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Nutrition and Food Services Program

Meal Applications and Eligibility for School Meals

As a sponsor of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, the District will provide free and reduced-price breakfasts and lunches to students who qualify in accordance with the programs.

The District will distribute the Letter to Households and the Child Nutrition Eligibility and Education Benefit Application to all student households at the beginning of each school year. If a parent or guardian of a student needs assistance with application materials in a language other than English, the District will offer appropriate assistance to that parent or guardian. The District will protect the student's identity and the confidentiality and disclosure of the data on a Child Nutrition Eligibility and Education Benefit application.

At least monthly, the District will directly certify students for free school meals if the students qualify because of enrollment in assistance programs, including but not limited to the supplemental nutrition assistance program, the temporary assistance for needy families, and Medicaid.

The District and its school staff will work to improve systems for identifying homeless students, students in out-of-home care, runaway students, and migrant students to ensure that each student has proper access to free school meals and that applicable accountability and reporting requirements are satisfied.

Meal Patterns and Menu Planning

The District will follow the USDA meal patterns for the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Smart Snacks in School standards for all food and beverages sold to students on school campus during the school day.

Community Eligibility Provision

Each school with an Identified Student Percentage (ISP) of at least 40% must participate in the USDA CEP and offer meals at no cost to all students.

To the extent practicable, the District will group schools to maximize the number of schools eligible to participate in the CEP.

The Identified Student Percentage (ISP) is calculated by dividing the number of Identified Students, students categorically eligible for free school meals by direct certification or in other ways, by the total enrollment.

Breakfast After the Bell

Each high-needs school shall offer breakfast after the bell to each student and provide adequate time for students to consume the offered food. Schools that are not obligated by state law to offer breakfast after the bell are encouraged to do so.

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High-needs schools with at least 70% of free or reduced-price eligible children participating in both school lunch and school breakfast are exempt from the requirements of the paragraph above. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction will evaluate individual participation rates annually.

Each high-needs school and the District may determine the breakfast after the bell service model that best suits its students. Service models include, but are not limited to, the following: breakfast in the classroom; grab-and-go breakfast; and second-chance breakfast. All breakfasts served in a breakfast after the bell program must comply with chapter 28A.235 RCW and federal meal patterns and nutrition stands for school breakfast programs under the federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, as well as any federal regulations implementing that act.

When choosing foods to serve for a breakfast after the bell program, schools must give preference to foods that are healthful and fresh, and if feasible, give preference to Washington-grown food.

For this program, the following definitions shall apply:

- “Breakfast after the bell” means a breakfast that is offered to students after the beginning of the school day. Examples of breakfast after the bell models include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - “Grab-and-go,” in which easy-to-eat breakfast foods are available for students to take at the start of the school day or in between morning classes;
 - “Second-chance breakfast,” in which breakfast foods are available during recess, a nutrition break, or later in the morning, for students who are not hungry first thing in the morning, or who arrive late to school; and
 - “Breakfast in the classroom,” where breakfast is served in the classroom, often during homeroom or first period.
- “Eligible for free or reduced-price meals” means a student who is eligible under the national school lunch program or school breakfast program to receive lunch or breakfast at no cost to the student or at a reduced cost to the student.
- “High-needs school” means any public school that:
 - has enrollment of 70% or more students eligible for free or reduced-price meals in the prior school year; or
 - is using provision two of the National School Lunch Act or the CEP to provide universal meals and that has a free claiming percentage of 70% or more.
- “Public school” has the same meaning as provided in RCW 28A.150.010.
- “School breakfast program” means a program meeting federal requirements under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1773.

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- “School lunch program” means a program meeting federal requirements under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1751.
- “Instructional hours” means those hours students are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activity planned by and under the direction of school district staff, as directed by the administration and the Superintendent, inclusive of intermissions for class changes, recess, and teacher/parent-guardian conferences that are planned and scheduled by the District for the purpose of discussing students’ educational needs or progress, and exclusive of time actually spent for meals. If students are provided the opportunity to engage in an educational activity that is part of the regular instructional program concurrently with the consumption of breakfast, the period designated for student participation in breakfast after the bell must be considered instruction hours.

Mealtimes

The District will set mealtimes to allow breakfast to be served as close to the start of the school day as possible (except the Breakfast After the Bell program, above) and lunch to be served between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The length of the meal period will allow enough time for students to be served and eat a complete meal as well as take care of personal hygiene needs. The Superintendent or designee will periodically monitor district schools for progress in implementing these provisions to the extent appropriate and feasible.

