

# Tucson Unified School District

## Food Services Overview

2012-2013



***TUSD***

## **School Food Services - Yesterday & Today**

Tucson Unified School District is committed to serving healthful meals to our students. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to offer the National School Lunch Program and like to think that we are an important part of the education experience our district provides.

School food service has come a long way since the National School Lunch Act was signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. The legislation came in response to claims made that many American men had been rejected for World War II military service because of diet-related health problems. The federally assisted meal program was established as “a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation’s children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities.” The National School Lunch Act has since been amended numerous times.

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) was established by President Lyndon B. Johnson in the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. President Johnson remarked during the signing that “good nutrition is essential to good learning.”

Before the National School Lunch Program officially started and a measurable amount of consistency was introduced to the meals served across the nation – food was often brought to school by teachers or parents in soup kettles. Meals were often made from home and brought to school to serve to students. Although intentions were good, food safety and nutritionally balanced menus were not the primary focus.

**The reminder that we are serving food in a public forum was a discussion then and remains one today.**

**School food service today has made great strides but has not forgotten its roots.**

**Although there are patterns of similarity between yesterday and today with child nutrition – much of it continues due to changes in our food products available and decreased overall physical activity existing in our modern culture.**

Today - TUSD Food Services employees arrive early each morning mindful that we may present many of our students their only meal of nutritional value for the day – perhaps their only meal for the day. As a group, we take our job very seriously. As a School Food Authority (SFA) for the federal meal programs we manage each day, it is our role to support the district needs within the guidelines of the government regulations we must work within. We continuously focus on building or maintaining successful systems designed with integrity and compliance. Our operating systems are linked from the time the menus are designed to our managers submitting menu requisitions to the tight turn-around time of product procurement to receiving product in our warehouse, storing at proper temperatures, distributing product to school sites, producing thousands of meals a day and serving the meals with (hopefully) a smile each day. My goal is that the meals are produced with our quality standards in mind and they are served within compliance and with a high level of customer service.

## **TUSD Food Services - Department Snapshot**

### **Employees**

- We currently have 352 employees – of which – 300 (85%) are directly tied to service site operations. The remaining 52 positions include the Director’s position – 3 nutrition educators and/or dieticians fully or partially funded by grants – nutrition coordinator (coordinates menu planning & nutrition analysis) – warehouse – inventory – delivery drivers – personnel – finance – purchasing – federal meals – system integration specialists – equipment technicians and clerical support. Staffs range from 9 to 12 month employees.
- We transitioned 9 food services managers to multi-site managers. We were able to reassign each of the managers affected by the school consolidations. We are currently going through a RIF process for site operation staff. This process is not unfamiliar to our employees. We review labor hours at the service sites twice a year and determine whether we need to decrease or increase hours or RIF positions from one school to another based on participation and site needs. We have identified (5) employees that will be included in the RIF process due to decreased labor hours at their site. We will then add 18 site operation positions affected by the school consolidations. We will follow the agreed process following position and seniority groups.

Employees have been informed that we cannot promise position availability – however – with our current vacancies - I will add at least (1) new position at each of the designed merge schools as needed due to the expectation that participation will increase with increased enrollment. With the reconfiguration of school sites moving into a multi-site management format, I will also add a set of hands where labor hours allow. Both steps will add several new position availabilities. In addition, we have approximately 25 positions open due to vacancies and/or an increase in labor hours at identified sites. The majority of positions will be 4 to 6 hours on a 9 mth contract.

### **Service Sites**

We currently support 99 service sites during the school year and an average of 80 during the summer.

### **Meals Served**

We serve an average of 8,500 breakfast meals and 29,000 lunch meals daily (37,500 total). We also serve after school snacks to 64 schools each day.

## **Meal Programs Offered**

*School Breakfast Program*

*National School Lunch Program*

*After School Snack Program*

*Summer Meal Program*

## **TUSD Students Eligible for the Federal Meal Program**

For many years we remained consistent with an average of 65% of TUSD students qualifying for the meal program. This year we reached 71%, which is the highest we have ever been.

We process thousands of federal meal program applications each school year. We increased the amount of students who qualified as direct certifications this school by 25%. This indicates that they were already receiving government assistance.

