



Brownsville Independent School District

Agenda Category: General Function Board of Education Meeting: 03/06/24

Item Title: Consultant Services for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) X Action
Information
Discussion

BACKGROUND:

School Food Systems Solutions provides customized evaluation, training and other services that meet school nutrition programs needs in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs while ensuring compliance with federal regulations and lasting success. The Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Department is requesting approval for consultant services with School Food Systems Solutions to conduct workforce analysis, development or revisions of job descriptions and design performance evaluation systems to include specific skills that are required for positions as the district expands its scratch-cook operations so that all staff understand their responsibilities. The financial consequences involve a singular and non-repetitive expenditure, which is expected to yield long-term benefits for FNS.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

Fund 101: \$12,000.00

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend approval to use School Food Systems Solutions to deliver workforce analysis, development of job descriptions and design performance evaluation systems as the district expands its scratch-cook operations in the amount not to exceed \$12,000.00 for the 2023-2024 school year.

/Jackie Cruz

Submitted by: Principal/Program Director

Alejandro Cespedes Alex Cespedes

Recommended by: Asst. Supt./CFO

Dr. Nellie Cantu Nellie Cantu

Approved by: Deputy Supt./Chief Officer

Approved for Submission to Board of Education:

Jesus H. Chavez
Dr. Jesus H. Chavez
Interim Superintendent

When Necessary, Additional Background May Follow This.



Brownsville Independent School District

Food & Nutrition Services Department



DATE: February 16, 2024

TO: Mr. Alejandro Cespedes, Chief Financial Officer

FROM: Jackie Cruz, Director of Food and Nutrition Services

RE: Request for Board Approval –
Contracted Services with School Food Systems Solutions

I am writing to seek your approval on behalf of the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Department for contracted services with School Food Systems Solutions.

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations, the FNS Department is proposing to engage School Food Systems Solutions to conduct a comprehensive workforce analysis. This analysis will play a pivotal role as our district expands its scratch-cook operations. The objective is to ensure that all staff members fully understand their roles and responsibilities within this evolving context.

The proposed services from School Food Systems Solutions include:

1. **Workforce Analysis:** School Food Systems Solutions will evaluate our current workforce, specifically those positions outlined in the proposal, by conducting job analyses. The analyses will be instrumental in developing targeted strategies for job description development or revision. The analysis will rely on the proposed 2024-2025 organizational structure, consolidating specific positions to enhance overall efficiency. Also provided is the current organizational chart for your reference, allowing you to make comparisons with the proposed one. (*Refer to Exhibits A and B*).
- 2.
3. **Job Description Development or Revision:** The contractor will collaborate with our team to either develop new job descriptions or revise existing ones to align with the requirements of our expanding scratch-cook operations. This will ensure clarity and consistency in defining roles and responsibilities.
4. **Performance Evaluation System Design:** School Food Systems Solutions will work with us to design a performance evaluation system that incorporates specific skills required for positions within the FNS Department and measurable performance outcomes. This system will serve as a valuable tool for assessing individual and team performance accurately.



Brownsville Independent School District Food & Nutrition Services Department



These services are crucial to maintaining the high standards of our food and nutrition services, especially as we undertake the exciting endeavor of expanding our scratch-cook operations. The expertise offered by School Food Systems Solutions will contribute significantly to the professional development of our staff and the overall success of our department.

The estimated cost for these services is \$12,000.00 and have attached the proposal for your review (*refer to Exhibit C*)¹. Although \$12,000.00 may appear substantial, it constitutes a one-time investment, and the resulting work will remain sustainable for many years.

Additionally, I have included the Brownsville ISD Food and Nutrition Services Assessment Report from the Get Schools Cooking Grant Team, providing further support for our proposed analysis (*refer to Exhibit D*).

FNS believes that these contracted services will not only streamline our operations but also contribute to the long-term success of our district's FNS Department. I kindly request review and approval to proceed with School Food Systems Solutions for these essential services.

Thank you for your support in this matter. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

¹*The initial proposal was presented in October 2023. However, owing to the FNS Administrative, Procurement, and Financial Reviews, as well as the focus required for concurrent state and federal audits, I am now attending to this request. Originally, three quotes were sought from three vendors, but only School Food Systems Solutions responded and provided a quote. The proposal has been revised to align with February 2023, and the vendor is agreeable to maintaining the initially submitted price.*

EXHIBIT A

Proposed 2024-2025 Organizational Structure



2024-2025 Organizational Chart

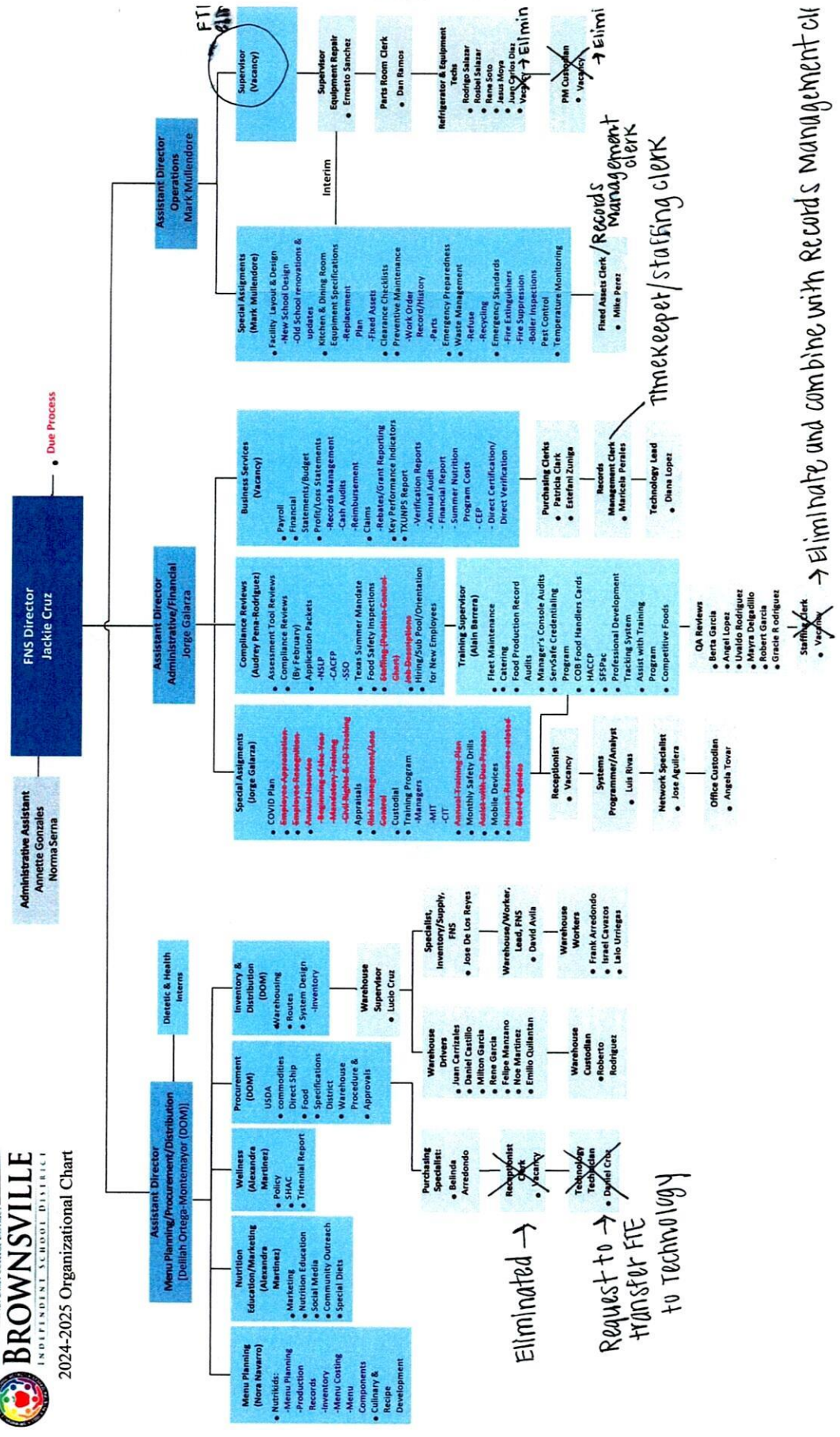
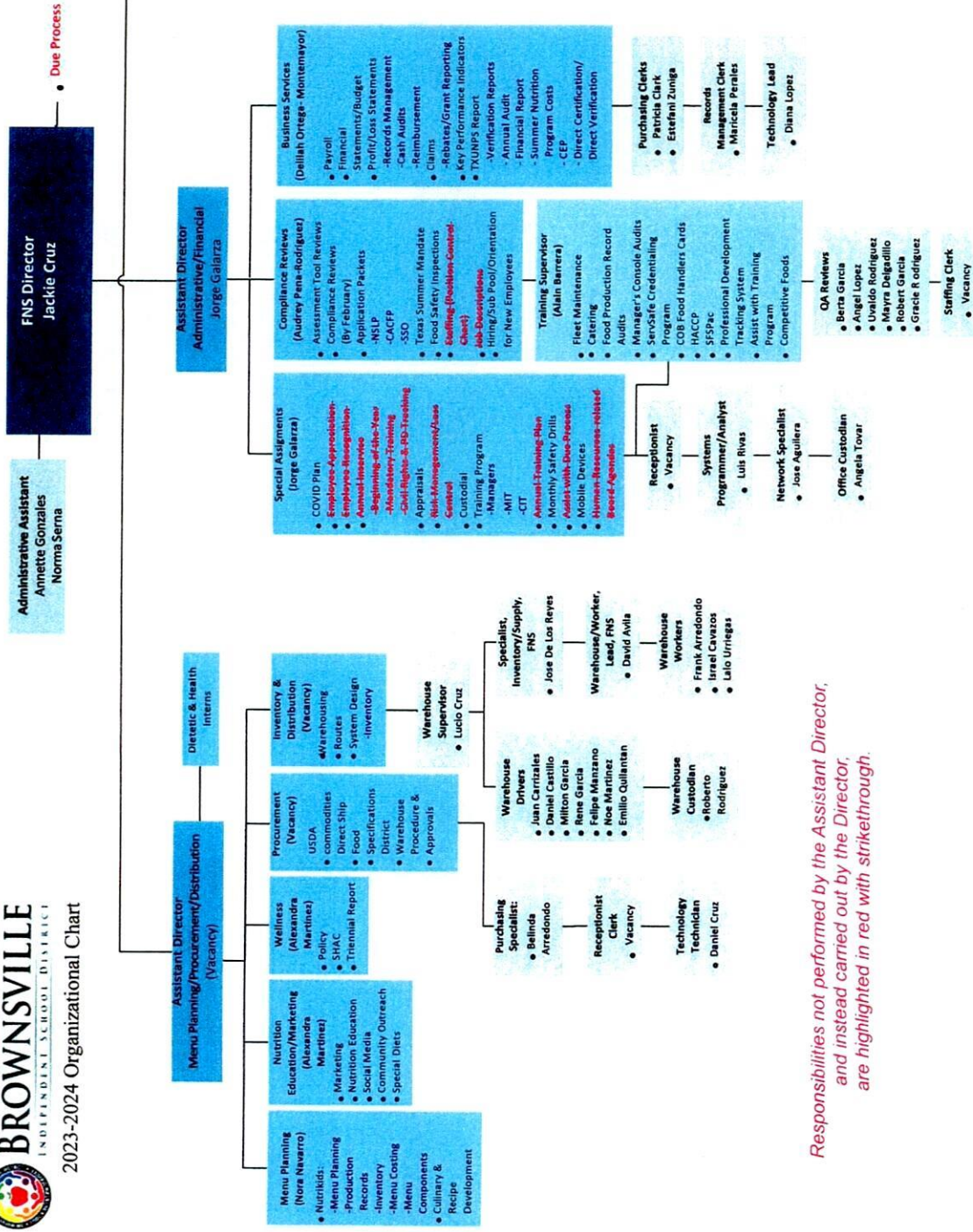


EXHIBIT B

Current 2023-2024 Organizational Structure



Responsibilities not performed by the Assistant Director,
 and instead carried out by the Director,
 are highlighted in red with strikethrough.

EXHIBIT C

Brownsville Independent School District

Food and Nutrition Services Department

Assessment Report by

Get Schools Cooking Grant Team



Brownsville Independent School District

Food & Nutrition Services Assessment Report

October 2023

Get Schools Cooking: A Systems Approach to Change
5th Cohort

Jessica Keene

Juni Elston

Lori Nelson

The Chef Ann Foundation is a 501c(3) non-profit working to provide school communities with the tools, training, resources, and funding that enables them to create healthier food and redefine lunchroom environments. To date, we've reached over 14,000 schools and 4 million children in all 50 states. Get Schools Cooking (GSC) is an intensive 3-year assessment and strategic planning program that provides schools with the operational knowledge to transition from a heat and serve to scratch cook operational model.



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[Brownsville Master Assessment Sheet - with data used for assessment](#)

[Brownsville Master Assessment Sheet - for district future use](#)

[Brownsville Procurement](#)

[Brownsville Multi-Year Participation Chart](#)

[Brownsville Labor Cost Per Meal Chart](#)

[Brownsville Meals Per Labor Hour Chart](#)



Introduction

The [Chef Ann Foundation](#) (CAF) thanks the Brownsville Independent School District (ISD) team for generous access to the district: Superintendent Dr. Rene Gutierrez, CFO Business & Finance Dr. Nellie Cantu, Director of Finance/Payroll Mary Garza, Director of Human Resources Maricela Franco, Assistant Superintendent HR Carmelita Rodriguez, Director of IT Robert Fisher, Director of Operations/Maintenance/Buildings Manuel Hinojosa, Food & Nutrition Services Director Jackie Cruz, Food & Nutrition Services Assistant Director Stefany Castrejon, and especially the Food & Nutrition Services kitchen staff.

This assessment was provided through the [Get Schools Cooking \(GSC\) grant](#) supported by CAF, [Whole Kids Foundation](#), the [Rachael Ray Foundation](#), and an Anonymous Funder. GSC provides a food service assessment, strategic planning, virtual and onsite technical assistance, a \$35,000 systems assistance grant and participation in a workshop focused on school food innovation as well as other networking opportunities to connect with districts aligned in their mission to increase scratch cooking in schools. The GSC program is evaluated by the [Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition](#) and the [Center for Good Food Purchasing](#).

Research shows there are various benefits to cooking school meals from scratch using fresh, whole ingredients, such as improved academic performance.¹ Scratch-cook programs are a financially sustainable food service model, as they have more control over the cost of their ingredients than purchasing processed items from a manufacturer. Additionally, the ability to purchase whole ingredients locally contributes to the local food economy and a more environmentally sustainable way of preparing food in schools.

As the second largest hunger relief program in the country, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides an unique opportunity for equal access to healthy, scratch-cooked meals that students of all backgrounds need to thrive and meet their full potential. Providing more

¹ Adolphus K, Lawton CL, Dye L. The effects of breakfast on behavior and academic performance in children and adolescents. *Front Hum Neurosci*. 2013 Aug 8;7:425. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2013.00425. PMID: 23964220; PMCID: PMC3737458.



scratch-cooked school meals can reduce the rate at which all students consume ultra-processed foods. When scratch cooking happens in schools instead of serving low-quality, processed food student habits, palates, expectations, as well as health and achievement outcomes change.

CAF defines scratch cooking as school districts cooking their own meals and incorporating whole, fresh ingredients, rather than serving pre-assembled or processed meals and meal components. Scratch cooking prioritizes the incorporation of raw proteins, whole grains, and fresh fruits and vegetables to create nutritious and delicious meals. A scratch item is produced from a set of instructions for preparing a particular dish, including a list of the ingredients that must be combined to create a final product. A speed scratch recipe uses convenience, or ready-made products as well as fresh ingredients to make a complete dish.

The primary purpose of the assessment is to gain insight into the status of current programs and services within the Food & Nutrition Services department. By understanding the current food, fiscal, facility, human resources, and marketing aspects of the department, districts can determine the best course of action and develop strategies to realize the department's vision. The assessment is based on interviews, data analysis and on-site observations. The report contains recommendations, bolded, and suggestions, italicized, to be used in strategic planning, and best practices, highlighted in green, that the department already has in place.

The Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition (GSCN) will measure how Brownsville ISD has implemented the recommendations and the progress made in procuring whole ingredients and increasing scratch cooking. GSCN will assign a baseline and final Healthy School Meal Score to the Food & Nutrition Services Department to determine success. The evaluation will include baseline, late implementation and final outcomes interviews and data review.

The Center for Good Food Purchasing (GFPP) will take a deeper dive into district procurement practices by collecting relevant procurement data. The five GFPP core values of assessment are environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare, local economies, and nutrition. The GFPP assessment process will include baseline and ending assessments, including in-depth analysis and reporting of the five core values. GFPP will provide a debrief of the assessment report



Introduction

results with the district, as well as grant access to the Good Food Operators Peer Learning Network and online tools and resources.

Key Indicators of Change:

- The menu items with the highest frequency are not highly processed.
- Ingredient categories trend toward little or no processing.
- Fresh produce is prominent.
- Juice is not a mainstay for fruit components.
- Reimbursable meal is emphasized, while a la carte is minimal.
- Commodity allocations reflect ingredients over ready to heat products.
- Flavored milks have been eliminated or at minimum restricted.
- Local procurement is emphasized, with necessary SOPs in place.
- Staff is trained and educated on how to deliver fresh, healthy meals and embraces the value of that contribution to student success.

In this report, we are primarily focusing on operations pre and post covid, understanding that data from 2019-20 and 2020-21 were significantly impacted by the pandemic. With the unexpected around every corner in the past few years, we admire the Brownsville Food & Nutrition Services team whose unwavering dedication, despite all the uncertainty, extended service to the broader community. There were disruptions to operations and financial impact, and the team has overcome so many obstacles in the pursuit of providing healthy food access—many accolades for their heroic work.

In the 2023-24 school year, Brownsville ISD has 37,991 students with 72% coming from economically disadvantaged households. The district demographic make up is 1% white and 99% BIPOC, primarily Hispanic. The district has 53 schools: 34 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, six high schools, and three alternative sites. Two sites produce meals for two satellite sites. All other sites are self-prep. With the team, facilities and Jackie's leadership, Brownsville ISD has potential to be a model for scratch-cooking in Texas.



Food

School meals are an opportunity to teach wellness, food literacy, cultural foodways, and food systems—from where food comes from to its environmental and social impacts. Increasing the food quality and the amount of scratch cooking offered to students creates more equitable food access for the local community, and makes healthy food accessible to all students. There are four main goals in the food section: create menu efficiency, shift from products to ingredients, increase produce and decrease sugar. From menu cycles to procurement, districts can take many small steps in the food category to increase scratch cooking.

Create Menu Efficiency

Menu and recipes drive workflow in the kitchens. Food & Nutrition Services must plan menus to maximize efficiency so staff time can be spent preparing the highest quality meals.

Menu Software & Production Records

Food & Nutrition Services uses NutriKids software from [Heartland](#) for nutrient analysis, recipe management, and menu planning. [Systems Design](#), another software, is used to manage inventory and ordering processes. NutriKids and Systems Design do not interface, requiring double entry of information and resulting in a lack of shared data for quick use. **CAF recommends using one software for both front of house (POS and eligibility) and back of house (menu planning, production records, inventory and ordering) to create efficiency. Specifically, using a single software solution for all back-of house functions is highly recommended.** The district uses eSchoolPlus for their Student Information System (SIS), and as part of a strategy to implement this change, the district could integrate front-of-house software that pairs with NutriKids or consider transitioning both FOH and BOH platforms to a new system that pairs with the district's SIS. Using one software for front of house and back of house creates efficiency because data can be shared across all systems, and automated processes save the team time and avoid duplication and errors.

Production records are excellent planning and communication tools. In Brownsville, production records are printed and completed on paper although NutriKids software allows them to be

completed digitally. Software-based records provide the greatest option for accuracy, analysis, and accountability, and allow data to be leveraged for functions like ordering and inventory. When utilized well they help control food and labor costs by tracking production needs for each menu cycle. As districts transition to more scratch recipes, effective use of production records becomes imperative so that food and labor are not wasted in overproduction. **CAF suggests** that the production record data be entered into the NutriKids software upon completion, to aid in the review of the document. During the onsite visit, CAF observed that production records were completed daily. Site leads kept them on clipboards in the kitchen where staff could fill them out as they work for optimal accuracy and efficiency. At most sites, the Site Leads use historical data to forecast menus and plan production. They adjust meal counts two weeks prior to service, based on past service participation and item popularity.



As programs shift to scratch-cooked production, tracking over-production is essential to controlling labor costs. During the onsite, CAF observed most sites following the best practice of batch cooking in an effort to try to minimize leftovers and provide students with fresh foods. Additionally, staff demonstrated uniformity in their approach to handling leftovers, as kitchen staff followed the practice of disposing of unpackaged hot leftovers and items that were cold, while individually packaged shelf stable items were returned to stock.

Brownsville has a standard operating procedure ([SOP](#)) to guide staff on proper production record protocols. Brownsville utilizes their field supervisors to review production records when they are completing site visits, but does not have a formal process to ensure the frequency of these checks. Production records need to be reviewed monthly for accountability and compliance purposes, and weekly spot checks emphasize the importance of using production records as tools. Using



electronic production records makes consistent review and follow up possible. **CAF recommends a structured approach to reviewing production records.** The structured approach can include reviewing all sites monthly using a checklist of key elements to review, such as if planned amounts were based on actuals and production amounts were adjusted for leftovers. Additionally, completing production records electronically will allow for easier access to the documents, as staff can review from any location.

Menu Development & Recipes

Menu and recipes drive workflow in the kitchens. Directors must plan menus to maximize efficiency so staff time can be spent preparing the highest quality meals.

Menu Planning

In Brownsville, the Assistant Food & Nutrition Services Director writes the menu. Cycle menus provide a plan to inform procurement, standard procedures, and work patterns. They enable staff to build skill and efficiency through repetition on the production side while still responding to student preference on the customer side. Breakfast and Lunch menus are on a 3-week cycle menu, which are kept for three cycles before adjustment or additions are made. Breakfast menus are ideal at a 2-3 week cycle. **CAF recommends expanding the lunch menu to a 4-6 week cycle, which provides a variety of choices without creating too many options.**

Lunch

There is menu continuity between elementary, middle, and high schools as entree and side options are kept similar for the base menu, while the number of options is expanded as the grade level increases. Elementary sites offer two entrees per day, one hot and one cold, a vegetable option and a fruit option. Elementary sites do not offer salad bars, rather sites cup fruit and vegetable sides. One day per week the district menus fruited gelatin, and on a separate day offers either juice or flavored raisins as the fruit component. White and chocolate milk are offered daily.

The middle and high schools offer three to four entrees, two vegetable choices and one fruit option. Similar to elementary sites, the middle and high schools also offer fruited gelatin weekly, and on a separate day offers either juice or flavored raisins as the fruit component. White and chocolate milk are offered daily. The middle and high schools also do not offer daily salad bars. **To prioritize fresh produce and for production efficiency, CAF recommends implementing salad bars at all sites and offering all produce in bulk, self-serve format from the salad bar. CAF suggests** the service of hot vegetables be minimized, in an effort to streamline service and balance labor. Recognizing the significance of beans as a side choice, this could also be maintained through the HOM platform or served hot from the line a few times per month.



Vegetarian options allow more students to participate in the program while making a positive environmental impact. **CAF recommends offering a daily vegetarian option in addition to a salad bar at all levels. This can be achieved by replacing an entree option across all sites with a vegetarian option.** This keeps the number of entrees offered at all sites the same. Providing variety in vegetarian meals beyond a peanut butter and jelly sandwich will enrich student food literacy, and offer students who do not eat one or more animal proteins choices within the meal program.

The district focuses efforts on the student menu, and does not prepare a separate adult menu.

When adults eat the same meals as the students are offered, it sends a message that the meals are healthy and tasty.



