

## Department Report: Nutrition Services

### **Financial Standing**

The Nutrition Services Department is required to be a self-supporting department and does not receive funds from the District's General Fund, although our services and mission are supported by the district in various other ways.

Last school year Nutrition Services received additional revenue in the form of USDA Supply Chain Assistance Funds and through a temporary increase in meal reimbursements rates. We also experienced a reduction in labor costs due to difficulties hiring staff. The largest portion of the Nutrition Services budget goes towards labor. This increase in revenue and decrease in costs has contributed to an excess of funds in the Nutrition Services' operating budget.

School Nutrition Program Sponsors are not allowed to maintain more than three months of operating expenses on hand for an extended period. Sponsors with excess operating funds must submit a spend down plan to the Oregon Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs. BSD Nutrition Services' approved spend down plan assigns the largest portion of excess funds to enhancing site staffing levels. This school year we have added 25 positions above the staffing level we ended with last school year. Expected labor related costs including step raises and COLAs were accounted for in the spend down plan.

Our food and supply costs increased on average 10% over last year's contract pricing, and this is the next largest portion of the spend down plan. Remaining funds will be spent on replacing kitchen equipment such as milk coolers and warmers, replacing point of sale computers, and purchasing seasonal or local foods to enhance menu offerings.

Meal prices were not raised this year due to the excess funds available. However, to meet USDA Nonprogram Food Revenue requirements, prices for a la carte items, including individual milk, were raised this school year. Meal pricing for next school year will be reviewed in the spring.

### **Participation: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) & School Breakfast Program (SBP)**

The two primary programs the Nutrition Services Department is responsible for are the School Breakfast and Lunch programs that are available at all school buildings in the district. After a significant increase in participation in school year 2021-22 when all students were offered free breakfast and lunch, our participation last year returned to pre-pandemic numbers as we resumed traditional counting and claiming of meals.

To consider the decrease in enrollment we also look at participation percentages, and the participation percentage increased last year. That increase is likely related to electing the Community Eligibility Provision Incentive program at 15 eligible schools and extending free meal eligibility for more students through the Oregon Expanded Income Guidelines incentive programs that is part of the Student Success Act. This school year our participation percentage continues to increase, with 12.5% of students participating in breakfast and 40.39% of students participating in lunches through the beginning of November.

**Belong. Believe. Achieve.**

**Participation:**

	SY 2018-19	SY 2019-20	SY 2020-21	SY 2021-22	SY 2022-23
Breakfast Meals #	782,689	693,707	1,012,474	980,367	764,480
Breakfast % Participation	10.39%	10.26%*	15.72%†	15.04%‡	11.38%
Lunch Meals	2,725,073	1,978,722	1,075,314	3,154,032	2,483,000
Lunch % Participation	36.09%	36.10%*	16.78%†	48.38%‡	38.23%
Total Meals	3,507,762	2,672,429	2,087,788	4,134,399	3,247,480

\* Through March 13, 2020

† Remote and Hybrid Learning

‡ Universal Free Meals

**Free and Reduced Meal Eligibility**

The Community Eligibility Provision Incentive program that provides free breakfast and lunches without requiring applications is offered in 15 schools in the district. Schools are eligible for Community Eligibility Provision by having at least 40% of students directly certified for free meal benefits through alternate means such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), Migrant or Homeless. Nutrition Services grouped schools together to meet the 40% requirement. Due to the addition of pre-K classes at some of our Community Eligibility Provision schools we re-evaluated our grouping in spring of school year 2022-23 and were able to add two schools to our existing Community Eligibility Provision group. We will re-evaluate the group again this spring due to combining Raleigh Hills and Greenway. The Community Eligibility Provision schools are: Aloha Huber Park K-8, Barnes, Beaver Acres, Chehalem, Fir Grove, Greenway, Hazeldale, Kinnaman, McKay, McKinley, Meadow Park MS, Merlo Community School, Mountain View MS, Vose and William Walker.

The State of Oregon applied for and was selected as one of 14 states to take part in an expansion of the USDA's Direct Certification with Medicaid Demonstration Project for school year 2023-24. The program was implemented in September and all students who were approved for Medicaid over the last few years have been directly certified for free meals through the pilot program. This has increased our direct certification numbers and may increase the number of schools eligible to take part in the Community Eligibility Provision Incentive program next year.

Nutrition Services continues to approve free meals for individual students who are eligible under federal income guidelines for free and reduced school meals. Additionally, for families whose income is between 185% and 300% of the federal poverty level, free meal eligibility is available through Oregon Expanded Income Guidelines. There are currently 900 students eligible for free meals using the Expanded Income Guidelines program. Families are still required to apply for meal benefits using the federal application and are approved using the state income guidelines.

The overall free/reduced rate for the school district is 37.11% and the percentage of students who can access free meals through all methods is 46.15%.

### **Additional Meal Programs**

Besides breakfast and lunch meals available at all school buildings, we also sponsor the following meal programs throughout the school year and during the summer months:

#### **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**

Nutrition Services sponsors summer meal sites at parks, recreation centers and schools during the summer months. Meals through the Summer Food Service Program are available for all children ages 1–18 free of charge. Summer Food Service Programs may only be offered in locations where 50% or more of families are eligible for free or reduced meals.

Last summer we offered meals at twelve school sites and two Beaverton community locations: Beaverton City Park and THPRD Cedar Hills Park and Rec Center. Over 41,000 breakfasts and lunches were served to children ages 1–18 this past summer. We also partner with the Beaverton City Library and THPRD Nature Mobile to provide enrichment activities for children during summer meal services.

