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Dear Parents,

### **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 your children 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 non-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 Federal USDA regulations.

### **What is the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA)**

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.

### **Changes You May Notice**

#### **We will begin using a Food Based Menu planning system**

Every meal will consist of five components: grains, meat/meat alternates, fruit, vegetable, and milk. An example of meat alternate is cheese or soy. 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.

#### **Point of Service Meal Counting (Cashier)**

One of the guidelines announced by the Oregon Department of Education is that we will need to have our serving lines reconfigured to have the cashier at the end of the serving line so that our staff person (Cashier) can make sure every student has the right amount of items on their plate. This is called a reimbursable meal, it's the point at which the student is about to leave the serving area with a tray of food and has all the components they need in order for the District to receive reimbursement from the USDA.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD) or (888) 271-5983 Extension 516 (toll free). USDA and the State of Oregon are equal opportunity providers and employers.

**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. We will accomplish this minimum by placing 1/2 cup of a fruit or vegetable on the tray. They are listed on the menu and called “From The Garden”. We understand that not all students will like the offering on their plate; they do not have to eat the product, however, please help us by encouraging them to try these items.

**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.

**Thank you for your patience**

As you can imagine, any time 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!

**What can you do to help?** – Review the menu choices, printed menus were sent to all households in the school district. Talk with your child, let them know about these changes and allow them to discuss how they feel about these changes. If you did not get a copy of the menu, we have paper versions in every school office or you can locate an electronic version by going to the school district website and drilling down to lunch menu.

**What if you have more questions?** – Please contact our office 541-966-3267; if you have any additional questions.

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