

Defiance City School Food Service

Q. 1 What is the goal of the School Lunch/Breakfast Program?

The goal of the program is to provide high quality/nutritious lunches and breakfast meals to all students in school. Eligible students receive meals free or at a reduced price. An additional goal is to keep the price low for paying students.

Q. 2. What guidelines have to be followed for the school lunch/breakfast program?

The National School Lunch/Breakfast programs are governed by Federal (U.S. Department of Agriculture) and State (Department of Education) regulations, as well as policies that the local board of education deems necessary.

Q. 3 Who plans the school menus?

They are planned by a certified school nutrition program director or trained school level manager and advised by a state consultant.

Q. 4. Can schools serve any food they want?

Menus must meet school lunch/breakfast program meal pattern requirements. Meals are planned with a goal of providing students with one third for lunch and one fourth for breakfast of their daily Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for key nutrients and calories.

Q. 5. What about the vegetables that are often not appealing to school-age children?

School-age children often do not like and thus do not eat many vegetables and fruits. This can lead to a deficiency in many nutrients, especially vitamins A and C. For this reason schools are being required to serve fruits and vegetables rich in these two vitamins more often. Schools should serve a variety of such food items so children will be more likely to find one they will eat.

Q. 6. Are snacks such as candy and carbonated beverages available at school?

Eating these snacks instead of a balanced meal promotes poor nutrition and diet deficiencies. State and federal guidelines prohibit the sale of these items in the food service area during lunch. Local guidelines may be more restrictive.

Q. 7. Do schools get commodities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)?

Yes, Commodities are allocated to or ordered by schools, depending on their availability. Commodities range from meat items, such as ground beef, chicken and cheese, to grain products, including bread sticks and fruit whole wheat turnovers.. Some frozen vegetables and fruits, as well as canned vegetables (low in sodium) and fruit (canned in water or unsweetened) are available monthly for a lower cost.

Q. 8. Are these foods of good quality?

Commodities must meet very exact, high quality specifications written by USDA. In many instances they are of higher quality than is generally available in retail grocery stores,

Q. 9 What about the per-packed individual commodities like the applesauce cups and peach cups, aren't they full of sugar and additives?

The individual cups of fruit that we receive from government commodities are not only healthy they are also very cost effective. The schools are not only allowed many of these items, they are also available in many flavors.

Q. 10 How much of the commodities do schools get?

Schools are allotted a set amount of most items each year. This total generally amounts to about 10 percent of the meal cost.

Q. 11 How is the lunch price determined?

A person has to take into account what the school receives from federal and state funds for every student meal it serves. This reimbursement makes up the difference between what the lunch costs to produce and what the students pays. The amount of federal reimbursement paid per lunch depends on the economic need of the student.

Q. 12 Are meals priced as a unit or are the food items priced separately?

A balanced meal provides essential nutrients. Omitting foods, such as vegetables and fruits, may lead to undernourishment and poor school performance.. Buying the meal as a unit encourages students to accept and eat the complete meal. We have what is called Offer Versus Serve which means they have to choose three of the five for lunch and three of the four for breakfast. Meal components may be priced separately and are usually more expensive. (a-la-carte)

Q. 13 What qualifications does a school nutrition director possess at the school?

A nutrition supervisor completes core training in nutrition, meal planning, quantity food preparation, purchasing and personnel and organization management. A supervisor must also continue training on a prescribed basis. Training is based on the tasks and functions identified by the American School Food Service Association.

Q. 14 Why should my child buy lunch at school rather bring it from home?

The school lunch assures that your child is receiving a nutritionally balanced meal. More variety (an established dietary guideline) is easier to achieve through school menus. Also, the subsidized school lunch is less expensive than a lunch of equal nutritional value prepared and packed at home.

Q. 15 Are there other advantages to my child participating in the school lunch/breakfast program?

Students learn good nutrition habits that provide a basis for better health throughout their lives. School lunches contain a variety of foods and offer students exposure to new foods. The better nourished student will generally have better attendance, be more attentive and have more energy to cope with school day opportunities.