

**School Board Meeting/Workshop:**

May 11, 2015

**Subject:**

**Food Service Program**

**Presenter:**

Marilyn Splinter

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**SUGGESTED SCHOOL BOARD ACTION:**

No action required.

**DESCRIPTION:**

Following is a summary of strategies used to bring expenses and revenue in closer alignment.

- Fifteen minute reduction in daily hours for school site staff. A reduction was not made when it would affect access to benefits or job category.
- Reduced staffing through attrition. If someone left the department, each vacancy was evaluated. Did we really need to fill the position? How can we adjust assignments and not fill the position? If position is posted, how many hours? Most postings were made for fewer hours than previously assigned. In May 2012, we had 51 staff assigned for 279.0 hours/day. We currently have 48 staff assigned for 255.5 hours/day.
- We revisited the “Great Trays” menu planning and production training provided by the Minnesota Department of Education and Department of Health, to help schools comply with the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act. The two-year training program was funded by a \$2,000,000 grant from the Center for Disease Control. The menu planning protocol greatly increased food and labor costs without a corresponding increase in participation or student satisfaction.
- We planned menus to maximize the use of USDA commodities and Minnesota School Buying Group (MSFBG) products. An example: Using Tyson all beef hot dogs, the MSFBG bid award for 2014-15, rather than the product previously used, was a cost avoidance of \$13,000.
- The primary vendor food buying guides were thoroughly updated and refined adding the 2014-15 MSFBG products, removing the 2013-14 awarded items and identifying the best value products to be used. Buying the ketchup awarded by MSFBG for 2014-15, rather than the one awarded for 2013-14, was a cost avoidance of \$3,000. Buying only the bowl pack cereal awarded by MSFBG was a cost avoidance of \$22/case.
- The BCMS menu plan was reorganized, utilizing many of the same sides on each line. This streamlined production, reduced waste and reduced time spent washing pots and pans.
- We evaluated any menu, or menu items, that were underperforming. If the kids were not eating it, we changed products, changed preparation procedures or changed menu items.

- We utilized Infinite Campus Messenger to send families reminders of low and negative meal account balances, Monday-Thursday. The messages help a great deal to minimize negative meal account balances. Previously we used the Blackboard Connect service.
- We initiated the use of Infinite Campus Messenger to contact just the students going on a field trip, letting them know they could order a bag lunch from food service and it would be at the student's usual price. We captured more meals than without the Infinite Campus contact. The eligibility of the students ordering meals was about half free/reduced and half paid.
- We discontinued the annual marketing and promotion allowance allocated to each school. The procedure was changed to approval upon request.
- We encouraged free, on-line continuing education rather than paying tuition. The contract has 16 hours/year plus the annual conference for another 13-15 hours. If a CEU costs about \$10.00 between the 16 hours/year and the state conference, the potential expenditure was \$14,400. The department will not be paying registration for staff to attend the 2015 Minnesota School Food Service Annual Conference. This is a cost avoidance of approximately \$7,000, between registration, mileage and parking.
- The state funded Kindergarten Breakfast has been a new source of revenue for the department. The schools with the greatest participation are Northwinds and Tatanka, where breakfast is part of the school day. The Kindergarten students come down as a class at Northwinds. Breakfast is served in the classroom at Tatanka.
- A USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) will be initiated at Discovery. Meals (breakfast and lunch) will be served Monday-Friday, June 8-August 28, 2015.
- In January, I started looking for additional programs that we could access that would bring new services to our students and revenue to the department. I researched Community Eligibility, which we do not qualify for, and that lead me to the Summer Food Service Program. In early March, I asked the staff at MDE Summer Food Service Program to help me find a way to qualify for the program. The same day they came back to me with the news that we had a census eligible site. It wasn't where I thought it might be. It was in the middle of the City of Buffalo, not in the south part of Wright County.
  - Census eligible Summer Food Service Program sites are approved for five (5) years.
  - The SFSP will be a benefit to all children, ages 1-18 in the Buffalo area. It will benefit the Food Service Department. It will benefit Community Education and KidKare, by removing the cost of meals from their summer budget. It will benefit a few district staff by providing additional employment opportunities during the summer.

- The SFSP will be staffed by the current Discovery Food Service Staff and a person from B/G Summer Help will be assigned to the cafeteria and kitchen. They will be funded by the SFSP.
- The potential expense and revenue will depend upon participation. We will adjust staffing according to the level of participation. The level of participation is expected to be highest during the Community Education Sunblock program.
- FirstBook and USDA have a partnership in that if you are a SFSP site, your application for membership in FirstBook will be automatically approved. FirstBook is a publishing industry and charity partnership providing members access to new books at a minimal cost and/or for the cost of shipping. Hosting reading activities at SFSP sites is highly encouraged.
- Second Harvest and the Vikings Children's Fund have grant money available to help with additional services and activities at the SFSP sites. An application was submitted to extend transportation after Sunblock through August 28, 2015 and to pay for books and shipping from FirstBook. The grant deadline was May 1, 2015. If we receive the grant, details will be worked out.
- Posters for SFSP, generic ones provided by USDA, are being lettered by volunteers with the Discovery Site information.
- Food Service was approached by a Boy Scout from Buffalo, asking how they might be involved as volunteers to work towards a Citizenship badge. This is in the thought process. Details have not been confirmed, but they may be a good resource for poster distribution in the community.
- An outreach plan is being developed. Further direction and guidance will be in place when the district's Communications Coordinator returns from leave.
- There is a lot to learn, try and revise in the first year with the first SFSP site.