Recipes

For districts that want to shift to increased scratch production, software provides the tools required to scale recipes, avoid overproduction, and provide detailed, correct steps. Brownsville utilizes NutriKids for recipe management, and has standardized recipes. Standardized recipes are only effective, however, if sites scale the recipe to the amount of servings needed each day and utilize the recipes for production. In Brownsville, the site lead prints the standardized recipe once the planning is complete and then pairs the scaled recipe with the daily production record.

Cultural Foodways

The relationship between one's heritage and the food on their plate is fundamental. Eating meals that represent a variety of cultures is not only comforting, but also provides a great opportunity for kids to learn about their own, and their peers', heritages through food. Offering these meals also brings equity to the program by allowing students of different backgrounds to engage with the program, who otherwise not have participated.

Due to its versatility, scratch cooking is the easiest avenue for including culturally relevant foods on the menu. The entrees and items offered by the district reflect the effort made to provide cultural relevance to Hispanic students. As demonstrated in the [top 20 analysis](#), tamales were the number one food spend in 2022-23. Tacos, chalupas, enchiladas and carne guisada are some of the entrees offered weekly. The majority of the other entrees reflect standard American cuisine, predominantly revolving around convenience foods which dominate modern life such as pizza, burgers and hot dogs.

Ordering & Inventory Procedures

Ordering

Brownsville ISD sites order all products using Systems Design. Managers submit their orders based on the order guide prepared by the central office on Mondays, the central office verifies orders on Tuesdays and submits orders on Wednesdays for delivery the following week. Depending on the item and current inventory or availability, orders are placed to the district warehouse, directly to the

prime distributor, Labatt, or directly to the produce distributor, which alternates between three vendors based on the lowest price of the weekly bid.

Once the order is received at a school site, the kitchen staff check temps, check for damage or missing items, write the date received on the box, store appropriately, and update Systems Design that the items have been received. Labatt invoices are processed by the central office. Kitchen staff that receive invoices for produce make note of any items missing or damaged, sign, make a copy and send to the central office.

The current ordering process would benefit from the previous recommendation of using one software for both front of house (POS and eligibility) and back of house (menu planning, production records, inventory and ordering) to create efficiency. Specifically, using a single software solution for all back-of house functions. **CAF recommends using BOH K-12 software with a warehouse setup for ordering, receiving and inventory management.** The software would autogenerate the order guide based on the menu and provide inventory levels for all central staff to reference. Using software for ordering will also allow for reviewing site orders and holding site staff accountable for ordering and inventory. If the software is also used for production records, it can also provide data for the production managers to inform orders, resulting in more accurate ordering and improved food costs.

Once a week produce deliveries are not ideal because the quality degrades throughout the week, and makes offering a daily salad bar difficult. **CAF suggests** twice weekly produce deliveries for all the elementaries and middle schools and up to three times a week for the high school or any regional kitchen. Delivery minimums may be a barrier for twice weekly deliveries at the smaller sites, and are one of many reasons to move towards regional production.

As a future consideration, **CAF suggests** the adoption of a hub-and-spoke ordering and delivery model to help centralize the ordering process. This approach would reduce the number of locations placing orders and receiving deliveries. As such, this would result in significant cost savings related to delivery expenses and grant greater control over food purchases and inventory management. Understanding that the volume is significant at many sites, it's likely possible to consolidate



ordering and direct delivery from 50+ sites to 10-15 locations. In this model, certain vendors such as dairy still deliver directly to individual sites, whereas prime, produce, and some bread could be delivered to the primary kitchen. The approach would require the district to modify the current truck routes and utilize the existing fleet of trucks and drivers to distribute goods between sites.

Additionally, this suggestion aligns with the concept of establishing a [regional kitchen network](#) to support recipe execution as the district transitions toward more scratch cooking. From a labor perspective, there is also a cost benefit associated with reducing the [clerk positions](#) through consolidated ordering practices, as much of their time is dedicated to ordering and managing products. If the district is interested in pursuing this suggestion TA time could be dedicated to discussing these options.

Inventory Management

Brownsville ISD uses Systems Design to track inventory. The central warehouse and school sites take a monthly physical inventory and enter adjustments into the software. Monthly inventory counts are necessary for calculating and tracking [food cost](#) throughout the year.

In 2021-22, the department had 504 individual items on velocity reports provided from two vendors, Labatt and Nicho's Produce. In 2022-23 this number dropped to 464 items. The number of inventory items influences the time required to create order guides, order, review orders, receive product, produce food and take inventory. Brownsville has a reasonable number of inventory items to allow for both variety and accurate management.

Shifting from Products to Ingredients

Menu development is the key factor in how districts develop procurement strategies. The number one indicator of scratch cooking is that the top purchased items are ingredients rather than products. Analyzing purchasing to strategically make menu shifts is an important strategy for improving school meal quality.

Brownsville ISD Vendor Food Purchases 2022-23	
Vendor	Total \$ Spent
Labatt	\$9,160,774.21
Nicho's Produce	\$1,040,813.29
Hiland Dairy	\$366,108.15
Grand Total	\$10,567,695.65

*The Hiland Dairy spend reflects juice purchases only.

Brownsville Food & Nutrition Services spent about \$10.5M on food in SY 2022-23². The prime vendor was Labatt, the fresh produce vendor was Nicho's Produce, and apart from milk, Hiland Dairy provided the majority of the district's juice. The data above reflects the velocity reports provided and does not include food spend with other vendors, such as Flowers Baking Co., Brother's Produce, and Exquisita Tortillas, Inc. which are indicated on the Food Cost & Inventory Tracker³.

The district participates in a co-op for its prime vendors. Since the district has central storage there is the opportunity to buy directly from manufacturers as well as aggregate products from smaller producers.

Most of the department's goods are procured via Labatt. When looking at the top 20 items by total spend from prime vendor in SY 2022-23:

- The top item is culturally relevant and purchased from a company based in Fort Worth, TX

Brownsville ISD Top 20 Purchases 2022-23	
Product Description	Total \$ Spent
TAMALES, PORK TVP 902	\$665,642.45
PIZZA, PEPPERONI WG 4X6	\$592,408.40
ORANGE JUICE	\$366,108.15
APPLE ROYAL GALA 138	\$279,685.00
UNCRUSTABLE, PB & GRP WG	\$253,816.92
PEACHES, SLICED IN ELS	\$237,050.45
GEMS, TATER ZGTF OVEN LS	\$221,079.25
CHICKEN CHUNK WG CRISPY CN	\$217,977.94
PIZZA,CHEESE CRUNCHER, WG	\$169,025.52
FRUIT COCKTAIL, IN ELS	\$166,037.16
CHICKEN FAJITA STRIPS W/D FC	\$164,259.18
DICED PEARS IN ELS	\$150,799.32
DOUGH, DINNER ROLL WG RTO	\$149,840.13
BNLS WING,MDW/WHL MUSL,FC,WG	\$144,958.15
FC WG CHICK DRUMSTICK BONEIN	\$131,550.72
CHIPS BAKED SCOOPS WG	\$122,645.43
FRENCH TOAST STICKS, WG	\$119,879.68
BROCCOLI FLORETS	\$117,274.99
TKY FRANK 8/1 LOW SODIUM	\$116,889.60
ORANGE CA NAV 138	\$111,798.50

² [Brownsville Procurement](#)

³ [Brownsville Master Assessment Sheet - Food Cost & Inventory Tracker](#)



- None of the top 20 items include fresh vegetables
- Orange juice made from concentrate is the 3rd highest purchased item
- 2 of the top 20 are fresh fruit (apples and oranges)
- 3 of the top 20 are processed, canned fruit in syrup with added sugar
- 3 of the top 20 are pre-cooked breaded chicken products
- Uncrustables are the 5th highest purchased item
- Tater tots are the 7th highest purchased item
- The primary heat and serve entrees are pork tamales, pepperoni pizza, chicken nuggets, cheese pizza, chicken wings and drumsticks, french toast sticks and hot dogs.

The volume of purchases of an item often reflects how often it is menued and its high take rate, which is why these items make the top of the list. This is likely not the case for the pork tamale, and rather a reflection of the choice to purchase a higher-dollar, culturally relevant item.

Processed foods are more expensive than ingredients because the buyer outsources the labor to make the item. The chart below highlights processed food items that are served with high frequency, and provides suggested, achievable replacements. Not all changes must take place at once. Choosing to substitute one to three recipes for products in a cycle can make a big difference, and once the team develops proficiency with a new recipe, another can be added. Offering a training session for each recipe is one way to support staff as they learn new recipes and skills.

As the department increases scratch cooking, more ingredients will be reflected in the velocity reports. **CAF recommends the district track the progress of shifts in velocity data (top 20)⁴ on an annual basis and celebrate success by marketing them to the community.**

⁴ [SOP - How to Perform a Top 20 Analysis](#)

High Frequency Menu Items and Suggested Replacements		
Current Item	Replace With	Reasoning
Pizza (pepperoni and cheese)	Switch to a clean label pizza or use an oven rising crust and top with sauce and cheese	#2 & #5 entree spend, increase quality
Un crustables	Sunbutter and jelly sandwiches made in-house, using the assembly line method (demonstrated here with grilled cheese)	#3 entree spend, increase quality, eliminate individual packaging to decrease waste
Tater Tots	Roasted Potatoes or Chili Roasted Sweet Potatoes	#1 vegetable spend, increase quality, control sodium
Breaded Chicken Nuggets, Wings, and Drumsticks	Roasted Chicken Drumstick (recipe and training video) or Crispy Chicken Sandwich	#4, #7 & #8 entree spend, increase quality
Fajita Chicken Strips	Switch to a clean label or commodity chicken	#2 protein spend, increase quality
French Toast Sticks	French Toast Casserole (recipe and training video)	#1 breakfast entree spend

Healthy Meal Score

The healthy meal score (HMS) is an indicator developed by CAF and the GSCN to measure the healthfulness of school meals served and the amount of scratch cooking happening in a district.

The score focuses on lunch. The variables that indicate a healthy school food environment include:

- The number of scratch, speed scratch and processed recipes in a four week period



- Healthy beverages are offered
- Fresh produce is a prominent part of the daily menu
- A la carte sales do not compete with the reimbursable meal program
- Commodity usage tends towards DoD Fresh and Brown Box ingredients (in applicable districts)

Brownsville will receive a baseline and end of program Healthy Meal Score as part of the evaluation process. The replacements listed above for the Top 20 and the recommendations made in the [Increase Produce](#) and [Decrease Added Sugar](#) sections along with the other recommendations in the report will help the district improve their score.

Good Food Purchasing Program

The [Good Food Purchasing Program](#) (GFPP) aims to encourage large institutions, such as school districts, to spend their food dollars in alignment with five value-categories:

- Local economies
- Environmental sustainability
- Valued workforce
- Animal welfare
- Nutrition

As an evaluation partner to GSC, GFPP will assess and score Brownsville's procurement using vendor velocity data at baseline and again at program end. GFPP will also provide a debrief of the assessment report results with the district, as well as grant access to the Purchase Browser, Good Food Operators Peer Learning Network, and online tools and resources.

Product & Ingredient Standards

School districts can make progress towards their vision by developing food standards reflective of menu and procurement priorities. Food purchasing decisions have an impact on nutrition, as well as the environment, local economy, animal welfare, and labor conditions. The [Good Food Purchasing](#)



[Program](#) has model language providing an easy way to establish procurement values and share those values with vendors and the community without committing to strict purchasing rules or recreating the wheel. Marketing strategies that celebrate food standards can snowball awareness of the food quality, and ultimately contribute to increased participation. **CAF suggests** developing a one-pager that outlines the district's food standards to share at the beginning of the procurement process. While larger and having different resources, conditions and goals, [Minneapolis](#), [Boulder](#) and [Austin](#) have proven examples of food and menu standards that may serve as good starting points.

Clean Labels

Minimally processed foods will always be part of school food service and time must be spent researching labels and production processes to select clean foods that reflect health and wellness priorities. **CAF recommends that the district commit to a clean label initiative using the [Ingredient Guide for Better School Food Purchasing](#), for all products and ingredients and include it in the Wellness Policy.** The guide provides scientific reasoning behind the importance of eliminating unwanted ingredients from procured menu items and ingredients: artificial colors, artificial & unspecified natural flavors, artificial preservatives, artificial sweeteners and other sugar free sweeteners, flavor enhancers, flour conditioners, high fructose corn syrup, nitrites and nitrates, partially hydrogenated oils. The guide also includes a list of ingredients to watch for (added sodium, added sugars, artificial preservatives, bleached flour, specified natural flavors, thickening agents, vegetable proteins) and provides health related reasoning for why limiting these ingredients is important. The Life Time Foundation offers [Green Onion](#), a free, easy to use software that assists districts with evaluating their labels according to the Ingredient Guide and provides resources for clean label products and ingredients.

Buying Local

Local producers are a good source for whole ingredients for scratch cooking. Districts committed to incorporating local products commonly begin by developing a specific definition of local, targeting regional varieties within bid solicitations, identifying vendors that can support education on local food and agriculture, and setting procurement goals. Celebrating local purchases engages the



community and educates them on the quality of school food that features the unique flavors of Texas. Maximizing procurement and working with local growers is one of Brownsville's top three goals for the upcoming fiscal year.

As a best practice, Brownsville has established menu and procurement goals to help guide planning and purchasing, however, goals related to local procurement are not defined or tracked. **CAF suggests** the district create local purchasing goals that are measurable, such as allocating a percent of the total food budget to local ingredient purchases. Districts may consider starting with short term goals and establish new goals at regular, annual intervals so that successes can be celebrated.

The district currently purchases tortillas and other bread products from Flowers Baking Co., based in Georgetown, TX, as well as a few local items through Labatt such as pork tamales from Fort Worth, conchas from a company based in San Marcos, chorizo from a company based in Edinburg, and kolaches from a company based in LaPorte. Fluid milk and produce are often the easiest category to increase local spending in, and produce distributors can be given specific direction to provide more local products without requiring extensive work from the Food & Nutrition Services team. The district expressed that awareness of local products, deliveries and distribution can be a barrier to purchasing more local products. For awareness, The Texas Department of Agriculture oversees the [Texas Farm Fresh Initiative](#), which invites local contracting entities to apply for grant funds under the [Texas Local Food for Schools Program \(LFS\)](#). The purpose of this program is to strengthen local and regional food systems in Texas, with a focus on historically underserved producers and small businesses.

Brownsville does not use local preference language in RFPs since they are a member of a purchasing co-op where RFPs are handled on behalf of all members. Indicating preference for local foods during procurement is the best way to meet local purchasing goals, particularly for produce and proteins. **CAF suggests** bringing up the idea of adding local preference language in RFPs at a future co-op meeting for discussion. Additional local procurement guidance and regulations can be accessed on the [USDA Community Food Systems website](#).

Brownsville is already doing a significant amount of local procurement. In 2022-23, the items mentioned above that were purchased locally through Labatt, plus the annual spend with Flowers

Baking Co. and Exquisita Tortilla amounted to about \$965k, or 9% of the total annual food spend. To reach 10% local procurement, Brownsville would need to spend \$91.6k more per year locally. To make these larger procurement shifts, **CAF suggests** looking at top 20 items that can be found in Texas, such as peaches and oranges, as well as chicken and corn or corn products. If Brownsville transitioned just 30% of their peaches and oranges to local, it would represent about 1% of the total food spend and Brownsville would reach 10% local procurement. In 2017, Cameron County's top crops included dry beans and dry peas, as well as some vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes. Cameron County also produces relatively high amounts of poultry, eggs, and pigs⁵. Brownsville, located within Cameron County, could look into these products as a way of increasing local spend.

Incorporating ingredient and product standards into district policy helps to keep on track toward those goals and make them district and community goals, not just food service goals. Policy creates an easy way to communicate the vision and direction of the department with all and creates continuity over time. **CAF recommends establishing ingredient and product standards, including local purchasing goals, as part of district policy.**

Geographic preference is the ability to apply a preference for locally grown and locally raised, unprocessed agricultural products in RFPs. This local definition is used to develop RFP selection criteria in such a way as to make bids for locally grown and locally raised products more competitive as a potential lowest bidder. Geographic preference can be applied in a variety of ways, and [USDA has a brief primer](#) that provides three examples. The key is to be sure geographic preference does not restrict full and open competition.

The majority of Brownsville's local spend is not on fresh fruits and vegetables, pointing to an area of opportunity to increase the local spend. Given the prevalence of farming in the region, this is an area of opportunity for the district. As of October 2023, Brownsville ISD participates in the [Texas Farm Fresh Initiative](#) at Garcia Middle, Gonzalez Elementary and Ben Brite Elementary. This initiative includes serving three or more Texas foods representing three meal components once a week over the course of a month, hosting at least one educational opportunity during the month of October,

⁵ [2017 USDA County Profile - Cameron County](#)

and sharing about the initiative on social media. **CAF suggests** integrating the [Texas Harvest of the Month \(HOM\) Program](#) as well and promoting it on the FNS webpage on the district website. **CAF suggests** tying local purchasing to Farm-to-School programming, such as with tastings, farmer visits, and promotional materials.

Tying local purchases to programming helps make connections for students between the classroom and the cafeteria, and provides nutrition education, a sense of food literacy, and access to good food to all children, regardless of economic status. In addition to food quality, the vendor relationship, ties to the community, the environmental impact, the marketing impact of local food has the potential to engage students and parents and help grow meal participation.

Increase Produce

Increasing the amount, and the variety, of produce offered is incredibly important to child health and wellbeing. Too few children are consuming the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables, and so it is imperative that school meal programs provide access to these items that children may not otherwise have access to outside of school.⁶ Fruits and vegetables provide children with essential vitamins and nutrients they need to grow healthy, and can lead children to perform better in the classroom as well.⁷



Fruits & Vegetables

All districts operating the National School Lunch Programs must offer specific quantities of fruits and vegetables, as well as specific vegetable sub-groups within each week's menu. For all meals, students must take at minimum a half cup serving of fruit or vegetable for the meal to be

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/fruit-vegetables/index.html>

⁷ Lopez-Gil, JF et al. [Association Between Eating Habits and Perceived School Performance: A Cross-Sectional Study Among 46,455 Adolescents From 42 Countries](#). Frontiers in Nutrition. 2022. DOI:

reimbursable. The USDA does not limit school districts in how many servings may be permitted, and in some districts, students are encouraged to take seconds of fruits and vegetables.

Combined Fruit and Vegetable Purchasing by Type SY 22-23							
Category	Type	Hiland	Labatt	Nicho's	DoD Fresh	Total by Type	% by Type
Fruit	Canned		\$ 652,585			\$ 652,585	28%
	Dried		\$ 160,177			\$ 160,177	7%
	Fresh-Processed		\$ 16,752	\$ 31,533		\$ 48,285	2%
	Fresh-Whole			\$ 770,679	\$ 261,388	\$ 1,032,066	44%
	Frozen		\$ 11,529			\$ 11,529	0.5%
	Juice	\$ 366,108	\$ 52,881			\$ 418,989	18%
Fruit Total		\$ 366,108	\$ 893,924	\$ 802,211	\$ 261,388	\$ 2,323,630	61%
Vegetable	Canned		\$ 199,329			\$ 199,329	14%
	Dried		\$ 2,338			\$ 2,338	0.2%
	Dried, Potato		\$ 80,372			\$ 80,372	5%
	Fresh-Processed		\$22,040.48	\$ 181,059		\$ 203,099	14%
	Fresh-Whole			\$ 56,631	\$ 261,388	\$ 318,019	22%
	Frozen		\$363,345.29			\$ 363,345	25%
	Frozen, Potato		\$ 296,429			\$ 296,429	20%
Vegetable Total		\$ -	\$ 963,854	\$ 237,690	\$ 261,388	\$ 1,462,932	39%
Grand Total Fruit and Veg		\$ 366,108	\$ 1,857,778	\$ 1,039,901	\$ 522,775	\$ 3,786,562	

Total Food Expenses	\$10,567,696
Total Commodity Spend	\$2,657,183
Total Food + USDA Commodities Spent	\$13,224,879
% of Fruit and Vegetable of Total Food Value SY 2021-22 (value of commodities included)	29%
% of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables of Total Food Value (value of commodities included)	12%
Total Breakfast, Lunch and Supper SY 2022-23	8,965,023
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable - Cost per Meal	\$0.18
All Types - Fruit and Vegetable - Cost per Meal	\$0.42

Brownsville's average total fruit and vegetable cost per meal was \$0.42 in 2022-23. For the purposes of this analysis we have assumed that half of the DoD Fresh spend was on fresh fruit and half was on fresh vegetables, as a detailed report with the DoD purchases was not provided. Fresh produce makes up 12% of total food spend. Of the \$0.42 per meal spent on produce, \$0.18 was spent on fresh produce, while \$0.24 per meal was spent on frozen, canned, dried, or juiced produce.

Brownsville purchases 46% of fruit and 36% of vegetables as fresh, demonstrating their commitment to healthful options for students. With changes made to juice and frozen potato



offerings the percentage of fresh produce offered can grow, while the cost per meal spent on produce can decrease, allowing more funds for higher quality food products overall.

CAF recommends procuring a greater percentage of produce as fresh produce to move away from highly processed foods with many unnecessary ingredients. For example, frozen potatoes make up a high percentage of vegetable purchases at 20%. Potatoes are one of the most prevalent vegetables offered in school lunch programs, thus are also the highest consumed. When consumption of other vegetables is compared to starchy vegetables, students have been found to consume less than a tablespoon. This indicates that a variety of vegetables offered is necessary in order to encourage students to consume more non-starchy vegetables⁸. Fresh potatoes, and ultimately other types of produce, are preferable to frozen potato products. Fresh potatoes can be brought in, sliced with the robot coups or fruit section cutters and roasted or made into recipes found on The Lunch Box, including: [sweet potato fries](#), [Greek potato salad](#), [roasted potatoes](#), and [potato salad](#).

Offering a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables provides a food literacy opportunity for students and increases the likelihood that they will select fresh items and eat them. In 2022-23, Brownsville purchased 16 different fresh fruits. The top fresh fruits purchased were apples (39% of total fresh fruit spend), oranges (15%), pears (15%), and bananas (10%). Grapefruit (4%), cantaloupe (4%) and cherries (2%) were the next highest fresh fruit spend. Other fruits, such as grapes, strawberries, and watermelon, each comprised less than 0.5% of the fresh fruit spend. Brownsville purchased 10 different fresh vegetables. The top fresh vegetable purchases were carrots (29%), lettuce (24%), and tomatoes (20%). Aside from spinach (10%), celery (6%), and zucchini (6%), the remaining vegetables comprised less than 1% of the fresh fruit and vegetable spend. **CAF suggests** increasing the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables in order to give students exposure to many different nutrients and experiences. Fresh produce can be processed in-house for the salad bar or in scratch recipes. Some recipes to try include: [mashed potatoes](#), [black bean and corn salad](#), [caprese salad](#), [cool & spicy cucumber salad](#), [moroccan carrot salad](#).

⁸ Ang, IYH et al. School Lunch Environmental Factors Impacting Fruit and Vegetable Consumption 2019. 51(1) 68-79. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2018.08.012>

Salad Bars

Salad bars serve as a platform to teach, encourage, and tempt students with a dazzling array of fruits and vegetables. Salad bars improve access to fresh whole foods, increase variety, and provide more choice in the menus. Research shows that [salad bars increase consumption of fruits and vegetables](#) and [increase meal program participation](#). Salad bars can accomplish many goals and are a great place to offer intact grains and local produce.

None of Brownsville ISD's sites have salad bars. Salad bars are a great place to increase the variety of fruits and vegetables for many reasons - celebrating local, minimizing production time, potential decrease in plate waste, and providing more choice in menu options. As previously mentioned, **CAF recommends that all sites implement daily salad bars and suggests** implementing double-sided salad bars to increase line speed. Allowing students to self-serve at the salad bar for side items or entrees cuts down on production and increases the overall take rate of salad bar items, making the production more worthwhile. **CAF recommends all salad bars be offered self service.** Further planning and implementation support is available in [the salad bar section of The Lunch Box](#).



