

School Administrative Unit #63

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Bryan K. Lane
Superintendent of Schools

Betty Moore, M.Ed.
Director of Student Support Services

Lise Tucker
Business Administrator

TO: The WLC School Board
FROM: Bryan Lane
DATE: 5/1/18
RE: Food Service Parent Survey

I have children that attend, choose all that are appropriate. (95 responses)

FRES	59	62%
WLC MS	34	36%
WLC HS	32	34%

Does your child purchase school lunch? (96 responses)

Yes	55	57%
No	41	43%

If they do not choose to take school lunch- choose all that apply: (51 responses)

I prefer to provide their meals	0	
The program is too costly	6	12%
My child does not like the food choices	32	63%
My child does not like the quality of the food	32	63%
My child has specific nutritional needs	2	4%
Not enough time to get food and eat	14	27%

If your child does purchase school lunch, choose all that apply: (39 responses)

My child enjoys the choices	23	59%
My child feels they have enough to eat	18	46%
My child like the "ala carte" options	23	59%
The ease of prepaying is helpful	27	69%

Comments

The quality of the food and the lack of appropriate amount of time for lunch (20 minutes) is concerning.
My kids adore Chef Deb and she truly does go above and beyond in supporting the school, my kids, and all of the students. She is a resource I hope FRES appreciates.
My child often complains that he is hungry.
My children have complained about the choice of food and also the quality.
Healthier lunches need to be offered. Not the same meals (example pizza) multiple times a week. More choices as well. Feel the quality of meals has gone down over the years compared to when my oldest bought school lunches.
We buy lunch about once a month when she sees chicken tenders on the menu. Since she is such a picky eater I mostly pack her lunch so more options would be great, but if not, packing her lunch is just fine :)
Don't allow children to purchase whatever they want. I'm not going to continue paying for junk food.

My child dislikes the lunches, but does not take the time to bring her own. She finds the selections not appealing. Cold meatball subs, burnt pizza, not enough food to fill her. I have heard nothing but complaints from her and her friends over the past few months. The quality and quantity have gone way downhill.
Need to provide meal options without wheat and meat.
My daughter is very picky, so a lot of the choices, she does not like. She may have it 1 or 2 times a month. When she does get it, she does enjoy it.
My children purchase lunches usually 1-2 times a week depending on what the choices are. When they do buy lunch they don't have any complaints!
My children at WLC are not keen on the lunches and started off eating them but after a little while preferred lunch from home. Main complaints were it wasn't very appealing and was bland. Not a great choice of food for them. My child at FRES will sometimes choose 'hot lunch' but more often than not would prefer a packed lunch from home.
My children get free lunch so i make them get lunch at school to save money.
I would really like to see you eliminate Styrofoam containers and plastic silverware at lunch. I understand they are cheaper and easier, but really bad for our world. I would also like to see lunch time be a bit longer. My daughter runs out of time a lot. She LOVES chef Deb and I like the way she incorporates the garden when possible. I also like the idea that you have recess first and then lunch. Not a huge fan of the ice cream every Friday, but as a special treat I guess it's fine. I hope they aren't eating ice cream and throwing away their meal.
My Son is always pleased with lunch and also Breakfast. Tells me how good everything is.
Both of my children come home stating they are not given enough to eat for lunch.
To much processed and prepackaged foods. Canned fruits are used more than fresh fruit. Pop tarts should be banned! Food should be made from scratch and be farm to table especially when we live in a community that emphasizes on sustainability. My daughter who has a smaller portion than what was she had at her previous school has gained 10lbs this year from eating the breakfast and lunch program at the school. The difference is the homemade versus processed foods and food high in calories even though her amount is less.
My child is pretty picky and it is nice to be able to have her get school lunch a couple of times a week.
My child would like me to join him at lunchtime. But there is no clear communication between principal, front office and lunch room. I call set up to visit and get turned away because they didn't know I was coming. Bothers my son.
Nutrition plays an important role in overall child health and ability to learn. Pre-made, packaged, processed foods may meet nutrition guidelines on paper but are not as healthy and beneficial as food made from scratch. The quality of the food could be better controlled if food was made onsite. This gives control over the quality of ingredients and the ability to prepare food that is safe for a variety of special diets. Food made from scratch can also be more cost effective when done correctly. For the number of children served in this district you could easily make your meals from scratch and even make your own salad dressings and condiments (ie. ketchup). Exposure to a variety of foods contributes to a child's development. This is exposure not only to different fruits, vegetables, grains, and protein sources but also to foods from different cultures. I would strongly encourage you to serve only plain milk and to stop serving flavored milk or at least limit the number of times a week that is an option. Children like it but it is not teaching lifelong healthy habits and is yet another source of added sugar that is unnecessary. Food served at school should lead by example and provide only healthy options. I encourage you to leave the treat foods (such as flavored milk) to the discretion of the parent in the home. Children should be learning at meal time in the school and should be exposed to healthy eating patterns and learn what a balanced meal looks like. Meal time is not just time to eat it should be seen as a learning opportunity just like the rest of the school day. In addition to this, serving ice cream on Fridays during the school day should end. Again, you should leave the treat foods up to the parent in the home. 1 in 6 children in the United States are obese. Children are getting plenty of treat foods and added sugar. They do not need to get it at school too. Meal time is short enough, you do not need children skipping healthier food options to make sure they have time to eat ice cream. Breakfast options also should follow the above and provide a meal that is going to support the child's ability to concentrate and learn. Looking at the breakfast menu items served on a rotating basis such as cereal, crackers, and cinnamon buns those are all going to be digested quickly, result in a spike in blood

