

OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN HENRY CUELLAR
28TH Congressional District of Texas
118th Congress

Event: Webb County School Meals Announcement

Date: Wednesday August 28, 2024 @ 9:30 AM CST.

Location: Dr. Henry Cuellar Elementary, 6431 Casa Del Sol Blvd., Laredo, TX 78043

Acknowledgments

- Hello, and thank you for being here today.

- Thank You:
 - **Dr. Victor Trevino**, Mayor of the City of Laredo
 - **Dr. Gerardo Cruz**, United ISD Superintendent

- **Roberto Cuellar**, Laredo ISD Child Nutrition Program Director
- **Dr. H. H. Garza Jr.**, Webb Consolidated ISD Superintendent
- **Susan E. Carlson**, Executive Director of Communications United ISD

Remarks

- I deeply appreciate you joining me for this significant announcement.
- Today, I am proud to announce *substantial federal funding for Webb County School*

Districts including United ISD, Laredo ISD, Webb Consolidated ISD, and Harmony School of Excellence through the USDA's National School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

- This year, ***Webb County School districts received \$50,736,738 in federal reimbursements*** to provide free or reduced-cost meals to their students during the 2023-2024 school year:
 - ***United ISD received \$33,070,364***
 - ***Laredo ISD received \$16,439,928***
 - ***Webb Consolidated ISD received \$234,475, and***

○ *Harmony received \$991,969*

- This funding ensures that **eligible students in our school districts can enjoy quality breakfast, lunch, and dinner.**
- When our children are well-fed, they are well-prepared to learn.
- Additionally, I'm pleased to share that funding is also utilized for the salaries of our dedicated food services employees.

- And can also be used for essential equipment needed to run these programs including:
 - Food Storage,
 - Fridge/Freezers, and
 - Kitchen tools

- Our schools were able to continue their critical services during COVID, by adjusting their normal distribution methods.

- By offering curbside pick up at their school campuses, and even establishing delivery routes for those in more rural or distant locations.

About the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

- The School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are not just meal programs; they are lifelines for millions of children across our nation.
- These programs are federally assisted, operating in public and non-profit private schools to provide our children with the nutrition they need to succeed.

- Their goal is to safeguard the health and well-being of our school children, particularly by addressing food insecurity among low-income families.
- By providing nutritionally balanced meals, these programs do more than just feed our students—they fuel their potential.
- They help establish lifelong healthy eating habits, giving our children the foundation they need to thrive.

- Local school districts, **like United, Laredo, Webb Consolidated, and Harmony, manage these programs**, receiving cash subsidies and USDA foods for each reimbursable meal served.
- Research has shown that students who participate in these programs typically enjoy meals of higher nutritional value than those who eat elsewhere.
- When we invest in our children's nutrition, we invest in their futures.

- By keeping our students well-fed throughout the school day, **we are enabling them to focus on what matters most: their education.**
- We are helping them build the future they deserve.
- Furthermore, these programs alleviate the financial burden on families, allowing them to allocate resources to other essential needs, which in turn stimulates our local and national economy.
- These programs are vital to the students and families in TX-28, and **that's why I am**

committed to continuing my work in Congress to fund, support, and expand these initiatives to combat food insecurity across our nation.

- Our children's futures depend on it.
- We must ensure that hunger is never a barrier to a quality education.

Closing Remarks

- I want to extend my deepest thanks to our school's nutrition departments and to all the cafeteria staff

who work tirelessly to ensure our students are fed, healthy, and ready to learn.

- Your work is essential, and your dedication does not go unnoticed.
- As President Bill Clinton once said, **"There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America."**
- Together, we are doing what is right by investing in the health and well-being of our children, and in turn, the future of our nation.

- Thank you again for being here today.
- Please stay safe, continue supporting one another, and may God bless you.