
Approval to Award Food Management Services Contract

Background:

The District utilizes a non-national school lunch program model in which meals are prepared off-site and delivered daily for students. This model allows the District to provide meal service while managing operational efficiency, staffing, equipment limitations, and overall program costs.

In February, the Administration conducted a review of its contracted service providers. The data returned on our lunch program revealed that a change in vendors was necessary.

Request for Proposals:

The District began a comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP) process in March. As part of the evaluation process, the administration used a comprehensive review approach to gather feedback from multiple stakeholder groups and to evaluate both operational capacity and meal quality.

The review process included:

- A student, parent, and administrative food tasting committee to evaluate meal quality, presentation, variety, and overall student appeal;
- Interviews with prospective vendors to review program philosophy, customer service expectations, staffing support, communication practices, and operational procedures;
- Site visits to other school districts and/or operational locations currently served by the vendors to observe service quality, meal presentation, and day-to-day program operations; and
- A formal review of proposal submissions, including pricing structures, menu offerings, references, responsiveness to specifications, and overall alignment with District goals.

In addition, the administration conducted reference checks with school districts currently utilizing the recommended provider to review performance history, service reliability, responsiveness, and overall satisfaction with the program.

Following the review process, the Facilities Committee recommended awarding the contract to **Quest Food Management Services**. Administration believes Quest is the best fit for Benjamin 25 based on the program's logistical management and price point. Quest will service the District through its West Chicago High School operation. Quest's program will streamline operations through the [MySchoolQUEST](#) online platform, which will provide families with monthly menus, ingredient information, and nutritional details. The system will also reduce administrative workload by eliminating many current point-of-sale and meal tracking responsibilities.

Under the proposed agreement, the District will be charged a per-meal rate of \$4.86, which includes a beverage and staffing support at both school buildings. The Facilities Committee recommended, and the Finance Committee supported, establishing a student meal price of \$4.50 per meal, with the District subsidizing the remaining cost to help support families and encourage participation.

Recommendation:

The Administration recommends approval of the proposed Food Management Services contract for the District's vended meal program to Quest Food Management Services. Administration believes the enhanced meal quality, ingredient selection, variety, and portion sizes will significantly improve the student dining experience and increase participation in the District's lunch program.