able to be inspired by other educators who were willing to work in their role to inspire other colleagues. In my journey through leadership, I work every day to inspire others to believe in students and strive to find the positive moments in their lives. In my life's work, I hope that I can inspire students, colleagues, and others to work to better the lives of students each day, as I do.