LAGUNA BEACH
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

LBUSD Nutrition Services Program Update

From Universal Meals to fresh, local and scratch-cooked food

Board of Education Meeting · November 12, 2026



TONIGHT'S STORY

One connected story

01
Landscape
Universal Meals and new standards

02
Self-operation
Local purchasing and funding

03
On the tray
Fresh, scratch-made meals

04
Student engagement
Green Teams, clubs and TK/K self serve

05
Results
Meals served and state review

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Looking ahead
Partnerships and long-term goals



The changing school nutrition landscape

State policy expands access. Federal standards guide what we serve.

CALIFORNIA: MEAL ACCESS

Universal Meals provides **breakfast and lunch** at no charge to any student who requests them, regardless of household income.

FEDERAL: NUTRITION STANDARDS

2025–26: Product limits on added sugars

Limits apply to breakfast cereals, yogurt and flavored milk.

2027–28: Further changes

Added sugars below 10% of weekly calories.
Sodium limits fall about 15% for lunch and 10% for breakfast.
New USDA standards based on the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines are in development.



What these changes mean for LBUSD

Broader access increases participation and changes the work behind each meal.

MORE STUDENTS CHOOSING LUNCH

16.1% → 28.6%

September 2018 September 2023

Districtwide lunch participation before and after Universal Meals began.

12.5 percentage point increase

WHAT THE PROGRAM MUST SUPPORT

Capacity for more meals

Align food quantities, meal preparation and service with increased participation.

Menus that meet changing standards

Review recipes and purchased products for added sugars limits now and tighter sodium limits in 2027–28.

District purchasing power, local priorities

In 2025–26, LBUSD transitioned from a food service management company to district-operated Nutrition Services, bringing purchasing decisions directly into the district. This model gives us greater flexibility to:

Local partnerships
Purchase directly from local farms and producers.

Menus and ingredients
Align ingredient choices and menus with student preferences and nutrition goals.

Program investment
Direct resources toward staff and meal service to support students.



Funding nutrition services in a basic aid district

State and federal program reimbursements fund most nutrition services operations. District support supplements program revenue.

26-27 PROGRAM REVENUE

$1.4 M

Fund 13 operating **revenue**

26-27 OPERATING COST

$1.8 M

Fund 13 **expenditures**

DISTRICT CONTRIBUTION

$400,000

Total General Fund Support

State reimbursements
$957,000
Federal reimbursements
$387,000
Local revenue
$22,000

78%

of operating costs covered by program revenue

$140,000

Purchased from local farms and vendors, including Aziz Farms, Dickinson Family Farms, Sunny Cal Farms, Bluebird Canyon Farms and Hollandia Dairy

Improving what's on the tray

We've changed how we buy and how we cook.

How we source

We partner directly with local farms and order seasonally so menus reflect what's being harvested. We also buy organic produce through DoD Fresh and a 17-district purchasing co-op. Many proteins come from Cream Co. Meats' hormone- and antibiotic-free family ranches.

How we prepare

Support from the Chef Ann Foundation and culinary training for staff are helping us expand scratch cooking in our own kitchens.



Fresh-cut produce prepared in our kitchens.

- **Citrus-marinated chicken** with scratch-made tzatziki, rice flavored with an organic 11 herb and spice blend, and pita
- **Lemon pepper wings** with fresh-baked cornbread and carrot and celery sticks
- **"Build Your Own Bar" Wednesdays** at the high school
- **Grab-and-go protein box** at every school: True Story turkey, cheese cubes, fresh veggies and whole grain-rich pretzel bites
- **BBQ chicken sliders** with cornbread poppers at our elementary sites

Students have a seat at the table

EVERY SITE

Site Green Teams

Regular meetings on menu suggestions, student preferences and less packaging waste.

HIGH SCHOOL

Strength in Numbers Club

A talk on fueling for training and getting protein throughout the day.

HIGH SCHOOL

Fitness and Wellness Club

Protein smoothies made with freshly harvested greens like kale and spinach.





TK/K Students Serve Themselves Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

BEFORE

Fruits and vegetables in individual plastic containers

NOW

Students scoop their own, with staff assistance



1,000

Plastic containers removed every week

- Less plastic waste
- More independence and choice at mealtime
- Part of a wider push to cut single-use plastics
- Staff make sure every tray meets USDA meal requirements

Results we can measure

246,376
Meals served during 2025–26

73,923
Meals served August–October 2026

+6.4%
Breakfast meals vs. August–October 2025

Zero
2026 CDE Administrative Review findings



Thank you to our Nutrition Services staff for their work on meal quality and service.

Two partnerships driving what's next

Conscious Kitchen Organic School Food Purchasing Co-op

- 1 of 17 districts in the nation's first organic school food co-op
- Pooled buying power for organic ingredients
- Making organic purchasing more affordable

Chef Ann Foundation

- Recipe development and menu improvements
- Staff training and professional development
- Kitchen operations and equipment review
- Hands-on support moving to scratch cooking



Our long-term goals

1. Expand scratch cooking to every school site
2. Buy more local, organic and sustainably sourced food
3. Invest in staff training and kitchen equipment
4. Keep student feedback at the center of menus
5. Stay financially sound and fully USDA compliant



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Thank you.

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