## **Compliance Audits**

We host inspectors and auditors often at Food Services. The Pima County Health Department schedules 2 kitchen inspections a school year. We periodically have USDA inspectors stop by the central kitchen along with the Fire Marshall.

In coordination with USDA, auditors from the Arizona Department of Education are scheduled to conduct an administrative and program compliance audit every 3 years. As you so generously recognized – we were presented with an “Outstanding Administrative Review” award from Dr. Huppenthal this year. Our staff was very excited when all of you recognized us for this achievement – thank you.

As we speak – we have a group of 5 Arizona Department of Education “validation” auditors arriving in town to start an 8 day review.

## **Nutrition & Menu Planning**

The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act 2010 was a scheduled 5 year reauthorization for legislation directly affecting the NSLP and the SBP. There were many facets of the legislation and fortunately, USDA is working to smooth out a few wrinkles with proposed legislation so that applications of the law will work in the real world.

For many years, SFA’s were allowed to choose from several menu-planning systems. We chose the Nutrient Standard format – which takes a computer-based approach to analyze the specific nutrient content of menu items during the planning process; menus were planned to meet nutrient standards over the course of a full week.

The reauthorization in 2010 eliminated the multiple menu-planning systems in favor of a single system. This stemmed from several years of discussion between USDA and school food service and nutrition professionals as well as

recommendations of an Institute of Medicine panel in 2009 that assessed current nutrition science and the advisory of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The new meal pattern is a food based plan rather than a nutrient standard menu plan. This does not mean that we do not review the nutrients – we do. In general, with nutrient based, other than fluid milk, no defined foods or portion sizes were required or specified. Menus were analyzed for all nutrients to ensure the goals were met. With the food based design, specific food groups must be offered. Menus do not have to be analyzed by food services, but upon state review they must meet targets.

TUSD historically has made it a priority to serve nutritious meal options and to include fresh produce in our menus. The new change in menu design has not gone without controversy. A majority of the media have been supportive of the changes – in which the guidelines include increased servings of fruit & vegetables as well as whole grain rich breads and pastas.

### **Menu Comparison**

SY 10-11            Cheddar Cheese Crisp, Southwest Beans & Rice, Fruit, Milk

SY 12-13            Whole Grain Cheddar Cheese Crisp, Butternut Squash, Fruit, Milk

### **We have had several challenges with the new meal pattern:**

- ***Increased food cost***
- ***Inventory rotation***
- ***Packaging***
- ***Redesign of the school service lines.***

**It has been a challenge – *however* – School Food Services is familiar with challenges as FOOD is a very personal choice.**

Whether you are 5 or 85 – you develop a sense of what foods you like and which ones you do not. Each of us has a different background – we may have grown up in a different region or a different country. We may have had family home-style meals or take out as our norm. We may have had “good cooks” in our family or “not so good cooks” preparing our meals. Some of us LOVE fruits and vegetables and others love pasta and potatoes.

In designing our menus we also need to consider the many trends that come across our path in waves over the years. Since I started working with TUSD Food Services 16 years ago – I have seen trends and very strong opinions from students to parents to administrators regarding food. It’s wonderful that people are passionate about food – we certainly cannot please everyone but we try to serve marketable, nutritious options prepared to our quality standards.

It's interesting to see what other countries menu for school children. I recently read a statement from "wordpress.com" that says it all: ***Everyday, all over the world, children eat together at school. No matter where they live, kids need a healthy meal to help them learn. School meals are an investment in our future.***

In tandem with cultural menu choices are food trends and concerns that have been and will continue to be a menu planner's challenge in years to come.

