



Sharon Williams, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**To:** RIMSD 41 Board of Education  
**From:** Dr. Sharon Williams  
Cabinet Champion: Beth MacKenna, Director of Nutrition Services (NWIL Coop)  
**Date:** September 23, 2025  
**Re:** Northwest Illinois School Food Cooperative

Last spring, the Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Department encouraged smaller school food cooperatives across the state to consider combining efforts in order to increase purchasing power and improve benefits. In response, the Northwest Illinois School Food Cooperative (NWIL Coop) was connected with the LaSalle County Area Purchasing Cooperative (LCAPC), which is operated by ROE 35.

The LCAPC currently includes 73 school districts, serving more than 40,000 students across 21 counties, and continues to expand each year. Like the NWIL Coop, they partner with Kohl Wholesale as their primary distributor.

The annual membership fee for LCAPC is \$500, but this fee will be waived for all new members joining in 2025–2026. The NWIL Coop treasury has sufficient funds to cover membership for two additional years. LCAPC's next bid cycle will occur during the 2026–2027 school year.

Working closely with Kohl Wholesale, we compared pricing between the two cooperatives. Kohl has agreed to honor the lowest bid price from either cooperative, ensuring that districts benefit from the most competitive pricing available. Currently, NWIL Coop represents approximately 25,000 students. By joining the LCAPC, our combined purchasing base would grow to more than 65,000 students. This expanded scale provides stronger negotiating leverage with vendors, ultimately maximizing cost savings for our district.

On September 9, 2025, the NWIL Coop voted in favor of disbanding our cooperative. It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the Nutrition Service Department to join the LaSalle County Cooperative.

**Investment Period:** July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026  
**Total Investment:** \$0 (first-year membership fee waived);  
**Funding Source:** N/A

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