

Executive Summary

THE PATH TO PROVIDING EVERY ELIGIBLE STUDENT GREATER ACCESS to meals involves a network of processes and relationships among various stakeholders in the Los Angeles Unified School District, from the Food Services Branch to Staff Relations to Secondary Instruction to Site Administration to the Local District Superintendent. In mastering the intricacies of this network and achieving the goal of allowing every student “20 minutes to eat” after obtaining a meal, professionals in each area shall work together to promote a school based plan which will guide the process toward success.

The landscape within education has changed. The “we’ve-always-done-it-this-way” approach simply will not work within the present climate. With the current state of the economy and unemployment on the rise, the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced meals continues to grow. Participation in the National School Lunch program at the secondary level maintains a steady climb in the 08-09 School Year. The Provision 2 (ticketless) program at secondary schools positively impacts student participation even more. All these various forces have contributed to the very real possibility of denying students access to meals; a challenge that affects all stakeholders.

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO EFFECTIVELY DRIVE CHANGE in the food service program. Plans for modernization of our secondary level schools continue. Modernizing secondary schools involves adding additional staff and opening up more points of service as in scramble area lines, windows and if necessary, carts for outside service. Many secondary schools strive to qualify for the Provision 2 (ticketless) program. The promotion and establishment of these programs drives participation and, especially at the larger schools, make it very difficult to meet the Board policy requiring every student to have “20 minutes to eat”. This is why the Food Services Branch collaborated with Secondary Instruction, Human Resources, and Local District Superintendents to establish a plan to help achieve greater access to meals for all eligible students. By developing strategies and identifying resources

designed to assist all stakeholders in understanding the dynamics behind “20 minutes to eat”, we can uphold the Board Policy and allow students the time they need to fuel themselves for academic success.

In producing the Student Access to Meals Tool-Kit, the Food Services Branch, Secondary Instruction, and Human Resources sought to achieve the following:

- ❖ Specific school based information regarding the current status of each school site’s food service program
 - Number of food service staff and total labor hours
 - Number of Points of Service (areas where students exchange money/ticket for a reimbursable meal)
 - Lunch participation percentages
 - Number of minutes required to allow 70% of eligible students at the school site to have “20 minutes to eat” after obtaining a meal
 - Area Food Service Supervisor assistance with analyzing the options available; adding minutes to the lunch schedule, adding Points of Service if economically feasible, adding additional time to the lunch period by modifying the bell schedule
 - Updates to the Local District Superintendent and school site administration regarding lunch participation and the impact modifications in lunch schedule has on student access to meals

- ❖ Collaboration with stakeholders
 - SECONDARY INSTRUCTION to provide training or assistance to Administration in modifying bell schedules
 - STAFF RELATIONS to provide guidance in UTLA regulations regarding faculty concerns with bell schedule changes
 - LOCAL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT to assist with monitoring the program school based plan for follow-through

EDUCATING CHILDREN AND INSTILLING IN THEM the means for a future thriving with possibilities requires looking out for the needs and best

interests of many. We do not have the luxury of looking out for the interests of one. If we are to achieve an environment that truly promotes a winning academic performance for every student, the nutritional intake of every child within the District must be addressed.

Currently, only 30% of secondary schools implement an “out of the ordinary” bell schedule. The remaining percentage of secondary schools, incorporate one 30 minute lunch period. It is impossible to serve every eligible student a meal and allow them “20 minutes to eat” within this allocated time. Compounding this issue is a lack of sufficient seating capacity and unsafe crowding within the lunch area and cafeteria. Fights amongst students often result simply due to the sheer number of students trying to eat at the same time. Students often go hungry, share meals or purchase inadequate snack items from the Student Store as a quick fix to their hunger when the lines are too long in the cafeteria.

NUTRITIONAL INTAKE OF STUDENTS PLAYS A VITAL SUPPORTING ROLE in providing a flourishing academic environment. Our students come from varying backgrounds and home life. The Food Services Branch recognizes the breakfast and lunch meals provided are often the most nutritionally substantial meals many students will consume during their day. Placing the importance of nutritional intake on low priority is counterproductive to a student’s successful academic performance.

The Student Access to Meals Tool-Kit offers practical solutions to help school site administration develop and maintain an atmosphere that recognizes the significance nutritional intake plays in the life of a healthy, “ready to learn”, student.

The goal of the Tool-Kit is to provide guidance and suggestions. There is no “one size fits all approach”.

Progress toward providing every student with the opportunity to receive a healthy, nutritionally beneficial meal depends on the effective, efficient networking and communication at every level between the stakeholders. Management and follow-through with the Student Access to Meals Tool-Kit will create best practices for each individual school site. Best practices implemented and maintained will ensure excellence is achieved.