

THE DISH



⊛ YOUR SCHOOL NUTRITION NEWSLETTER ⊛



March Staff Birthdays

Happy Birthday to our School Nutrition staff members!

Annie H. – DW Substitute
Robin B. – MGHS



UPCOMING EVENTS

- ⊛ **National School Breakfast Week & Cereal Day**
All week, March 2nd–6th
Join us for school breakfast during National School Breakfast Week! National Cereal Day is on Friday.
- ⊛ **Friendship Bracelets!**
Friday, March 13th
All elementary students who participate in school lunch on 3/13 will receive a fun friendship bracelet!
- ⊛ **Looking Ahead...**
Wednesday, April 29th (5–6pm)
Our first Wellness Policy Committee Meeting will take place on the 3rd floor of the MG District Office. This meeting is open to all interested staff & families.



the quest for school breakfast

NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK
MARCH 2-6, 2026

School Nutrition Spotlight

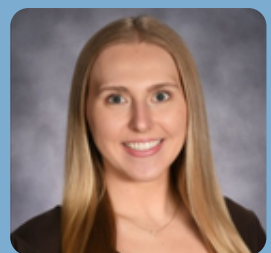
USDA's School Breakfast Program

More than 15 million students across the US eat breakfast each day through the USDA's School Breakfast Program. This important program gives Monona Grove students the opportunity to fuel their bodies and minds for learning. Research shows that a balanced breakfast featuring at least three food groups can positively impact students' focus, energy, and academic performance. Our Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) model, offered in

all of our elementary schools, creates a more inclusive approach to school breakfast. Allowing students to enjoy their meal in the classroom helps them feel connected to their peers and reduces stigma sometimes associated with the traditional breakfast program. We encourage students to join us for school breakfast any day of the school year, and be sure to celebrate National School Breakfast Week with us from March 2nd – March 6th.

Message from the Dietitian

Eating breakfast is linked to clearer focus, longer attention spans, and fewer behavioral concerns for students of all ages, setting them up for a successful day of learning. Whether through our BIC program or our traditional serving model, we are proud to fuel students for the day ahead.



Local Feature

Wisconsin Chili Lunch

The Wisconsin Chili Lunch is state-wide initiative to encourage local food integration in the school meal menu, similar to the Great Apple Crunch held in October. Monona Grove schools will eat lunch with a side of warm beef chili on Thursday, February 26th. The local ingredients in the chili will include: dry beans, beef, onions, sweet potato, green pepper, and spices. This chili recipe was used at the 2025 Spring Community Dinner held at Winnequah School.

Chili Lunch Feedback Survey

We want your feedback on this chili lunch and on scratch-made, local foods in school meals.

[LINK TO SURVEY](#)



Pizza vs Chili Lunch Counts



When Pizza is offered

45.2%

of students participate
in school lunch



When Chili is offered

32.6%

of students participate
in school lunch

We've noticed this trend for several years. It can be challenging to add local, scratch-made meals when students choose not to eat them. We're proud to offer fresh, homemade options, and your participation and feedback helps us add meals that students enjoy and are excited to try.



Local & Scratch-Made

It is our school nutrition team's goal to continue adding more fresh, locally sourced ingredients to our recipes and preparing more meals from scratch for our students. These improvements help us serve food that is both nutritious and delicious. Our nutrition program is self-supporting and does not receive funding from the school district or local property taxes. This means that student participation truly makes a difference in what we are able to serve. Every meal served helps us continue growing these positive changes for our school community.

Why Serve Pizza?

We offer items like scratch-made chili because it gives us the chance to include fresh, local ingredients. These recipes support local farms and allow our students to enjoy nutritious, home-style options. We also serve favorites like pizza because we know students love them and are more likely to participate in the meal program on those days. Since we are self-funded, strong participation helps support our meal program financially. By offering both, we can provide fresh, local meals while still making sure our program remains sustainable for all students.





National Nutrition Month

March is recognized as National Nutrition Month! This year's theme: "Discover the Power of Nutrition", focuses on how a balanced, nutritious meal can give us the "power" to get through our day. Want to test your nutrition knowledge? View this ["Fact or Fiction" worksheet](#) created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and check your answers on the second page, or print this kid-friendly fun [word search](#)!

Each school meal served at Monona Grove schools has to follow age-appropriate nutrition guidelines & meet specific requirements such as; more whole grains, or lower sodium, and added sugar that is backed by science to support childhood growth, while honoring preferences. Learn more about school nutrition on [our webpage](#).

Parent/Guardian Feedback Survey

School Nutrition wants to know what you think of school meals. Take our survey below!

[LINK TO SURVEY](#)



Kitchen Manager, Judy, was excited to serve our GDS students chili made with local ingredients.



Lunch Tray from Chili Lunch



Breakfast items at MG



School Nutrition Q&A

How do we add new recipes or menu items?

MG School Nutrition has interested staff members test-cook a potential new recipe from the leadership team. Then, staff members will taste it and adjust the ingredients or cooking instructions if needed before it gets added to the menu.

We try to do a student taste test (free samples) when able, to receive feedback. After these test runs, the item will be placed into the menu rotation - typically at the secondary level first. After about 3 to 4 times, we evaluate meal counts on the new item and will either keep it on the menu, or remove it due to low participation.

Get Involved!

School Nutrition is looking to reform it's Local School Wellness (LSW) Policy Committee, 2026. Addressing whole-district wellness and school meal advancement efforts. We encourage community, family, and student participation in a low commitment, volunteer setting. Please contact Kori Blumer, MGSD Registered Dietitian at kori.blumer@mgschools.net if interested. First meeting will be in April 2026.

