
RSU 9 FOOD SERVICE UPDATE

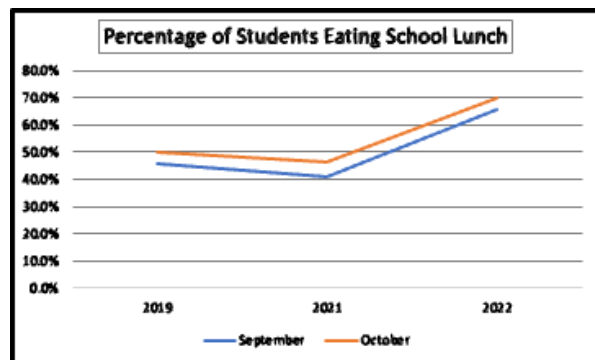
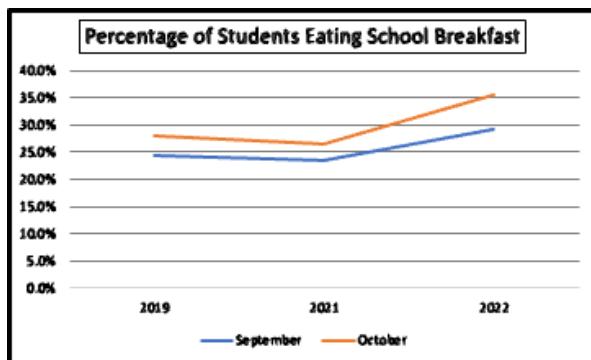
November 2022

Andrew Hutchins-Director of Food Services

Student Meal Participation Continues to Climb

Meal participation levels continue to climb with unprecedented numbers through September and October this year. With all students being offered free meals since March 2020, the “stigma” of eating meals at school has become a thing of the past. Coupling that with high quality food and service provided and the high prices at the grocery stores, students are eating more meals at school than ever before. This is a great thing for our district as numerous studies have shown that well fed students contribute to higher test scores and fewer disciplinary problems.

The following graph show the percentage of students participating in school meals. We track meal participation in percentages so that a difference in school days or enrollments from one year to the next does not factor into the data. However, to put things in perspective, we served 11,0021 more meals in October 2022 than October 2021 with the same number of school days. Thats an additional 580 meals per day!



A year over year increase in meal participation rates of 2-3% is considered healthy growth in school nutrition programs. We are currently seeing increases of 13% at breakfast and nearly 20% at lunch. The team is doing a phenomenal job handling the increased workload and are always looking for ways to sustain the current trends.

Financials:

As mentioned in a recent Superintendents Report, we are experiencing unprecedented costs in all purchasing categories, especially food and paper products. Anything shipped from the west coast now has an additional \$8-\$10 added to the cost of each case for shipping costs alone. As our local and east coast produce seasons come to a close, the majority of our fresh produce will be coming out of Yuma AZ. so costs are expected to continue climbing through late spring. Citrus crops, which we rely on heavily in December and January, are having a very poor year and pricing will remain high.

Paper products are unusually high driven by shipping costs and labor shortages.

Supply chain shortages and extended lead times are becoming more frequent, requiring occasional menu adjustments and substitutions.

Despite these challenges, our high student meal participation rates and corresponding state and federal per meal reimbursements are paying the bills and we have not had to dip into any reserve funds to maintain a healthy balance sheet.

Academy Hill Cafeteria Renovations

[Link to Slideshow](#)

