High School Food Service Program
Financial Review
November 12, 2025

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Definitions

Meal – As defined by the USDA, includes 3 of the following five components:

- Protein
- Fruit
- Vegetable
- Milk
- Whole Grain

Definitions

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) – provides federal and state funding to participating schools.

Ala Carte – Individual items sold that do not meet the criteria for a meal. Some examples would be a bagel, an order of fries, a hummus cup or a hoagie.

Free and Reduced – Students who families fall within an annual income threshold that affords the student to receive free or reduced price meals. For schools on the NSLP, meals are subsidized by the state and federal government. MHS does not receive a state/federal subsidy for meals served to students who qualify for free and reduced meals.

Meal Equivalent - A way to measure meal service by converting different types of food items (like breakfast, snacks, and a la carte sales) into a standard unit, based on the reimbursable lunch.

Background

- Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, Methacton High School voluntarily went off the National School Lunch Program in order to:

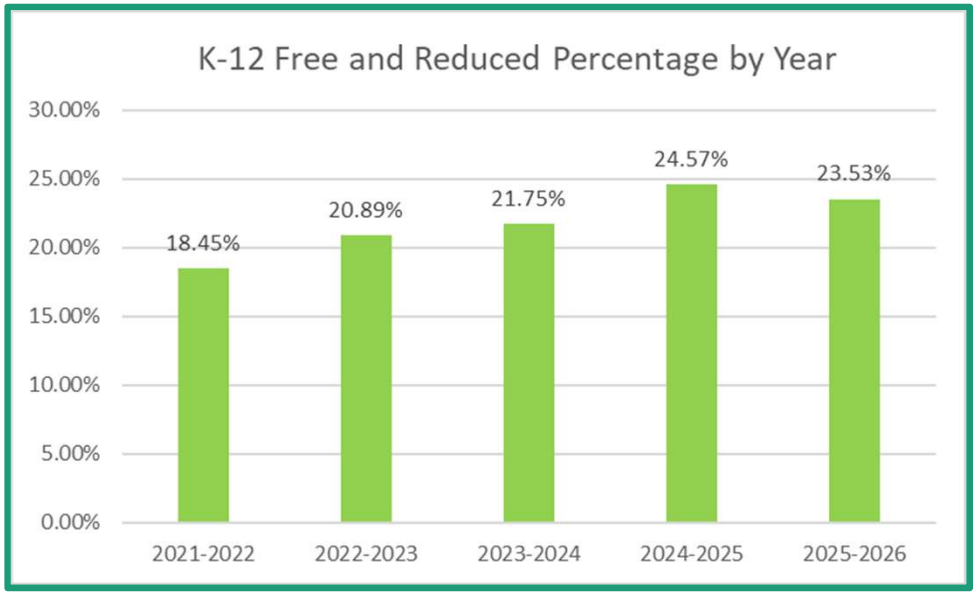
  Expand offerings available to students

  Increase food service experience

  Increase participation

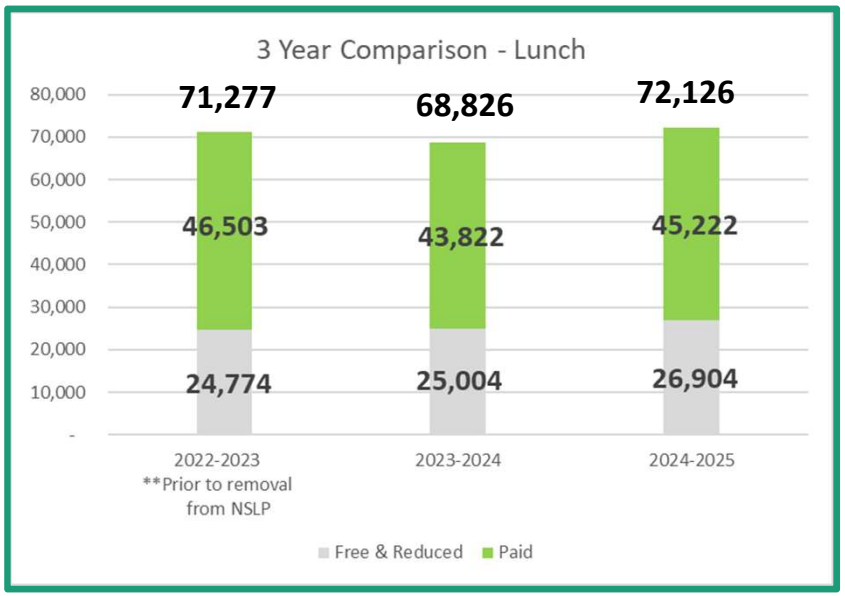
- Windy Hill Café opened providing students with an alternative to the traditional cafeteria setting including access to Ala Carte options in the morning and in between classes.

