

NUTRITION UPDATES

The Nutrition Department would like to take a few minutes of your time to give you some highlights of our Department and the changes you may have noticed with the breakfast and lunch programs at your school due to the Federal regulations governed by the USDA. These regulations are very involved and control every aspect and decision made by the Department.

A little known fact of school meal programs is the program is to operate financially independent of the school district. The Nutrition Department receives all of its funding from federal reimbursement for the traditional school meals as well as the funds we collect through ala carte sales. The department then pays all of our expenses to include labor, benefits, equipment repairs/replacement and supplies from the funds we receive from our sales. By having a financially independent nutrition department it allows the District's general fund dollars to be focused on a strong educational environment.

Because we are self-funded the supplies (spoons, napkins, condiments, etc.) we have at the schools are for the students who are purchasing meals from the Nutrition Department. For us to supply them to the entire District at no-charge we would either have to raise our meal prices or have money transferred from the general fund. We appreciate your support of this by sending your students with the items they need for their meals brought from home.

Three major changes to the meal program this year are:

- At breakfast a student is required to take $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetable or a combination of the two that equals $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and that 1 cup must be offered. We realize that not all students desire a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving of fruit or vegetable for breakfast; this is a requirement of program and the child must take the item as part of the complete meal.
- At lunch all condiments (referred to in the program as accompaniments) have to be included in the nutrient analysis of the meal items (ketchup, mustard and mayo for a hamburger or ranch dressing with the salad) and must meet the fat, sodium, sugar limits of the program. Because of this regulation accompaniments are pre-packaged and limited in the quantity a student may have with their meal.
- "Smart Snacks" is the next regulation that has impacted not only the nutrition programs but the school vending and fund raisers. This regulation requires that all items sold on a school campus during the school day meet set levels of calories, sodium and fat. This regulation also requires that the first ingredient be from one of the four following items: whole grain, fruit, vegetable or protein.

We appreciate your understanding and support of our program as we continue to work within the regulation set by the USDA.

If you have any questions over the Nutrition program please feel free to contact me at mcd-h@d49.org or 719-495-1106.

Regards,

Monica Deines-Henderson

Director, Nutrition Services

