



Bethel Public Schools

Department of Nutrition Services

August 31, 2012

Dear Bethel Public Schools Family,

Welcome back to the 2012-13 school year!

This year our School lunches will have a new look with many more healthy choices for your child everyday! For the first time in nearly two decades, the federal government has issued new nutrition standards for meals served to America's schoolchildren, based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For more information on the Dietary Guidelines, see ChooseMyPlate.gov.

We want to let you know about some of the changes your child will see in our cafeteria this year. The new requirements include strict limits on the calories, saturated fat, trans fat and sodium in school meals. We are meeting these nutrition standards by offering students a selection of low-fat and fat-free milk, larger portions of colorful fruits and vegetables, and a variety of whole grains and lean protein choices. All lunches include five meal components:

- a **meat or meat alternate** such as yogurt, lean beef, chicken or low-fat cheese;
- a **grain** such as whole-wheat bread or brown rice;
- a fresh or canned **fruit** selection;
- raw or cooked **vegetables** in a variety of colors; and
- low-fat or fat-free **milk** selections.

Each child must select at least three of these five components on their tray to make a meal, including a fruit or vegetable. The biggest change is that children **must** select a fruit or a vegetable with their lunch every day. Without a vegetable or fruit, students will be charged the a la carte price instead of the meal price. **Please understand, free and reduced students will be charged accordingly if they do not comply with the new meal pattern.**

Our school district will be encouraging students to try the new foods being offered this year. **We are also asking for your help.** Please explain these changes to your child before they arrive at school. Every student needs to be prepared to select at least one fruit or vegetable with their lunch every day. We are planning our menus to include selections we know students like, as well as many different foods they may not have tried before. Please encourage your child to try these new foods. They just might find a new favorite!

We look forward to serving your child this year and we welcome your feedback regarding our menus and choices. To find out more about our school nutrition programs visit our website at www.bethel.k12.ct.us

Have a great year!

Sincerely,
Amanda Riley, Food Service Director
Bethel Public Schools
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Bethel School District



School Meals Makeover Coming This Fall

As you may have heard, for the first time in 15 years, the USDA has made significant changes to school meals in an effort to curb childhood obesity. In December of 2010 the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kid's Act was passed into law. In January of 2012 the U.S. Department of Agriculture released the final meal pattern requirements that are mandated by that law. What does this mean for us?

We have always wanted to provide you with the best possible healthy meal, so many of these "new" requirements are already in place. We have always

offered a great selection of fruits and vegetables throughout the week. You have already seen low fat and no fat milk in our schools. You may know that all of our sandwiches are made using whole grain and whole wheat breads, and that we are serving brown rice and other whole grain items. Our menus have always been analyzed to make sure that we are in compliance with the Dietary Guidelines and USDA regulations.

What is the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act?

The final rule **updates the meal patterns and nutrition standards** for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to align them with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

This rule requires schools to increase the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat fluid milk in school meals; reduce the levels of sodium, saturated fat and trans fat in meals; and meet the

nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. These improvements to the school meal programs, largely based on recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, are expected to enhance the diet and health of school children, and help mitigate the childhood obesity trend.



Bethel School District

Changes You May Notice

We will begin using a Food Based Menu planning system

Every meal will consist of five components: grains, meat/meat alternatives, fruit, vegetable, and milk. In order to be considered a student meal, the student must select three of the five components. We encourage students to select all five components to receive a balanced meal.

Every student will be required to take 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetable each day to make a reimbursable meal.

We follow a plan that is called offer vs. serve. Larger portions of vegetables and fruit will be available to those students who want them. The minimum amount that a student will have to

take is 1/2 cup of a fruit or 1/2 cup of a vegetable.

It is important to note that students who qualify for free and reduced must follow the new meal pattern or they will be charged a la carte pricing.

Legumes will be offered at least once a week

Legumes are from the bean/pea family, but they are not green beans or green peas! Legumes are full mature beans, such as black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans. You may see these items offered as a side item, such as roasted garbanzo beans. Or, they may be part of an entrée, such as refried beans in a burrito.

All snack items are compliant with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Thank You for Your Patience!

As you can imagine, anytime we have this many changes at once there will be a learning curve, not only for you and your children, but for the food service and building staff as well. Please understand that there may be

some slight bumps in the road as we all learn the new requirements and what menu items the students will like the most. We will do our best to serve your children quickly and to have their favorite selections available!



Please contact

Amanda Riley, Food Service Director
at rileya@bethel.k12.ct.us with any questions regarding the HHFKA.

Student Meal Prices for 2012-2013

BREAKFAST FULL PRICE	\$1.95
BREAKFAST REDUCED PRICE	\$0.30
ELEMENTARY LUNCH FULL PRICE	\$2.50
ELEMENTARY LUNCH REDUCED	\$0.40
MS / HS LUNCH FULL PRICE	\$2.90
MS / HS LUNCH REDUCED	\$0.40