Oregon Department of Education Child Nutrition Program reviewed our summer program last year and noted only three minor items that were corrected the same day. We met or exceeded all other program requirements. The reviewer provided some additional feedback about their “excellent review experience at Beaverton SD.” They found that, “The site staff at Chehalem Elementary did a wonderful job! Meals look appealing and were packaged/prepared appropriately for age/grades served. Staff positively engage with students which reflected in positive student behavior.”

#### **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**

After-school supper meal programs are available through the Child and Adult Care Food Program for programs that provide after-school supervised enrichment and are in areas with at least 50% free and reduced eligibility. We currently provide supper meals for eight programs at seven locations and are planning for additional meal services to begin soon.

#### **Farm to Child Nutrition Programs (CNP)**

We are in the first year of the 2023-25 Farm to Child Nutrition Program grant. Beaverton School District was awarded \$140,308.61. With grant funds we have purchased a variety of fresh local produce including peaches, plums, Asian pears, grapes, and watermelon. We have also purchased locally made yakisoba noodles, granola, hummus, cheese and sausages. We will be featuring several additional locally made products in future months.

We have already spent our initial award of funds for this biennium, and that will allow us to apply for additional Farm to Child Nutrition Program funds as part of the competitive grant process. Only sponsors that have spent all their initial grant funds may apply for additional funds. Farm to Child Nutrition Programs funds allow us to support local growers and producers. The funding has enabled us to transition many menu items to locally made products that we continue to use regardless of the funding source.

### **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)**

William Walker, Vose and Barnes take part in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program by providing servings of fresh fruits or vegetables several times a week outside of the breakfast and lunch periods. Nutrition education is also provided as part of the program, and we are finalizing translations of all nutrition education materials into Spanish for the three program schools. We struggled to implement the program at all three locations last year due to staffing shortages, but with improved staffing this year we started the program at all three school sites this October.

### **Early Learning Programs (Preschool, Head Start and Pre-K)**

Nutrition Services provides age-appropriate meals for early learners at 14 district pre-K programs and Preschool Promise at Elmonica. We also provide vended meals for Head Start programs at three additional schools.

### **Staffing Update**

Hiring for open positions has improved dramatically this school year. We have hired 28 permanent employees since August 2023. We added additional positions to increase our school staffing levels and have been very successful hiring qualified candidates. We are also experiencing a higher retention rate of staff which has decreased turnover.

We still experience staffing shortages due to absences and leaves and are continually hiring substitutes. We have hired seven more substitute staff to our pool, and we added an additional Roving Assistant II position to assist with covering absences.

We maintain an ongoing partnership with the Community Transition Program (CTP) where we provide work internship opportunities for BSD students who are interested in pursuing employment in food service. This partnership provides support at some of our busier kitchens and important work experience for students.

### **Menu Updates**

Nutrition Services has made several updates to our menus this year. Once a month we designate a "Feature Entrée Friday" option that is either a seasonal or a farm to school item. Some of the featured items include Tillamook cheddar toasted cheese sandwiches, Zenner's bratwursts, BBQ pulled chicken sandwiches using locally made BBQ sauce, and coconut curry chicken over Umi Organic noodles. Several vegetarian and vegan options were added this year as regular items to the menu including chana masala, hummus cups, vegan burger patties, cheese quesadillas and veggie pizza.

We are updating our fruit and vegetable offerings to add variety and opportunities for students to customize their meals with flavorful accompaniments. We have transitioned away from tater tots and wedge potatoes to a roasted potato medley, as well as adding a roasted corn and bean salad to salad bars. We are piloting roasted vegetables and will be adding roasted broccoli, roasted carrots, and roasted cauliflower to the rotation of available hot sides. We offered a large variety of local fresh fruits on our salad bars this fall and are continuing to work with our vendors to provide additional variety through the winter months while still meeting Buy American requirements. Finally, we have updated our monthly treat offering at elementary schools to a fruit cup with a small amount of whipped topping instead of the traditional cookie treat. These changes have all been well received by students.

We continue to prioritize culturally relevant foods in the development of new menu options and are focusing on more plant-based proteins. We will be working on our menus for next school year starting in January and plan to do new recipe taste testing with students.



### **Nutrition Requirements**

USDA will publish the final rule “Child Nutrition Programs: Revisions to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans” in April. The changes expected include a proposed timeline to decrease added sugars in school meals, further reductions in sodium, and potential changes to milk and grain offerings. BSD Nutrition Services has been making incremental changes to our menus and ingredients to ensure we will be ahead of the proposed timelines while ensuring students find offered items acceptable.

We have already begun reducing added sugars in menu items. Some of the changes we have implemented to address added sugars this year include no longer offering chocolate milk at breakfast at any level, offering lower sugar breakfast cereal and no longer offering syrup with breakfast entrees at elementary or middle school. We have also indicated on our breakfast menus items that already meet the proposed added sugar guidelines for individual items. We will be making additional changes to the breakfast menus next school year and continue our transitioning to lower sugar items by incorporating more savory breakfast items.

Sodium reductions have been part of the nutrition updates since the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 and we meet current Target 1a sodium requirements for school year 2023-24. We have continued to adjust ingredients and menu offerings to meet the ongoing reductions. We have transitioned to lower sodium cheeses for nachos and macaroni and cheese. We have also selected lower sodium chicken items, potato products and gravies. Further changes will be made to slowly reduce sodium in ways that students will find acceptable.