

FOOD SERVICE BUDGET DISUCSSION

November 2009

USD #289 currently employs one (1) food service director and nine (9) food service workers. We did not fill the position of Sharon House when she retired in May 2009.

During this school year, we have 2 student workers at each building during 1st block; 2 student workers at each building during 2nd block; and 3 student workers at each building during 3rd block (lunch block) – for a total of 14 student workers. Student workers do not get paid, but they do eat breakfast and lunch free every day. This will be eliminated during the 2010-11 school year, and student workers will only get to each LUNCH free on the day they are working in the kitchen. (No free breakfast and no free lunch on days not working will save the district approximately \$6500.)

Eighty percent (80%) of our food purchase is on bid. Our storage is limited, so this limits how much we can order– when you bid food, it all comes in at one time. We get food delivery from bid two times per year. Our major food orders come from Springfield Foods, Sysco, US Foods, and Clayton Paper (for paper products). Melinda Bouse has asked our local grocery if they are interested in bidding some items for us, but they have declined so far. Part of the problem is that we would need to order a lot more food from them and would have to guarantee orders, which we cannot do.

In the debate of buying bread versus making bread – it is still cheaper to make, even with employing a baker. We do buy bread for grilled cheese and toast, but all other bread and bread products are homemade (rolls, buns, etc.)

Federal and state government places certain restrictions on what can be served and how much will be served. Food requirements for our students are:

Breakfast:

- 1 oz meat or meat alternative
- 2 grain breads
- ½ c. fruit or juice
- 1 c. milk (carton)

Lunch:

- 2 oz. meat or meat alternative
- 15 grain breads per week at the elementary/18 grain breads per week at the MS/HS
- ½ c. fruit- will increase to 1 c. in 2010-11
- ½ c. vegetable – will increase to 1 c. in 2010-11
- 1 c. milk (carton)

We are required to give each student 2 rolls (when hot rolls are on the menu) to meet the grains requirement.

In addition, beginning in the 2010-11 school year, we will need to offer WHOLE GRAIN breads at least 2x per week.

While we do not offer cake (as a dessert) that often, it DOES count in our grain offerings for the week when we do have it. The cake piece needs to be a certain size to meet regulations for the weekly grain count.

Our district chooses to do OFFER vs. SERVE – which means, we OFFER the food, and it counts as an item, as long as the student takes their required number of starred items.

We are required to employ a “monitor” that checks each tray to make sure each student has what they need to comply with federal/state regulations.

The ala-carte window is not a money-making endeavor – we have to employ one full-time person to run the window and also employ someone to take the money (we are required to have separate people –we cannot take money at the “window” – it has to be taken from a cashier.) Eliminating the ala-carte window – on a temporary basis – will save the district money – although at this time, I am not sure of the exact savings – would be at least the one employee, if not two.

The food service department knows what meals the students like. When there is a “good lunch”, the ala-carte line is significantly shorter. When pizza is offered at the main line (the lunch menu) it is not offered at ala-carte. If ala-carte is eliminated for the 2010-11 school year, the food service department would rotate the meals the students “like” much more often, and not “branch out” so much in its’ offerings of different foods. The foodservice department has received criticism from some that our menus do not offer a lot of variety. In an effort to keep costs down, variety sometimes goes out the window!

The food service department also takes some criticism for not offering fresh fruit more often – part of the problem with offering fresh fruit is the availability, the cost, and the quality, especially during the months of November through March. If the district orders fresh fruit, we are at the “whim” of the market – bananas usually come to us green and the day bananas are on the lunch menu is not the day we can offer them because of this. The shelf life for fresh fruit is also not very long; consequently, if the students don’t eat it on the day(s) it is offered, the freshness becomes a problem. Sometimes fresh fruit ends up spoiled and in the trash. Also, according to our food service department, fresh fruit is NOT a big item with our students. If given the choice, the majority of the students do not choose to take fresh fruit.

The food service department usually needs to be supplemented with about \$100,000 from General Fund on a yearly basis. My charge to Melinda Bouse, food service director, is to reduce her General Fund supplement by 10% of \$10,000. That is what we are working on for this school year.