***New Regs Talking Points -- May 29 -- (revise as necessary for your local situation):***

1. Regardless of what the regulations are, ***(Name of your district and department) will be there every school day to provide our students healthy, balanced meals so they can learn well in school and live healthy lives.***

2. We’ve adapted to the regulations put in place under the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids act by, among other things, serving more fruits and vegetables and whole grains. ***We’ll continue with these improvements regardless of the rules because that’s the right thing to do for our students.*** If we’re given more flexibility, we’d certainly take that into account in our meal planning, too – whatever it takes to provide kids healthy meals that they’ll eat.

3. ***We haven’t done a specific study in our district on how much food kids throw away, but anecdotally there’s not much difference from before the fruit or vegetable requirement was put in place 2 years ago.*** One study by the Harvard School of Public Health found that so-called “plate waste,” while high, was no greater than before the new regulations. They found that kids were choosing and eating more fruits and vegetables and throwing away about the same proportion as they ever had. That’s been our experience, too. Waste has always been a problem, partly because, as parents know, kids tend to be picky eaters and they don’t have a lot of time to eat.

4. ***We said this from the beginning of this effort two years ago: It’s more expensive to serve healthier meals.*** What we’d really like to see is better funding for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and more access to the highest quality fresh produce through the commodity program. We get no direct funding at all from the district and less than $3 per lunch from the feds for students who qualify based on family income. And paying students pay less than $3 for their meals. Out of that $3 or less per full meal, we have to pay food costs, labor, equipment costs. We’d like to see support from parents and other voters for more realistic funding, but in the meantime we’ll keep trying to provide healthy meals to kids with the resources we have.

5. At the end of the day, we’ll make the rules work, because we have to – the job we do is just that important for our kids. They have to eat well to do well in school, so, again, whatever the regulations are, ***we will be there every school day to provide our students healthy, balanced meals so they can learn well in school and live healthy lives.***