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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

EXECUTIVE

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4/16-11-4/106-101, 102, 103

4/16-11-4/106-104, 105, 106

March 17 1970

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Mr. Edward L. Morgan
Deputy Assistant to the President
The White House

Dear Mr. Morgan:

The problem covered in William Raspberry's recent Washington Post column on preserving the anonymity of children receiving free lunches is present in varying degrees in all school lunch programs. Our Child Nutrition Program people have been actively working with the District school officials on this problem throughout the current year. General public awareness, as indicated by the Raspberry column, is a great help in inducing local school officials to implement new systems or to change present ones until they evolve an acceptable system.

District officials announced the inauguration of a scrip system on February 2, 1970. Under this system children purchase lunch tickets (scrip) in a designated area outside the lunchroom, in a confidential manner, so that no pupil will have a personal knowledge of whether any other pupil is paying for his tickets or receiving them free. The same type of ticket is issued to free lunch recipients and to paying children. Tickets are coded for accounting purposes only. Also, in a few schools where only a small number of the children are needy--local principals may elect to use an all cash system, in lieu of scrip. In such schools the principal provides the needy children cash, privately, and the child uses this cash to purchase lunch just as the paying children do.

Since the inauguration of the District's present system in February, we have not received any specific reports or complaints that needy children are being overtly identified. We will, however, take a look at the current experience with the system, and we will advise you later of the findings.

Sincerely,

Richard Long
Richard Long
Assistant Secretary