### **How Do We Link this Large Intricate System?**

- We design a 5 week cycle menu for elementary sites – a 5 week / weekly rotating cycle for Middle & High Schools and several other alternate menus for satellite sites or special needs (sack lunches, after school snack program). Menus vary for the 8 cycles offered.
- Our Food Service Managers review the menus and submit their menu requisitions by computer approximately two 5 week cycles in advance.
- Regional Supervisors review and edit menus and they are sent to our Inventory Technicians for further processing.
- Purchasing receives a consolidated report in coordination with inventory on hand and begins the process of procurement. The majority of our items are purchased through the bid process. We also integrate USDA Commodity and DOD foods available to us. Items are scheduled for procurement approximately 6 weeks before need date.
- Product arrives to our warehouse dock in small and truck load quantities. Warehouse technicians inspect and receive products to insure they are at proper temperatures and of quality condition. Items are then stored following government regulations.
- Inventory technicians enter items received and the compilation of shipping and distribution lists begins. Drivers for each route receive daily and weekly shipping lists and deliver within scheduled timeframes.
- Food Service kitchen staffs inspect and receive items delivered by the TUSD warehouse as well as milk deliveries from vendors. Staffs follow the same storage regulations.
- Staffs produce and serve breakfast and lunch meals each day.
- Information is entered into the computerized point of sale system. This information is tied in to regulatory reports indicating whether a proper – reimbursable meal was served – their production records – meal categories served (F,R,P) and the sales information.
- Our finance staff collect and process revenue as well as process expenses. They also conduct internal audits of regulatory reports.
- Our personnel/payroll office keeps our rotating door of employee vacancies posted, processed and arrange interviews through site operations. All aspects of human resources are conducted.

- Our federal meals office distributes notification letters to TUSD households regarding the meal program. They also process and validate eligibility determination for students.
- Our regional supervisors oversee an average of 25 sites. They also have “project assignments” such as managing the federal meal program office, front of the house computer system, back of the house computer system or assist in coordinating catering.

## **Managing Our Resources**

- We operate as a cost center with the goal to end the year with revenue meeting or exceeding expenses.
- Our budget averages \$19 million with our highest cost in food and labor. The majority of this revenue is generated by reimbursable meal claims.
- We have built a culture of “resource stewards”.
- Committees or groups meet often so that purchasing quantities and timing is reviewed and inventory levels are coordinated with menu needs. Commodity products are reviewed carefully and incorporated into menu design. A representative from each area contributes an updated status so that coordinated decisions can be made and we can move forward quickly. We have developed key indicators that flag us when an area is off balance.
- Product and recipe development incorporates nutrition standards and cost parameters. Products are tested at the central kitchen. If approved – they are sent out for student taste testing surveys that are conducted with a minimum of 180 students. Products passing 75% or higher are placed on the menu.
- Packaging costs are incorporated into each menu.
- *Cancel Cycle Weeks* – are scheduled so that managers may adjust menu requisitions prior to purchase. We have a tight 7 day window to organize all sites to submit their cancellations, process through inventory and report to Purchasing in an updated consolidation report.
- Quarterly site inventory returns are also scheduled so that we may redistribute product as needed.
- Staff training and communication is presented frequently and in different venues. Standard performance objectives are in place. Professional Development is encouraged through industry conferences, internal and external training and formal education.

## SY 12-13 Achievements – Outreach – Collaborations – Focus Projects

- **School Consolidation** – we are compiling a comprehensive report of what equipment can be saved or salvaged – site needs for equipment and potential costs associated with moving, disassembling and assembling the equipment.
- **New Meal Pattern** – focused on full implementation and application/audit review for .6 cents.
- **Catering** – increase district catering – to date we have increased our catering events by 60 over last year. We have also increased our meal service to Camp Cooper. We have worked with the organizers to develop items that tie in with their curriculum.
- **TUSD Cooks** – mobile school culinary program – conducted pilot events
- **Farm to School Grant** – partnered with Community Food Bank for \$25,000 of their \$100,000 grant to develop a school garden to cafeteria operation process and local farm to school procurement procedures. We are currently reviewing the status of school garden activity in the district. We are coordinating with Legal and Risk Management to review traceability and liability risks for the district. Our plans are to increase our outreach with local area growers and incorporate the produce into our meal service.
- **Department Nutrition Initiatives** - Our nutrition education staff work with the Arizona Nutrition Network Grant to teach nutrition and cooking classes around the district. To date (this school year) they have taught 660 lessons and reached 20,710 students. We have taught 98 cooking classes so far this school year at 4 different schools. Total funds received this school year for AZNN (81 qualifying schools) \$75,198.

With the FFVP Grant (Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program) our nutrition education staff has worked with 8 schools and has introduced 32 different fruits and 23 different vegetables to TUSD students. Funds received through FFVP (8 schools) \$178,395.

We also partnered with an elementary school for the Fuel Up to Plan 60 grant (\$4,000).

Food Services Managers have conducted nearly 400 nutrition education classes in the classroom so far this school year. Our nutrition education coordinator develops curriculum in partnership with current school curriculum.