Free and Reduced Participation



Free and Reduced Participation spiked in the 2024-2025 school year at 24.57%. Participation has been above 20% for the last four years.

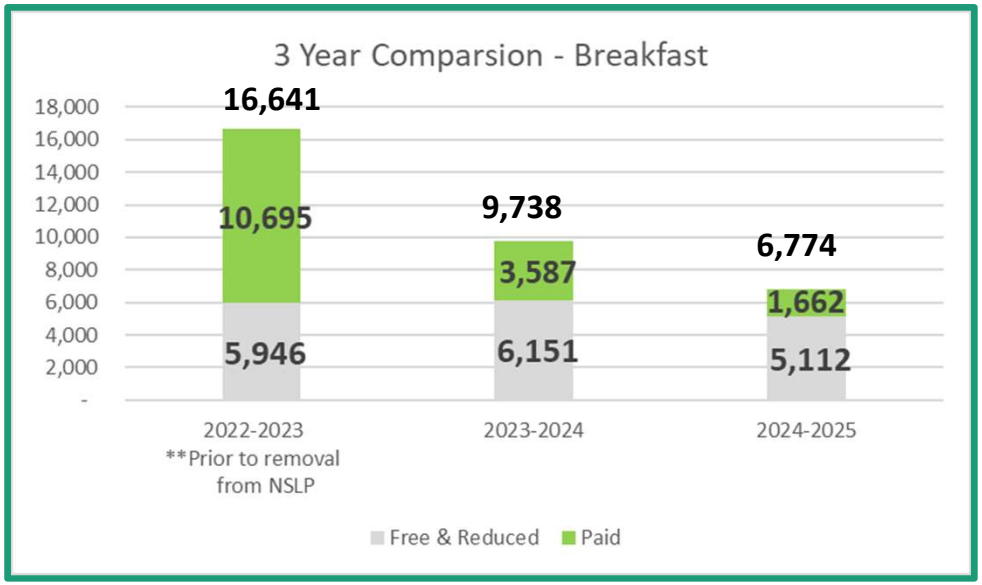
Meals Served – MHS Lunch



Lunch meal counts have increased by 1.2% over the three-year period from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025.

- Paid meal counts have **decreased** by 2.75%
- Free and reduced meal counts have **increased** by 8.6%

Meals Served – MHS Breakfast



Breakfast meal counts have decreased by 59% over the three year period from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025

- Paid meal counts have **decreased** by 84.5%
- Free and reduced meal counts have **decreased** by 14%