To control food costs and most importantly offer all students the same options and experience, all sites need to offer the same salad bar items daily and allow students to select the same meal pattern. Standardizing salad bar ingredients and using production records provides data to make more ordering and production more accurate, thus avoiding food and labor waste. Planning salad bar menu cycles around themes, local availability, and updating seasonally allows for variety and tracking, and ensures that students districtwide have access to the same options. Additionally, pairing salad bar options with the entree choices can create a cohesive meal. **CAF recommends utilizing the salad bar for entrees and sides.** Intact grain salads, bean salads, hummus and hard boiled eggs are cost effective items that can make up a complete meal.

Decrease Added Sugar

Eating and drinking too much added sugar puts kids at risk for tooth decay, heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and fatty liver disease, among other health problems, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Families should focus on foods and drinks that do not have added sugar, the AAP advises.⁹ Unfortunately, national school meal programs do not have sugar or added sugar maximums. Even though school meal specific products, like cereals, have been formulated to meet national school meal program regulations and boast 25% less sugar on the packaging, many contain considerable amounts of sugar. Added sugar limits and scratch cooking are ways to decrease the sugar offered to students and ultimately increase the healthfulness of school meals.

Breakfast

Brownsville demonstrates a commitment to breakfast access, with Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) at all elementary and middle school sites, as well as Grab & Go and through-the-line service in their high schools. The entree options consist of prepackaged breakfast items such as Uncrustables, cereal, cinnamon toast pastry or mini pancakes, and heat-and-serve items such as french toast sticks, kolaches, and tamales.

Elementary and middle school sites have one entree option that is either hot or cold alongside fresh fruits or orange juice and both chocolate and white milk. High schools offer two breakfast entree options, one hot and one cold, in addition to cereal. Hot entree options generally reflect the elementary and middle school menus. Cold entree options include smoothies, muffins, Poptarts, and oatmeal. Breakfast conchas are also featured in the high schools. **CAF suggests** offering only one daily



⁹American Academy of Pediatrics Publication: [Added sugar in kids' diets: How much is too much?](#)

entree along with a cereal option at breakfast in the high school. Two options give students choice, and limits having a scratch cooked item compete against packaged, branded products.

In addition to considering the number of options, it is also important to consider what the options are. The School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal pattern requires two servings of grain, and major food manufacturers offering convenience breakfast items that outsource labor costs to their operations push school breakfast towards sweetness. **CAF recommends eliminating dessert-like breakfast items like pastries, or at a minimum limiting them to one day a week to foster healthy habits in students.** Some breakfast recipes that are BIC-friendly include: [baked blueberry oatmeal](#), [hashbrown and egg casserole](#), [cinnamon raisin overnight oats](#), and [breakfast sandwich](#).

Given the time constraints and volume of meals produced in BIC models it can be beneficial to distribute meal preparation over several days to offset labor burden. A multi-day prep schedule could be utilized to allocate a day for thawing product, assembling and packing, and a third for heating in foil lined paper bags for service. Menu items such as breakfast sandwiches, tacos, and overnight oats would lend themselves well to this method. The Brownsville team has shared that improving breakfast options is a priority for the department, as part of the GSC program this is a great area to dedicate TA support.

Based on the current menu, students can select a chocolate milk with 22 grams of sugar (11 of those grams are added), a cinnamon toast pastry, adding up to 37 grams, 26 of which are added. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ages 2-18 should have less than 25g of added sugar a day.¹⁰ **CAF recommends that Food & Nutrition Services set added sugar limits for all items and include those limits in the Wellness Policy.** For reference, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 recommend no more than 10% of daily calories come from added sugars.¹¹

¹⁰American Academy of Pediatrics Publication: [Added sugar in kids' diets: How much is too much?](#)

¹¹ [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025](#)



Food

Juice

Districts with a focus on fresh and scratch cooked foods will reduce reliance on juice as it provides more sugar than fresh fruit, and zero of the naturally occurring fiber in fresh fruits. In 2022-23, about \$419k was spent on fruit juice making up 18% of fruit purchases. In Brownsville, juice is offered daily at breakfast. While the USDA considers juice as a fruit component, students often take juice for a beverage. [Smoothies](#) are another beverage option at breakfast, which can be prepared in large batches and either sent in pitchers to classrooms or portioned into cups for service. Additionally, the district might consider offering agua fresca, which can also contribute to the fruit serving when formulated to meet the meal pattern requirements. **CAF recommends that juice be offered only up to two to three times per week at breakfast at all levels.**

Milk

Brownsville ISD SY 2022-23 Milk Purchasing Rate by 8 oz Carton						
Milk Type	Elementary	Middle	High	Warehouse	Total	% By Type
MILK, CHOCOLATE	1,240,470	711,785	857,955		2,810,210	49%
MILK, LACTOSE FREE FAT FREE	20,780	1009	2780		24,569	0.4%
MILK, STRAWBERRY	375	0	0		375	0.01%
MILK, WHITE 1%	1,576,089	362969	488943	7425	2,435,426	43%
MILK, WHITE SKIM	361,911	44,715	34,065		440,691	8%
SOY MILK, VANILLA	3024	24	24		3072	0.1%
UHT 2% WHITE MILK	0	0	0	7280	7280	0.1%
Total	3,202,649	1,120,502	1,383,767	14705	5,721,623	
% Total	56%	20%	24%	0.3%		
Student Reimbursable Breakfast	3,510,169					
Student Reimbursable Lunch	4,677,532					
Student Reimbursable Supper	777,322					
Total Student Meals	8,965,023					
Milk Purchase Rate:	64%					

*The Elementary milk counts include Lincoln Park School.

Milk is a required component to be offered with all school meals, although it is not required to be selected¹². It is a common misconception that even if a student selects enough components from other parts of the menu, they must also take milk with the meal. In many districts, the overall take

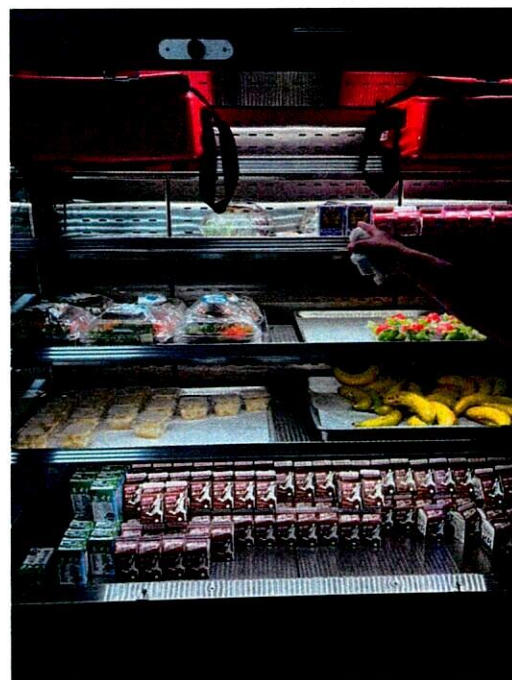
¹² [USDA FNS Offer vs. Service Guidance](#)

rate of milk is high. Brownsville switched milk vendors mid-year and as a result velocity data was only available for the second portion of the school year. Based on an approximation, using milk data from the second portion of the school year and extrapolating an average monthly purchase rate to estimate the purchase rate for the remaining months, **Brownsville's SY 2022-23 purchase rate was approximately 64%**. The ideal purchase rate for milk is around or below 60%. This demonstrates Brownsville execution of offer vs serve and student awareness of meal pattern options.

For districts that wish to move to healthier and less processed foods, shifting away from flavored milk usually [comes up for discussion because of the added sugar](#). Investing in fresh, scratch-cooked foods can be in conflict with accompanying that food with flavored milk. Most students gravitate toward flavored milk when it is offered, increasing the potential for an added tablespoon of sugar consumption per carton. In Brownsville, fat-free chocolate milk is offered at both meal periods, and comprises 49% of all milk purchases, almost equal to white milk at 50%, and about 1% of alternative milk such as soy and lactose free milk.

Brownsville's students have three current milk options; skim, 1%, and FF chocolate. **CAF recommends that, to start, flavored milk be eliminated at breakfast at all levels.** Eventually the district could consider eliminating it entirely. **CAF also recommends that the district include guidelines around milk in the Wellness Policy in order to support Food & Nutrition Services as these changes take effect.**

The most common concern about removing flavored milk is a reduction in meal counts. In districts that have removed flavored milk, the drop is temporary if at all. School districts handle reducing flavored milks in a variety of ways, such as offering it on Fridays only or replacing milk cartons with [bulk milk](#) dispensers. [Bulk milk](#) service provides a colder product without a carton

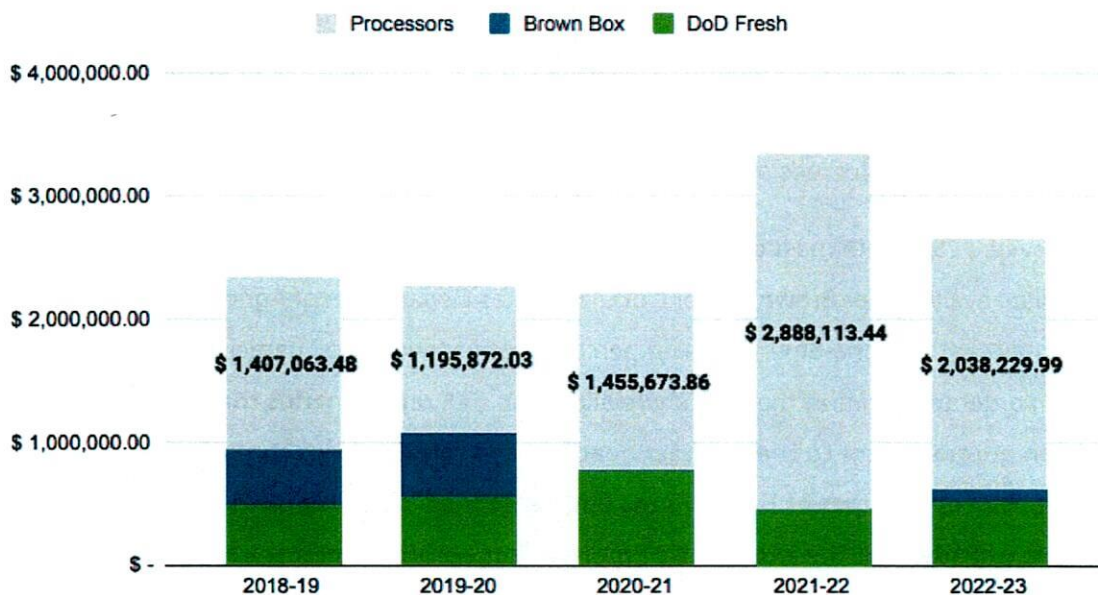


aftertaste and gives students a sense of autonomy in choosing the amount of milk they pour. This service style results in higher milk consumption, though not higher overall take rates. Districts see a cost savings when implementing bulk milk because they purchase closer to the amount students want to drink rather than 8oz for each student taking milk. The cost savings can then be invested in higher quality food products, such as organic milk. The reduced packaging, empty shipping space and milk waste also have a positive environmental impact. **CAF recommends the district replace cartons with bulk milk service to decrease food waste and improve quality of product.**

In addition to adding bulk milk service to the line, **CAF suggests** adding water or spa water dispensers. While there are water fountains and bottle fillers outside of all cafeterias, offering spa water on the line would give students easier access to beverage choices other than milk. Spa water can be flavored with slices of lemon, cucumber, mint, or strawberry, for example. As part of the GSC program, TA could be utilized to help identify the best location to place the water on the line.

Commodities

Brownsville Commodity Allocation and Diversion





The USDA commodity distribution is overseen in Texas by the Department of Agriculture. In 2018-19, Brownsville was allocated \$2,346,121, 21% of which was diverted to DoD, 19% to Brown Box, and 60% to processors. In 2019-20, Brownsville was allocated \$2,273,613, including a \$86,701 bonus which they did not spend. Twenty five percent of the commodities utilized were diverted to DoD, 22% to Brown Box, and 53% to processors. Eight percent of the total allocation went unutilized in 2019-20, likely due to pandemic related challenges. In 2020-21, Brownsville was allocated \$2,224,085 and utilized \$2,224,085, meaning 10% of the total allocation went unutilized. Thirty five percent of the commodities utilized were allocated to DoD, none to Brown Box, and 65% to processors. In 2021-22, Brownsville was allocated \$3,337,423, 13% of which was diverted to DoD, none to Brown Box, and 87% to processors. In 2022-23, Brownsville was allocated \$2,657,183, including a \$26,487 bonus, which they did not spend. Twenty percent of the commodities utilized were allocated to DoD, 4% to Brown Box, and 77% to processors. 1% of the allocation went unutilized in SY 2022-23. While the pandemic likely impacted projected utilization of products and may have influenced allocations, there is a pattern of unutilized funds and a tendency to divert to processors rather than brown box items.

Commodities can contribute up to 20% of the plate value in some districts depending on product selection and utilization of unprocessed USDA Foods that are cooked from scratch. In Brownsville, commodities represent on average 19% of the total value spent on food. Generally, this percentage drops when a district uses more of its allocation for processed foods because the manufacturer fees can reduce the overall value to the plate.

In Brownsville's case, with most of the commodity dollars going into processed foods, there are fewer dollars available for Brown Box or DoD. The Texas Department of Agriculture distributes DoD Fresh Entitlement as a one-time, fair share percentage allocation to all participating contracting entities. In order to maximize their fair share allocation **CAF recommends the district opt into the DoD Fresh program prior to the contract deadline and refrains from committing any entitlement to other types of USDA Foods until after the DoD Fresh distribution has taken place. This will allow for the allocation of more commodity dollars toward fresh, unprocessed foods.** Because availability of items through DoD can fluctuate, it is important to have commercial

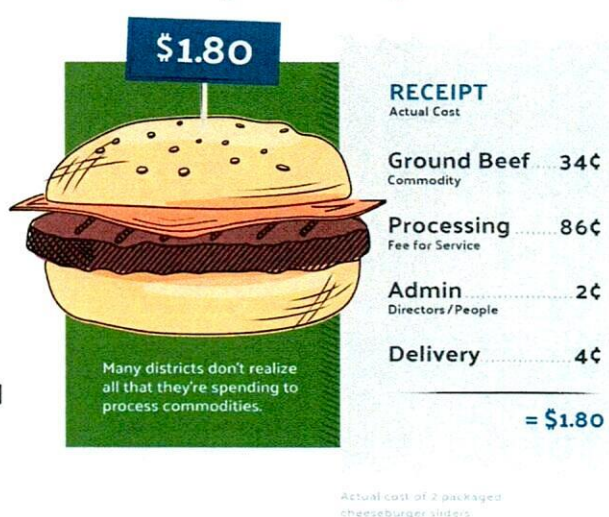
produce available, and with flexibility most produce can be obtained through both DoD and a commercial vendor. **CAF recommends the department shift dollars from processing to similar items or ingredients from Brown Box to be made in house and use part of the GSC technical assistance to make commodity selections for school year 2024-25.**

When evaluating a processed commodity's menu item cost, the best practice is to consider the true value of the commodity foods and compare them to the commercial equivalent. While commodity costs do not come out of earned revenue, they still represent value and therefore, districts need to shop with their commodity dollars for the best value just as they would for commercial items. In fact, sometimes a commercial item is priced lower than a commodity item's true value. For every processed item there are added fees for manufacturing, additional ingredients, and handling.

For example, Don Lee's Individually Wrapped Whole Grain Cheeseburger Sliders carry a donated commodity value for the bulk beef used in them of \$24.74 per case¹³ based on the \$2.32 per pound value of the USDA commodity bulk ground beef. To make the beef into a product, the customer pays an additional \$62.04 per case, known as the fee for service (FFS). USDA assesses an admin fee of \$0.015 per pound. Making the total case cost \$86.94, not including any additional handling fees. Divided by the serving count per case of 72, the true per serving value is \$1.21 instead of \$0.86, which is quite expensive for an

entree. When deciding whether to divert commodity value to a processor to make a product, Food & Nutrition Services compares the true value with the commercial price of the same item to determine whether that choice makes sense over the course of the year, needs to be limited within the menu cycles or made in-house. The true value of the processed product can also be compared

The True Cost of Commodity Processing



¹³ [Don Lee Cheeseburger Sliders CN label](#)



Food

to the raw product available through Brown Box foods or commercially to determine whether it makes sense to outsource the labor of processing (cooking) to a manufacturer or to assume the labor cost in house with scratch cooking.



Facilities

Proper facilities are a critical component of any successful scratch-cook operation. The ability to produce fresh meals is dependent upon the production site's equipment and storage, cooking, and washing space, as well as service areas that have flow and modern equipment for sanitary service and attractive food presentation. There are three main goals for facilities: outfit kitchens with proper equipment for scratch cooking, minimize waste and set up service lines for fresh, bulk service.

Brownsville is fortunate to have a large central warehouse, an asset that allows for bringing in large amounts of product, aggregating local products, and obtaining the best price by working directly with manufacturers and arranging for one delivery. Brownsville is also fortunate to have spacious kitchens that are well equipped and have ample storage and refrigeration, providing a great foundation to integrate more scratch cooking. Currently, all sites are self production sites, with the exception of Brownsville Academic Center and Brownsville Early College High School who receive their meals from neighboring kitchens.

Outfit Kitchen with Proper Equipment for Scratch Cooking

The ability to scratch cook hinges on having proper kitchen equipment for storage, prep, and cooking. Brownsville has the majority of the equipment necessary to start scratch cooking, and requires approximately \$733k in equipment to outfit kitchens appropriately.¹⁴ This estimate does not include delivery and installation of equipment.

Site Kitchens

Brownsville's site kitchens are generally right-sized for self production, with sufficient space and equipment to support daily delivery of fresh foods. Overall, the kitchens are incredibly clean and organized and use the space well.

¹⁴ [Master Assessment Sheet - Equipment Estimate](#)



For self production, the standard equipment would include:

- Refrigeration (reach-in or walk-in depending on meal volume)
- Freezer (reach-in or walk-in based on meal volume)
- Combi Oven(s) or Convection oven(s) and steamer
- Tilt skillet
- Exhaust hood sized to heating equipment
- 3 compartment sink
- Dishwasher (if able)
- Handwashing sink
- Stainless steel prep tables
- Commercial immersion blender
- Food processor

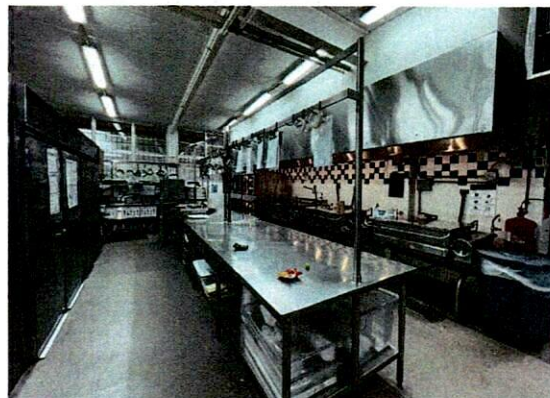
In general the self production kitchens in Brownsville have:

- Walk-in refrigerators and freezers, adequately sized.
- Pass through hot and cold units, multiple of each
- Double stack convection oven(s)
- Tilt Skillets (2-3)
- Exhaust Hoods, adequately sized
- Stainless steel prep tables (ample)
- Power Soak 3 compartment sinks
- Handwashing sink(s)
- Office Space
- Dry Storage, adequately sized

Approximately 25% of the kitchens have steamers and a few school sites have combi ovens. **CAF recommends that all self production sites have either a combi oven or a convection oven AND steamer so that there are multiple cooking methods available.** As part of the GSC technical assistance, time could be allocated to discuss and evaluate the addition of new equipment, especially as it relates to available space within the kitchens. Additionally, food processors, sectionizers, and commercial immersion blenders are key pieces of equipment for a scratch cook operation and particularly helpful in supporting salad bar operations. While many of the kitchens in Brownsville had food processors, sectionizers, and/or mixers, these pieces of equipment were not consistently found in all school kitchens. **CAF recommends that all self production sites be equipped with a food processor, sectionizer, and at least a commercial immersion blender to support scratch cooking production and salad bar preparation.**

Elementary Sites

The district has a total of 34 elementary school locations which range in enrollment from 215 to 876 and on average serve 354 breakfast, 429 lunches, and 92 suppers per location.



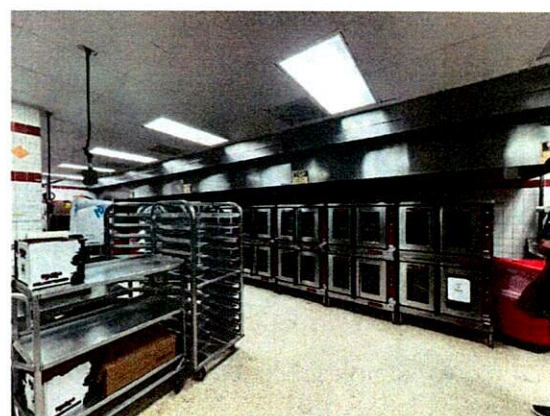
Middle School Sites

The district has a total of 10 middle school locations which range in enrollment from 569 to 1099 and on average serve 426 breakfast, 560 lunches, and 57 suppers per location.



High School Sites

The district has a total of six high school locations which range in enrollment from 146 to 2,249 and on average serve 497 breakfast, 916 lunches, and 124 suppers per location.



Alternative School Sites

The district has a total of three Alternative School locations which range in enrollment from 66 to 343 and on average serve 79 breakfast, 102 lunches, and 6 suppers per location. Of these locations, only Lincoln Park High school is a self production site, the remaining two (Brownsville Academic Center and Brownsville Early College High) are satellite campuses. The kitchen space at Lincoln Park High is small, but adequately equipped given the volume of meals produced. The kitchen has a double stack convection oven, both a single door and double door reach-in cooler, a single and triple door freezer, 3 compartment sink,

handwashing sink, and a small stainless steel prep table. At the time of the onsite assessment the school had an enrollment of 66 students and served approximately 60 breakfast and 69 lunches daily. Given this low volume, **CAF recommends food be prepared and delivered the day before service in a bulk format for finishing on site and serving bulk style on the line at Lincoln Park HS. The meals should be delivered via a refrigerated truck or delivery vehicle using wheeled insulated food totes.** Porter Early College High School is located approximately 1.5 miles from Lincoln Park High and has facilities that could adequately accommodate the production. Consolidating meal production has many benefits including reducing food waste, providing consistent quality, and providing savings in labor.



Satellite Kitchens

Brownsville has two schools, Brownsville Academic Center and Brownsville Early College High School, that receive their meals from nearby kitchens. The meals are shipped hot, day of service, for both breakfast and lunch. These sites follow the same breakfast and lunch menus as the other secondary school sites.

For satellite service, the standard equipment would include:

- Combi oven, convection oven & steamer, or Retherm unit
- 3 Compartment Sink
- Dishwasher (if able)
- Stainless Steel prep table(s)
- Hand Sink

The “cook, chill, and ship” production model is the preferred method to retain the freshness of scratch-cook preparation. The final products are then “finished” at the site, meaning that ingredients

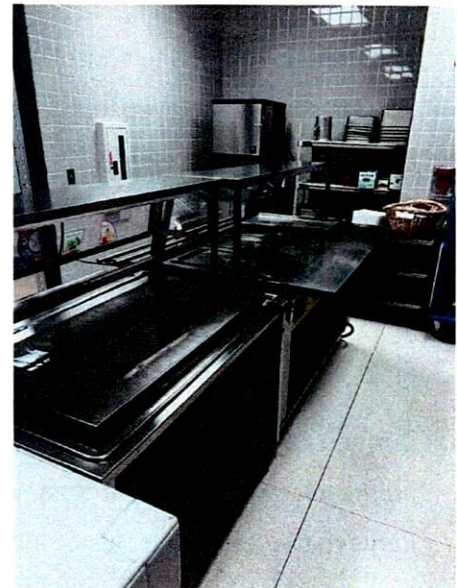
may be combined and then heated. The focus is to reduce the number of times a product is handled throughout the entire process, from the point of procurement to storage to production to service, which avoids contamination and is more labor efficient. The key element to assist in this process at the production site is refrigeration. Holding refrigeration for finished goods prior to transport is essential, as well as the ability to transport food in refrigerated trucks or insulated transport carts. A blast chiller rapidly reduces the internal temperature of foods and is a key element for productivity and food safety in all large scale production environments. **For Brownsville Academic Center and Brownsville Early College High, CAF recommends food be prepared and delivered the day before service in a bulk format for finishing on site and serving bulk style on the line. The meals should be delivered via a refrigerated truck or delivery vehicle using wheeled insulated food totes.** Food delivered cold and finished on site is the best method for food safety and food quality. To support the “cook, chill, ship” operations at Rivera High School, Brownsville Learning Academy, and Porter High School **CAF recommends the addition of a blast chiller unit for those kitchens sending meals to finishing kitchens.**

Brownsville Academic Center

The Brownsville Academic Center receives its meals from Rivera High School, which is located approximately 3.5 miles away. They have 187 students enrolled and serve approximately 95 students for both breakfast and lunch daily. The kitchen space is small and is equipped with a warmer, two reach-in coolers, hand sink, 3 compartment sink, ice machine, and a small space for dry storage. The site does not have an exhaust hood.

