



METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NUTRITION SERVICES

The Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Nutrition Services Department participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Menus are planned to be consistent with the nutrition standards established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for both of these programs. These nutrition standards are based on the recommendations provided by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and emphasizes a diet that includes a variety of vegetables from all subgroups; fresh fruits; whole-grains; low-fat dairy products; lean proteins in addition to limiting foods which are high in saturated and trans fats, added sugars, and sodium.

Our menus feature multiple choices of fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and whole-grain products daily. Students have access to potable water at both breakfast and lunch by either a water fountain, dispenser, or disposable cups. Low-fat and fat-free milk is offered to students daily. The chocolate and strawberry flavored milks are fat-free and are specially formulated to reduce the sugar content to 18 grams per 8 fluid ounces. Recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine regarding flavored milk suggest a limit of 22 grams of sugar per 8 fluid ounces of milk. With a sugar content of 18 grams per 8 fluid ounces, the Nutrition Services Department is offering a product that is below the suggested amount and in alignment with the Institute of Medicine's recommendation. Calories for both breakfast and lunch menus continue to be closely monitored in addition to several key nutrients including sodium, total fat, saturated fat, and trans fat.

All of our menu items are oven baked or steamed. Fryers were removed from all high schools by the beginning of school year 2013-

2014 and the remaining fryers were removed from all middle and elementary schools by school year 2014-2015. Equipment upgrades are occurring on a continual basis to improve the quality of our foods and the efficiency of our kitchens. All schools follow a three-week menu cycle that is developed and planned by the District Chef and Coordinator of Nutrition Education & Training. Menu items are prepared by Nutrition Services staff using standardized recipes to ensure nutrient standards and portion sizes are controlled. Foods and beverages sold a-la-carte to all grade levels are required to meet the standards established by the Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines and include specific ingredient standards in addition to nutrient limits involving calories, sodium, fat, and sugar. Foods and beverages available for purchase in school vending machines are also required to meet the Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines. Additional information regarding the wellness environment of all MNPS schools can be found in the District Wellness Policy.

Continuous efforts are being made by our department to coordinate the program to help decrease and prevent obesity among our student population. All food products that are currently available to schools are reviewed by our Coordinator of Nutrition Education & Training for compliance with federal regulations. Products are tested with students for acceptability prior to being added to either the breakfast or the lunch menus. The Nutrition Coordinator and District Chef collaborate with food industry representatives to offer the newest, high quality products that meet program standards. In addition to this, USDA provides entitlement funds annually that allows the Nutrition Services Department to purchase USDA Foods for use in our programs. Some of these items are processed into products utilized within our recipes and menus. School year 2018-2019, Nutrition Services introduced a Philly beef filling; an all-natural, 100% beef, limited ingredient product that is procured and processed with USDA entitlement dollars.

Nutrition Services recognizes the diverse food preferences of MNPS students and we are now offering a vegetarian option at lunch daily to assist in meeting the wide range of student tastes. While peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and grilled cheese are traditional meatless menu options, Nutrition Services is searching for more unique meat alternate menu items for students. In school year 2018-

2019, falafel, a traditional Middle Eastern food made from chickpeas and spices, was added to the lunch menu. Falafel is a versatile ingredient and allows for creativity in various recipes. It is featured on two menu days in the three-week cycle menu with plans to increase the number of times it is offered as the item becomes more popular among students.

Sodium restrictions require cafés to be creative when seasoning foods. Nutrition Services includes low-sodium bases, salt-free seasonings, spices, and herbs in our recipes to limit the amount of salt that is added to food items. In school year 2017-2018, “Flavor Stations” were introduced to all cafés that served students in grades 5-12. These stations feature stainless steel canisters that offer low-sodium and salt-free dry seasonings and allow students to add extra flavor to their lunch. Flavor Stations feature flavors such as buffalo, ranch, garlic & herb, nacho cheese, and Southwest chipotle. They are conveniently located on the serving line providing students to season their food prior to leaving the serving line.

Emphasis has been placed on procuring foods identified as “cleaner label” products. To date, the district offers a no antibiotic ever bone-in chicken and a 100% beef hamburger patty to all grade levels. These products are featured on the menu at least twice per month. As new cleaner label products are introduced in the K-12 food industry, they will be evaluated for quality and student acceptability for the purpose of being included on the monthly menu.

