



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 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 or dispenser. School year 2016-2017, Nutrition Services Department began offering pre-packaged 4-ounce water cups to students at no cost. 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 school nutrition 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, 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. Snack foods sold a-la-carte to all grade levels meet the standards established by the

Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines. Foods and beverages sold a-la-carte are required to meet specific ingredient standards in addition to nutrient limits involving calories, sodium, fat, and sugar. Nutrition education material is posted throughout the café to promote healthy eating habits and lifestyles.

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 lunch program. The Coordinator of Nutrition Education collaborates with Food Industry representatives to offer the newest, high quality products that meet program standards. In addition to this, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides entitlement funds annually which 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.

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 clean 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, School Gardens committee, Alignment Nashville School Nutrition Working committee, School Food Focus and the Chef Ann Foundation. All of these collaborative partners provide support to bring about healthier changes in our schools’ food environment. As a department, we continue to seek the support of our Board in strengthening the competitive foods policy. Competitive foods are defined as foods sold in schools in competition with the USDA school meal programs: school breakfast and lunch. The operation of vending machines should not be allowed during the serving time of any school meal. Venders in our local schools can make a positive impact on students’ eating habits by placing healthier options in our vending machines that meet the established nutritional standards.

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. In school year 2016-2017, three local produce items have been procured through our produce vendor, McCartney Produce. Green bell peppers, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes offered by McCartney Produce meet the definition of local produce. Key partners in the grant planning process are the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Alignment Nashville, Green Door Gourmet, Nashville Farmers Market, Nashville Grown, Josh Corlew/Nashville Urban Farmer, Plant the Seed, University of Tennessee Extension, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center Dietetic Internship Students. These partners assist Nutrition Services by providing nutrition education activities and resources to MNPS students and the community. Cooking demonstrations, farm field trips, and plate waste studies are just a few examples of the activities these partners have organized.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. In an effort to increase our breakfast program participation we are now offering breakfast in the classroom. Since its introduction, this program has had great success and more children are eating breakfast at their specified locations. As of school year 2016-2017, a total of 61 schools participate in the breakfast in the classroom program. This program is available to all elementary and middle schools in the district.

USDA's Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program is another supplemental program offered by the Nutrition Services Department. 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 required as well. As of school year 2016-2017, a total of 31 elementary schools were awarded this program. The Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program is available to all elementary schools that apply.

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. Many of the dietetic interns assist with the Nutrition Walk; an educational activity that can be used in all grade levels to broaden students' knowledge of the importance of healthy eating habits. 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 2016-2017, a total of 91 schools received the Bronze Award for Healthier US 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 nutritional 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.

This department provides on-going nutrition services training for all employees and works closely with the Metro Health department to meet required food safety standards. In 2014, cafeteria managers completed a 10-hour ServSafe course and are all ServSafe Certified. The USDA established minimum annual training hours in July 2015. These training standards apply to all Nutrition Services staff, including central office staff.

The Nutrition Services Department began participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in the 2014-2015 school year. This provision allows all students enrolled in our schools to be provided breakfast and lunch at no cost. The 2017-2018 school year is the final year of this pilot program. Dependent upon legislation allowing the continuation of CEP, MNPS Nutrition Services intends to reassess the impact CEP has made on student participation and the financial integrity of the department.

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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