



School Committee Response to Motion August 2024

Motion:

Ask the superintendent to have a survey regarding the quality of school lunch and provide some recommendations to improve its quality that includes choices, taste, and freshness.

LPS Student Nutrition menus feature flavor forward **entrées** with at least four options available **daily including a main entrée**, a grill item, a cold **entrée**, and a sandwich of the day. Every day we also feature a hot and cold vegetarian item for students. We have integrated culturally diverse menu options based on student feedback and collaboration with the Tasting History Cookbook.

Our menu standards include fresh fruits and vegetables featuring local produce, and premium ingredients such as Tyson white meat chicken, Rich's pizza dough, Land o' Lakes cheese, Barilla pasta, Cheerios and locally made breakfast items from Ashley's Confections. The menu also features Limited Time Offers, Harvest of the Month recipes, and monthly Special Promotions to increase variety, prevent menu fatigue, and incorporate fun into school meals.

Student engagement and feedback is an integral part of our menu development strategy. Over the past year, we have conducted 37 taste tests across 22 schools. We use data gathered from these taste tests as a metric of menu acceptability. In addition to taste tests, we conducted 26 menu item feedback surveys in cafeterias this past year. These surveys gather feedback on menu items being served that day at lunchtime. We use this data to implement recipe changes, menu changes and as a training tool for the food service team. We also piloted QR survey flyers, which directed students to digital feedback surveys, at Lowell High School, Robinson Middle School, and Butler Middle school with poor response. Aramark sent out a "Your Voice Survey" with no responses.

Our plan for school year 24-25 is as follows for Student Engagement:

- Continue student taste tests and **café** engagement to gauge menu acceptability.
- Continue use of QR code surveys for continual feedback access.
- "Be Heard" feedback email on our website and posted in all cafeterias.
- Implement Student Nutrition Advisory Committee for the district. This committee will need to consist of Administration, Aramark, and students. This is an

opportunity to educate about school meals, increase student voices in menu selection, and sample current menu options and new recipes.

Opportunity Areas:

- Enhanced Culinary Training for LPS foodservice cooks:
 - An intense culinary boot camp for current cooks to develop skills to effectively implement menu items and presentation standards to elevate our menu.
 - Increase culinary skills focusing on presentation, scratch cooking, and cooking techniques to increase quality of meals.
 - Recommend in addition to current professional development training a mandatory hands-on culinary class monthly for two hours after school.
- Communication:
 - Quarterly review of program highlights to be shared with the school committee, focusing on program highlights, student feedback and menu.

Respectfully Submitted,

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General Manager