

Continue Investment in Fruit for School Breakfast

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»» ISSUE

In 2005, the Governor and the Legislature provided \$18.2 million to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in school breakfast. These much-needed funds were expected to improve breakfast program participation, increase produce consumption and help establish life-long healthy eating habits.

This California Fresh Start Program, established in 2005 by SB 281 (Maldonado), has been an ideal complement to other nutrition legislation, such as SB 12 and SB 965, which sought to remove unhealthy items from school. The program provides school districts with an extra 10 cents for additional fruits or vegetables served with the School Breakfast Program. However, the Governor's January Budget Proposal does not contain funding to continue the program.

»» NEED

Schools have long said they need additional resources to deal with the higher purchasing and handling costs associated with serving fresh fruits and vegetables. Though the program got off to a slow start, about half of the state's school districts (and well more than half the students) now participate. School districts will likely spend about \$11 million in 2006-07 to implement the program.

Without continued resources the California Fresh Start Program will not proceed as currently designed.

»» REQUEST

CFPA requests the Legislature take the following action:

Action: Continue to Invest in Produce in Schools	Continue Funding for the California Fresh Start Program.
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»» HISTORY

The evaluation of the program is expected by Fall of 2007. Action to remove funding prior to this evaluation would be premature.

»» OUTCOMES

The California Fresh Pilot Program may improve students' nutrition, health and academic performance by encouraging them to eat breakfast at school. The program also may help improve students' eating outside of the school day. Anecdotal evidence suggests that when students eat fresh produce at school, they request that their parents purchase it at home. Not only does this help kids' diets, but it can also be a boon for California's agricultural economy.