sugar, followed by a drop and the children are going to soon be hungry and have a hard time concentrating vs. having a more balanced breakfast with good protein that will keep blood sugar levels more stable. The food service brochure sent home in the beginning of the year said "Our objective is to serve the highest quality and nutritious food available...". I encourage you to think about the food service program and whether or not you are meeting this objective. You can choose to meet the USDA requirements with lower quality pre-made, packaged, processed foods but there is no reason why you can't hold yourself to a higher standard and change your perspective regarding meal time as an important part of a child's daily education and at the same time potentially decrease the amount you are spending on food and increase the participation of the students in the meal program. Lastly I would like to paint a picture for you to reflect on. My child reported to me recently that for lunch there was a meal of pancakes w/syrup, hash brown potato patty, sausage, and fruit. That meal does not have a lot of fiber, has a high fat protein source, added sugar, a poor vegetable choice and very little color variation. What if instead you served a similar meal but made a homemade whole wheat 'pancake bake' served with homemade blueberry 'syrup' (just frozen blueberries cooked in their own juice to create a syrup...nothing added), hard-boiled egg, diced roasted homemade sweet potato and white potato home fries, and sliced honeydew melon? Food for thought...

I do not find the menus to be nutritious. It is mostly filled with reheated, processed items. I also don't appreciate that they sell ice cream to the elementary students. Why would 6 to 11-year-old kids need that kind of dessert every Friday for lunch. It seems like an unhealthy habit to be promoting with kids who are just learning about how to eat right.

The food selection for elementary school age kids is not realistic of what that age group eats. The food is cooked too far in advance and looks and tastes terrible. For example: Keeping food items with cheese on it warmed for hours prior to serving dries it out. Maybe consider a new menu and having the staff cook the food closer to serving time.

My children tell me that the food isn't very tasteful and the portions are very small

My child does purchase items for lunch but not often. His favorite is the Bosco sticks!

I have 3 children only 1 eats school lunch. I pack lunch for 2 because they do not like it. My son that eats the school lunch finds it to be a very small portion and unhappy with the quality.

Payment through my meal website is easy but have an additional fee please work toward eliminating the fee. Thanks.

The child in High school feels there is not enough food in lunch where she needs to purchase a 2nd lunch (sometimes)

You didn't give a choice of yes and no if your child eats hot lunch for people with multiple children in school. You also didn't give a choice of taking hot lunch is easier than carrying a lunch because you are already caring to much stuff with having to carry all of your books all day back and forth to classes. Also it is my understanding that this survey is closed yet I just got this email.

The only thing I don't like is the fee for paying with me credit card.

My child will get hot lunch as a last resort, like running late.

My child complains there isn't enough food served and the quality of the food is not good. Thank you

Food service needs more/better staff that can cook and provide quality food and choices..

My child eats the lunch - but usually does not like it

I have one child that will get pizza occasionally. My other child has never eaten hot lunch in the 8 years. I don't think they have a real qualified complaint about the program, they just like my home made lunches better.

Both of my kids will occasionally purchase lunch, but only on days where there is a specific food item being served that they particularly like. Pizza and chicken tenders are really the two main items they like.

