

# THE PITTSBURGH SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT:

Strengths and Opportunities in the  
Pittsburgh Public School District

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) operates 54 schools and serves over 31,000 meals to a student population of roughly 25,000.<sup>1</sup> For many of these students, the meals they receive at school make up the majority of calories they eat in a day. Therefore, it is important that school meals are as nutritious and accessible as possible. This report will examine some of PPS's existing policies and practices and make recommendations regarding how the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council could support PPS in making improvements to the school food environment, based on the successes of other cities and school districts.

PPS has already made significant strides towards improving school food; these are highlighted in *Appendix III, Pittsburgh Public School Key School Food Successes*. For example, PPS was an early adopter of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which ensures that all children in the school district receive free breakfast and lunch each day. At the same time, PPS faces challenges common to school districts across the country, such as serving more fresh fruits and vegetables, ensuring that children participate in meal programs, and incorporating lessons about healthy eating into the school curriculum and culture. The first Section of this memorandum will cover strategies to improve the nutritional quality of school meals. The second Section will focus on ways to increase participation in school meal programs and access to food during the school day as well as after school. The final Section will describe ways to incorporate healthy foods into the school curriculum and change school culture to encourage kids to eat healthy foods.

One major impetus for improving school food is a district's Wellness Policy. Under the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, school districts must create formal wellness policies.<sup>2</sup> The Wellness Policy includes goals for student health as well as general guidelines and action steps to accomplish these goals.<sup>3</sup> The existing PPS Wellness Policy was drafted in 2005 and meets the minimum requirements for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.<sup>4</sup> PPS, along with community partners, is currently drafting a new Wellness Policy that will exceed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act standards. Whenever possible, this memorandum will note where policies could be included in the District's new Wellness Policy.

## II. IMPROVING THE NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF SCHOOL FOOD

Schools must meet both federal and state nutrition requirements for school foods. Notably, there are two main categories of food available in schools and each must meet different nutrition standards:

- **Reimbursable meals** are meals for which schools can be reimbursed by the federal or state governments, such as the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

- **Competitive food** is any food item sold in competition with reimbursable meals. Schools are not reimbursed for these foods, and thus students or parents pay full price. Competitive food includes “a la carte” food items sold in cafeterias (e.g. pizza or chips), food sold in vending machines (e.g. snack foods and soda), and food sold at school fundraisers (e.g. bake sales). The standards for competitive foods are less stringent than those for reimbursable meals at both the federal and state level.

This Section discusses strategies to ensure that schools meet federal and state nutrition standards, as well as strategies to encourage schools to exceed these standards when possible.

## **A. Exceeding Federal and State Nutrition Requirements**

As authorized under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established nutrition standards for school meals, including breakfast and lunch, that require daily fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, while limiting calories, sodium, and saturated fat.<sup>5</sup> Districts, however, can go above the federal and state requirements and establish standards that are more stringent. PPS’s current Wellness Policy sets the goal of meeting or exceeding the USDA nutrition standards.<sup>6</sup> While this is helpful as a broader goal, a wellness policy can also establish specific recommendations that support this goal. For example, schools could serve fresh fruit instead of fruit juice to meet the fruit requirement at breakfast and could substitute other less-processed foods whenever possible. Babylon Union Free School District in **Babylon, NY** included in its Wellness Policy a preference for no sugar added products, more stringent sodium restrictions, and limits on grams of sugar per serving.<sup>7</sup>

## **B. Funding for Healthier Food in School Meals**

The largest hurdle to improving the nutritional quality of school meals is budget constraints. PPS’s use of CEP lowers administrative costs for the school district, but the federal reimbursement rates are still very low, and are supposed to cover the costs of labor, storage, and delivery.<sup>8</sup> Schools can apply for grants to fund healthier food purchases, such as the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program or the USDA Farm to School Grant Program. Schools can also decrease the costs of food by preparing more food from scratch, a strategy described later in this Section. The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council can play a key role in advocating for the city and county governments to provide more financial support for school meals.

### **1. Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is a federal program that reimburses elementary schools for purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables.<sup>9</sup> The USDA reimburses schools between \$50 and \$75 per student per year for produce served

outside of reimbursable meal times.<sup>10</sup> Funding is contingent on following a plan to integrate the FFVP with nutritional education; however, the cost of the education is not reimbursable with FFVP funds.<sup>11</sup>

The Pennsylvania Department of Education handles FFVP applications in the state, awarding funds to schools based primarily on need, with a threshold of at least 50% of students eligible to receive free or reduced meals.<sup>12</sup> The Department of Education also considers whether a school's application "effectively demonstrates the ability to operate and administer" the program.<sup>13</sup> Applications to the program must include: (1) an implementation plan; (2) the documented support of a food service director, principal, or district superintendent; and (3) a plan integrating the FFVP with other health, nutrition and anti-obesity efforts.<sup>14</sup> Schools must complete applications on an individual basis.<sup>15</sup> Last year, roughly fifteen Pittsburgh schools applied for the program.<sup>16</sup> Half successfully obtained funding.<sup>17</sup>

Curtistine Walker, PPS's Food Service Director, suggested that the current FFVP application process could be made more efficient, since currently it must go through the individual school, the food service department, and finally to the district administration.<sup>18</sup> Pennsylvania requires that each school submit a separate application.<sup>19</sup> However, the State could amend this process by creating a district-level application process that streamlines approval and gives schools more time to plan their applications. In addition to the sample FFVP application that the District already distributes to schools, school districts can make successful applications available in order to give schools insight into how to apply for and win funding.

