



A Monthly Newsletter from Minnetonka Nutrition Services

February 2026

Welcome to Tonka Fresh, the official newsletter of Minnetonka Nutrition Services! February is a busy month for Nutrition Services. From our annual celebration of the Lunar New Year, to another round of sampling, and everything in between, there is no shortage of excitement for students during school meals in February!

Celebrating the Lunar New Year: Serving Dumplings to Represent Unity and Celebrate Chinese Culture



Today, February 17th, is the start of the Lunar New Year, a traditional celebration in Chinese culture. To honor this celebration, all Minnetonka Schools served traditional foods for lunch that hold symbolic meaning on this first day of the Lunar New Year. Students enjoyed dumplings, a symbol of wealth and unity, paired with delicious vegetables, and mandarin oranges, which are seen as a sign of respect and good fortune.

Since its debut for last year's Lunar New Year, the dumpling menu has become a crowd favorite for all students. Recently, a poll amongst high school students showed dumplings as the top-ranked lunch entree overall. Many Minnetonka students spend their days immersed in Chinese culture, and this simple celebration during lunch allows all students to join in on vibrant Chinese traditions outside of the classroom.

Local Spotlight: Pizzaioli Provides Custom Pizzas Based on Student Feedback

For Minnetonka students, it is no secret that Pizzaioli is one of the most popular lunches on our menus. This long-time partner has been providing students with delicious pizzas made specifically to meet the nutritional criteria of the USDA school meals program for nearly 14 years. Pizzaioli is a locally owned and operated pizzeria in Chanhassen, Minnesota. With their

double-stack pizza oven and dedication, they can cook four pizzas every minute, providing Minnetonka students with over 850 pizzas each week.

As the District Nutrition Services team has been gathering feedback from students this year, one common theme shared by middle and high schoolers was that they would like to try a new “specialty pizza” in addition to the cheese, pepperoni and veggie options that are always offered. From conversations the students had amongst their peers, surveys taken, and votes cast, our friends at Pizzaioli have developed three new specialty pizzas to honor our student’s desires.



Earlier this month, students at Middle School West got to indulge in a Hawaiian-style pizza, complete with turkey, ham, and pineapple. While on the other side of the district, students at Middle School East were introduced to a taco pizza with a base of taco sauce, tangy cheddar cheese and taco-seasoned beef. In March, high school students will finally get to taste a long-awaited sausage pizza. We are so appreciative of our partner and friends at Pizzaioli for helping to feed Minnetonka students!

Introducing Students to a New Dark Green Vegetable: Kale Sampling in February



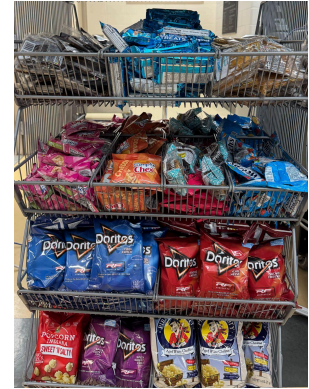
Later this month and the first week of March, the Nutrition Services District team will be visiting schools for another round of sampling! Students will have the opportunity to taste kale prepared as a simple kale salad.

As part of the National School Lunch Program, students are required to be offered a variety of vegetable subgroups each week. These subgroups are defined by the USDA, and include red and orange vegetables, dark green vegetables, starchy vegetables, beans, peas and lentils, and “other” vegetables. Kale is one dark green vegetable that Minnetonka students have not been introduced to as a potential vegetable in rotation as a part of their school meals. While sampling, students will have the opportunity to provide feedback as to whether they would like to see kale added to the school lunch menu rotation.

While kale may seem like an unappealing option for students, with the proper preparation, kale can make a delightful addition to any meal. Kale is packed full of vitamins, minerals and fiber to help fuel growth and learning. Our team hopes to see many students give this nutrient-packed vegetable a taste this month, and help us decide if it should be added to the vegetable rotation!

National Snack Food Month: Snacks Available for Students to Purchase Outside of Breakfast and Lunch

Did you know that February is National Snack Food Month? While this is the month to honor snacks, Minnetonka Middle School East and West and the High School have snacks available for purchase throughout the school year. The snacks offered in schools are called Smart Snacks, which is a term the USDA uses for items that meet federal nutritional guidelines.



For our middle school and high school students with a positive meal account balance, we have a wide variety of snacks available for purchase during school breakfast and lunch. While many of these snacks may closely resemble snacks commonly seen at the grocery store, the Smart Snack versions sold at school are made with whole grains, reduced fat, reduced sodium and less added sugars! This allows students to have healthy options during the school day in addition to the main meal offered.

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