GOVERNOR ROBERT BENTLEY AND ALSDE ENCOURAGE ALABAMIANS TO HELP ELIMINATE CHILDHOOD HUNGER
Summer Food Service Program Sponsor Sign Up Begins

Montgomery, Ala. – Alabama Governor Robert Bentley is joining the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) in urging schools, churches, governmental agencies, college and universities and private non-profit organizations to help ensure that all children in the state have access to nutritious meals in the summer.

Bentley is scheduled to sign a proclamation in support of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) on Wednesday, January 21, at 2 p.m. in the Old House Chamber in the State Capitol Building. Administered in Alabama by the ALSDE Child Nutrition Section, the SFSP was established to ensure that children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session.

The SFSP is one of the most underutilized federal programs, with approximately 10 percent of children who are eligible for the program receiving meals. More than 21 million children in the country receive meals through the National School Lunch Program during the school year, but during the summer only about 1 in 10 of those kids (3 million) receive meals through the federal Summer Food Service Program.

Since 2013, Alabama has led the Southeast in filling the summer “nutrition gap” in underserved areas in the state. A total of 1,995,852 meals were served in 2014, compared to 1,650,652 meals in 2013, and 1,265,105 in 2012.
The continued growth of Alabama’s summer feeding program can be attributed to awareness raised through its annual SFSP kickoff rally and www.BreakforaPlate.com, a website developed to promote the need for more sponsors in USDA targeted areas where SFSP participation is low.

Other efforts across the state that have led to a rise in the number of summer meals served include the Mobile County School System’s Super Food Express, which administers meals via school bus, and a program in the Huntsville City School System, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner through the SFSP.

“I am proud that Alabama continues to be cited as a leader in its administration of the Summer Food Service Program,” said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tommy Bice. “The organizations that are aiding us in this effort are to be commended for narrowing the nutrition gaps that arise during the summer and working to eliminate childhood hunger in their communities.”

Here are some facts about the Summer Food Service Program:

**WHAT IS THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)?**

- The ALSDE is looking for organizations interested in becoming a sponsor to provide, at no cost, meals for needy children during the 2015 summer. Participating organizations may be reimbursed for meals and snacks that meet USDA guidelines.

- The ALSDE encourages schools, parks and recreation programs, faith-based organizations and other nonprofit organizations to offer meals through the Summer Food Service Program.

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?**

All children 18 years of age and under who come to an approved open site or to an eligible enrolled site may receive meals provided by SFSP Sponsors.

**WHO CAN SPONSOR A SFSP?**

- A public or non-profit private school

- A public or non-profit private residential summer camp

- A unit of local, municipal, county or state government

- A public or non-profit college or university

- A private non-profit organization
Information can be obtained by contacting the Alabama State Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs at 334-242-8249 or visiting www.BreakforaPlate.com.

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