The Nutrition Services Department has partnerships with the MNPS Coordinated School Health Program, Community Food Advocates, TSU Extension, Trevecca Nazarene University Urban Farm and Garden, and the Alignment Nashville School Nutrition A-Team. All of these collaborative partners provide support to bring about healthier changes in our schools’ food environment.

In November 2015, Nutrition Services was awarded funds through the Farm to School Grant Program. This grant program is intended to integrate nutrition education and practice at seven target schools: Casa Azafran Early Learning Center, Fall Hamilton Elementary,

Glengarry Elementary, Glenview Elementary, Park Avenue Elementary, Rosebank Elementary, and Wright Middle School. Grant program goals are being met through a network of established and targeted community partners, creating a pilot to replicate throughout the district. As part of this grant program, Nutrition Services identifies sources of locally grown food, procures it, and promotes this initiative to both schools and communities. Beginning in school year 2016-2017, three local produce items were procured through our produce vendor, McCartney Produce. Green bell peppers, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes offered by McCartney Produce meet the definition of local produce. To date, these three produce items continue to be offered throughout all MNPS cafés. Key partners in the grant planning process are the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Alignment Nashville, Community Food Advocates, Green Door Gourmet, Nashville Grown, Josh Corlew/ Nashville Urban Farmer, and University of Tennessee Extension. These Key community partners assist Nutrition Services by providing nutrition education activities and resources to MNPS students and the community. Cooking demonstrations and farm field trips are just a few examples of the activities these partners have organized.

USDA's Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program is another supplemental program offered by the Nutrition Services Department to elementary schools. This program introduces students to a variety of fruits and vegetables to which they may not otherwise have access and is intended to improve present and future eating habits of children. An educational component to connect the featured fruit or vegetable and the benefits of eating this food is included to strengthen the learning experience. In school year 2018-2019, a total of 30 elementary schools were awarded this program.

The Nutrition Services Department works with local universities to provide field experience for students in dietetic internship programs. These students are given the opportunity to observe the school nutrition program and how it relates to the school district. Students shadow the Coordinator of Nutrition Education & Training and participate in trainings/activities to gain a greater understanding of the role school nutrition plays in the total education program. The Coordinator of Nutrition Education & Training also provides nutrition lectures and nutrition education activities to MNPS students at the

request of school faculty. The field experience dietetic students obtain during their rotation with Nutrition Services is intended to encourage them to consider pursuing a career in school nutrition.

In school year 2017-2018, a total of 45 schools received the Bronze Award for Healthier U.S. School Challenge: Smarter Lunchroom. This award recognizes the collaborative efforts of school staff and Nutrition Services to create a culture of wellness within the school environment while meeting the guidelines for nutrition standards and physical activity. Cafés receive a monetary award to be used towards improving the nutrition program at the school, a plaque, and a banner to display in the café. Certification lasts for five years and all certifications for MNPS will last through the year 2022 or 2023. The Healthier U.S. School Challenge: Smarter Lunchroom was discontinued on June 30, 2018 and schools are no longer able to apply for this award.

The USDA established minimum annual training hour requirements for all school nutrition professionals in July 2015. In order to ensure all staff receive the proper amount of training, our department provides continual training to all staff throughout the school year. Nutrition Services works closely with the Metro Health department to meet required food safety standards and we offer ServSafe training courses to our café management staff. In October 2018 the Nutrition Services department will provide a 16-hour ServSafe training to all Café Managers and Cluster Leads. Upon completion of the course, all of these individuals will be ServSafe Certified and knowledgeable of essential food safety practices. Certification lasts five years and counts towards the required professional standards training hours.

For the last four years, MNPS has participated in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This provision allowed all students enrolled in our schools to be provided breakfast and lunch at no cost. In 2018, the District was required to reapply for participation in the program. Based on changing eligibility factors, MNPS is no longer eligible to participate in CEP system-wide and cannot offer lunch at no cost to all students at every school. We will continue to provide breakfast at no cost to all students in all schools and we will offer CEP to those schools that are eligible. For schools that are not

eligible for CEP, free and reduced-price meal applications are available to any family wishing to apply for free/reduced meal benefits. Additional information can be found on the MNPS website, www.mnps.org.

We hope that you will always make the school cafeteria the first choice for your child's breakfast and lunch every day.

Visit the Nutrition Services Department website for a complete program description, wellness policy, menus and nutritional information, and many other informative resources. The Nutrition Services Department website can be found at the following link: <http://mnpsnutritionservices.org/>.

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