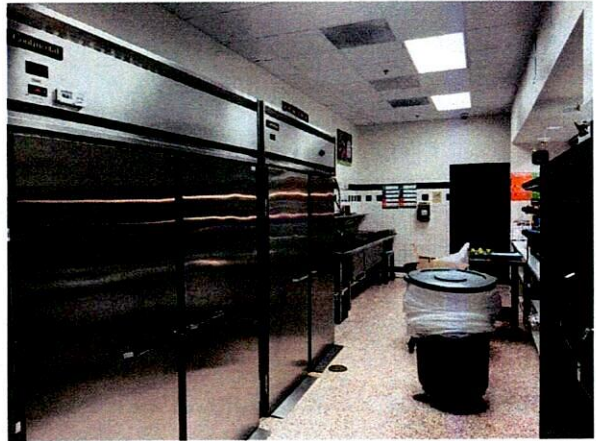
CAF recommends the following changes to the Brownsville Academic Center kitchen:

- Add a retherm unit to support finishing on site.



Brownsville Early College High School

The Brownsville Early College High School receives its meals from the Brownsville Learning Academy located approximately 2 miles away. The site has 348 students enrolled and serves approximately 76 breakfast and 138 lunches daily. The kitchen space is small and is equipped with a double door pass thru cooler, double door pass thru warmer, 3 compartment sink, handwashing sink, 2 small prep tables, and an office space. The site does not have an exhaust hood.



CAF recommends the following changes to the Brownsville Early College High School kitchen:

- Add a retherm unit to support finishing on site.

Regional Kitchens

The primary reasons to consolidate production are quality, efficiency, and cost. Scratch cooking at scale is easiest achieved in a central kitchen. At some point the district may want to explore the option to consolidate [ordering](#) to fewer kitchens, which would also lend itself to consolidated production support. Consolidation provides savings in labor by concentrating skilled culinary staff to fewer locations, while also reducing the number of hours required at satellite locations. Meanwhile, greater consistency can be achieved in the execution of more complex recipes. Consolidation also allows the satellites to focus on customer service, which can improve participation.

Currently the district is divided into six clusters that are supported by six Field Supervisors. **CAF suggests** that one site per cluster consolidates production of certain menu items and ships these items to the remaining cluster locations for service utilizing the existing warehouse delivery schedule. The suggested sites have room within their current ADP and MPLH for this additional production. All suggested regional sites but Pena Elementary have two walk-in coolers which would

provide the storage space necessary for the increased production. The chart below shows the suggested regional kitchen structure.

Cluster	Regional Production Site	ADP	MPLH	Sites Served
1	Martin Elementary	777	11	Hanna High School Oliveria Middle School Vela Middle School Perez Elementary Egly Elementary Hudson Elementary Paredes Elementary Gallegos Elementary
2	Pena Elementary	848	13	Rivera High School Brownsville Academic Center Perkins Middle School Garcia Middle School Vermillion Elementary Gonzalez Elementary Champion Elementary Breedon Elementary School
3	Del Castillo Elementary	394	8	Porter High School Besterio Middle School Canales Elementary Cromack Elementary Putegnat Elementary Casteneda Elementary Morningside Elementary Aiken Elementary
4	Palm Grove Elementary	526	9	Lopez High School Faulk Middle School Lucio Middle School El Jardin Elementary Garza Elementary Lincoln Park School Southmost Elementary Brite Elementary School
5	Russell Elementary	817	12	Pace High School Brownsville Learning Academy Brownsville Early College High School Stell Middle School Manzano Middle School Benavides Elementary Ortiz Elementary Keller Elementary School
6	Skinner Elementary	660	11	Veterans Memorial High School Stillman Middle School Garden Park Elementary Sharp Elementary Villa Nueva Elementary Burns Elementary Yturria Elementary Pullam Elementary School

Given the volume of meals served in many schools, the intent is to leverage sites with lower MPLH to better support sites with higher MPLH while increasing the district's scratch cooking capacity.

These regional production sites could reasonably produce scratch bulk items like sauces, dressings



and salad bar items. Consolidating production in this way would allow the satellite sites to focus on customer service and allow the district to prioritize recipe consistency as they increase their scratch cooking capacity. Recipes that could work well in this model are [Cheese Sauce](#) for scratch macaroni and cheese, [Chipotle Ranch Dressing](#) or [Southwest Quinoa Salad](#) for use on salad bars, as the district works to implement them across the region.

As mentioned, this method aligns with the thought of consolidating ordering and deliveries to fewer sites, which has an associated cost benefit in the reduction of delivery locations as well as tighter inventory management. In general the kitchens in Brownsville are spacious and many have multiple walk-in refrigerators, which are beneficial in the regional model. As part of the GSC program, technical assistance could be provided to explore the options for establishing a regional kitchen model, as well as help determine any additional equipment needed to support this service model.

For consolidated production, the standard equipment in a regional kitchen includes:

- Walk-in refrigerators and freezers, adequately sized
- Roll in blast chillers, with sized matched to ovens
- Dry storage, adequately sized
- Roll-in combi ovens or commensurate cooking equipment
- Tilt skillet and/or steam jacketed kettles
- Exhaust hood sized to heating equipment
- Large scale production chopper/food processor
- Floor standing mixer
- High temp conveyor belt dishwasher
- 3 compartment sinks
- Produce washing sinks
- Handwashing sinks
- Transport vehicle and backup

Warehouse & Delivery Routes

Adequate warehouse space is especially important in larger school districts, as it provides space to aggregate products and efficiently distribute products to school sites. The warehouse is in overall good condition and contains a 50 pallet freezer, ample cooler space, and an area for dry good

storage. The district is currently renting additional freezer space while a 500 pallet freezer is planned for the future. During the onsite visit it was shared that the storage racks in the warehouse were installed in 1998, understanding that the lifespan of these racks is typically 30 years, **CAF suggests** planning and budgeting for the replacement in the coming years.

The warehouse is staffed with 14 positions that serve the FNS department. The warehouse operates 5 routes daily, with 10 school sites assigned to each route. Two drivers have dedicated routes that support satellite food delivery, which could be consolidated to one driver with a shift to the cook-chill-ship model, as deliveries can be made the day prior and not tied to service times. The FNS delivery drivers start their day at 6:30am, leave the warehouse around 8:00 am and are back by noon. Currently, the routes are organized to deliver the following; 1 day frozen items, 1 day paper goods, 1 day cleaning supplies, 1 day dry goods, and the final day is dedicated to picking up or relocating equipment.

The district has a fleet of 7 refrigerated box trucks, two of which are diesel. These trucks can fit 8 pallets each. There are 4 additional 12 foot trucks, two of which are refrigerated. Currently the district requires all of the FNS drivers to maintain a CDL license, when only a Class B license is needed to operate the trucks in the current fleet. **CAF suggests** revising the current FNS delivery driver criteria to allow for a Class B license, as this would expand hiring opportunities.

An area of opportunity within the warehouse that supports the district's overall vision and direction, involves leveraging its storage and distribution capabilities for the independent procurement of environmentally friendly service items such as compostable trays, forks, spoons and knives. Given the district's current utilization of the warehouse as a central distribution hub and delivery schedules, there is an opportunity for the district to explore new vendor partnerships that can offer the most competitive pricing on specific items. Additionally, **CAF suggests** the district utilize the warehouse to aggregate other locally sourced or directly shipped products that might be more cost effective to take directly or unavailable through their main distributors.

Equipment Replacement Plans

It's necessary to plan for preventative maintenance and replacement so that kitchen teams have the equipment they need to scratch cook. Currently, Brownsville keeps a detailed inventory record by site of large equipment that includes make, model, and serial number. A similar record for smallwares was not shared during the onsite. In addition to an equipment inventory, it is helpful, and necessary for budgeting purposes, to also keep a smallwares inventory. **CAF suggests** creating an inventory record for smallwares such as hotel pans, sheet pans, spoodles, etc that can be updated annually.

The district does not currently have a preventative process in place to maintain equipment. The District maintenance staff inspect equipment when it breaks, and equipment replacement is handled on an as needed basis. It was shared during the interview process that there are intentions to develop a PM program in the future, but staffing was a current barrier. **CAF suggests** the district develop an equipment maintenance and replacement plan for the specific equipment in each kitchen to prevent interruptions from failing equipment. Budgeting funds for equipment replacement is a great start, which Brownsville is currently doing. The Lunch Box has more resources for how to [create and keep an equipment inventory and replacement plan](#).

Minimize Waste

Landfills pollute our environment, pose a threat to human health, and contribute significant amounts of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere.¹⁵

Minimizing waste means reducing consumption at the source, becoming conscious of what chemicals we release into the environment, and disposing of waste responsibly. Bulk service is one way to reduce consumption at the source as it reduces disposable packaging and allows students to choose what they



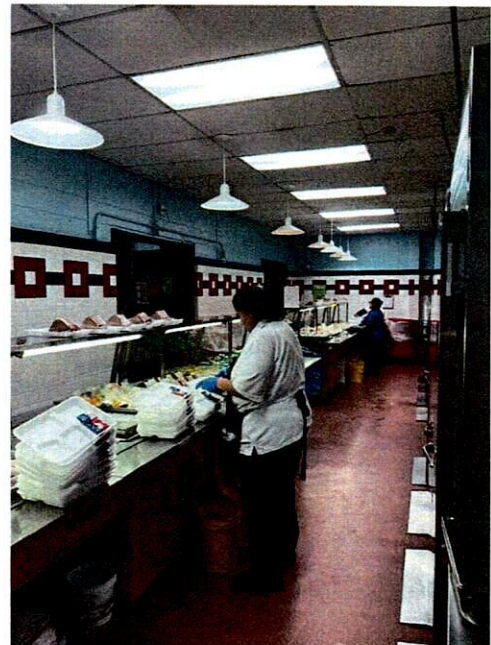
¹⁵ [Environmental and Socio-Economic Impacts of Landfills](#), Linnaeus ECO-TECH 2012

will eat, rather than being given more than they want and will eventually throw away. When purchasing chemicals used for cleaning or dishwashing, look for products that are eco friendly. Commercial composting is an excellent way to divert waste away from landfills. Compostable trash bags, trays, plates, utensils, and cups come in a variety of sizes and can be phased in over time in accordance with budgeting and training. As the public and their institutions continue to demand more environmentally conscious products, prices for these products decline, resulting in greater access to things like compostable trays and utensils.

Serviceware

None of Brownsville's schools have dishmachines, but almost all kitchens have a 3 compartment Power Soak sink. The schools serve meals on styrofoam disposable trays and provide spork packets for cutlery. Additionally, most sites were observed packaging entrees and sides into plastic single service containers, instead of serving directly onto the tray. The volume of disposable items being used was substantial and is reflected in the expenses, in SY 2021-2022 the department spent 1.7 million in non-food items, opposed to \$600,000 the year prior. It was shared that these single use items were leftover from COVID protocols and there were plans to phase out their use.

Given the current practices in place and lack of dishwashing equipment, the department could consider a phased approach in addressing current sustainability practices. In the immediate future, **CAF recommends eliminating the additional packaging and serving food directly onto the trays.** Additionally, **CAF suggests** using environmentally conscious trays, either recyclable or compostable depending on the availability





of services in the area, to minimize environmental impact. The price of recyclable and compostable trays has come down in recent years making them a feasible option, particularly when other efficiency and sustainability measures are put in place simultaneously. To create an environment that supports scratch cooking, eating complete meals, and provides students the opportunity to practice dining, **CAF recommends replacing sporks with forks, spoons and knives.** For long term planning, **CAF suggests** incorporating dish machines into future facility planning and evaluating the use of reusable trays.

Condiments

Condiments provide autonomy and allow for student preference. Brownsville provides portion control (PC) condiments such as individually wrapped butter, salad dressings, ketchup and syrup. PC condiments generate more waste as students have less control over the amount that they take and are less cost-effective than bulk condiments. In 2022-23, Brownsville spent almost \$280k on 21 different kinds of PC condiments. House made salad dressings are an easy way to increase scratch cooked items and decrease waste at the same time. Find recipes, such as our [ranch dressing](#), on the Lunch Box. Using squeeze bottles with narrowly cut tips to offer condiments, either on the line, at the POS or at a condiment station allows for some portion control and decreases overall waste. **CAF suggests** removing PC condiments from the line in order to limit waste and save costs. **CAF also suggests** moving towards bulk condiments, such as salad dressings, ketchup, and mayonnaise.

Portion Controlled Condiments Purchased SY 22-23		
Item	Total Cases	Total Cost
DRESSING, RANCH LITE CUP	3982	\$ 74,184.66
KETCHUP PACKET 9 GM	2859	\$ 56,150.76
MAYO LIGHT SNGL SRV PACKET	2190	\$ 30,200.10
SYRUP, MAPLE 1.5OZ CUP	2882	\$ 27,177.26
DRESSING,LITE RANCH 1.5 OZ	1176	\$ 20,732.88
SAUCE, PICANTE 1/2 OZ	1565	\$ 16,995.90
JELLY, GRAPE POUCH	1543	\$ 16,818.48
MUSTARD, MILD-SINGLE SERVE	1141	\$ 15,209.53
BUTTER FLVR GRANULES POUCHES	366	\$ 13,706.70
DRESSING, CAESAR 1.5 OZ	125	\$ 2,388.75
KETCHUP, FANCY 33% PC	97	\$ 2,335.76
DRESSING, RASP VING PC	116	\$ 1,948.80
DRESSING, BMLK RANCH 12GM	44	\$ 436.48
JELLY ASST #10 GRP MXD FRUIT	25	\$ 306.25
MUSTARD, 5.5 GM POLY	19	\$ 177.65
MAYONNAISE PC	17	\$ 168.81
SAUCE, SWEET & SOUR DIP CUP	5	\$ 95.85
DRESSING, BM RANCH FFREE 12G	7	\$ 76.44
BBQ DIPPING CUP, LS	2	\$ 73.16
PACKETS, SUGAR LABATT 2M	2	\$ 47.04
BUTTER CUPS 90 CUT AA SALTED	1	\$ 39.17
Total	18,164	\$ 279,270.43



Set Up Service Lines for Fresh Bulk Service

The service and dining areas make a significant impact on the overall program success. The dining room is the food literacy classroom, and the service area provides face-to-face customer service and daily contact that connects the students to the food service staff. The serving areas in Brownsville are sufficient at most sites.

As mentioned, Brownsville currently does not have salad bars in any of their school sites. Given the variability in configuration and space in each serving area, the best method and approach for incorporating salad bars will vary by school site. Sites with cold wells and bars could utilize those spaces to implement a salad bar by raising the sneeze guard. Additionally, sites with open air coolers could place salad bar pans inside the cooler and relocate milk options. Technical assistance as part of the GSC program can provide guidance on how to operate salad bars regardless of how the serving line is designed and based on existing equipment.

The majority of elementary schools have:

- A milk box
- Serving lines with steam tables and space for serving cold items
- A POS station is positioned at the end of each line
- Pass-through warmers
- Pass-through coolers
- Dedicated indoor dining spaces with adequate folding table & bench seating

The majority of middle schools have:

- Two or three traditional serving lines each with adequate hot-wells, space for serving cold items, serving counters, and milk boxes.
- Each line has a POS at the exit to the serving area, many of which are single sided.
- Pass-through warmers
- Pass-through coolers
- Dedicated indoor dining spaces with adequate folding table & bench seating



Facilities

The majority of high schools have:

- 3-5 horseshoe configured service lines that utilize gravity slides to serve the hot entrees and hot sides. Open air grab-n-go coolers are used to serve the cold fruit and vegetable sides. **CAF recommends replacing gravity slides with hot wells to facilitate bulk service.**
- Each line has a POS at the exit to the serving area, many of which are single sided.
- Pass-through warmers
- Pass-through coolers
- Dedicated indoor dining space with various kinds of seating.

The high school and middle school serving areas are set up with multiple lines, to allow students to disperse and keep lines to a manageable length. Implementing double-sided POS stations is ideal for increasing line speed and minimizing student wait time, which is often a deterrent from participating in the meal program. **CAF recommends that all POS be double sided to increase line speed and decrease the number of cashiers required.** Technical assistance could be utilized to help guide line flow modifications and placement of the POS.



Finance

For new initiatives and program changes to be successful in any organization, fiscal accountability and transparency are essential. There are two main goals in the finance area: maximize revenue and create efficiency and accuracy in the budgeting process.

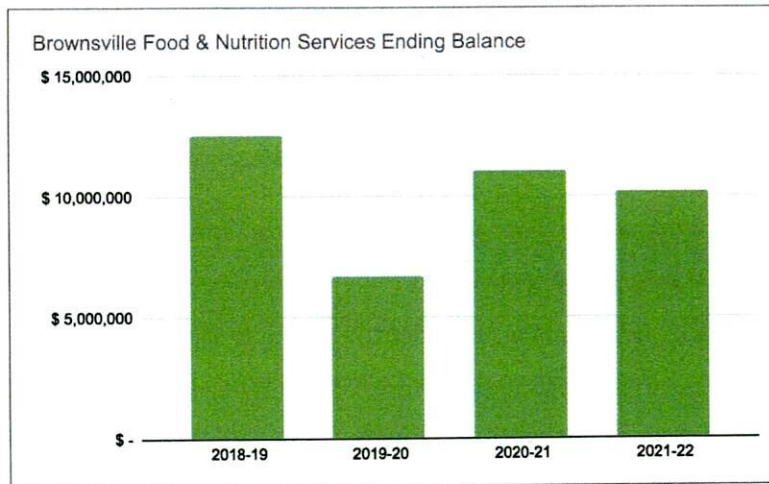
Systems that tie data together and make accurate projections allows the department to prepare for and react to changes. The ability to respond in a timely and well-informed fashion increases the chances of successfully providing quality meals for the students in an economically sound manner. Understanding the financial impact of operational decisions is key to managing a balanced budget. Having transparency in financial processes and of the overall budget helps create buy-in and skilled staff.

Food & Nutrition Services works with the Finance department annually to create the budget. The two offices are in constant communication to review the monthly claim, discuss budget progress, as well as discuss grants and monthly inventory.

Finance Software

Brownsville uses eSchoolPlus for its Student Information Software and Systems Design for its point of sale (POS). The two programs interface and share data. The District uses BusinessPlus for its financial management, which is also a PowerSchool product. The director runs budget and activity reports on a monthly basis, understands and utilizes them.

Fund Balance



	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals
Beginning Balance	\$ 10,034,531	\$ 10,034,531	\$ 9,608,193	\$ 12,541,535	\$ 4,585,193	\$ 6,677,141	\$ 3,943,758	\$ 11,046,878
Ending Balance	\$ 9,608,193	\$ 12,541,535	\$ 4,585,193	\$ 6,677,141	\$ 3,943,758	\$ 11,046,878	\$ 3,659,039	\$ 10,191,292
Profit/Deficit Spending	\$ (426,338)	\$ 2,507,004	\$ (5,023,000)	\$ (5,864,394)	\$ (641,435)	\$ 4,369,737	\$ (284,719)	\$ (855,586)
Three Months Operating Costs	\$ 11,588,805	\$ 9,888,101	\$ 12,300,985	\$ 9,526,156	\$ 11,336,915	\$ 5,962,001	\$ 11,304,091	\$ 10,020,661
Amount Over Allowed Balance	\$ (1,980,612)	\$ 2,653,434	\$ (7,715,792)	\$ (2,849,015)	\$ (7,393,157)	\$ 5,084,877	\$ (7,645,052)	\$ 170,631

Based on the multi-year profit and loss data provided by the district we are able to see that the Food & Nutrition Services department has maintained a positive fund balance for many years, despite financial challenges brought on by the pandemic. In the past four years, the department has alternated between a deficit and surplus each year, ranging from a \$5.8M deficit in SY 2019-2020 to a \$4.3M profit in SY 2020-2021. This fluctuation has impacted the department's net cash resource funds, particularly in SY 2019-20.

Food & Nutrition Services funds in Texas are allowed to carry three months of operating balance, based on 11 months of operation. Having three months of operating balance on hand in the food service fund is important not only to tide the department over during emergencies or government shutdowns when reimbursement funds may be delayed, but also to provide cash flow for the department so that there is not a timing issue with payroll or accounts payable that would require the general fund to loan Food & Nutrition Services funds. Since reimbursement claims for meals



served are submitted within thirty days of month close and State departments have sixty days to disburse funds after a claim is made, food service departments can receive reimbursement revenue up to ninety days after a meal is served, making a cash balance imperative for operating.

In 2021-22, three months of operating costs for Brownsville were around \$10M, while the ending fund balance was \$10.2M, not exceeding the allowable carryover by a significant amount. In the past four years, the value of the funds that exceeded or fell short of the 3 month operating costs has varied widely, as this also correlates to the fluctuations in the department's financial performance. In SY 2019-20 the district fell short of the 3 month operating cost balance by 2.8M, compared to SY 20-21 where they exceeded by 4.3M, however the amount of excess was brought nearly back in line in SY 2021-22. While these variations were likely impacted by the pandemic, they also highlight the significance of accurate budgeting and projecting year end revenue practices, which allow the department to make plans within the school year to either invest funds into the program or curb spending.

Maximize Revenue

In any food service operation, and especially a scratch cook operation, maximizing revenue is important so that adequate funds are available to invest into food, labor and supplies. Since food service departments are reimbursed for each meal served and school meal programs are vehicles for creating food equity in a community, working to ensure students are participating in all meal services to the greatest extent is necessary for creating a sustainable program.

Enrollment, Eligibility and Reimbursement Rates

The percentage of students in Brownsville that qualify as economically disadvantaged using meal benefit forms or through direct certification is 72%, speaking to the importance of quality meals, as well as to the potential for revenue generation to support those meals. School food authorities meeting the meal pattern and nutrition standard requirements are eligible to receive performance-based cash assistance, \$0.08 for each reimbursable lunch served. **Brownsville earns the performance based reimbursement at lunch, and therefore maxes out the highest**

reimbursement rate available to the district for regular NSLP programming.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. CEP decreases administrative burden while expanding school meal access. All school sites in the Brownsville Independent School District operate under CEP, which is a tremendous benefit to the students and community. Because the district total percent of students that are directly certified is 72%, all of the meals served are reimbursed at the federal free reimbursement rate.

