

SCHOOL NUTRITION REPORT JANUARY

During the month of December, the Nutrition Department served 33,684 meals over 12 days of service, an increase of 354 meals compared to December of last year. This growth is an encouraging indicator that more students are choosing to eat school meals, reflecting our continued efforts to improve both the quality and appeal of our offerings. For the month, the department received \$105,195.28 in combined breakfast and lunch reimbursements, \$15,345.64 through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and \$6,029.88 from the Afterschool At-Risk Program, for a total of \$126,570.80 in reimbursements—a strong result for a shortened service month.

We have also begun early planning for the Summer Food Program with the goal of making it more successful and sustainable than in previous years. The department recently applied for a \$500,000 grant to help offset summer operating expenses, and we will keep the Board informed as funding decisions are announced. Currently, our average food cost is \$3.64 per student per day, while reimbursement averages \$4.89 per meal. By closely managing costs and expanding participation, our long-term objective is to move the Nutrition Department toward financial self-sufficiency. In December, we were fortunate to receive anonymous donations at Heyburn Elementary, East Minico, and Rupert Elementary that eliminated several negative student account balances. While this generosity significantly reduced outstanding debt, the district still carries \$21,648.75 in negative balances, an ongoing concern. To address this more sustainably, we are actively reviewing our meal charge data and working toward qualifying the district for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for next school year. Achieving CEP status would not only reduce the financial burden on the district but would also ease the strain on families by providing free meals to all students.

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