- **Healthier US Challenge** – partnership with Pueblo High School – USDA recognized TUSD for nutrition excellence through our menu's and from the school leadership and students at Pueblo HS for building a strong wellness culture on campus. We welcomed USDA Deputy Under Secretary Dr. Janey Thornton upon her visit to congratulate the participants.
- **Dietetic Intern Program** – we hold one to two week internship rotations each year in coordination with Maricopa County, UMC and St. Mary's Hospital. We have added an independent internship this year for an Arizona student working through Iowa State University.



- **Tohono O’odam Community Action (TOCA)** – we welcomed Stephanie Lip is working on a new project to develop a school food service non-profit enterprise. We hosted her for a week as she met with section managers to review operations.
- **Festival Taste Tests** – in addition to our current central and student taste testing process – we added a new format, which is conducted in the cafeteria during lunch service at the high schools. The events were very successful and created a great
- **PCard** – we are currently implementing the new PCard system with shared TUSD vendors as well as setting up the process with Food Services vendors.
- **Staff Training** – increased staff Lead training for multi-site operations
- **Career Tech Classes-** we have worked with school store coordinators to ensure the district is in compliance with competitive food sales and district nutrition standards. The stores are currently open before the bell and after the bell. Food sold falls within the local nutrition guidelines.

We have started development to partner and support the students in their culinary and entrepreneurial activities. This year our Chef Tori has worked with the culinary education classes with the development of our new TUSD Cooks cart – she conducted a pilot presentation with them and received terrific feedback from the students. She was also invited to assist in assessment reviews.

We are currently developing a line of “celebration” food items through catering that fall within the nutrition standards. In coordination with Chuck McCollum we will schedule to meet with the students and teachers working with the school stores. We will review the line of products available to them for purchase through our catering office. They may purchase the items and sell in the stores and/or purchase through special orders as requested. Items will include fruit & veggie bouquets – yumsters – pops – school mascot pizza – fresh fruit salsa parfaits – muffins – and photo imprinted cookies or cakes – all falling inside the nutrition standards. We will also work with the students to conduct special taste tests and accept ideas that they may develop for the menu.

### **SY 13- 14 New for Next School Year**

- **Career Tech (Culinary Education Classes, DECA & FBLA)** – to add to what we are beginning this school year - we are in preliminary discussions to partner in a district event that will tie in each area of career tech studies – the event will raise money and bring positive recognition to the district with support from Food Services. Although there are still members of the district leadership we need to meet with – so far the idea has had great interest. I will leak a little bit of the concept for you.

I will preface by saying that I wanted the students to know that Food Services supports their entrepreneurial interest. The concept (as it stands in the preliminary stages) is **TUSD Books for Cooks** featuring Arizona authors. This would involve all the high school culinary education classes as well as DECA & FBLA students. The culinary and entrepreneurial students would join together to choose Arizona published cook books and food artists to

showcase at a taste test/dinner event. The project would be developed within a semester. Tickets would be sold, students would market the event, culinary students would cook dishes, area authors and artists would be featured, local celebrity food editors would be invited and Food Services would be there to assist with kitchen space, equipment, linens etc. We are looking forward to the possibilities if approved to proceed and to see how the students develop the program into something spectacular. We see it as a win/win partnership as we are all part of the district.

- **Fusion Station** – we plan to introduce a new lunch station at the high schools next school year. The Fusion station will feature one base (rice, pasta, legumes, flatbread, pita pockets, etc.) with a choice of two different toppings. We will tie in student favorites as well as introduce them to new international dishes.
- **New Menu Items Introduced** – we are excited to introduce several new dishes next school year such as a Sesame Noodle Bowl – Fiesta Chicken Bowl – Sweet Fruit Salsa Parfait – Whole Grain Scones – Nacho Mac & Cheese and Mac Stacks (nacho macaroni with chili on top). The student taste tests this school year have been very successful.
- **PTA/PTO** - we would like to schedule meetings with parent groups to review the new meal pattern.
- **Healthier US Challenge** – we will continue our program next school year with Catalina High School and have planned to add a middle school and two new elementary schools to our list.

**From our daily operations to our product development and collaborations with the district and community we will continue to align our department with the district goals and mission.**