
RSU 9 FOOD SERVICE UPDATE

March 2023

Andrew Hutchins-Director of Food Services

A Healthy School Nutrition Program

And we're not just talking about the food!

As school meal participation levels hold steady and meal reimbursements remain high, the finances of the school nutrition program are as healthy as the food we prepare and serve each day. The team has done an outstanding job at keeping rising costs in check by working diligently to reduce food waste, control inventories, and work as efficiently as possible. Our revenues for the 2022-2023 school year will exceed 1.7 million. These revenues primarily come from school meal reimbursements, cash sales to students and staff, and catering. To put that growth into perspective, five years ago revenues were \$872,572. That's a 102% increase!

Often times, with growth comes growing pains. And of course revenue is only one part of the equation. Even with the incredible increase in revenue, the district's talented school nutrition professionals have maintained a positive, clean, and efficient workplace while keeping labor costs below 40%. Even more impressive, despite rising food inflation, the team has maintained a food cost of 31%. This hard work and dedication pays off. Over the course of the year we've been able to replace some major pieces of equipment that were failing and lot's of small-wares to help keep our operations running smoothly.

It is required by law that any profits generated from school nutrition programs must be reinvested back into the program. With a forecasted surplus this year, we'll be making a number of investments into our programs over the next few years.



Planned Investments:

- * The walk-in cooler and freezer at AHS is over 40 years old and not as efficient as it should be. It will be replaced over the summer of 2023
- * The CBS cafeteria tables are nearly 30 years old. We will be replacing the tables and some key pieces of cooking/serving equipment over the summer as well as giving the space an updated look. This will enhance the atmosphere and help the flow of service, giving students more time to eat.
- * More Local! We'll be continuing to invest in increasing our local food purchasing in the coming year.
- * Clean Label Initiative. We have already begun, but will be expanding our clean label efforts, moving away from canned and frozen fruits and vegetable to more fresh items. Additionally, we're working to reduce the amount of processed foods by increasing scratch cooking and finding cleaner label substitutes.
- * School Nutrition Staff. Investing in our people is one of the most important things we can do. We'll be adjusting the staff pay scale and exploring new benefit options.
- * Equipment Replacement. We'll be replacing several key pieces of commercial kitchen equipment in the next two years.

Lifting Spirits and Breaking Monotony:

Who couldn't use a spirit lifter this time of year? Hot cocoa usually does the trick!

Elementary students enjoyed a hot cocoa bar with their lunch in January & February including a variety of toppings and of course whipped cream!

"This is the best day of my life!" exclaimed one student at Academy Hill School

