

## L.A. Now

California: This just in

# Summer program will provide 4.5-million free meals to L.A. students



The L.A. Unified School District will work in partnership with the city to provide 4.5 million lunches to students over summer break.

By **ALICIA BANKS**

JUNE 5, 2014, 2:01 PM

**L**os Angeles Unified announced plans Thursday to provide roughly 4.5-million lunches over the summer break to more than 520,000 students who typically qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Called the "Food That's In, When School Is Out" program, the district's food services division will serve the free meals at 317 school sites this summer in addition to 105 city recreation and park centers from June 9 to Aug. 8, officials said.

A \$25,000 grant from Walmart through the National Recreation and Park Assn. will provide staffing to educate children on healthy eating habits through lessons and games.

"Students may now enjoy a summer of health and education," said Matthew Sharp, senior advocate with the California Food Policy Advocates.

Meals include a range of fruit from raisins to apples, turkey sandwiches, sunflower seeds and water. L.A. Regional Food Bank Chief Executive Michael Flood said the federally funded program also allows food to be purchased locally, such as oranges delivered from San Bernardino County.

"This partnership allows kids to get healthy foods at recreation sites so kids can go back to doing what they do best, being kids," Flood said.

At the Lake Street Community Center in Historic Filipinotown where officials had gathered to announce the program, 17-year-old Jennifer Meneses said she participated in the program alongside her siblings for more than three years. Living in the Pico-Union area, she grew up watching her peers eating chips for breakfast and even dinner.

"My mom would wake us up and take us to the recreation center. It was something to look forward to," Meneses said. "It's important that children grow up with healthy eating habits."

For more information about the Summer Food Service Program, meal times and locations, visit [www.iminlausd.com](http://www.iminlausd.com) or call L.A. Unified's Food Services Division at (213) 241-2956.

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