

THE WHITE HOUSE

January 27, 2012

Dear School Professionals, Teachers, Food Service Directors, Operators, and School Chefs:

Recently I joined USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to announce the finalization of our Nation's groundbreaking new school lunch standards, which means that nearly 32 million American children will get more of the healthy foods they need. It was a historic day. And I wanted to write you all because we couldn't have made it to this day without you.

Every day, you all are on the front lines on the issues of child nutrition and child hunger. You're dealing with tight budgets, limited resources, and more responsibilities. Yet you pour your heart and soul into your work to make sure that your students learn and grow in both the classroom and the lunchroom. I've seen it first-hand, all across the country. Everywhere I go, I meet school chefs, administrators, teachers, and parents, who are coming up with new and creative ways to make the meals they serve even healthier. Leaders like you are adding more fruits and vegetables to meals, shifting to whole grains, and incorporating salad bars into cafeterias.

And I want you to know that the new standards build upon all of your efforts, and they'll help support even more of your good work. That's been our goal since we started *Let's Move!* – to bring all the best ideas from every sector of this country together to help folks find solutions that work for their communities.

While we've made a lot of progress in the past two years, there is much work ahead. But I know that if everyone – parents, business leaders, public officials, and community leaders like you – does their part, then we can ensure that all of our children can grow up healthy and pursue their dreams.

Tuesday, we took a big step toward achieving that. I look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead to finish the job.

*Michelle Obama*