

# DISTRICT 45

**Food Services Presentation**

**Board of Education**

**June 2, 2026**

## Why District 45 is discussing a food service change now

- The food service program District 45 has operated under since 2022 is set to expire June 30, 2026.
- In 2022, as the District recovered from COVID-19, continuing with the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) made sense at that time.
- The District must decide how to proceed while maintaining financial responsibility.

## What is CEP? Why are District 45 Schools on this program?

- The Community Eligibility Provision, or CEP, is a federal program that allows eligible schools to serve free meals to all students without collecting individual meal applications.
- Instead of reimbursing District 45 based on each student's application, the federal government estimates reimbursement using a school's percentage of directly certified students, including students who qualify through SNAP, Medicaid, foster care, homelessness or other programs.
- CEP can work well financially for schools with high levels of student need because the reimbursement rate may cover most meal costs.
- That is why schools such as York Center, Schafer, Stevenson and North appear financially favorable in the district's modeling, with free eligibility rates ranging from 88% to 100%.

## What is Provision 2? Why are District 45 Schools NOT on this program?

- Provision 2 is another federal meal option that allows students to receive free meals.
- However, reimbursement is calculated differently than it is under CEP.
- Under Provision 2, a “base year” is established, and meal-claiming percentages are locked in for several years.
- The District then uses those historical ratios instead of CEP’s direct certification formula.
- In practice, Provision 2 can sometimes create a better reimbursement structure for schools that are in the economic middle range — not high enough in student need for strong CEP funding, but still serving many students who need assistance.

## Why not charge the families who can afford to pay for food?

### Financial and operational challenges:

- Elementary schools have only 20 minutes set aside for lunch.
- Charging students would require individual students to enter their payment or ID information before receiving food, which could leave some students with only about 10 minutes to eat.
- As a result, the district would likely need to hire additional lunchroom supervisors to monitor students who are still eating.

### Legal challenges:

- Legally, students who don't have enough funds are still required to be fed a complete meal.
- Districts comparable in size to District 45 have annual unpaid lunch balances approximately \$100,000-\$200,000 per year.

# What is the Proposal for the 2026-2027 School Year?

- North, Schafer, Stevenson, York Center, and Jefferson will remain on the CEP program
- Ardmore, Westmore, and Jackson will transition to Provision 2
- Expenditures are based on average meal price of \$2.00 for breakfast and \$3.75 for lunch.

Program	Estimated Meals	Proposed Revenues	Proposed Expenditures	Projected Profit/Loss
All Schools on CEP	563,760	\$2,039,748	\$2,133,831	<b>\$-94,084</b>
CEP and Provision 2	563,760	\$2,232,139	\$2,133,831	<b>\$98,307</b>

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**Questions?**

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All Schools on NSLP	563,760	\$2,484,932	\$2,133,831	<b>\$157,260</b>