Food Safety Plan

The District will establish a Food Safety Plan based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points. Because of the potential liability of the District, the food services program will not accept donations of food other than as provided in this policy without District approval. Should the District approve a food donation, the superintendent or designee shall establish inspection and handling procedures for the food and determine that the provisions of all state and local laws have been met before selling the food as part of the school lunch menu.

Meal Pricing

The Superintendent or designee shall determine paid meal prices annually and for the National School Lunch Program and follow Paid Lunch Equity regulations.

Adult meal prices shall be set to allow teachers, administrators, and parents to demonstrate their support for school meal programs by occasionally eating with students. The price must be the price charged to students paying the full meal price plus the value of federal reimbursement for paid meals and the USDA Food Value.

USDA Foods

The District will use the full entitlement of USDA Foods made available under the Federal Food Distribution Program for school meal programs.

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Non-Profit School Food Service Account

The District will maintain a non-profit school food service account. All revenues shall be used solely for the school meal programs and to improve the quality of the food service program for the students being served. Food sold a la carte and food sold to other school entities will be priced to recover, at a minimum, food costs.

Unpaid Meal Charges

District employees may use an account for meals, but may not charge to their account. Employee accounts will not be allowed to go into the negative.

Children with Special Dietary Needs

The District will establish procedures to accommodate children with special dietary needs when a diet prescription form is signed by a licensed medical authority. The District food service department will work with the school's 504 Coordinator to accommodate students' special dietary needs.

Civil Rights

The District will follow USDA Food and Nutrition Civil Rights and nondiscrimination policies.

Procurement

The District will follow all state and Federal guidelines when procuring food for the Federal School Meal Programs. And as part of district procurement procedures, the District will establish a procurement plan and Code of Conduct consistent with the Uniform Grant Guidance (2 CFR Part 200). Food specifications shall be written in a manner to procure food products that meet the school meal pattern requirements.

Smart Snacks Standards in School

All foods and beverages sold to students on campus during the school day (e.g., vending machines, DECA school stores, bake sales, and other school fundraisers) must meet USDA Smart Snacks standards. No food or drink items will be sold unless they have been approved by the principal or school official responsible for oversight of the Smart Snacks standards or as designated in the wellness policy.

Best Practices for Meal Service

The Superintendent or designee will make reasonable efforts to ensure the following occurs:

- Student participation in the breakfast and lunch programs is encouraged;
- Any student may eat in the school cafeteria or other designated place;
- Schools provide varied and nutritious food choices consistent with the applicable school meal program guidelines;

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- Healthy foods are competitively priced;
- Meal prices are conspicuously posted in each cafeteria or designated meal area;
- Seating for meals is uncrowded and occurs in a pleasant and safe environment;
- Supervision during mealtime is appropriate and rules for mealtime behavior are consistently enforced;
- Bus schedules allow students to arrive in time for participation in the School Breakfast Program;
- Alternate breakfast service models are implemented so that students have access to breakfast meals; and
- Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2 Special Assistance Program is implemented in qualifying schools.

On testing days, the District may provide free, nutritious meals to all students, including those who do not qualify for free or reduced priced federal school meal benefits. However, the District must use non-federal funds to cover the cost of providing such meals.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, and unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring with them and carry throughout the day approved water bottles (filled only with water).

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day. The District will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students, and the community.

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The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through the following:

- Implementation of at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using Smarter Lunchroom techniques.
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that the District and individual schools may use are available at <http://www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Family and Community Involvement

To promote family and community involvement in supporting and reinforcing nutrition education in schools, the school principal is responsible for ensuring that the following occurs:

- Breakfast and lunch menus are made available to parents;
- Parents are encouraged to promote their child's participation in the school meals program. If their children do not participate in the school meals program, parents should provide their children with healthy snacks/meals;
- Families are invited to attend exhibitions of student nutrition projects or health fairs;
- School staff are encouraged to cooperate with other agencies and community groups to provide opportunities for student projects related to nutrition, as appropriate; and
- School staff consider the various cultural preferences in developing nutrition education programs and food options.

Nutrition Education

The District's K-12 nutrition education curriculum will align with the Washington State Health and Physical Education K-12 Learning Standards and will be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote healthy behavior.

The District's nutrition education K-12 curriculum should include, but not be limited to, the following concepts:

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- Age-appropriate, developmentally-appropriate, and culturally relevant nutritional knowledge, including:
 - The relationship of nutrition and food nutrients to physical performance and body composition;
 - The benefits of healthy eating;
 - Essential nutrients.
- Age-appropriate nutrition-related skills, including how to:
 - Gather and analyze health information;
 - Understand and use food labels;
 - Evaluate nutrition information, misinformation, and commercial food and advertising; and
 - Assess one's personal eating habits, set goals for improvement, and achieve those goals.