CACFP

The Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP) allows school districts to serve a third meal of the day after school. Currently, all school sites in the Brownsville Independent School District operate a supper program, except the three alternative schools; Lincoln Park School, Brownsville Learning Academy, and Brownsville Academic Center. Offering this additional meal is a tremendous benefit to the students and

Brownsville Independent School District Eligibility Overview SY 23-24			
School Site	# of Directly Certified Students	Enrollment	% of Directly Certified Students
Hanna High School	1395	2249	62%
Porter High School	1317	1768	74%
Pace High School	1140	1742	65%
Rivera High School	1554	2247	69%
Lopez High School	1254	1808	69%
Brownsville Early College High School	172	343	50%
Lincoln Park School		66	0%
Veterans Memorial High School	963	2170	44%
Faulk Middle School	785	955	82%
Stell Middle School	633	790	80%
Oliveria Middle School	584	791	74%
Perkins Middle School	458	569	80%
Vela Middle School	422	646	65%
Besterio Middle School	480	586	82%
Lucio Middle School	535	694	77%
Garcia Middle School	648	887	73%
Stillman Middle School	577	1099	53%
Manzano Middle School	584	914	64%
Canales Elementary	584	671	87%
Cromack Elementary	427	513	83%
Martin Elementary	387	457	85%
El Jardin Elementary	325	378	86%
Garden Park Elementary	351	413	85%
Putegnat Elementary	403	466	86%
Russell Elementary	421	485	87%
Sharp Elementary	405	495	82%
Skinner Elementary	287	346	83%
Casteneda Elementary	418	472	89%
Villa Nueva Elementary	301	369	82%
Del Castillo Elementary	194	215	90%
Perez Elementary	560	632	89%
Palm Grove Elementary	260	316	82%
Egly Elementary	442	535	83%
Garza Elementary	219	244	90%
Vermillion Elementary	563	631	89%
Burns Elementary	511	636	80%
Morningside Elementary	371	420	88%
Gonzalez Elementary	539	659	82%
Southmost Elementary	268	330	81%
Yturria Elementary	353	562	63%
Aiken Elementary	483	561	86%
Hudson Elementary	483	677	71%
Benavides Elementary	648	876	74%
Champion Elementary	548	666	82%
Paredes Elementary	574	798	72%
Gallegos Elementary	335	404	83%
Ortiz Elementary	337	507	66%
Brite Elementary School	472	546	86%
Pena Elementary School	376	481	78%
Pullam Elementary School	524	856	61%
Keller Elementary School	420	544	77%
Breeden Elementary School	417	572	73%
Brownsville Learning Academy		146	0%
Brownsville Academic Center		125	0%
District Total	27,707	38,328	72%



community. The reimbursement rate for CACFP is the highest, and from a financial and food access standpoint, an important program to take part in.

Summer Meals

During the summer of 2022-23, Brownsville offered summer meals at ten elementary sites, ten middle school sites, and eight high school sites, in addition to 26 non-school sites. All sites were open to the community. Based on the multi-year profit and loss statement provided, summary activity is rolled into federal funding object codes and is not tracked separately. **CAF recommends tracking summer revenue separately within the Multi-Year P&L in order to monitor program changes.**

Meal Counts & Reimbursement Claims

Meal counts determine the amount of revenue that a program will receive to cover the costs of labor, food and general operations. Meal counts are the key data set that are tracked in school food programs. They drive the hours of labor needed to produce and serve meals properly and provide the basis for estimating the amount of food that needs to be purchased and prepared to support the menu. Complete and accurate monitoring of meal counts is the foundation of every school food program.

In sites operating Breakfast in the Classroom, teachers use count sheets to document which students participated in breakfast and a bulk number is entered into the POS system. In sites that provide a grab and go breakfast or service from the cafe line, PIN numbers are used to capture meal counts. At lunch student meals are recorded directly into the POS. *The Food & Nutrition Services Area Supervisors review meal counts monthly and enter them into the state system. The Finance office reviews the data for variances prior to submitting the claim to the state.* This system is beneficial as it involves multiple checkpoints prior to submitting the claim.

Meal Participation

In school food, participation is the primary measure of success. Analyzing meal counts by percent of enrollment provides insight to the opportunities available to serve more students. Meal

participation is an indicator of how well the community is being served and engaging in the program. Concerns about losing participation if popular elements in a program are affected can be a barrier for directors to make important program improvements. Being able to communicate the department's vision for their program is an important step in the process to instill confidence in the program and maintain (or grow) participation.

The Food & Nutrition Services Department reviews average daily participation by site monthly, however a comparison of year over year participation is not yet part of the analysis. CAF recommends that percent of total enrollment participation at breakfast, lunch, and supper be tracked and systematically evaluated on its own and relative to the prior year to gauge the opportunity to grow meal participation and celebrate progress when participation increases.

Brownsville Independent School District Participation Overview SY 18-19 - SY 22-23										
	SY 18-19		SY 19-20		SY 20-21		SY 21-22		SY 22-23	
	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch
Elementary School Range	73% - 97%	89% - 100%	54% - 72%	66% - 77%	30% - 86%	32% - 87%	53% - 81%	76% - 91%	59% - 82%	78% - 91%
Middle School Range	57% - 87%	64% - 89%	42% - 64%	44% - 63%	2% - 5%	6% - 10%	22% - 73%	58% - 79%	41% - 81%	63% - 84%
High School Range	30% - 44%	55% - 67%	24% - 30%	41% - 48%	2% - 37%	2% - 23%	17% - 25%	33% - 52%	25% - 32%	47% - 57%
District Total	67%	81%	48%	60%	28%	30%	47%	68%	52%	70%

*Note: Due to incomplete data, alternative sites and BLA are not included.

Around 50% participation at lunch is average, and because meal programs are meant to serve all students, a goal of 75% total participation at lunch is ideal, however, high participation at sites with universal meals is expected. The general target for students coming from economically disadvantaged households is 80% participation at lunch. In Brownsville, the 2018-19 average daily lunch participation was strong, at 81%, with the elementary schools ranging from 89% at Paredes to near 100% at multiple schools. The attendance rate in Brownsville is high, relative to the national attendance factor, but it should be noted that participation at or near 100% could result from enrollment data inaccuracies or aggregated averages from enrollment and meal participation not aligning. Participation dropped by about 20% at both breakfast and lunch in SY 2019-20, likely due to the covid-19 pandemic and associated school closures. Participation remained low in SY 2020-21, also likely due to the pandemic. Participation rose significantly in SY 2021-22 as students returned



to classrooms, reaching 47% at breakfast and 68% at lunch. Participation continued to rebound in SY 2022-23, particularly at secondary sites. Despite these gains, meal participation has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels and about half of the sites either had no change or decreased lunch participation in SY 2022-23. This suggests the importance of improving meal quality and desirability to regain student participation. A more detailed [multi-year participation by site](#) chart can be found in the appendices. As a starting point the district may want to begin focusing on the elementary schools that fall below 80% participation, site visits to observe service and speak with staff, implementing surveys to collect feedback, and utilizing marketing to promote the program are great ways to identify barriers and boost participation.

Adequate participation for breakfast at CEP sites is 70% or higher. In Brownsville, average daily participation for breakfast was 52% in SY 2022-23. The majority of sites have seen increases in breakfast participation from SY 21-22, however the participation has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels yet and is down 15% compared to SY 18-19. The elementary site's breakfast participation appears to drive that gap and should be evaluated for best practices in terms of access, marketing, and food quality. [Currently, breakfast is served in the classroom in the majority of middle and elementary schools.](#) The department could consider administering a survey to gather student feedback on breakfast service to guide strategy for increasing participation.

Adult Meals

[Brownsville offers and records employee earned meals.](#) Offering employee meals is a work benefit that communicates value, and recording the meals allows them to be factored into MPLH and food cost calculations.

A la Carte

	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals
A La Carte Sales	\$ 613,201	\$ 756,072	\$ 613,201	\$ 134,009	\$ 618,201	\$ 8,877	\$ 618,201	\$ 26,858
A La Carte % of Revenue	1.46%	1.95%	1.53%	0.46%	1.51%	0.03%	1.50%	0.07%

As part of the Healthy, [Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010](#) nutrition standards were developed for [all foods sold in schools](#), which shifted the approach from what were referred to as competitive foods



to creating standards for what are now called [smart snacks](#). Smart snacks also include meal entrees sold on the day they are menued or the next day. For fiscal tracking we refer to foods that are sold separate from and alongside reimbursable meals as a la carte sales. For districts that are shifting their production model from ready to heat to scratch cooking, there is an inherent incompatibility in selling chips, snacks, beverages, and ice cream alongside the reimbursable meal. Balancing the priority of reimbursable meal participation, nutrition, and wellness education versus a la carte revenue is a discussion that must occur. A la carte sales in Brownsville made up almost 2% of revenue pre-pandemic and **dropped to less than 1% of revenue during and post-pandemic**. This change sets a great foundation for moving forward with a focus on ingredient driven reimbursable meals. In order to continue to emphasize the reimbursable meal, **CAF recommends eliminating a la carte in elementary sites.**

Point of Sale (POS)

Brownsville uses Systems Design for its POS, which is the same program used for ordering and inventory, but different from the program used to manage menus and production records. Systems Design integrates with the SIS software to share data. All meals are recorded in Systems Design using computers.

At the elementary sites the POS is stationed at the end of the line and staff utilize tally sheets to record meals, the total meals are entered into the computer at the end of service. At the middle and high schools, there are multiple point of sale stations at the exit to the serving area where students enter their PIN number into a keypad. Many of these POS stations are single sided. As mentioned in the facilities section, **CAF recommends that all POS be double sided to increase line speed and decrease the number of cashiers required.** This is especially important at the large secondary school campuses, where long lines can discourage meal participation. Implementing double-sided POS stations can also result in labor savings as it will decrease the number of cashiers required.

Brownsville accepts cash on the serving lines for a la carte purchases and adult sales. **CAF suggests** not accepting cash on the serving lines to keep lines flowing and to eliminate associated tasks for kitchen staff so labor and time can be spent on food production. Particularly in the high school,



going cashless can help increase the line speed and congestion in the serving area. Going cashless requires time and patience, and is worth the payoff in time saved and increased meal participation due to quicker lines. Having all parents and staff utilize the pre-payment system and having staff collect checks and envelopes from the front office or classrooms in the morning to deposit before meal service are best practices. Deposit boxes can be utilized in the secondary schools in lieu of office or classroom pickup. Brownsville currently has two staff count the cash drawer, utilizing a blind count method.

Create Efficiency and Accuracy in the Budgeting Process

A budget is a tool for making operational decisions within the financial bounds of the department. Regular analyses of meal counts and labor and food costs provide the information needed to assess progress and impact of program changes in relation to the budget. The best practice for enterprise budgeting is utilizing data to create projections reflective of program operations and changes, and not to roll revenue and expenditures from one year to the next.

Profit & Loss Statement (P&L)

A multi-year profit and loss statement¹⁶ provides:

- A way to see if the budget developed for the current year is balanced
- If the prior years provided at least a break-even picture for the program
- A comparison from year to year, particularly as operations change
- A summary of budget assumptions to give context to the numbers
- The opportunity to spot trends in ending balances and profit and loss year over year so that surplus or deficits can be managed appropriately.

As profits are realized the District can set funds aside for future improvements such as equipment replacement or startup costs for future programmatic changes. The Food & Nutrition Services Director prepares the budget, with support from the Finance and Human Resources department.

¹⁶ [Master Assessment Sheet - Multi-Year P&L Tab](#)

The district follows a July 1- June 30th budget cycle. In March/April a worksheet is sent to each department for input and projections for the upcoming year, which is returned to the budget department. At the end of May, when the Texas legislative session ends and funding is finalized, departmental budgets are finalized and sent to the board for approval. This process is ideal as it provides the Food Service Department with input and support in the budgeting process, as well as fosters collaboration between departments.

Revenue Projections

Detailed revenue budgeting is essential for comparing assumptions and outcomes and assisting in programmatic decision making. The Meal Count and Revenue Tracker¹⁷ is a starting place for these projections. In a scratch cook model it is particularly important to know how the program is operating compared to the budget so the director can adjust menus and operations as necessary. The ability to pinpoint, for example, that breakfast participation is higher and lunch participation is lower than expected lets the team know where to focus, and where to take best practice examples from and expand them. *The Food & Nutrition Services Director reviews current participation and enrollment projections, taking program changes into account, to project revenue.*

Labor Cost

Brownsville ISD Food & Nutrition Services				
Labor Costs as a Percent of Revenue				
Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Total Revenue	\$ 38,763,375	\$ 29,064,844	\$ 26,230,409	\$ 35,886,838
Labor Subtotal	\$ 15,864,068	\$ 17,712,604	\$ 10,905,682	\$ 17,365,688
% Labor Spend of Revenue	41%	61%	42%	48%

Labor costs represent the largest expense category in the budget, and usually run between 45-50% of earned revenue. The total labor cost for 2021-22 was about \$17M based on the multi-year P&L, which is higher than 2018-19, the most similar school year to the current year program wise.

¹⁷ [Master Assessment Sheet - Meal Count and Revenue Tracker](#)



Brownsville's labor percentages from 2018 through 2022 ranged from 40-60%. The high labor cost percentage in 2019-20 can likely be attributed to a decline in meal participation during the COVID pandemic, which resulted in decreased revenue, while labor cost increased likely due to staff hazard pay or overtime for emergency feeding. Outside of that year, labor cost percentages were either low or within the expected range. In Brownsville, health and retirement benefits make up almost 30% of total labor costs as all Food & Nutrition Services staff receive benefits and retirement.

Brownsville Independent School District Labor Cost Per Meal	
Elementary School Range	\$1.50 - \$3.48
Middle School Range	\$1.57 - \$2.52
High School Range (Self Prep)	\$1.76 - \$1.89
High School / Alternative Site Range (Combined Production and Satellite)	\$1.65 - \$2.16
Alternative Site Range (Self Prep)	\$6.75
District Total	\$1.92

* The combined high schools & alternative sites include BLA & BECH and Rivera & BAC.

The number of employees, hours allocated and meals served from each kitchen can provide insight as to whether kitchens are staffed equitably. As a guide, when the labor cost per meal is .50 or more greater than another school serving the same menu, the labor should be evaluated in an effort to promote equity between sites and ensure staff are given similar productivity expectations. This analysis includes all staff assigned to the site, including the FNS custodians, as well as the overtime hours incurred by the supper program staff. The elementary kitchens are staffed with 6-10 positions. Their labor cost per meal averages at \$2.02, with the minimum of \$1.50 at Pullam and the maximum of \$3.48 at Garza. Garza has similar enrollment and participation to Del Castillo, which also has a high labor cost per meal at \$3.24. Both sites have low Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH), Garza at 7 and Del Castillo at 8. These sites may be areas to focus on when considering labor adjustments at elementary sites.

The middle school kitchens are staffed with 7-11 positions. Their labor cost per meal averages at \$1.83, with the minimum of \$1.57 at Stillman and \$2.52 at Besterio. Besterio has the same



enrollment as Perkins Middle (575 students), but lower participation (66% at Besterio and 82% at Perkins). Despite serving more meals, Perkins has one less kitchen position than Besterio, resulting in comparatively low MPLH at Besterio (10 MPLH at Besterio and 15 at Perkins). In order to increase parity between sites, Besteiro Middle may be a site for labor adjustment consideration.

The high school kitchens are staffed with 12-16 positions. Their labor cost per meal averages at \$2.28, with the minimum of \$1.76 at Porter and a maximum of \$4.61 at Brownsville Learning Academy (BLA), which inflates the average. Without BLA included, the average labor cost per meal at the high school sites is \$1.89. BLA has 7 kitchen positions and produces about 100 meal equivalents per day for their students and about 230 meal equivalents per day for students attending Brownsville Early College High (BECH), where the labor cost per meal is \$1.33. The combined labor cost per meal at BLA and BECH is \$1.65, demonstrating the cost efficiency of consolidated meal production. Rivera High School produces meals for Brownsville Academic Center and their combined labor cost per meal is \$2.16, which is somewhat high for consolidation. Rivera is the most staffed high school with 16 positions. Hanna High School produces a similar number of meals but is staffed with 14 positions, impacting the discrepancy in MPLH and labor cost per meal. A more detailed [labor cost per meal](#) by site chart can be found in the appendices.

The remaining alternative site that does not currently receive meals from another site is Lincoln Park School,

School Site	Estimated Avg Overtime Hours Per Day	Estimated Cost of Overtime Per Year
Hanna High School	5.00	\$13,972
Porter High School	5.56	\$15,885
Pace High School	6.76	\$19,158
Rivera High School	4.39	\$12,417
Lopez High School	7.96	\$22,733
Brownsville Early College High School		
Veterans Memorial High School	4.68	\$12,817
Lincoln Park High School	0.31	\$841
Faulk Middle School	4.02	\$11,436
Stell Middle School	2.19	\$6,083
Oliveria Middle School	2.00	\$5,592
Perkins Middle School	1.70	\$4,792
Vela Middle School	1.57	\$4,290
Besterio Middle School	7.37	\$22,045
Lucio Middle School	3.25	\$9,286
Garcia Middle School	3.92	\$10,602
Stillman Middle School	2.79	\$7,719
Manzano Middle School	2.68	\$7,393
Canales Elementary	6.01	\$17,031
Cromack Elementary	2.85	\$8,161
Martin Elementary	3.80	\$10,585
El Jardin Elementary	3.40	\$9,804
Garden Park Elementary	4.46	\$12,752
Puegnat Elementary	2.83	\$7,733
Russell Elementary	4.06	\$11,787
Sharp Elementary	3.48	\$9,529
Skinner Elementary	2.99	\$8,500
Casteneda Elementary	5.55	\$15,623
Villa Nueva Elementary	3.32	\$9,598
Del Castillo Elementary	3.09	\$8,689
Perez Elementary	3.59	\$10,152
Palm Grove Elementary	3.77	\$10,728
Egley Elementary	3.49	\$10,129
Garza Elementary	3.57	\$9,974
Vermillion Elementary	4.70	\$13,195
Burns Elementary	3.53	\$9,779
Morningside Elementary	7.26	\$20,913
Gonzalez Elementary	3.31	\$9,126
Southmost Elementary	3.42	\$9,718
Yturria Elementary	2.84	\$8,075
Aiken Elementary	5.90	\$16,206
Hudson Elementary	3.68	\$10,303
Benavides Elementary	4.63	\$12,804
Champion Elementary	4.60	\$12,705
Paredes Elementary	6.02	\$14,938
Gallegos Elementary	2.67	\$7,225
Ortiz Elementary	4.26	\$11,806
Brite Elementary School	3.74	\$10,220
Pena Elementary School	3.59	\$10,040
Pullam Elementary School	4.42	\$12,361
Keller Elementary School	3.96	\$11,267
Breeden Elementary School	3.14	\$8,958
Brownsville Learning Academy	2.78	\$8,270
Brownsville Academic Center	0.56	\$1,558
District Total	205.42	\$577,305



where the labor cost per meal is extremely high at \$6.75. They have 3 positions and only produce about 90 meal equivalents per day. As mentioned in the Facilities section, Porter may be an option for meal production for Lincoln, and since their labor cost per meal is on the low end of the high schools, they may already be well staffed to accommodate the additional meals.

In SY 2021-22, Brownsville Food & Nutrition spent about \$580k in overtime. Based on partial-year data, we estimated the overtime cost for SY 2022-23 for each site (\$577k), as well as the estimated average overtime hours per day. In most cases, overtime is attributed to supper program operations. Most sites have two-three staff members assigned to stay after school for supper. When compared to the number of supper meals served per day, a few sites are misaligned with the number of overtime hours per day. For example, Besterio Middle serves less suppers per day than Lucio Middle, but has four more hours of overtime per day, on average. By prepping ahead of time and staggering schedules, it is possible to operate the supper program without requiring multiple hours of overtime per day. **CAF recommends revising supper program staffing to minimize overtime by staggering schedules and requiring the teams to prep ahead.** Staffing for the supper program may be an area for technical assistance as part of the Get Schools Cooking program.

Compensation

While the minimum wage in Texas is \$7.25, the living wage in Brownsville for a family of four with two working adults is \$21.15. For comparison, the living wage for a single adult is \$14.74.¹⁸ The starting wage, and the hourly rate for Custodians and FNS Workers, in Food & Nutrition Services is \$15.00. Custodians and FNS Workers can earn up to \$20.30. Site Managers' wages currently range from \$16.07-\$23.13 depending on skill level/experience and the number of meals they oversee the production of. The district has a salary schedule with multiple steps within pay grades, wherein FNS positions have parity with other positions in the district. This pay scale has been updated in recent years to accommodate an increase in the starting wage to \$15/hour, creating pay compression which the district is currently evaluating in an ongoing Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) study. Further adjustments may alleviate compression and ensure that staff are compensated equitably.

¹⁸ [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#)



Of course, a critical part of compensation and labor costs are benefits. All Food & Nutrition Services staff are full time and receive health and retirement benefits. Vision and dental are optional for staff to receive and require an additional contribution from the employee.

Time Recording

Time clock systems are recommended for use in food service settings, especially those in remote or site-based production locations. Time clock systems create a physical, indisputable record of when employees report in and out of work each day. When employees are required to use a clock-in system there are generally fewer mistakes and disputes over time worked. Supervisors can use data to regulate tardiness or extra hours rather than policing their staff's time. Timeclock documentation can also be used for disciplinary action, if required, and for actual meal per labor hour analysis.

Brownsville utilizes time clocks for all employees. All classified employees clock in and out using their fingerprints. Each campus has a timekeeper and approver to help oversee the process. Employees are required to verify their hours, and once confirmed the information is sent to Finance for review. The data is then uploaded into BusinessPlus. All staff utilize direct deposit, as no paper checks are issued. This process is adequate as it provides multiple checkpoints for data verification.

When employees clock in and out their actual time is recorded. All classified staff are paid bi-monthly for the number of hours worked. Overtime is common as all staff are benefitted and 2-3 staff members are typically assigned to work the supper program. As mentioned in the [labor cost section](#), CAF recommends evaluating staffing for the supper program to minimize overtime.

Budgeting for Labor Cost

To budget for labor, the Food Service Director utilizes position control data as well as factors in potential raises, COLA, and salary step increases to project labor expenses.

When planning labor for the following school year, an important first step is to review actual MPLH by site and make adjustments to bring all sites as close to target as possible. This step is particularly important for balancing labor at the sites and the central kitchen to ensure all sites are adequately staffed. The department uses meals per labor hour (MPLH) to determine staffing adjustments. New



positions can be requested during the budget process and require approval from the superintendent and school board.

Brownsville has position control within the district financial software. The PCW lists each employee by site, contracted hours, extra hours, rate of pay and position type. Additional information includes duty days, paid holidays, mandatory professional development (PD) hours, as well as any other types of compensation. Vacant positions which are expected to be filled are also included. Additional personnel costs such as substitute wages would be listed separately. The gross wages are calculated along with employer paid benefits that include retirement, FICA, Medicare, unemployment insurance as well as health, dental, vision and life insurance coverage.

The PCW details labor costs and demonstrates the fiscal impact of staffing changes such as raises, additions or reductions of positions or duty dates, additional professional development days or changes in benefits.

Food Cost

Brownsville ISD Food & Nutrition Services				
Food Costs as a Percent of Revenue				
Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Total Revenue	\$ 38,763,375	\$ 29,064,844	\$ 26,230,409	\$ 35,886,838
Food Subtotal	\$ 18,481,104	\$ 14,169,961	\$ 8,871,078	\$ 16,028,558
% Food Spend of Revenue	48%	49%	34%	45%

Food costs are the second largest expense in food service budgets. In most cases, food costs make up approximately 45% of earned revenue. From 2018-2022, in Brownsville the food cost percentage was between 34% and 49%, averaging at about 44%. The food cost as of 2021-22 had increased, along with revenue, as students returned to school and participation increased after the pandemic.