My children think that the staff does a good job serving them. They are friendly and do the best they can with the food that they are given to prepare meals. Borrowing from Mike Myers of Saturday Night Live, the food used to prepare school lunch is, "so ew!"

Occasionally both of my children buy food if they forget lunch. Occasionally, I receive an email stating that they owe a small amount of money. I am glad that they don't buy lunch that often, because if they did, I'd be furious about the way the fiduciary aspect of school lunch. Not that it's that much money per meal, but I want to be able to view a receipt to check that it is accurate or in agreement with what we

believe we are spending. When I attempt to take a quick look, I have to enter a student code and password that I never set up. It is cumbersome. Also, I don't like that I would be charged money to make online payments to the lunch program for each of my children. It seems a little suspect to me. I would prefer to have fast hassle free access to this information and form of payment. My kids much prefer to bring in their own lunch because it tastes better...they like fresh fruit, cheese sticks, and crackers or a sandwich. They'd love to heat up a meal from home, but feel there isn't enough time to wait for a microwave to be available.

I sure wish Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution caught on nationwide and helped to improve all school lunch programs. Fresh healthy food doesn't have to cost a lot of money.

So, Jamie Oliver would be GREAT. Students would likely be appreciative if you were to add more microwaves so that kids could reheat leftover meals brought from home. They go for the cold fresh fruit, etc because there are only two microwaves and lunch time is pretty short.

Thank you for asking for my feedback,

Eileen Smith

The food offered is very low quality

Kids Don't feel there is enough to eat

The menu is confusing as two choices of meals are listed - which one is for middle school?

The food quality is subpar. When they get hot lunch the quantity is not enough to sustain them through the rest of the day. Providing a sixth grade female with the same quantity of food as a twelfth grade male that participates in after school sports is completely illogical. I try to provide my children with minimally processed food, but I find much of what the hot lunch program offers is heat and serve items. The reason the program is running in the red is due to lack of quality and quantity of food provided.

The food provided is definitely less than appropriate. The amount of food provided for a 6th grade boy vs an 11 to grade boy is tremendously different. Also sometimes the selection is horrible. If you would like to see pictures of the menu please let me know.

The lunches at the school are the same size lunches given to the 6th graders and a 12 grade adult student. This is a problem because a 11 year old child does not eat as much as a 17 year old boy who actively plays sports and activities after school.

My child likes Sal's pizza and taco day. That's about it. She said the hamburgers often have hard pieces in them. She does not like the quality of most of the food and is often still hungry on the days she does buy lunch.

Perhaps the lunch period should be a little longer.

My 5th grader gets hot lunch every once in a while when we have had a busy morning. She is always complaint that the taste and variety is not good.

I've heard several parents say that FRES lunch time is very stressful. This is not related too the food service itself, but I because of the crowded conditions of the cafeteria, the need to control noise aggressively, and the brevity of the lunch period itself. Is it possible to add soundproofing panels to the walls and ceiling (if they aren't already there) or even some wall decoration that absorbs noise? Or is it possible to create an alternative lunch location for kids who would like some quiet space? It is not currently a relaxing environment for many kids, as they are rushed and struggle to balance eating, talking with friends, and following all of the rules.

Regarding the food service, I choose to send from home because I expect the food at school is highly processed, not freshly prepared (although I know Chef Deb does prepare some fresh items), and not very flavorful or appetizing. Partly this may be based on my childhood experience. If I knew that the food at school was all freshly prepared, or that part of signing up for school lunch included a monthly food-prep session for the students, or a trip to the community garden to plant/cultivate/harvest, I would be much more inclined to sign my children up, and even willing to pay extra. I know there are several parents who would be happy to get involved in a hands-on way as volunteers.

Any change to the meal service should involve an "open house" where parents can see/touch/taste the food as well. My husband and I have joined our children for lunch on occasion during the open lunch weeks at FRES, but there has not been much time to really try the food and get a sense of what's offered on a regular basis.

My children go through the monthly calendar and choose which days they like and those are the days they purchase lunch through the school program. I don't believe they have enough time to go through

the lunch line and still have time to eat.

I would love to see fresher food options.

Also I don't think many students find lunch to be relaxing or a time to decompress. The strictness of the cafeteria is a little much. This is the time students should be able to laugh with their friends or sit with other children that they may not be in class

We would like to see you eliminate Styrofoam and plastic ware. There's really no reason for it in this day and age.