

DEPARTMENT UPDATE: NUTRITION SERVICES

OVERVIEW

The Nutrition Services Department operates the child nutrition programs sponsored by the Beaverton School District. Information is provided on financial standing, staffing updates, meal participation and Oregon Department of Education administrative reviews. Updates on menus and nutrition requirements are reviewed, along with a summary of each separate program the department oversees.

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION – NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NSLP) & SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM (SBP)

Last year the USDA made a change to the eligibility requirements for the Community Eligibility Provision program which provides free meals for all students in a school, group of schools or districtwide. The Community Eligibility Provision program relies on eligibility information from income-based benefit programs such as SNAP, TANF and Medicaid. Districtwide we met the revised 25% eligibility requirement so all schools can offer free meals to enrolled students this year. Under Community Eligibility Provision we no longer accept meal eligibility applications, removing a significant barrier for many families to access free meals.

Community Eligibility Provision is typically a four-year agreement, but reassessment is required if there are significant changes to a school population such as the addition of pre-K or boundary adjustments. In anticipation of planned changes, we assembled two groups of schools. One of the groups will be re-assessed this year and will easily meet the required eligibility percentage to continue offering free meals. The reimbursement funding for meals comes primarily from the USDA and the remainder comes from Oregon’s Student Success Act funding. Without the additional Student Success Act funds, we would not be able to provide meals under the Community Eligibility Provision.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM PARTICIPATION:

	SY 2021-22*	SY 2022-23	SY 2023-24	SY 2024-25*†
Breakfast Meals #	980,367	764,480	893,667	466,373
Breakfast % Participation	15.04%	11.38%	14.06%	21.20%
Lunch Meals #	3,154,032	2,483,000	2,680,739	1,203,674
Lunch % Participation	48.38%	38.23%	41.83%	53.48%
Total Meals	4,134,399	3,247,480	3,574,406	1,670,047

* Free meals for all students

† Through November 30, 2024 (61 days)

Belong. Believe. Achieve.

Beaverton School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on any basis protected by law, including but not limited to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national or ethnic origin, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, familial status, economic status, veteran status, or because of a perceived or actual association with any other persons within these protected classes.

With the implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision, we have seen a notable increase in participation that has exceeded expectations. This year so far, there has been a 66% increase in breakfast participation and a 33% increase in lunch participation compared to last year through November 30. We estimate we will serve approximately 4.7 million meals by the end of the year.

It is also of note that the participation of our directly certified students (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid eligible) has increased by 13%. One of the main benefits of the Community Eligibility Provision outside of streamlining paperwork and removing barriers for families, is reducing stigma around school meal participation.

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. The Summer Food Service Program may also be used in the event of unexpected school closures to provide meals to children.

Last summer we offered meals at 13 school sites and two Beaverton community locations: Beaverton City Park and THPRD Cedar Hills Park and Rec Center. Participation increased by 19% compared to the previous year and we served just over 49,000 breakfasts and lunches to children ages 1-18. We also partner with the Beaverton City Library and THPRD Nature Mobile to provide enrichment activities for children during summer meal services.

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 were able to start middle school supper programs earlier this school year and we currently provide supper meals for 16 programs at 15 locations.

Farm to Child Nutrition Programs (CNP)

We applied for a competitive Farm to Child Nutrition Program grant this summer and received \$150,000 to provide locally grown, produced or processed items. With the funding we have purchased local grapes from Vial Family Farms, local apples from Bells Orchards as well as locally grown watermelon, plums, peaches, and Asian pears. We have also purchased Tillamook cheddar cheese, Better Bean hummus, MOB Sauce coconut curry sauce and Oregon Hills Farm marionberry huckleberry syrup.

We worked with Pacific Seafood to procure locally raised and processed steelhead and are looking forward to bringing in Oregon-harvested pink shrimp later this year. We are also planning to use Zenner's sausages, other locally made sauces and resume using Umi Noodles once their production is up and running after their operations were impacted by a fire last year.



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

William Walker, Vose and Barnes continue to 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 being provided in the form of an electronic monthly newsletter that is shared with teachers and parents.

