

2650 Durant Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94720

September 28, 2015

The Honorable Loni Hancock
1515 Clay Street, Suite 2202
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Senator Hancock,

As a UC Berkeley undergraduate student majoring in Nutritional Science, I am concerned that the K-12 schools in your district are having lunch times that are too short for students to eat in a healthy way.

I am writing to you about this concern because I have not only experienced the shortness of lunch time by myself, but have also seen the same problem taking place in your district very recently. Personally, I still remembered having to gulp down my lunch within a period of less than 30 minutes when I was attending a public high school in California. Recently, as I visited some public elementary schools and middle schools in Berkeley and Oakland via my Foodservice Management course at UC Berkeley, I found the lunch period short and problematic.

A chef at one of these schools that I visited explained that he saw kids spending most of their short lunch time waiting in line. Then, after a few hurried bites, the kids had to throw away their unfinished lunch because the period is over. This not only left kids feeling hungry, but also created unnecessary food waste. Furthermore, an NPR news from 2013 illustrated similar findings in which Oakland High School was also having lunch periods that were too short to satisfy the needs of the students.

Having inadequate time to eat lunch can potentially affect the health of school children in a negative way as research suggested that speedy eating correlates with chronic disease such as obesity. Therefore, in terms of my proposal, I hope that the length of school lunch periods, especially the time frame in which students can sit down and have their lunch, can be increased. This goal can potentially be achieved in the several ways. The most direct way is to increase the length of school lunch periods. If increasing the length of lunch period is not possible, perhaps the actual eating time can be increased by expanding the capacity of school cafeteria, so that more kids can be served at the same time, instead of letting them wait in lines. In another way, food can also be delivered to each classrooms, which again reduces waiting time.

I understand that it might take a lot of effort before the length of lunch period can be increased. However, I believe that the health of children is very important, which makes this challenge a worthy one to take on. Thank you for considering my concern and proposal. I am looking forward to hearing from you. You can reach me by my email: ruobin@berkeley.edu or by letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruobin Wei". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruobin Wei

Ruobin Wei

Dr.Mary Lesser

NST166

28 September, 2015

Personalized Summary

In my Letter to Legislator Assignment, I proposed that the K-12 public schools in Berkeley and Oakland should increase the length of their lunch periods. I can feel that having super short lunch period is a problem because I have not only experienced its negative effects in person, but have also seen from my recent visits to a few local grammar schools in Oakland and Berkeley that this problem still exists (personal communication, March, 2015). I chose to address my letter to Senator Loni Hancock, the legislator that speaks for Berkeley and Oakland, because I learned from her biography that she had devoted a lot of effort in supporting education-related issues in the district that she is in charge of (Hancock, 2015). I believe that Senator Hancock, who cares about education, will be able to understand the importance of having adequate school lunch time as it relates to students' academic performances. In the letter, I talked about my personal experiences with short lunch periods. I also referenced a piece of NPR news which reported that Oakland High School was having the same problem (Westervelt, 2013). The reason why I used these personal experiences and references is that I wanted to relate my issue to my legislator's interest, so that my proposal can have a greater chance of being considered. In addition to expressing my concern for the inadequate lunch time (Otsuka et al., 2006; Radzevičienė, 2013; Ray, 2013; Turner, Eliason, Sandoval & Chaloupka, 2014), I also listed out some solutions that may increase the length of school lunch period.

References

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