

TONKA FRESH

A Monthly Newsletter from Minnetonka Nutrition Services *January 2026*

Welcome to Tonka Fresh, the official newsletter of Minnetonka Nutrition Services! As we dive into 2026, we are reflecting on the first half of the school year, and looking forward to what is yet to come! In this edition of Tonka Fresh, we take a look at new menu items that we introduced in the first half of the school year and give you a sneak peek at the new items, selected by students, that will be making their debut as we kick off 2026!

MHS Student Voice: New Feedback Opportunities for Busy High Schoolers

This school year marks the highest High School student school lunch participation in the history of Minnetonka Nutrition Services. This amazing achievement could not come without the willingness of our students to join us for lunch each day and the hard work of our amazing High School kitchen staff.



In order to keep this positive momentum going, it is crucial that students have a voice in the meals they are offered each day. However, between the rigor of their class schedules, their sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities, it is hard to coordinate a meeting time with high school students. Thus, all Minnetonka high schoolers have the opportunity to fill out a series of short feedback forms throughout January to provide their thoughts and offer new ideas for school lunch.

We have three different feedback opportunities making an appearance this month. Students are able to quickly scan a QR code while standing in line for lunch and answer the questions before they get to the serving line.

Last week, students were asked to select their favorite lunch entrees out of the meals that have been served so far this school year. While we track product usage and meal participation in the kitchen, this other data can be skewed by class schedules, having multiple entrees served at the same time, and events going on outside of school. Getting direct feedback from students provides us with strong information about which menus are here to stay and which ones could be improved.

This week, we are asking students to share their ideas! Using a list of menu ideas inspired by both elementary and middle school students and a space for high schoolers to share their ideas, students will vote on potential new menus to debut on menus later this school year. The final feedback opportunity of the month will ask students to rate the new menu items that have debuted so far this school year to help us determine any necessary changes to these menus.

Additionally, the Nutrition Services District Team will be asking students during their lunch period to vote on a new specialty pizza made by our friends at local restaurant Pizzaioli. Keep an eye on our Instagram account [@TonkaFresh](#) for the debut of the new speciality pizza coming to MHS in February.

Reflecting on the New Menus Introduced in 2025 and the Excitement to Come in 2026



As we transition into the new year, it is a great time to reflect on the first half of the school year and look ahead at what is to come during the spring semester. So far, we have already served more than 10 brand new menu items across this district. Many of these new items are meatless options, such as chana masala, Impossible burgers, yogurt parfaits and Cheez Dippin' Bitez. Meatless entrees are available daily for all students.

Some of our other menu additions were added to spice up old favorites, such as adding turkey barbacoa with the burrito bowl, Mole chicken with nachos, and spicy chicken nuggets for heat-loving high schoolers, and a build-your-own yogurt parfait for our creative elementary students. Making slight changes to menu classics is a great way to introduce students to new flavors while still finding comfort in the meals they know and love.

With the help of our middle school student leaders, featured in last month's edition of Tonka Fresh, we have some exciting new meals that will be hitting our menus starting in February. After hearing from their peers and sampling new products, students at Middle School East came up with one new menu and helped us revamp another. Their new menu item, soft-shell tacos, will be featured including black olives, sliced jalapenos and a new blend of shredded Monterey Jack and cheddar cheese. They also transformed the "Woodle" bowl into a Build-Your-Own Poke bowl, where students will be able to choose their own vegetables and sauces atop tasty steamed rice.

Students at Middle School West had their hearts set on spaghetti and meatballs. Middle school students will soon be able to indulge in this comforting classic. They will also be introduced to the yogurt parfait bento boxes that have been a huge hit among our elementary school students this school year. Be on the lookout for these menus to debut at the middle schools in February and for these updates to be filtered to the elementary schools and high school.

Interested in Getting Involved? Learn More About the Nutrition Input Committee

Did you know Nutrition Services has an Input Committee composed of parents and guardians of Minnetonka students? This is an opportunity to provide input on school meals through taste testing and offering feedback based on questions from our Nutrition Services District Team.

Time Commitment:

- Welcome and Informational Meeting: Monday, February 2 at 1pm
- In-person meeting: April 16 at 2pm
- 26 - 27 School Year
 - Two meetings held at the District Office at 9am

Interested in joining the committee? Have any questions? Please email Kristen Turnblad, Director of Nutrition Services, kristen.turnblad@minnetonkaschools.org.

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

Stay Connected! Follow @TonkaFresh on Instagram

Want to see more behind the scenes and what goes into serving the Minnetonka School District? Connect with Minnetonka Nutrition Services on Instagram [@TonkaFresh](#)!

Learn more by visiting the updated Minnetonka Nutrition Services website:

minnetonkaschools.org/nutrition