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

Nutrition Services provides age-appropriate meals for early learners at all district pre-K programs, Preschool Promise at Elmonica, and CAIRO pre-K at Errol Hassell. We also provide vended meals for a Head Start program at Terra Linda.

STAFFING UPDATE

Due to the increase in participation, we have added 18 permanent positions and hired over 36 staff so far this year. We still experience staffing shortages due to absences and leaves and are continually hiring substitutes. We have hired five more substitute staff to our pool.

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 school kitchens on the west side of the district and is important work experience for students.

MENU UPDATES

Nutrition Services continues to offer a “Feature Entrée Friday” the third week of each month. This year we have focused on providing locally sourced items and culturally relevant options for our “Feature Fridays.” Some of the featured items we have served or are planning for this year include [pupusas](#), steelhead with marionberry huckleberry glaze, vegetarian dumplings, shrimp “ceviche,” mango curry chicken, chicken shawarma, and teriyaki steelhead with fried rice.

We have regularly added the following items to menus several times over the course of the year: green chile and cheese tamales, chicken katsu, coconut curry chicken, chana masala, Philly beef sandwiches, and three bean chili. We continue to look for more vegetarian entrée options and will have students testing a vegan taco filling and falafel in the next few weeks.

Breakfast menus have been updated slightly this year with the addition of some savory options. Over the next year we will be adjusting breakfast menus further to meet the requirements of the USDA’s final rule published in April 2024, [“Child Nutrition Programs: Revisions to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.”](#) We already meet most of the updated requirements, but we will need to adjust our breakfast offerings to achieve the 10% added sugars weekly limit requirement.

As part of focusing on meals for all students we have also discontinued a la carte snack sales at middle schools this year. This has been well received by school administrators and has reduced behavior concerns during the lunch period.

FINANCIAL STANDING UPDATE

The Nutrition Services Department is required to maintain self-supporting status. Under USDA rules we are allowed to have three months of operating expenses on hand. Currently we have an excess operating fund balance and will be working to spend down those funds of the course of this year to meet the three-month requirement. Some of the ways we will be using those excess funds are additional staff positions, covering contracted salary and benefit increases, updating computers, and replacing aging

dishwashers in six schools. We will also need to cover increased food costs later this year as we expect to run out of commodity items due to increased participation.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

The Oregon Department of Education reviews all program sponsors every three years and Beaverton's National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program were reviewed last December. There were a few minor corrective actions and no recoverable financial findings. The reviewer's commendations included the following:

"Thank you for all of the work you do to support the School Nutrition Program. The state agency's team enjoyed working with Beaverton School District staff while onsite during the Administrative Review as they were prepared, organized, informative, and easy to work with. Staff were gracious and expedited responses to the state agency's documentation requests.

School and kitchen staff are well trained and their positive attitudes are reflected in the students they serve."

This year the state begins a new three-year review cycle and Beaverton has been selected again for an administrative review. Oregon Department of Education will be on-site in April for that review.

WELLNESS COORDINATOR

The Nutrition Services Department added a Program Specialist – Wellness Coordinator position to our department. The wellness coordinator, Kayla Petersen, will be responsible for ensuring we meet wellness requirements that are part of the USDA's Health Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 which includes maintaining a wellness policy, facilitating a wellness policy team to revise the policy regularly and reviewing the policy implementation every three years. The position will act as a point of contact for topics that relate to the wellness policy and provide support and resources for schools and departments to engage with wellness topics.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

We will be paying close attention to any changes or adjustments to the meal programs that may be proposed by the incoming federal administration. We will also be monitoring how policy changes may impact the cost of food, service items and equipment. Any increases to costs this year will impact our spend down plan. We will be able to absorb cost increases in the near term, but ongoing increases may affect staffing levels and menu offerings.

Locally there is continued support for "[School Meals for All](#)" in Oregon and there is ongoing advocacy for increasing state funds so all schools in Oregon can provide free breakfast and lunch. Staff from Nutrition Services will be attending the School Nutrition Association's Legislative Action Conference in Washington D.C. in March to meet with legislators and advocate for all the meal programs that support our students.