Brownsville Independent School District
Food Cost & Inventory Tracker
SY 22-23

Vendor Name	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	Total
Serving Days	12	21	20	16	16	17	20	19	21	22	184
Beginning Inventory											
LABATT	\$468,078	\$644,563	\$556,417	\$1,269,927	\$472,560	\$847,905	\$924,552	\$948,415	\$621,076	\$678,198	\$ 7,431,692
HILAND DAIRY FOODS	\$24,780	\$393,401	\$319,533	\$241,282	\$76,283						\$ 1,055,279
NEW DAIRY OPCO LLC.					\$242,037	\$210,861	\$332,025	\$228,588	\$294,967	\$338,306	\$ 1,646,784
NICHO'S PRODUCE	\$96,596	\$159,208	\$11,081	\$55,306	\$139,809	\$71,669	\$126,327	\$148,796	\$120,326	\$33,245	\$ 962,363
FLOWERS BAKING CO.	\$13,121	\$25,579	\$29,859	\$22,706	\$34,000	\$33,401	\$23,319	\$26,929	\$30,064	\$23,900	\$ 262,876
BROTHERS PRODUCE OF					\$34,929	\$23,642	\$34,722			\$90,755	\$ 184,048
EXQUISITA TORTILLAS INC.	\$254	\$208	\$202	\$150				\$7			\$ 819
Total Purchases	\$602,829	\$1,222,959	\$917,093	\$1,589,370	\$999,618	\$1,187,478	\$1,440,944	\$1,352,734	\$1,066,433	\$1,164,404	\$ 11,543,861
Ending Inventory											
Food Cost	\$602,829	\$1,222,959	\$917,093	\$1,589,370	\$999,618	\$1,187,478	\$1,440,944	\$1,352,734	\$1,066,433	\$1,164,404	\$ 11,543,861
Food Cost Adjustment											\$ -
Adjusted Food Cost	\$602,829	\$1,222,959	\$917,093	\$1,589,370	\$999,618	\$1,187,478	\$1,440,944	\$1,352,734	\$1,066,433	\$1,164,404	\$ 11,543,861
Average Food Cost Per Day	\$50,236	\$58,236	\$45,855	\$99,336	\$62,476	\$69,852	\$72,047	\$71,197	\$50,783	\$52,927	\$ 62,738
Average Meal Equivalents	41,419	45,771	46,086	45,264	44,307	43,781	41,816	41,646	42,991	42,246	43,571
Food Cost Per Meal	\$ 1.21	\$ 1.27	\$ 0.99	\$ 2.19	\$ 1.41	\$ 1.60	\$ 1.72	\$ 1.71	\$ 1.18	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.44

*The food spend above does not include food purchases from June for the Summer Program.

Actual Annual Food Cost	\$ 11,543,861
Prior Year Food Expense	\$ 12,691,135
Over/(Under) Prior Year	\$ (1,147,274)

To assist in analyzing food costs, CAF provides a Food Cost and Inventory Tracker¹⁹ (FCIT). The FCIT shows the district's food cost per meal for SY 2022-23 was \$1.44, with the average food cost per day at \$62.7k. The food cost per meal is artificially inflated due to lack of inventory data. When inventory values are included in the calculation only food served will be reflected in the food cost per meal. Recording total food costs by month sets a benchmark expectation for the following year and indicates if there is an area that needs to be investigated. Daily food cost totals can help with cash flow management as well as understanding if projected costs will exceed projected revenues. Recording monthly inventory valuations allows for monitoring inventory levels so they can be addressed if they veer from the norm. The food cost per meal calculation provides a point of comparison for budgeting as well as year over year comparison of investment in food quality. Of the \$1.44 food cost per meal, with \$0.42 for produce and \$0.26 for milk, that only leaves \$0.76 per entree. This underlines the importance of shifting some of the produce spend to DoD Fresh, to help offset produce costs and allow more funds to be used for the center of the plate. **CAF recommends utilizing the FCIT to monitor the status of the program's food spend.** Using some of the

¹⁹ [Master Assessment Sheet - Food Cost and Inventory Tab](#)



technical assistance provided as part of the GSC program could be used to work on and analyze the data in the FCIT.

Budgeting for Food Cost

To budget for food, Brownsville Food & Nutrition Services rolls over the amount spent in the prior year and adds a percentage for inflation. While the department conducts a pre-cost analysis of the breakfast and lunch menus and a post cost analysis of the supper menu, these values are not directly incorporated into the budgeting process. Actual menu costs and meal counts will always provide the most accurate food cost projections, particularly when making changes to the menu and products offered. The Food Cost Projection Tool (FCPT)²⁰ provides a more accurate projection of food costs than rolling over the previous year's spend by taking the average cost by meal type and multiplying by average daily participation by site, producing a daily food cost which can be extended to an annual projection. The average meal costs can include all components required for the meal pattern, which will result in a higher projection than actual because most students will not take all meal components, adding some cushion in the budget for fluctuations. **CAF recommends that food cost projections be based on ADP and menu cost per meal.** The district could utilize some of the technical assistance provided as part of the GSC program to complete the Food Cost Projection Tool in order to project food costs for the upcoming school year.

²⁰ [Brownsville Master Assessment Sheet \(Fresh\) - Food Cost Projection Tool](#)



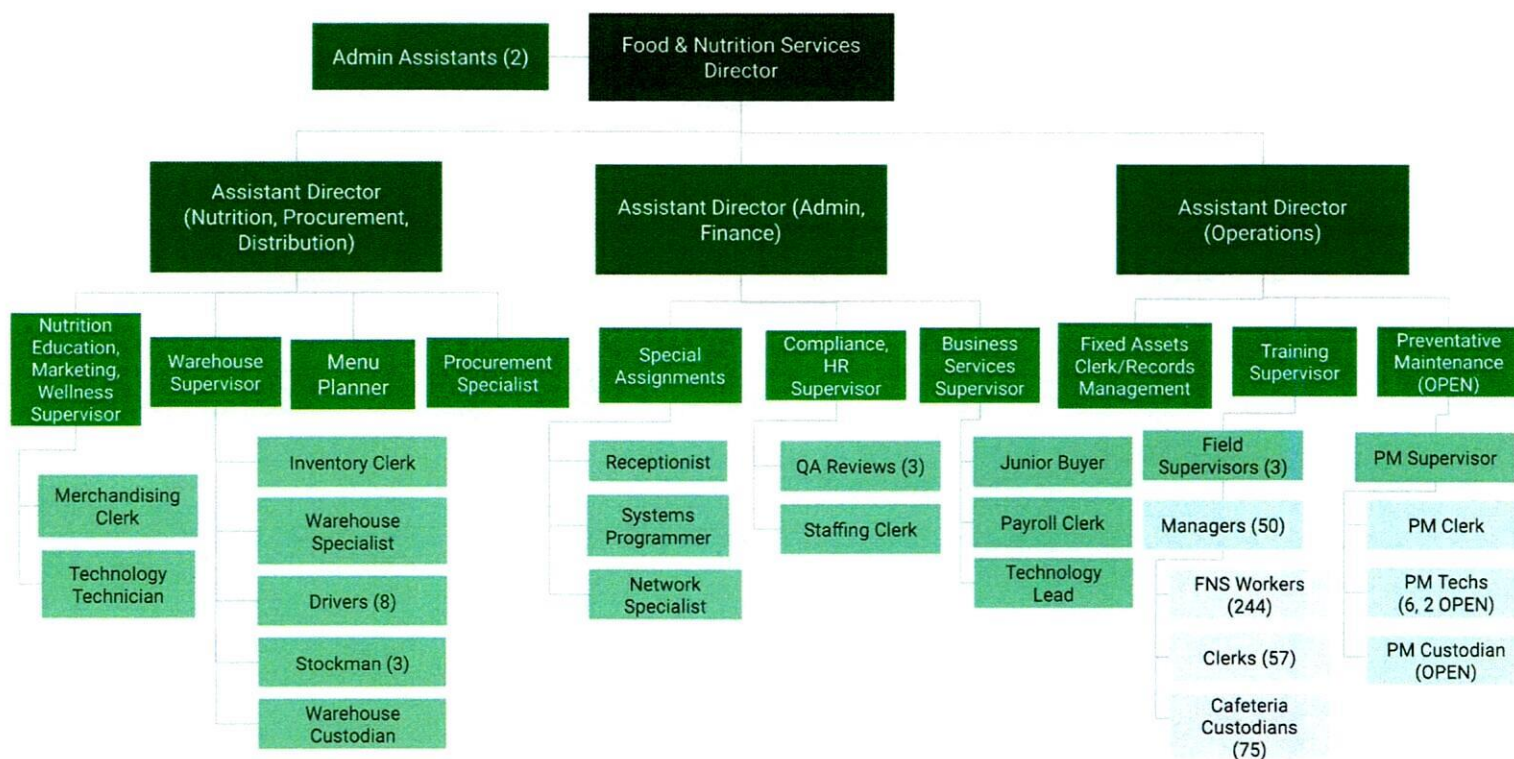
Human Resources

The human resources component is critical to any organization, and understanding staffing expectations and challenges is essential for full-scale change. There are three goals for human resources: staff efficiently, plan professional development and create expectations and accountability.

Efficient Staffing

Brownsville has the labor that can provide students with a meal program that provides strong nutrition.

Staffing Structure - Current





Food Service Office

The central Food & Nutrition Services office is staffed by 61 positions, which includes 15 warehouse support personnel. The Food & Nutrition Services Director oversees the entire department, guides program strategy, and represents the department's interests to district administration and the community. The Director is supported by two Administrative Assistants and three Assistant Directors. One Assistant Director oversees nutrition, procurement, and distribution. This position is supported by four others, each focusing on a different aspect of nutrition, procurement, and distribution, as well as a marketing position. The warehouse staff fall under this vertical within the central office. Another Assistant Director oversees department admin and finance. This position is supported by three roles that focus on emergency preparedness and technology, compliance and human resources, and business services such as claims and payroll. Each of these roles oversee positions that support their work. The third Assistant Director oversees operations, including maintenance, equipment, and waste management, as well as the school supervision team.

A dedicated culinary position is particularly important in scratch cook operations to support field staff and is recommended regardless of the size of the district. **CAF recommends the addition of a professional culinary position, such as a District Executive Chef, to help guide recipe development and conduct training.** This position could be fully funded out of the estimated \$577K savings from reducing overtime hours associated with supper production. As part of the GSC program, TA time could be dedicated to evaluating other opportunities for incorporating culinary focused roles into the existing FTE allocation.

School Site Positions

The school site operations are located at 53 sites. The majority of sites are self prep and have a Manager, one or two Clerks, three to ten FNS Workers, and one to three Custodians. Two sites are considered production sites, and are staffed similarly to self prep sites. The two satellite sites, however, do not have a Manager and have one Clerk and one FNS Worker. The FNS clerk duties are primarily focused on inventory management, receiving and storing products, as well as cashier and meal counting related duties. The FNS worker role is dedicated to meal preparation and service, as well as cleaning responsibilities. If the district were to adopt a [hub-and-spoke ordering system](#) there



would be an opportunity to reduce the number of clerk positions in the kitchens, as these positions are heavily focused on ordering and product management. In doing so, the job description for the FNS worker would also need to be updated to encompass cashier responsibilities. The school sites are currently staffed with 57 clerk positions. If the bulk of the ordering was consolidated to 15 locations they could reduce clerk positions to 20 resulting in a potential \$1.36M in labor savings annually. This savings could be utilized to fund more culinary focused positions, additional FNS workers to support scratch cooking, and support the warehouse delivery system.

Productivity & Meals per Labor Hour

Meals per Labor Hour is the most common measurement of productivity in school food operations. MPLH can be calculated to:

- compare the parity of labor between sites
- provide logic for balancing staffing among sites
- demonstrate to employees the reasoning behind staffing decisions
- assess the ability of the department to sustain current labor hours
- evaluate the potential effects of staffing shifts or changes to the production model
- indicate a site's ability to take on new programs or increased student participation
- use as a tangible illustration for administrators when seeking approval for additions or reductions to labor

Meal counts are factored for breakfast and snack meals to equvalate them to lunch, the most labor-intensive meal type with the most menu options offered. Often meal equivalents (ME) are set for breakfast at .66. Because the meal pattern and variety differ from breakfast to lunch, we find that .66 for breakfast is too generous if the meals are served in the cafeteria, and therefore for breakfast through the line service, we use .33 (1 breakfast = $\frac{1}{3}$ lunch). For Breakfast in the Classroom we use .66 for breakfast to allow time for the packing and unpacking of meals (1 breakfast = $\frac{2}{3}$ lunch). For snack, which has two components, usually a packaged item, milk or whole fruit, we use .25 (1 snack = $\frac{1}{4}$ lunch). Supper, or after-school meals, follows the same meal pattern as lunch, and CACFP Supper is counted as 1 (1 supper = 1 lunch).



CAF does not include a la carte sales in MPLH calculations because they generally work against districts that are moving toward a whole foods scratch model. Additionally, since most a la carte items are pre-packaged and simple inventory management items, it is unnecessary to give labor credit for them. For a program that wants to serve more ingredient-driven, scratch-cooked meals, reimbursable meal counts are the core metric.

MPLH targets must consider the types of positions assigned to each site, the production model, type of foods and menu complexity, number of entrees, the facility, type of breakfast service, the number of meal periods and time between them, number of service lines and POS, type of serviceware, and any campus specific programs.

While MPLH targets must be developed specifically for and by each district, in general 16-22 MPLH is an acceptable range for sites doing self-production. The production model has a direct impact on productivity. For example, a school serving 301-400 meals doing scratch cooking would be found to range from 16 to 18 MPLH, while the same school doing speed scratch would range from 18 to 20 MPLH, and if operating with processed heat-and-serve items would range from 20 to 22 MPLH.

General MPLH Targets	
Self Prep	
Scratch Cooking	16-18
Speed Scratch	18-20
Heat & Serve	20-22
Consolidated Production	
Central Kitchen (1)	80-90
Regional Kitchen (2+)	45-50
Satellite	25-35



Brownsville Independent School District Meals Per Labor Hour Summary		
	Average	Range
Elementary Schools	13	7 - 16
Middle Schools	14	10 - 16
High Schools (Self Prep)	13	12 - 14
High Schools / Alternative Sites (Combined Production and Satellite)	10	7 - 12
Lincoln (Alternative, Self Prep)	4	4
District Total	13	4 - 16

* The combined high schools & alternative sites include BLA & BECH and Rivera & BAC.

Brownsville's [MPLH](#) are 13, which for a predominantly self prep model is below the target range for scratch cooking, while the district is operating more of a heat & serve and speed scratch menu. This analysis includes all staff assigned to the site, including the FNS custodians, as well as the overtime hours incurred by the supper program staff. Thus, with the current labor the sites could do more scratch cooking.

The elementary sites average at 13 MPLH, with a minimum of 7 at Garza and a maximum of 16 at Pullam. 33 of the 34 elementary sites are below 16 MPLH. The middle school sites average at 14 MPLH, with a minimum of 10 at Besterio and a maximum of 16 at Faulk and Sillman. 8 of the 10 middle school sites are below 16 MPLH. The high school sites that are self prep average at 13 MPLH, with a minimum of 12 at Pace and 14 at Hanna, Porter, and Veterans Memorial. The consolidated production sites average at 10, which is very low for consolidated production. Low MPLH and high [labor cost per meal](#) suggests overstaffing relative to the meals served. Both measures should be utilized to review staffing to bring parity across sites and maximize labor efficiency. **Brownsville utilizes MPLH targets, which the central office team reviews weekly. CAF recommends Brownsville create productivity goals relevant to their specific operational model and facilities, and implement processes to compare productivity against the goals on a monthly basis.** As part of the GSC program, TA time could be utilized to assist in the development of productivity goals.

There is opportunity to increase participation, particularly by improving breakfast access and food quality through scratch cooking. While scratch cooking requires more time than heat and serve



operations, the district is adequately staffed with people and hours to make the transition without adding substantial labor because the MPLH are currently below the speed scratch operation targets. The detailed Position Control & MPLH Worksheet²¹ can be used to assist in determining productivity goals, staff assignments and budget planning.

Hiring

The Food & Nutrition Services department works in conjunction with the Human Resources department in the development of job descriptions, postings, interviews, and hiring for food service positions within the district. Recruitment strategies mainly include online advertisements on the TalentEd portal. Open positions will also be spread by word of mouth through the staff. **CAF suggests** working with Human Resources on developing a recruitment strategy. Ideas can include:

- T-shirts with the department name and logo
- Business cards with QR codes that sends one directly to the job application
- Local job fairs
- Various advertisements across media: newspaper, radio, fliers, TV, online, ect.

The position descriptions for the Brownsville Nutrition department were last revised in 2020. **CAF recommends updating all job descriptions, making sure to include specific culinary skills that may be required for the position.** Updating the job descriptions will be particularly important as the district expands its scratch-cook operations so that all staff understand their responsibilities.

When hiring, **CAF recommends requiring candidates to take a math and cooking test before hire.** While these tests can help a district decide on whether to move forward with a candidate, it can also help with more targeted onboarding or what kitchen they should be placed in. Sample job descriptions and hiring tests can be located in [The Lunch Box](#).

Food Services staff being ServSafe certified sets the district up to operate with the highest levels of food safety and sanitation. Including current ServSafe certification or the requirement to become ServSafe certified within the first ninety days of employment are best practices when hiring. **CAF**

²¹ [Brownsville Master Assessment Sheet - Position Control](#)

recommends ServSafe certification (or comparable accredited food manager certification) for all managers or kitchen leads, as well as any employees handling raw proteins. The remaining staff should have a minimum of a food handler card and receive annual training on food safety practices.

Plan Professional Development

Professional development is a key component of running a successful scratch cook program. In addition to ensuring compliance, offering opportunities for professional growth is a great way to engage staff as you make operational changes to support healthy school meals. Staff development also prepares employees for advancement within the organization, which makes your department an attractive employment option for motivated workers.

Under the current USDA regulations for Professional Standards, the district must provide specific minimum training hours by position type. All staff currently have two days of professional development included in their calendars. Since the cafeteria is the classroom for food literacy, it's important for staff to have the skills and education to enhance student meal experiences. **CAF suggests** budgeting additional hours for professional development beyond the minimum hours required by the USDA to ensure staff are prepared for the operational requirements of a more complex system. This could be a few hours throughout the year for additional training on target areas.



As mentioned in the [Menu Software & Production Records](#) section, **CAF suggests** the department provide training on production record best practices including:

- Entering electronic production record data into the Nutrikids software.

- Reviewing production records monthly for accountability and compliance purposes, and weekly spot checks .

Currently, professional development is provided to all staff before the start of the school year to meet the mandatory PD requirements. Additional training for managers is provided and specific to the roles and responsibilities of their position. Professional Development hours are budgeted for the all-staff training at the beginning of the year, additionally staff who are hired after the start of the school year are invited to a training mid-year. Over the past three years, Brownsville staff have had training on Customer Service, Nutrition Education, Food Production - Kitchen Organization and Management, Point of Sale - Cash Handling, Production Records, Ordering, Receiving and Inventory, Sanitation and Food Safety Certification, K-12 Software and/or Computer Skills, Coaching, Procurement - RFPS, Bids, and Annual Planning. While the department does currently budget two professional development days, scheduling additional time throughout the year is beneficial for keeping staff current and building upon previous training. **CAF recommends scheduling and budgeting time for PD throughout the year.** Planning non-school days into the employee calendar can provide dedicated PD time. Adding one PD day for existing repair techs, warehouse staff, managers, clerks, and FNS workers would cost the department about \$65k.



Culinary and Mission Driven Courses

Professional development is the time to share the motivation behind the department's vision. Mission-driven courses focus on the values behind the School Nutrition program, such as food access, nutrition, clean labels, the food system's environmental impact, animal well-being, fair labor conditions, local foods, and cultural foodways. The [School Food Institute](#) courses weave these



themes throughout. Another helpful resource is the [National Farm to School Network's](#) weekly newsletter.

During the onsite visit, staff generally exhibited good food safety practices, as well as a high degree of organization and professionalism. Onsite observations did, however, demonstrate an opportunity for additional culinary training for all staff. **CAF recommends culinary training for all kitchen staff to include:**

- **Knife skills and culinary techniques**
- **Ordering, receiving and inventory**
- **The 'Why' behind scratch cooking**
- **New recipe with specific equipment training**

As the department integrates salad bars into their program, training on **salad bar prep and set up** will be essential. Additionally, as the presence of scratch cooking increases, kitchen staff will need additional **training on equipment, such as commercial immersion blenders and robot coupes**, that have not been utilized as frequently in recent years, as well as the execution of new recipes.

Onboarding

Onboarding new staff provides an opportunity to set the tone for their employment and create a baseline of knowledge and skill levels for all employees. **Brownsville has a robust onboarding process for new hires** that begins at the district level, where employees are given an introduction to the district and an opportunity to meet with various departments. The Food & Nutrition Services department then provides an orientation that includes a review of the department goals, compliance, kitchen food safety and sanitation practices, and key operational topics. Additionally, the department has developed a "Manager in Training" program that provides a framework for staff to advance and ensures comprehensive training to support career development.



Create Expectations & Accountability

Creating expectations and accountability is critical to any organization and is essential for full-scale change. Expectations are set by policies and procedures that staff can use as a guide to perform their duties, while accountability comes from appropriate leadership practices used to measure staff's performance of these duties. Accountability measures include reviewing production records, participation, and observing kitchen efficiency and workflow.

Currently, management of the sites is divided among the field supervisory staff, who oversee 9 school sites each. The field supervisors regularly visit their schools to provide guidance and offer in-person training to staff. Additionally, the department has developed a checklist that is used when visiting the sites, which provides structure to the visit, ensures key elements of the operation are evaluated, and provides a record of training.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Change in any system produces stress and challenges, and systems that rely on SOPs are better able to weather change because of the clarity and consistency they provide. The whole staff must operate under the same assumptions. SOPs drive efficiency and consistency, and in districts where each site is autonomous, the importance of establishing and training on the SOPs cannot be understated. SOPs, most often associated with food safety, must cover all program aspects, such as meal presentation on the line and tray, staff interaction with students and parents, record keeping, clocking in and out, requesting time off, etc. Everything must be defined to drive an efficient and productive department. Brownsville has a procedure manual that provides detailed SOPs for most areas of food service operation. CAF recommends updating the manual as scratch cook operations expand to ensure food safety compliance and presentation standards are upheld. It is a best practice to update SOPs annually and for all team members to review all SOPs at the beginning of school and again mid-year.



Food Safety & Sanitation

Food safety and sanitation are a top priority in school food service, and even more so in scratch cook kitchens. When a district already has good food safety and sanitation practices in place they are equipped to begin the transition to scratch cooking. **Based on observations, Brownsville has solid food safety and sanitation practices.** The overall condition of the kitchens is clean and organized.

HACCP

It is a requirement of operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and usually the local health department, to develop and follow a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan that is modeled on a district's facilities and methods of operation. HACCP is a systematic approach to identify, evaluate, and control food safety hazards based on seven principles. Brownsville has a boilerplate HACCP plan, but during the onsite it was shared that the team has plans to update the document. The district's HACCP plan can be customized and developed into SOPs that include critical control points and corrective actions, which is and will be particularly important as scratch cooking increases. **CAF recommends creating a comprehensive HACCP plan through SOPs, utilizing [the USDA HACCP guide and sample SOPs](#).**

Temperature Recording & Tracking

The sites document cold storage temperatures on paper logs. **All sites had temperature logs for reach-in cold storage.** For temperature management during production and service, **staff were observed taking temperatures during heating and holding. Staff record temperatures on the production record as they are taken.**

There is also a practice of taking temps upon receiving food. **Sites utilize a temperature receiving log to document temperatures at the time of delivery.** This practice is followed both for vendors as well as items that are delivered from the warehouse and for the few sites that receive meals from other kitchens.



Cleaning & Chemical Use

In Brownsville, the Food & Nutrition Services team is responsible for all cleaning in the service areas and kitchens, including sweeping and mopping floors. Trash removal varied by campus, as some custodians removed kitchen trash, whereas other sites the cafeteria staff completed the task.

Chemicals are all auto dispensed using pre-portioned packets from SFSPac.

Handwashing & Glove Use

Handwashing and glove use may be the single most important food safety practices in the kitchen. Particularly when moving to scratch cooked operations, proper handwashing and glove use procedures must be followed. All sites demonstrated good hand washing and glove use practices.



Marketing

For districts implementing more scratch cooking, communication and stakeholder engagement is a critical task to lasting and sustainable transition. Marketing creates awareness of program quality, which increases participation resulting in increased revenue that can be invested to further increase scratch cooking and the required supports. Shifting the food model is very difficult and doing so with the interest and support of administration, school site leadership, community members, parents, and students will lead to a higher level of achievement.

