

Nutrition and Food Services

Purpose

This procedure guides staff in meeting the requirements of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) School Breakfast and Lunch Programs in conjunction with the nutritional goals of the district Wellness Program plan.

Scope

This procedure applies to the Superintendent, administrators, teachers, school food services staff, students, parents and guardians.

Procedure

1. WELLNESS PROGRAM

1.1. As an important component of the district's Wellness Program, the food services department will administer wholesome and nutritious school meals in accordance with USDA regulations.

1.2. Meal Applications and Eligibility for School Meals

As a sponsor of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), the district will provide free and reduced-price breakfasts and lunches to students who qualify in accordance with the programs.

1.2.1. The district will annually distribute the Letter to Households and Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications to all student households at the beginning of each school year. If a parent or guardian of a student needs assistance with application materials in a language other than English, the district will offer appropriate assistance.

1.2.2. Using the current *USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals*, the district NSLP/SBP Verification Officer ("Determining Official") is responsible for determining program eligibility, processing and approving applications, disseminating household notifications, and verification processes and recordkeeping.

1.2.3. If the district has obtained information from other sources that the student is likely eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but the parent or guardian has not submitted an application to determine the student's eligibility, the school will offer the family assistance with the application process as described in Procedure #6701P2, section 9.1. If, subsequently, an application has not been submitted on behalf of the student, the district will complete and submit the application for the student in accordance with the authority granted under 7 C.F.R. Sec. 245.6 (d).

1.2.3.1. This determination must be made family by family, and the district will not make eligibility determinations or certifications by categories or groups of children.

- 1.2.3.2. The completed application must set forth the district's basis for determining the student's eligibility.
- 1.2.3.3. A district family determined eligible under this process will be notified that the family's children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or for free milk.
- 1.2.4. At least monthly, the district will directly certify students for free school meals if the students qualify because of enrollment in assistance programs, including but not limited to the supplemental nutrition assistance program, the temporary assistance for needy families, and Medicaid.
- 1.2.5. The district and its school staff will work to improve systems for identifying homeless students, students in out-of-home care, runaway students, and migrant students, to ensure that each student has proper access to free school meals and that applicable accountability and reporting requirements are satisfied.
- 1.2.6. The district will protect the identity of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals in accordance with USDA guidelines for confidentiality and disclosure of student eligibility for such meals.

1.3. **Meal Patterns and Menu Planning**

The district will follow the USDA meal patterns for the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and *Smart Snacks in School* standards for all food and beverages sold to students on school campus during the school day. The food services manager will utilize resources offered on the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) website for dietary specifications, meal patterns, menu planning and recordkeeping.

1.4. **Meal Times**

The district will set meal times to allow breakfast to be served as close to the start of the school day as possible and lunch to be served between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The length of the meal period will allow enough time for students to be served and eat a complete meal as well as take care of personal hygiene needs.

1.5. **Food Safety Plan**

The district will establish a Food Safety Plan based on USDA Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HAACP). Because of the potential liability of the district, the food services program will not accept donations of food without Board approval. Should the Board approve a food donation, the Superintendent will establish inspection and handling procedures for the food and determine that the provisions of all state and local laws have been met before selling the food as part of the school lunch menu.

1.6. Meal Pricing

The Chief Financial Officer will conduct a meal cost analysis and recommend meal prices biannually for Board approval, and follow Paid Lunch Equity regulations. Adult meal prices will be set to allow teachers, administrators, and parents to demonstrate their support for school meal programs by occasionally eating with students. The price must be the price charged to students paying the full meal price plus the value of federal reimbursement for paid meals and the USDA Food Value.

1.7. USDA Foods

The district will use the full entitlement of USDA Foods made available under the Federal Food Distribution Program for school meal programs.

1.8. Non-Profit School Food Service Account

The district will maintain a non-profit school food service account. All revenues will be used solely for the school meal programs and to improve the quality of the food service program for the students being served. Food sold a la carte and food sold to other school entities will be priced to recover, at a minimum, food costs.

1.9. Meal Charge Policy

1.9.1. In order to allow students to receive nutritious meals, prevent over-identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program, the district will establish a written meal charge “policy” (standard practices) for students eligible for reduced price meals and students that are not eligible for free meals (those paying the full-price rate).

1.9.2. The meal charge “policy” will be communicated to households each year so that district employees, families and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. (Form #6701F0-School Meal Payment Guidelines)

1.9.3. The meal charge “policy” will also include a process for handling unpaid meal charges. Staff will refer to Procedure #6701P2-Food Service Accounting for meal charging and family assistance guidelines, negative account balance notifications, and account resolution processes.

1.10. Children with Special Dietary Needs

The district will establish procedures to accommodate children with special dietary needs due to a disability or other health condition, when such condition is evidenced by a diet prescription form signed by a licensed medical authority. The district food service department will work with the district’s nurse and 504 Coordinator to accommodate special dietary needs. Staff will refer to Procedure #6701P2-Food Service Accounting, section 5, for guidance.

1.11. Civil Rights

The district will follow USDA Food and Nutrition civil rights and nondiscrimination policies.

1.12. Procurement

The district will follow all state and Federal guidelines when procuring food for the Federal School Meal Programs and as part of district procurement procedures, will establish a procurement plan and Code of Conduct consistent with the Uniform Grant Guidance (2 CFR 200). Food specifications will be written in a manner to procure food products that meet the school meal pattern requirements.

1.13. Smart Snacks Standards in School

All foods and beverages sold to students on campus during the school day (e.g., vending machines, school stores, bake sales, and other school fundraisers) will follow USDA Smart Snacks standards. Food or drink sales will be approved by the school official responsible for oversight of the Wellness Policy. School staff will develop and provide a list of healthy and/or alternative items for sale planning.

1.14. Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, and unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. The district will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to carry throughout the day approved water bottles (filled only with water).

1.15. Celebrations and Rewards

Foods offered at school will follow the USDA *Smart Snacks in School* nutrition standards, including those brought for class celebrations and parties, and snacks brought by parents. School staff will develop and provide a list of healthy, recommended food and beverage items for such occasions, including use of alternative ways to reward students and provide incentives. Food and beverages should not be withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Supporting Documentation

6701P2-Food Service Accounting

6701F0-School Meal Payment Guidelines

3413F2-Diet Prescription for Meals at School

[*Eligibility Manual for School Meals*](#), USDA Food and Nutrition Services, Child Nutrition Programs

[*School Food Safety Program Reference Sheet*](#), OSPI/CNS

[*Smart Snacks Reference Chart*](#), OSPI/CNS

[Smart Food Planner-Products \(searchable\)](#), Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Document History

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