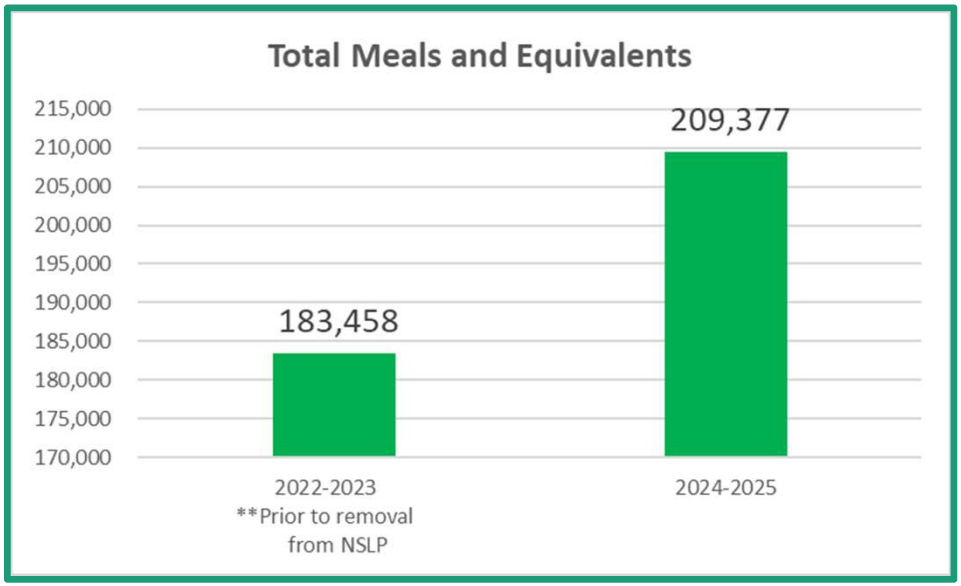
MHS - Windy Hill Café & Ala Carte Sales

2022-2023 Sales = $390,757
2023-2024 Sales = $403,641
2024-2025 Sales = $463,263

Windy Hill Café and Ala Carte sales have increased by roughly 19% when comparing 2022-2023 to 2024-2025.

Before & After - Total Meals and Meal Equivalents

When considering meals and meal equivalents there has been an increase in participation of 14.12% when comparing data from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025.



MHS Food Service

	Year	Operating Statement	District	Aramark
	2023-2024	($205,187)	($101,294)	($103,893)
	2024-2025	($196,057)	($108,733)	($87,323)
Projected	2025-2026	($201,054)	($111,333)	($89,721)

Factors contributing to Aramark loss:

- Increase in labor costs
- Increase in food costs

Factors contributing to District loss:

- Participation
- Increase in Meal prices

Addressing the loss at MHS

Option	Increase Selling Price
Status Quo	($109,410)
Increase Selling Price	$9,874
NSLP	$21,171

- If we remain Status Quo with our food service operation at MHS we are projecting an Aramark loss of ($89,721) for the 2025-2026 school year and just over ($109,000) for the 2026-2027 school year.
  - Methacton SD General Fund would continue to budget and cover the loss associated with the feeding of the free and reduced students. That loss is estimated at ($111,333) for the 2025-2026 school year would be similar for the 2026-2027 school year assuming similar participation.
- Implementing meal and Al a Carte price increases (outlined below) would generate an estimated profit of $9,874 for the 2026-2027 school year.
  - Breakfast price increases from $3.00 to $3.50 for the 2026-2027 school year
  - Lunch price increases from $3.75 to $5.50 for the 2026-2027 school year
  - Ala Carte items increase $.10 for the 2026-2027 school year
  - Methacton SD General Fund would continue to budget and cover the loss associated with the feeding of the free and reduced students (less the $9,874 profit). That loss is estimated at ($111,333) for the 2025-2026 school year would be similar for the 2026-2027 school year assuming similar participation.
- Returning to the NSLP would return an estimated profit of $21,000 and there would be no cost to Methacton General Fund to cover the cost of feeding the free and reduced students (returning to the program would generate over $200,000 in subsidy payments).

Recommendation

- Methacton High School exited the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to expand menu options, enhance the student dining experience, and boost overall participation. While participation rates and student feedback have reflected improvements, rising labor and food costs along with an increase in students qualifying for Free and Reduced Meals—will make it unreasonable to assume the program will break even moving forward.
  - Therefore, it is recommended that the high school returns to the NSLP at the earliest option following:
    - Presentation of impact on moving back to NSLP (Board/Students/Parents)
    - Develop Timeline and Project Scope