

2023-2024 Becker Public Schools Nutrition and Wellness Report

06.10.2024

Thank you for the opportunity to share what we've been doing in the Food Service Department. We know how important school breakfast and lunch is for children and we in the food service department strive to provide our students with a variety of healthful, appealing, and nourishing foods.

School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program

The state has completed a full year of MN Free School Meals for Kids. All children are eligible for a free breakfast and lunch each day. As shown in the table below, participation rates have increased significantly.

Student Participation Rates:

Lunch	2016-2019 Average (pre pandemic)	2021/2022 (free lunch for all Covid waiver)	2022/2023	2023/2024
Primary School	69%	88%	70%	85%
Intermediate School	69%	90%	77%	86%
Middle School	54%	74%	63%	78%
High School	53%	67%	69%	74%

Breakfast	2022-2023	2023-2024
Primary School	65%	92%
Intermediate School	52%	57%
Middle School	38%	44%
High School	48%	53%

Wellness Committee

- The committee has representation from all four school buildings and includes teaching staff, administration, nursing and food service.
- A donation from the Bounce Back Program helped support the committee and we were able to purchase prizes for a wellness bingo challenge.

Department Highlights

- Total Breakfast Meals Served: 263,092
- Total Lunch Meals Served: 350,584. *The next highest annual meal count I could find in my files was the 2012/2013 school year in which we served 337,877 lunches.*
- Total Ala Carte Sales: \$147,286.45
- MN grown or raised foods on the menu this year included: apples, pears, peppers, sweet corn, baby red potatoes, tomatoes, ground beef, wild rice, greens, onions, asparagus, beef hot dogs, cucumbers, refrigerator pickles, mushrooms and delicata squash.

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- MN Department of Agriculture FY23 Farm to School Grant recipient for \$17,000 and FY24 recipient for \$3,500.
- MN Department of Education equipment grant recipient for \$14,603 used to purchase a new convection oven at the High School.
- New serving lines and signage at all locations.
- All classes at the Primary School have a scheduled breakfast time in the cafeteria after the day begins. This reduces the need to ask families to provide snacks since they are now getting seat time for two school provided meals a day. A 27% increase in meal participation shows the success of this as well as positive feedback from teachers.
- Eliminated Student Meal Account debt utilizing Angel Fund donations and family payment plans.

A look at the 2024/2025 school year:

- Piloting preschool breakfast meals served over at the new early education building.
- Piloting a food recycling program at the Primary School.
- Increasing protein forward options offered at breakfast at all sites including homemade egg and sausage breakfast sandwiches.
- Families will be asked to apply for educational benefits (free and reduced meals) for the upcoming school year. At the point of sale, students are still coded based on their eligibility even though meals are free.
 - The application for educational benefits isn't available until after July 1st, 2024. School meal information will be shared with families at this point. Applications will be available and families encouraged to fill out during back to school days.
- Staffing shortages have been ongoing and currently the department has 5 open positions.



Respectfully Submitted,

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