It is important to identify a vision of the food program and garner support for that vision through meal participation, support for capital improvements, program marketing and overall District commitment to food service. Food service is a service for all. Food service workers in school districts usually touch more students and for a greater amount of time than any other employee in a school district. When a school District recognizes that the student's academic achievement is directly supported through nutrition and wellness, Food service then becomes an active part of the District's educational community.

Communication

Brownsville can reach every household through various channels and communicate what the department offers, the work they have accomplished so far, and how they are moving forward.

A mission statement is vital to a school food program because it guides messaging, builds a brand and keeps the team focused. A good mission statement will:

- Tell the school community who you are and what you believe
- Show why your work is important and valuable
- Provide guidance for your program as it develops

Food & Nutrition Services has a mission statement: "FNS is dedicated to students' health, well-being, and their ability to learn through appealing and nutritious food". The department has also developed a vision statement, which is "FNS fuels students' minds". While it is a great first step to create these statements, CAF recommends revising the mission and vision statements to make

them more specific and provide greater detail on program strategy and actions. Resources for developing statements can be found on The Lunch Box [here](#).

One of the most effective marketing strategies is to develop specific branding that makes the department and their vision instantly recognizable to households. Food & Nutrition Services has created an attractive logo that is visible on their website. The logo is front and center on the Food & Nutrition services website, although a larger and more high-resolution version would bring prominence to the logo. **CAF recommends further promoting the logo by making it visible in signage and on all communication channels.**



Uniforms are a visual way to develop the brand. They can feature the department logo, show professionalism and encourage respect for school food service professionals. The Food & Nutrition Services staff in Brownsville ISD wear a uniform of polo shirts and black pants, the shirts are color coded by staff group (i.e. area supervisor, manager, FS worker, and substitute).

Brownsville utilizes the best practice of having easy, one click access to the Food & Nutrition Services webpage from the District home page. The website is attractive and well-designed. In today's world of social media consumption, school food programs have been able to reach more households and partners by adopting the use of social platforms and creating easy access to what they offer. In addition to informing the community, social media can create national recognition, media opportunities and ignite new partnerships. This may, in turn, result in additional media that reaches community members who may not be as plugged in to social media. Food & Nutrition Services utilizes Instagram and Facebook to display informative, attractive graphics as well as celebrates staff.

One communication vehicle that food service does have that every family looks at, and many have hanging on their refrigerator is the menu. Food & Nutrition Services has easy to read menus, generated from School Nutrition Network and accessed through the district website. The menus have graphic designs that create an appealing communication tool. A best practice is to use the

menu as a communication tool to educate the community about the quality of food offered and the changes taking place. Including identifiers for local, scratch made, plant forward or new recipes help the community know these values are important to the Brownsville community. Including a statement such as, "We work with local farmers and purveyors, such as..., whenever possible", can elevate the community's perception of the food served. One simple sentence that provides information about the program, such as a commitment to clean labels, will market the program's dedication to fresh, scratch cooked, high quality meals.

Brownsville does not consistently identify menu items on the serving line or post menus in the cafeteria. The department utilizes QR codes that students can scan to access the menus, however many were missing or damaged during the onsite visit. Food & Nutrition Services could consider enhancing the serving area space with nutrition education by displaying beautiful, fun, and informative line signage about menu items and their health benefits that are consistent across all schools by level. **CAF recommends, at a minimum, ensuring menu items are identified on the serving lines and meal patterns and menus are posted near the serving lines.** As the department grows its local purchasing and culturally relevant meals this type of marketing can expand to educate students about the food system and cultural foodways. The focus on presentation

communicates that the students deserve a high-quality experience and creates a modern environment. Signage should align with style standards that include graphic design, as opposed to handwritten signage, which creates a professional feel. **CAF suggests** developing a style guide and distributing marketing materials from the Food & Nutrition Services office in order to promote the





brand and the mission consistently across all sites. An example of the types of guidelines that can be included in a SOP or style guide is to not have bun or other bags on the hotel pans and pan liners on the serving line to avoid the look of processed or purchased foods.

Other opportunities to communicate food service programming are:

- Labeling menu items in an appealing manner to share the department's values, such as where ingredients come from or how they contribute to a healthy meal.
- Developing and sharing communication tool kits with content for principals to use throughout the year for newsletters, campus web pages, robo-calls or emails, social media posts, and morning announcements. Much of the communication that happens in a school district comes directly from the school to families. Providing Principals with content about Food & Nutrition Services can be an easy way to build relationships and get messaging out to parents. [No Kid Hungry has a school meal marketing tool-kit](#) that could serve as a template.
- Presenting annually at each school's parent-teacher association meetings on the basics of the NSLP, initiatives in the department and the change on the horizon is a great way to educate and engage parents.
- Having Cafe Managers provide samples of scratch made items and provide info on the programs from booths at Kindergarten Roundup, school orientation days and back to school nights creates another touch point.

One of the aims of communicating about the wonderful program Food & Nutrition Services operates is to grow participation in the program to bring in more revenue to further invest in the program and the quality of the food. Food & Nutrition Services receives funding based on each reimbursable meal served, and increased volume allows for better pricing and efficient production in the kitchen. Therefore, the more meals served, the higher the quality of food the department can afford to procure and produce in house. The community wants fresh, high quality food for its students, and when they understand participation is a key to achieving that goal the community will pitch in to participate. Creating a collective impact campaign where this information is shared



directly related to Brownsville's procurement goals will provide a tangible way for the community to make the change they want to see in the food service program.

A collective impact campaign can include a message about the goals that can be obtained when all students participate, for example, "If all students who don't currently eat school lunch bought lunch once a week the district could afford fresh, local chicken at all campuses." The projected funds available if all students participate can be calculated by looking at the average number of students not currently participating in lunch in each category, multiplying by reimbursement rate + cash sales (for reduced-price and paid meals, when applicable) and multiplying again by the number of weeks in the school year. Projecting annual velocity amounts and cost difference in a product can provide a projection for the amount of revenue needed for the goal. Developing collective impact calculations could be an option for technical assistance. **CAF suggests** that Brownsville develop a collective impact campaign to help the community understand exactly what change they can create by participating in the lunch program.

Marketing and communication create a snowball effect, one promotion or bit of attention garners more promotion and attention. As the department works to increase participation to serve all students, getting the attention to make sure the community understands the quality of food the district offers is crucial. Brownsville has a person who oversees nutrition education and marketing tasks such as graphic design, social media posts, and community outreach. **CAF suggests** Food & Nutrition Services develop a marketing plan to schedule communications and events throughout the year.

Engagement

Beyond promoting the program, engaging with the school community is crucial to creating meaningful and lasting change. Asking for feedback and listening to your community builds trust and fosters a shared mission that everyone becomes invested in. Engagement is also an opportunity to promote food literacy, or the knowledge of the connections between food, individual and communal health, the environment, the economy, and equity.



Creating an inclusive program includes having culturally relevant menu items, translated materials, and creating buy-in from everyone involved; students, school administrators, parents, and community groups. Ninety nine percent of students at Brownsville ISD are Hispanic and Brownsville itself is only minutes away from the US/Mexico border. Given the Mexican cultural presence and prevalence in Spanish-speakers in the area, creating an inclusive program is paramount. The Brownsville ISD leadership team demonstrates a high level of sensitivity for their community and reflects and shares their culture and identity.

One way to engage students in the meal program is to hold [tasting events](#). According to the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#), a child might be offered a new food up to 10-16 times before they will eat it. With that information in hand, we have found that tasting, tasting, and more tasting is a great method to overcome their reluctance. [The Food & Nutrition Services department hosts an annual food show where students can sample and vote on prospective menu items; approximately 700 students attend this event annually.](#) Tasting events provide students with food literacy and a space to really connect with food and the department. Additionally, farmer or producer visits and chef demonstrations are other similar ways to engage students in food literacy and create understanding of where their food comes from. Food & Nutrition Services could consider developing a tasting event schedule and host at least one tasting event per campus per semester, which could include farmer, purveyor, or chef demonstrations.

Other opportunities for engagement that provide vehicles for students, staff, and parents to share what they like and what they would like to see on the menu and from the department as well as learn about what is already offered that the department can consider are creating a student, parent and/or staff advisory committee and conducting an annual survey with students, parents and staff. Phrasing questions intentionally can educate users about the work the department is doing or intending. For example, “of our weekly salad bar themes, which is your favorite?” or “what scratch cooked items would you like to see on the menu?” Including a few questions that share pride points such as, “Did you know that Brownsville was selected to participate in the Get Schools Cooking program for our commitment to bring more scratch made meals to our students?”, can also raise awareness. The data the survey provides can be valuable for planning and measuring progress.



Another great option for engagement are school gardens. School gardens provide cross-curricular experiential learning where students are able to experience the food cycle firsthand, from input and production to preparation, consumption and waste. The experience provides them with valuable food education that piques interest and shows up in healthier meal choices. The number of school gardens present in Brownsville was not provided and none were identified during the onsite visit. The [University of Texas Rio Grande Valley](#) is in Brownsville and may be a potential partner for school gardens in Brownsville ISD. Additionally, there is currently minimal Garden to Cafe programming. There are many [options for garden harvests beyond the lunch line](#) that provide students with further experiential learning opportunities. For programs that will celebrate the garden in the Cafeteria, [guidelines for safe production and harvest](#) can be developed to provide the same type of food safety that a certified farm does. There are many resources online for [garden based curriculum](#) to support lesson planning.

Wellness Policy

The Wellness Policy is an excellent place to outline department goals in addition to the district goals for student physical health and activity, nutrition education, food sales, rewards, and celebrations. Brownsville has a Wellness Policy and a supplemental Wellness Plan. The Brownsville School Board last approved an update to the Wellness Policy in 2021. The Wellness Plan does not require board approval to update and is therefore easier to add to and update. The Brownsville Wellness Policy is largely based on a template and does not include any goals specific to the food service department. [The Wellness Plan provides greater detail surrounding wellness initiatives](#), including a Wellness Mission that states their commitment to “establishing healthy school nutrition environments, reducing childhood obesity and preventing diet-related chronic diseases.” The Plan also provides a description of the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) program and its areas of school health, which includes several areas particularly relevant to Food & Nutrition Services; wellness, nutrition education services, and parent/family engagement. The nutrition education section is robust and describes a deeply integrated framework for food literacy engagement, including nutrition curriculum, student taste testing, and community activities. The nutrition guidelines section largely revolves around compliance with state and federal standards.



The district can strengthen the focus on student wellness by using the Wellness Policy and Plan as tools that reflect district goals in more detail. Food ingredient standards, specific local procurement goals, specific guidance for intentional dining environments, sustainability practices, time for students to eat, and guidelines around a la carte are all areas that can be addressed in the Wellness Policy and Plan to guide food service programming and operations. **CAF recommends, at a minimum, that the food and nutrition portions of the Wellness Plan be strengthened and updated to reflect department mission, vision, and goals.** *CAF suggests* taking steps to update the Wellness Policy as well.



Conclusion

Conclusion

Brownsville ISD's Food & Nutrition Services Department is implementing many school food service best practices, as well as demonstrating a strong commitment to continual improvement in food service programming. The district has ample facilities to support scratch cooking, including a central warehouse and spacious kitchens with updated equipment and cold storage. Brownsville Food & Nutrition Services has many solid processes in place, such as regular site visits, onboarding procedures, and MPLH tracking. The department is also off to a significant start in local procurement. Implementing a system of tracking local procurement will assist in identifying goals and potential areas for local expansion. Furthermore, as a result of CEP, they have a solid base of student participation, as well as friendly staff who demonstrate willingness to collaborate as a team. Jackie has an interest in increasing meal participation, tracking food cost, monitoring staff turnover and absenteeism, and increasing local procurement. Ensuring access to department data is foundational to these goals. Going forward, focusing on menu quality, including establishing product standards, managing sugar content, and introducing salad bars in all sites, will bring Brownsville closer to their goals. These changes will also benefit the department's sustainability by decreasing excess packaging. The Food & Nutrition Services Department is ready to take their systems to the next level, including developing goals and standards and integrating them into the Wellness Plan and Policy, as well as evaluating staffing from an efficiency standpoint by updating MPLH targets and examining overtime.

Challenges in school food are ongoing and the transition to scratch cooking doesn't happen overnight. The recommendations made in this report will support efficiencies in process and operation that will make the department stronger for the long term. Goal setting and strategic planning are essential to every organization's success in times of plenty and also when there are extreme challenges. The next phase of the program will assist with strategic planning and provide technical assistance to implement report recommendations. The Brownsville Food & Nutrition Services Department puts in tremendous energy to serve its students well, and CAF is so appreciative to be able to support their efforts.



59 Best Practices Demonstrated in Brownsville

Food

1. Food & Nutrition Services uses NutriKids software from [Heartland](#) for nutrient analysis, recipe management, and menu planning.
2. During the onsite visit, CAF observed that production records were completed daily. Site leads kept them on clipboards in the kitchen where staff could fill them out as they work for optimal accuracy and efficiency.
3. At most sites, the Site Leads use historical data to forecast menus and plan production. They adjust meal counts two weeks prior to service, based on past service participation and item popularity.
4. During the onsite, CAF observed most sites following the best practice of batch cooking in an effort to try to minimize leftovers and provide students with fresh foods.
5. Brownsville has a standard operating procedure ([SOP](#)) to guide staff on proper production record protocols.
6. The district focuses efforts on the student menu, and does not prepare a separate adult menu.
7. In Brownsville, the site lead prints the standardized recipe once the planning is complete and then pairs the scaled recipe with the daily production record.
8. The entrees and items offered by the district reflect the effort made to provide cultural relevance to Hispanic students.
9. Once the order is received at a school site, the kitchen staff check temps, check for damage or missing items, write the date received on the box, store appropriately, and update Systems Design that the items have been received.
10. Brownsville ISD uses Systems Design to track inventory. The central warehouse and school sites take a monthly physical inventory and enter adjustments into the software.
11. Brownsville has a reasonable number of inventory items to allow for both variety and accurate management.



12. The top item purchased in SY 2022-23 is culturally relevant and purchased from a company based in Fort Worth, TX.
13. As a best practice, Brownsville has established menu and procurement goals to help guide planning and purchasing.
14. Brownsville is already doing a significant amount of local procurement.
15. Brownsville purchases 46% of fruit and 36% of vegetables as fresh, demonstrating their commitment to healthful options for students.
16. Brownsville demonstrates a commitment to breakfast access, with Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) at all elementary and middle school sites, as well as Grab & Go and through-the-line service in their high schools.
17. Brownsville's SY 2022-23 milk purchase rate was approximately 64%.
18. When deciding whether to divert commodity value to a processor to make a product, Food & Nutrition Services compares the true value with the commercial price of the same item to determine whether that choice makes sense over the course of the year, needs to be limited within the menu cycles or made in-house.

Facilities

1. Overall, the kitchens are incredibly clean and organized and use the space well.
2. Currently, Brownsville keeps a detailed inventory record by site of large equipment that includes make, model, and serial number.
3. Budgeting funds for equipment replacement is a great start.

Finance

1. The two offices (Finance and Food & Nutrition Services) are in constant communication to review the monthly claim, discuss budget progress, as well as discuss grants and monthly inventory.
2. Brownsville uses eSchoolPlus for its Student Information Software and Systems Design for its point of sale (POS). The two programs interface and share data.
3. Brownsville earns the performance based reimbursement at lunch, and therefore maxes out the highest reimbursement rate available to the district for regular NSLP programming.



4. All school sites in the Brownsville Independent School District operate under CEP, which is a tremendous benefit to the students and community.
5. Currently, all school sites in the Brownsville Independent School District operate a supper program, except the three alternative schools; Lincoln Park School, Brownsville Learning Academy, and Brownsville Academic Center.
6. The Food & Nutrition Services Area Supervisors review meal counts monthly and enter them into the state system.
7. The Finance office reviews the data for variances prior to submitting the claim to the state.
8. The Food & Nutrition Services Department reviews average daily participation by site monthly.
9. Currently, breakfast is served in the classroom in the majority of middle and elementary schools.
10. Brownsville offers and records employee earned meals.
11. A la carte sales dropped to less than 1% of revenue during and post-pandemic.
12. Brownsville currently has two staff count the cash drawer, utilizing a blind count method.
13. The Food & Nutrition Services Director prepares the budget, with support from the Finance and Human Resources department.
14. The Food & Nutrition Services Director reviews current participation and enrollment projections, taking program changes into account, to project revenue.
15. Brownsville utilizes time clocks for all employees.
16. To budget for labor, the Food & Nutrition Services Director utilizes position control data as well as factors in potential raises, COLA, and salary step increases to project labor expenses.
17. The department uses meals per labor hour (MPLH) to determine staffing adjustments.

Human Resources

1. Brownsville utilizes MPLH targets, which the central office team reviews weekly.
2. Professional development is provided to all staff before the start of the school year to meet the mandatory PD requirements.
3. Professional Development hours are budgeted.
4. The department currently budgets two professional development days.



5. Brownsville has a robust onboarding process for new hires.
6. The field supervisors regularly visit their schools to provide guidance and offer in-person training to staff.
7. The department has developed a checklist that is used when visiting the sites, which provides structure to the visit, ensures key elements of the operation are evaluated, and provides a record of training.
8. Brownsville has a procedure manual that provides detailed SOPs for most areas of food service operation.
9. Based on observations, Brownsville has solid food safety and sanitation practices.
10. All sites had temperature logs for reach-in cold storage.
11. Staff were observed taking temperatures during heating and holding. Staff record temperatures on the production record as they are taken.
12. Sites utilize a temperature receiving log to document temperatures at the time of delivery.
13. Chemicals are all auto dispensed using pre-portioned packets from SFSPac.

Marketing

1. Food & Nutrition Services has a mission statement.
2. The department has also developed a vision statement.
3. Food & Nutrition Services has created an attractive logo that is visible on their website.
4. The Food & Nutrition Services staff in Brownsville ISD wear a uniform of polo shirts and black pants, the shirts are color coded by staff group (i.e. area supervisor, manager, FS worker, and substitute).
5. Brownsville utilizes the best practice of having easy, one click access to the Food & Nutrition Services webpage from the District home page.
6. Food & Nutrition Services utilizes Instagram and Facebook to display informative, attractive graphics as well as celebrates staff.
7. The Food & Nutrition Services department hosts an annual food show where students can sample and vote on prospective menu items; approximately 700 students attend this event annually.
8. The Wellness Plan provides greater detail surrounding wellness initiatives.



49 Recommended Strategies and Actions

Food

1. Use one software for both front of house (POS and eligibility) and back of house (menu planning, production records, inventory and ordering) to create efficiency. Specifically, using a single software solution for all back-of house functions is highly recommended.
2. Implement a structured approach to reviewing production records.
3. Expand the lunch menu to a 4-6 week cycle, which provides a variety of choices without creating too many options.
4. Implement salad bars at all sites and offer all produce in bulk, self-serve format from the salad bar.
5. Offer a daily vegetarian option in addition to a salad bar at all levels. This can be achieved by replacing an entree option across all sites with a vegetarian option.
6. Use BOH K-12 software with a warehouse setup for ordering, receiving and inventory management.
7. Track the progress of shifts in velocity data (top 20) on an annual basis and celebrate success by marketing them to the community.
8. Commit to a clean label initiative using [the Ingredient Guide for Better School Food Purchasing](#), for all products and ingredients and include it in the Wellness Policy.
9. Establish ingredient and product standards, including local purchasing goals, as part of district policy.
10. Procure a greater percentage of produce as fresh produce to move away from highly processed foods with many unnecessary ingredients.
11. Utilize the salad bar for entrees and sides.
12. Eliminate dessert-like breakfast items like pastries, or at a minimum limiting them to one day a week to foster healthy habits in students.
13. Set added sugar limits for all items and include those limits in the Wellness Policy.
14. Offer juice only up to two to three times per week at breakfast at all levels.
15. Eliminate flavored milk at breakfast at all levels.



16. Include guidelines around milk in the Wellness Policy in order to support Food & Nutrition Services as these changes take effect.
17. Replace cartons with bulk milk service to decrease food waste and improve quality of product.
18. Opt into the DoD Fresh program prior to the contract deadline and refrain from committing any entitlement to other types of USDA Foods until after the DoD Fresh distribution has taken place. This will allow for the allocation of more commodity dollars toward fresh, unprocessed foods.
19. Shift dollars from processing to similar items or ingredients from Brown Box to be made in house and use part of the GSC technical assistance to make commodity selections for school year 2024-25.

Facilities

1. Ensure that all self production sites have either a combi oven or a convection oven AND steamer so that there are multiple cooking methods available.
2. Ensure that all self production sites are equipped with a food processor, sectionizer, and at least a commercial immersion blender to support scratch cooking production and salad bar preparation.
3. Prepare and deliver food the day before service in a bulk format for finishing on site and serving bulk style on the line at Lincoln Park HS. The meals should be delivered via a refrigerated truck or delivery vehicle using wheeled insulated food totes.
4. For Brownsville Academic Center and Brownsville Early College High, prepare and deliver food the day before service in a bulk format for finishing on site and serving bulk style on the line. The meals should be delivered via a refrigerated truck or delivery vehicle using wheeled insulated food totes.
5. Add a blast chiller unit in Rivera High School, Brownsville Learning Academy and Porter High School.
6. Add a retherm unit to Brownsville Academic Center and Brownsville Early College High School.



7. Eliminate additional packaging and serve food directly onto the trays.
8. Replace sporks with forks, spoons and knives.
9. Replace gravity slides with hot wells to facilitate bulk service in high schools.
10. Ensure all POS are double sided to increase line speed and decrease the number of cashiers required in middle and high schools.

Finance

1. Track summer revenue separately within the Multi-Year P&L in order to monitor program changes.
2. Track and systematically evaluate percent of total enrollment participation at breakfast, lunch, and supper on its own and relative to the prior year to gauge the opportunity to grow meal participation and celebrate progress when participation increases.
3. Eliminate a la carte in elementary sites.
4. Revise supper program staffing to minimize overtime by staggering schedules and requiring the teams to prep ahead.
5. Utilize the FCIT to monitor the status of the program's food spend.
6. Base food cost projections on ADP and menu cost per meal.

Human Resources

1. Add a culinary position, such as an Executive Chef, to help guide recipe development and conduct training.
2. Create productivity goals relevant to their specific operational model and facilities, and implement processes to compare productivity against the goals on a monthly basis.
3. Update all job descriptions, making sure to include specific culinary skills that may be required for the position.
4. Require candidates to take a math and cooking test before hire.
5. Obtain ServSafe certification (or comparable accredited food manager certification) for all managers or kitchen leads, as well as any employees handling raw proteins. The remaining staff should have a minimum of a food handler card and receive annual training on food safety practices.



6. Provide culinary training for all kitchen staff to include:
 - Knife skills and culinary techniques
 - Ordering, receiving and inventory
 - The 'Why' behind scratch cooking
 - New recipes with specific equipment training
7. Provide training on salad bar prep and set up.
8. Provide training on equipment, such as commercial immersion blenders and robot coupes.
9. Update the manual as scratch cook operations expand to ensure food safety compliance and presentation standards are upheld.
10. Create a comprehensive HACCP plan through SOPs, utilizing [the USDA HACCP guide and sample SOPs](#).

Marketing

1. Revise the mission and vision statements to make them more specific and provide greater detail on program strategy and actions.
2. Further promote the logo by making it visible in signage and on all communication channels.
3. At a minimum, ensure menu items are identified on the serving lines and meal patterns and menus are posted near the serving lines.
4. At a minimum, strengthen and update the food and nutrition portions of the Wellness Plan to reflect department mission, vision, and goals.



