

TONKA FRESH

A Monthly Newsletter from Minnetonka Nutrition Services *February 2025*

Welcome to Tonka Fresh, the official newsletter of Minnetonka Nutrition Services! February has been filled with meetings with student leaders from across the district, as they shared their ideas for how school meals could be improved. Read on to learn more about how student voice impacts school menus.

Elementary Student Leader Collaboration: Incorporating Student Voice in Our Menus

Throughout the month of February, Nutrition Services district staff have been busy connecting with student leaders across the district. Groups of fifth grade students, who were selected by their principals, have met with the team to share their likes, dislikes and ideas related to school meals. In addition to sharing their thoughts on food, students learned more about the process of how menus are planned, including some of the regulations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that are followed to design nutritious breakfast and lunch options.



Using what they now know about school meals, students had the opportunity to use the information they learned and their own creativity to build a student-choice menu that will be served at our elementary schools later this school year. We cannot wait to see what they come up with—and to share it with the rest of our elementary students!

Local Partner Spotlight: Jonny Pops Provide Students With A Delicious, Fruit-Based Dessert and Inspiration to Spread Kindness



Jonny Pops frozen fruit popsicles are a consistent student-favorite on our schools' menus. This local company, created by two local college students in their dorm room at St. Olaf College, has gained popularity in recent years for their tasty frozen treats.

The Jonny Pops we serve at Minnetonka Schools are formulated specifically for K-12 students. These popsicles are made with real fruit and skim milk, and they are a smaller size than what is available in the store, making them the perfect little treat to round out a tasty school lunch.

Besides the delicious desserts they make, one of the best parts about this company's product are the ideas for kind actions printed on each popsicle stick. After finishing one of these treats, a simple way to share kindness is revealed—such as “remind someone that they are special today” or “sit with someone new at lunch today”—giving students an inspiring opportunity to spread care and connection in our schools. How sweet!

Meatless Meals Interest Group: A Way for High School Students to Influence School Meals



February marked the first meeting with Minnetonka High School's Meatless Meals Interest Group. The purpose of this group is to expand the meatless entrees offered during school lunch.

Students met with Nutrition Services district staff to taste test 19 meatless products, comparing the options that are already available on school menus to ones that could potentially be added. The Nutrition Services Department's goal is to have a meatless entree option with lunch each day at all schools, and the input from students provided us with a list of products that would be most

appealing to our community.

Students are the reason why we do what we do, and engaging them is a key priority for the Nutrition Services team. When students get a say in the menus, they know that their voices are heard, and we see higher participation in school meals. It's a win-win!

Did you miss a previous month's edition? Check out all [past newsletters](#) on the updated Nutrition Services Department website.

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