33 Suggested Strategies and Actions

Food

1. Enter the production record data into the NutriKids software upon completion, to aid in the review of the document.
2. Minimize the service of hot vegetables, in an effort to streamline service and balance labor.
3. Switch to two weekly produce deliveries for the elementaries and middle school and up to three times a week for the high school or any regional kitchen.
4. Implement a hub-and-spoke ordering and delivery model to help centralize the ordering process.
5. Develop a one-pager that outlines the district's food standards to share at the beginning of the procurement process.
6. Create local purchasing goals that are measurable, such as allocating a percent of the total food budget to local ingredient purchases.
7. Bring up the idea of adding local preference language in RFPs at a future co-op meeting for discussion.
8. Look at top 20 items that can be found in Texas, such as peaches and oranges, as well as chicken and corn or corn products.
9. Integrate the [Texas Harvest of the Month \(HOM\) Program](#) as well and promote it on the food service webpage on the district website.
10. Tie local purchasing to Farm-to-School programming, such as with tastings, farmer visits, and promotional materials.
11. Increase the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables in order to give students exposure to many different nutrients and experiences.
12. Implement double-sided salad bars to increase line speed.
13. Offer only one daily entree along with a cereal option at breakfast in the high school.
14. Add water or spa water dispensers to the lines.



Facilities

1. One site per cluster consolidates production of certain menu items and ships these items to the remaining cluster locations for service utilizing the existing warehouse delivery schedule.
2. Plan and budget for replacing the warehouse storage racks in the coming years.
3. Revise the current FNS delivery driver criteria to allow for a Class B license, as this would expand hiring opportunities.
4. Utilize the warehouse to aggregate other locally sourced or directly shipped products that might be more cost effective to take directly or unavailable through their main distributors.
5. Create an inventory record for smallwares such as hotel pans, sheet pans, spoodles, etc that can be updated annually.
6. Develop an equipment maintenance and replacement plan for the specific equipment in each kitchen to prevent interruptions from failing equipment.
7. Use environmentally conscious trays, either recyclable or compostable depending on the availability of services in the area, to minimize environmental impact.
8. Incorporate dish machines into future facility planning and evaluating the use of reusable trays.
9. Remove PC condiments from the line in order to limit waste and save costs.
10. Move towards bulk condiments, such as salad dressings, ketchup, and mayonnaise.

Finance

1. Track summer revenue separately within the Multi-Year P&L in order to monitor program changes.
2. Do not accept cash on the serving lines to keep lines flowing and to eliminate associated tasks for kitchen staff so labor and time can be spent on food production.

Human Resources

1. Work with Human Resources on developing a recruitment strategy.



Suggested Strategies

2. Budget additional hours for professional development beyond the minimum hours required by the USDA to ensure staff are prepared for the operational requirements of a more complex system.
3. Provide training on production record best practices including:
 - o Entering electronic production record data into the Nutrikids software.
 - o Reviewing production records monthly for accountability and compliance purposes, and weekly spot checks .

Marketing

1. Develop a style guide and distribute marketing materials from the Food & Nutrition Services office in order to promote the brand and the mission consistently across all sites.
2. Develop a collective impact campaign to help the community understand exactly what change they can create by participating in the lunch program.
3. Develop a marketing plan to schedule communications and events throughout the year.
4. Take steps to update the Wellness Policy.



Appendices: Brownsville ISD Multi-Year Participation Overview

Brownsville Independent School District Participation Overview SY 18-19 - SY 22-23										
School Site	SY 18-19		SY 19-20		SY 20-21		SY 21-22		SY 22-23	
	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch	% ADP Breakfast	% ADP Lunch
Hanna High School	36%	57%	26%	42%	37%	2%	23%	43%	30%	51%
Porter High School	30%	61%	24%	43%	3%	23%	21%	48%	28%	57%
Pace High School	44%	55%	27%	41%	4%	7%	17%	33%	26%	55%
Rivera High School	37%	67%	25%	42%	3%	4%	18%	44%	25%	51%
Lopez High School	41%	67%	30%	48%	4%	6%	25%	52%	32%	55%
Brownsville Early College High School	3%	49%	23%	34%	4%	7%	18%	34%	22%	39%
Veterans Memorial High School	41%	58%	26%	42%	2%	4%	22%	43%	27%	47%
Faulk Middle School	71%	88%	46%	63%	2%	10%	37%	70%	46%	70%
Stell Middle School	78%	83%	51%	63%	5%	10%	51%	70%	56%	65%
Oliveria Middle School	72%	79%	52%	55%	3%	6%	53%	63%	59%	63%
Perkins Middle School	87%	84%	64%	59%	3%	7%	73%	79%	81%	78%
Vela Middle School	62%	71%	42%	52%	4%	7%	51%	67%	50%	73%
Besterio Middle School	84%	89%	58%	60%	4%	9%	59%	58%	66%	63%
Lucio Middle School	67%	78%	47%	59%	3%	9%	22%	70%	45%	70%
Garcia Middle School	62%	70%	44%	59%	3%	9%	35%	67%	41%	70%
Stillman Middle School	57%	64%	44%	44%	4%	10%	54%	68%	55%	84%
Manzano Middle School	72%	85%	55%	59%	3%	7%	40%	58%	49%	65%
Canales Elementary	92%	98%	66%	75%	54%	56%	77%	86%	75%	81%
Cromack Elementary	93%	100%	65%	76%	51%	52%	68%	87%	71%	88%
Martin Elementary	89%	100%	64%	74%	58%	60%	70%	87%	68%	86%
El Jardin Elementary	87%	98%	62%	74%	82%	84%	66%	85%	68%	86%
Garden Park Elementary	87%	100%	61%	74%	77%	81%	72%	88%	70%	84%
Putegnat Elementary	96%	100%	67%	75%	40%	42%	60%	89%	63%	86%
Russell Elementary	87%	99%	64%	73%	54%	57%	62%	84%	68%	87%
Sharp Elementary	85%	89%	60%	67%	47%	48%	61%	82%	69%	83%
Skinner Elementary	93%	99%	71%	77%	86%	87%	77%	86%	82%	90%
Casteneda Elementary	75%	99%	56%	72%	69%	76%	59%	80%	61%	80%
Villa Nueva Elementary	93%	99%	67%	75%	71%	73%	72%	88%	76%	91%
Del Castillo Elementary	92%	100%	67%	77%	69%	74%	69%	85%	59%	82%
Perez Elementary	86%	97%	58%	73%	52%	57%	66%	89%	63%	83%
Palm Grove Elementary	86%	95%	69%	76%	64%	68%	62%	84%	63%	84%
Egly Elementary	74%	95%	54%	70%	47%	49%	64%	77%	66%	80%
Garza Elementary	84%	99%	65%	77%	82%	87%	66%	86%	64%	87%
Vermillion Elementary	86%	99%	65%	72%	75%	79%	58%	84%	64%	83%
Burns Elementary	87%	98%	65%	75%	57%	61%	73%	84%	78%	83%
Morningside Elementary	91%	100%	70%	74%	73%	75%	76%	90%	73%	86%
Gonzalez Elementary	80%	92%	57%	68%	44%	50%	63%	80%	64%	81%
Southmost Elementary	97%	100%	72%	75%	50%	50%	81%	91%	76%	87%
Yturria Elementary	79%	91%	56%	70%	45%	47%	67%	83%	63%	79%
Aiken Elementary	88%	94%	58%	69%	62%	62%	61%	82%	66%	79%
Hudson Elementary	83%	92%	58%	68%	30%	32%	70%	81%	74%	82%
Benavides Elementary	83%	98%	66%	76%	48%	54%	53%	83%	65%	81%
Champion Elementary	89%	99%	63%	74%	61%	63%	62%	87%	67%	88%
Paredes Elementary	77%	89%	57%	66%	41%	48%	63%	82%	65%	80%
Gallegos Elementary	89%	99%	68%	72%	74%	81%	71%	86%	68%	87%
Ortiz Elementary	73%	92%	54%	70%	39%	45%	65%	85%	60%	83%
Brite Elementary School	93%	100%	62%	75%	56%	58%	62%	85%	78%	84%
Pena Elementary School	94%	96%	69%	72%	58%	58%	69%	88%	70%	88%
Pullam Elementary School	93%	97%	68%	70%	41%	53%	77%	76%	80%	78%
Keller Elementary School	86%	93%	64%	71%	54%	56%	70%	83%	70%	85%
Breeden Elementary School	79%	96%	56%	71%	44%	48%	64%	81%	64%	80%
District Total	67%	81%	48%	60%	28%	30%	47%	68%	52%	70%

*Note: Due to incomplete data, alternative sites and BLA are not included.



Appendices: Brownsville ISD Labor Cost Per Meal

Brownsville ISD Labor Cost Per Meal SY 22-23		
School Site	Total Labor Cost	Labor Cost Per Meal
Hanna High School	\$522,142	\$1.79
Porter High School	\$459,460	\$1.76
Pace High School	\$496,525	\$2.06
Rivera High School	\$598,932	\$2.01
Lopez High School	\$540,004	\$1.93
Brownsville Early College High School	\$54,250	\$1.33
Veterans Memorial High School	\$477,057	\$1.80
Lincoln Park School	\$107,065	\$6.75
Faulk Middle School	\$343,044	\$1.60
Stell Middle School	\$295,136	\$1.78
Oliveria Middle School	\$296,207	\$1.75
Perkins Middle School	\$260,804	\$1.67
Vela Middle School	\$253,968	\$1.97
Besterio Middle School	\$329,150	\$2.52
Lucio Middle School	\$275,150	\$2.07
Garcia Middle School	\$300,220	\$1.59
Stillman Middle School	\$403,833	\$1.57
Manzano Middle School	\$330,747	\$1.81
Canales Elementary	\$347,549	\$1.81
Cromack Elementary	\$267,497	\$2.09
Martin Elementary	\$264,162	\$2.14
El Jardin Elementary	\$233,370	\$2.42
Garden Park Elementary	\$234,786	\$1.99
Putegnat Elementary	\$257,411	\$2.16
Russell Elementary	\$274,084	\$2.05
Sharp Elementary	\$223,924	\$1.70
Skinner Elementary	\$229,506	\$2.24
Casteneda Elementary	\$271,337	\$2.12
Villa Nueva Elementary	\$233,712	\$2.18
Del Castillo Elementary	\$227,725	\$3.24
Perez Elementary	\$303,490	\$1.83
Palm Grove Elementary	\$231,876	\$2.69
Egly Elementary	\$272,355	\$2.00
Garza Elementary	\$227,900	\$3.48
Vermillion Elementary	\$304,801	\$1.85
Burns Elementary	\$334,246	\$1.95
Morningside Elementary	\$251,313	\$1.84
Gonzalez Elementary	\$296,506	\$1.67
Southmost Elementary	\$230,666	\$2.26
Yturria Elementary	\$265,946	\$1.89
Aiken Elementary	\$266,615	\$1.76
Hudson Elementary	\$301,259	\$1.65
Benavides Elementary	\$372,804	\$1.58
Champion Elementary	\$336,406	\$1.83
Paredes Elementary	\$312,164	\$1.54
Gallegos Elementary	\$226,279	\$2.06
Ortiz Elementary	\$228,316	\$1.77
Brite Elementary School	\$259,897	\$1.82
Pena Elementary School	\$264,446	\$1.89
Pullam Elementary School	\$339,340	\$1.50
Keller Elementary School	\$269,252	\$1.83
Breeden Elementary School	\$267,505	\$1.80
Brownsville Learning Academy	\$275,854	\$4.61
Brownsville Academic Center	\$44,692	\$2.32
District Total	\$15,892,688	\$1.92



Appendices: Brownsville ISD Meals Per Labor Hour

MPLH Summary		
School Site	Meal Equivalents	MPLH
Hanna High School	1,616	14
Porter High School	1,449	14
Pace High School	1,337	12
Rivera High School	1,656	13
Lopez High School	1,557	13
Brownsville Early College High School	226	9
Veterans Memorial High School	1,474	14
Lincoln Park High School	88	4
Faulk Middle School	1,189	16
Stell Middle School	921	14
Oliveria Middle School	939	14
Perkins Middle School	865	15
Vela Middle School	716	12
Besterio Middle School	725	10
Lucio Middle School	738	11
Garcia Middle School	1,051	14
Stillman Middle School	1,433	16
Manzano Middle School	1,017	14
Canales Elementary	1,066	14
Cromack Elementary	712	12
Martin Elementary	686	11
El Jardin Elementary	536	10
Garden Park Elementary	656	12
Putegnat Elementary	661	11
Russell Elementary	742	12
Sharp Elementary	733	14
Skinner Elementary	570	11
Casteneda Elementary	712	12
Villa Nueva Elementary	595	12
Del Castillo Elementary	390	8
Perez Elementary	919	14
Palm Grove Elementary	479	9
Egly Elementary	757	13
Garza Elementary	364	7
Vermillion Elementary	917	13
Burns Elementary	953	13
Morningside Elementary	758	12
Gonzalez Elementary	984	15
Southmost Elementary	567	11
Yturria Elementary	782	13
Aiken Elementary	841	14
Hudson Elementary	1,015	15
Benavides Elementary	1,308	15
Champion Elementary	1,022	13
Paredes Elementary	1,123	14
Gallegos Elementary	610	10
Ortiz Elementary	717	14
Brite Elementary School	793	13
Pena Elementary School	777	13
Pullam Elementary School	1,259	16
Keller Elementary School	819	14
Breeden Elementary School	825	14
Brownsville Learning Academy	332	6
Brownsville Academic Center	107	6
District Total	46,086	13

*Rivera High School is a production site for Brownsville Academic Center and includes their meal equivalents. Brownsville Learning Academy is a production site for Brownsville Early College High School and includes their meal equivalents.

EXHIBIT D

School Food Systems Solutions Proposal

and

Curriculum Vitae

JOB DESCRIPTION PROPOSAL

FEBRUARY 16, 2024



SOLICITATION QUOTE PROPOSAL

This proposal is in response to Solicitation for Quotes (RFQ) for Brownsville Independent School District (BISD) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS). The purpose of the RFQ is to provide workforce analysis, development of job descriptions, and design performance evaluation systems.

Dora Rivas, MS, RD, SNS
School Nutrition Specialist/Consultant
School Food Systems Solutions,
Sole Proprietor
Contact Information:
1207 Middlebrook Place
Dallas, Tx 75208
foodsystemsdr@gmail.com
Phone: 956-266-8416

BISD FNS JOB DESCRIPTIONS –
FEBRUARY 2024
PROPOSAL

Request for Quotes Provided to:

Jackie Cruz, MS, RD, LD
Director of Food and Nutrition Services
Brownsville Independent School District
Food and Nutrition Services
1888 E Price Road, Brownsville, TX 78521
Office: (956) 548-8450
Direct: (956) 698-0150
Email: jcruz2@bisd.us

Proposal Prepared by:

Dora Rivas, MS, RDN, SNS
School Nutrition Specialist/Consultant
School Food Systems Solutions, Sole Proprietor
1207 Middlebrook Place
Dallas, TX 75208
Email: foodsystemsdr@gmail.com

BISD FNS JOB DESCRIPTIONS –
FEBRUARY 2024
PROPOSAL

Proposal submitted as per requested format

The content and sequence of the proposal is as follows

- Letter of Submission with attached Resume/Bio
- Proposer's Cost for Services- included in proposal
- Proposer's References

Letter of Interest/Response to Solicitation for Quote

February 16, 2024

School Nutrition Consultant proposes to provide services as noted on quote to develop job analysis and development of job descriptions and assessment tools with key performance indicators.

Review of Existing Job Descriptions

Job Analysis Questionnaires

Development or Revision of Existing Job Descriptions

Inclusion of Measurable Performance Outcomes

Evaluation Systems

Training

Consultant/SNS Specialist has over 40 years extensive experience in directing school nutrition programs inclusive of customized evaluation, training and other services that meet school nutrition program needs.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS/ SCOPE OF WORK

TIMELINE (Spring 2024)

Job descriptions as requested by Food and Nutrition Director will be reviewed against Organizational Chart and updated as per department needs. Job Descriptions include but are not limited to the following job titles.

- FNS Clerk
- FNS Worker
- FNS Custodian

BISD FNS JOB DESCRIPTIONS –
FEBRUARY 2024
PROPOSAL

- Purchasing Specialist
- Warehouse Supervisor
- Warehouse Drivers
- Inventory/Supply Specialist
- Warehouse Workers
- Fixed Assets Clerk/Records Clerk Management
- Junior Buyers
- Payroll Clerk/Staffing
- Claims Specialist

PROPOSAL FOR SOLICITATION OF QUOTE

CONTRACTOR RATE

Proposal is based on following rate structure: Quote is negotiable based on scope of work and/or training requested upon award approval.

\$1500/daily rate for training

\$1000/daily rate for preparation offsite (includes travel if within 50 miles).

\$ 600/half day rate.

\$ 200/hourly rate.

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Cost
PHASE II- BISD Job Descriptions- Spring 2024	12	\$ 1,000	\$12,000.00
Travel Expense (Dallas to Harlingen)	N/A	\$ 0	\$ 0
Total			\$12,000.00


Thank you for considering my proposal. Training as needed will be customized as to meet needs of department. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

BISD FNS JOB DESCRIPTIONS –
FEBRUARY 2024
PROPOSAL

List of References:

1. Pat Lewis, Ed.D., Grand Prairie ISD
Deputy Superintendent of Innovation and School Improvement at
GRAND PRAIRIE Independent SCHOOL DISTRICT.
2602 S Beltline, Grand Prairie, Tx
469-245-2120
patricia.lewis@gpisd.org
(Menu, Organizational Review)
2. Karen Andrasi, CMP*
Executive Director for the Texas Association of School Nutrition Association
5910 Courtyard Drive #230
Austin, Texas 78731
(512) 371-0087 Ext 204
3. Stephanie Areizaga
Mathematica, (Contractor for USDA FNS Study Project)
sareizaga@mathematica-mpr.com
P.O. Box 2393
Princeton, NJ 08543-2393
Phone: (202) 838-3725
Fax: 609-799-0005

* Additional references are available upon request.



Dora Rivas, MS,RDN,SNS
School Nutrition Specialist/Consultant

Attached: Curriculum Vitae/ Resume

Dora Rivas, M.S., R.D., S.N.S. has an extensive career in school foodservice. She is currently a School Nutrition Specialist / Consultant & Sole Proprietor of School Food Systems Solutions. Dora is recognized as a leader in the school food service industry and has served as President for the Texas Association for School Nutrition (1995-96) and President of the national School Nutrition Association in 2009-10. She served as the past Executive Director for the Dallas Independent School District and Brownsville Independent School District. After retiring from Dallas ISD, she served as the first civilian School Nutrition Specialist for the Army Air Force Exchange (Department of Defense)

She has received numerous awards for success in organizational management including the prestigious Operator of the Year- Silver Plate Award from the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association and the Gold Star FAME (Foodservice Achievement in Management Excellence) from the School Nutrition Association and the School Nutrition DPG Award of Excellence.. She has received Best Practice Awards from USDA for menu planning, innovative practices, and expanding breakfast programs. She was recognized by the First Lady Michelle Obama for success in achieving USDA HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSC) awards. She has been a speaker at numerous state and national association conferences and has served on peer review teams for the Council of Great City Schools and Texas Association for School Food Service.

Education

M.S. Institutional Management, Kansas State University,
Manhattan, KS in 1980

B.S. Foods & Nutrition, Texas A & M, Kingsville, TX 1972

Additional Education/ Certifications

School Nutrition Specialist, School Nutrition Association
(Credentialed since 2000)

Dietetic Work Experience Program, Valley Baptist Medical Center
Harlingen, TX (completed requirements as Registered Dietitian in
1974 through Commission of Dietetic Registration)

Professional and Business History

School Food Systems Solutions, Sole Proprietor. Consultant for
school food and nutrition departments and organizations. Provides
leadership and management training for school nutrition
professionals. 2019-present

Army Air Force Exchange Service, Department of Defense. Dallas,
TX 75236. September 2015-2019 (AAFES)

School Nutrition Specialist, AAFES School Meal Program

Directs nutrition services for SMP overseas (EUROPE/ASIA)

- Directed menu planning & nutrition services
- Provided technical assistance on SMP compliance
- Provided technical assistance on NSLP guidelines and participates in on-site administrative reviews on oversea programs
- Developed training program and provided onsite training

Dallas Independent School District, Food and Child Nutrition Services, Dallas, TX 75215. 2005-2014. Retired

Executive Director

Directed and oversaw the school foodservice operation for all the food and child nutrition programs

- Oversaw the operation of meal services to 220+ cafeteria sites serving over 92,000 breakfasts and 130,000 lunches daily. Current program has achieved the School Nutrition Association Standards of Excellence. Program includes initiatives to increase participation via various promotions, and initiatives. i.e. Breakfast In the Classroom (BIC)
- Managed a staff of over 1600+ food service employees. Designed and implemented a comprehensive staff development program for all staff and a manager training program for supervisory staff. Additional training has included a culinary arts component for kitchen staff. Staff were recognized for their performance through a regular monitoring system (5 Star Quality Assurance Program)
- Planned, monitored, and controlled a budget of \$100+ million. Maintained a positive fund balance and utilized funds to improve cafeteria operations and programs including updating of cafeteria graphics furniture and decor
- Maintained an equipment maintenance program and implemented an equipment replacement plan with departmental staff internally; worked with district bond program to assure continued kitchen assessments and improvements of facilities
- Collaborated with district coordinated school health program leadership team to implement the district wellness policy and other district health initiatives to reduce childhood obesity
- Collaborated with North Texas Food Bank to provide children with access to food through weekend Backpack

programs, afterschool meals, expand Breakfast in the Classroom programs

- Implemented Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) in all Elementary schools in 2013-14 school year and Middle Schools in 2014-15 school year as part of Dallas ISD mandated BIC Board Policy as part of district-wide initiative
- Implemented Provision 2 (Meals at No Charge) district-wide October 2013-2014 and transitioned to Community Eligibility Provision in 2014-2015 school year.

Brownsville independent School District, Food and Child Nutrition Services Department, Brownsville, TX 78520 October 1977-2004

Department Administrator

Director for the Food and Child Nutrition Services. October 1980-2004; Assistant Director- 1979-1980; Dietitian for District- October 1977-1979

Accomplishments:

- Maintained a positive fund balance and utilized excessive fund balance for kitchen renovations and upgrades
- USDA Best Practice Awards for Breakfast in the Classroom, Innovative Practices- Strategic Planning, and Menu Planning
- Implemented the Special Assistance Provision II program in 1994 district-wide (one of the first large districts in the country at the time)
- Achieved District of Excellence from the Texas School Food Service Association

**Presentations,
Papers, and
Publications**

Publications

- School Nutrition Journal, School Nutrition Association
- TASN News, Texas Association for School Nutrition

National Workgroups/Task Forces

Served on National Nutrition Standards Taskforce, School Nutrition Association

Served on Strategic Planning Committee, Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics

Invited Presenter at the following conferences

Honors & Recognitions

American Dietetic Association

National Association of School Business Officials

Texas Action for Healthy Kids

Texas Hunger Initiative Events, School of Social Work. Baylor University, Waco, TX

Numerous State and National Conferences on various topics and issues in school foodservice

State and National Leadership Positions

State President 1995-1996, Texas Association for School Nutrition

National President 2009-2010, School Nutrition Association

Gold Star Foodservice Achievement in Management Excellence (FAME) Award, 2000; School Nutrition Association, Seattle, WA

Foodservice Operator of the Year-Silver Plate Award, 2005; International Foodservice Manufacturers Association (IFMA), Chicago, Ill

Texas Director of the Year Award and Southwest Region Director of the Year Award in 2005, School Nutrition Association, Baltimore, Maryland.

Honorary Doctorate of Foodservice, 2011; The North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers (NAFEM), Orlando, Florida.

Lifetime Achievement Award, 2012; Dallas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Dallas, TX

Committees

Served on Governor appointed, Texas School Health Advisory Council. Term ending in 2015

Served on Governor appointed, Texas Diabetes Council. Term ending in 2015

Served on behalf of Superintendent of Schools for Dallas ISD as a member of the United Way Charting the Course Steering Committee

Hunger Center Advisory Council, North Texas Food Bank Hunger Center, Research and Grants Division. Term ended.

Review Panel. Guide for school nutrition (SN) directors to administer the middle/junior high student surveys. The National

Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division
(NFSMI, ARD) 2012

Texas Association for School Nutrition Past President Advisory
Board. 2015-2016.

School Nutrition Association. Past President Advisory Council Chair.
2015-2017.