## **2. Farm to School Grants**

The USDA has allocated \$5 million a year for the Farm to School Grant program, which is divided among Support Service grants, Implementation grants, Planning grants, and Training grants.<sup>20</sup> In 2016, the USDA awarded 74 Farm to School grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000, depending on the scope of the project.<sup>21</sup> The Clark County Public Health Project in **Vancouver, WA** received a \$100,000 Support Service grant to increase "regionally sourced foods and [expand] food system education opportunities for students in Vancouver Public Schools."<sup>22</sup> Washington State Extension staff will also use the grant funds to develop a plan for conducting field trips on the county-owned 79-acre educational farm.

Notably, the **Pennsylvania Department of Education and Department of Agriculture**, along with **Pennsylvania State University**, were awarded a \$25,000 USDA Farm to School grant in 2016 to organize five statewide training sessions to help farmers and farmers markets provide food for the Summer Food Service Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and National School Lunch Program.<sup>23</sup> School districts will be invited to attend these trainings and meet with producers. PPS and the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council should ensure that both schools and local producers are aware of and attend these trainings.

The USDA Farm to School grants are in high demand. Of the 1,067 applicants in 2013-2015, only 221 received awards, with 53% of these awards given to schools or school districts.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is important to identify state or local resources as well. The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council can get involved in pushing the city and county governments to provide more funding to schools for purchasing fresh, locally grown produce. More information on farm to school programs and funding advocacy is included below.

### **3. Pennsylvania Healthy Farms and Healthy Schools Grants**

Pennsylvania offers small grants for kindergarten classes, specifically, through the Healthy Farms and Healthy Schools Act.<sup>25</sup> These grants can cover farm to school programs, as well as nutrition and agriculture education, teacher and staff training on nutrition and agriculture, activities for parents, caregivers, and community partners, and field trips to Pennsylvania farms.<sup>26</sup> If a school or district chooses to apply for one of these grants to fund a farm to school program, it must also include in its application a list of farmers who have agreed to supply the school or district.<sup>27</sup> Schools may apply for up to \$15,000 annually per school.<sup>28</sup> However, there is a matching requirement: schools must provide 25% of the total costs of the program, either as cash or in-kind support.<sup>29</sup>

## **C. Procuring Locally-Grown Food and Farm to School Programs**

“Farm to school” programs can cover a range of activities and programs. The primary goal of farm to school programs is to incorporate more local produce into school meal service and encourage students to eat more fresh food. In addition, farm to school programs can establish connections with local and regional farms and teach children about where food comes from. Farm to school programs can include purchasing local food to serve in school meals and snacks, building school gardens, taking students on field trips to farms, and inviting farmers to talk to students. Pennsylvania is one of the nation's top producers of several types of fruits and vegetables, making it an ideal setting for farm to school programs.<sup>30</sup> Produce available in the State includes pumpkins, apples, grapes, cherries, pears, peaches, strawberries, snap beans, sweet corn, cantaloupe, and fresh tomatoes.<sup>31</sup>

This Section describes, first, how a geographic preference can help PPS source more food from local farms. This Section then describes other farm to school strategies that help schools use fresh, local foods throughout the year and effectively engage students.

### **1. Geographic Preference**

A 2011 USDA rule allows schools to implement a geographic preference during the formal purchasing process to favor local, unprocessed agricultural products.<sup>32</sup> This

means that while schools generally must choose the lowest bid on school food contracts, schools can preference bids from local farmers even if they are more expensive than bids from non-local vendors. School districts may define “local” however they wish, provided that the district does not say it is “exclusively purchasing Pennsylvania products” as this is a requirement and not a preference.<sup>33</sup> For example, “local” could mean “produced within 150 miles” or “harvested within 4 days of delivery.”

When schools are making large food purchases, the federal government requires that they go through a formal procurement process to ensure fair competition. PPS generally uses a *Request for Proposals* (RFP) process (rather than an *Invitation for a Bid* (IFB) process.) Under the RFP system, the school district can consider additional factors besides price, such as geographic distance, labor standards, or pesticide usage, when deciding which proposal to select.<sup>34</sup> PPS already utilizes its RFP process for produce to favor producers within 150 miles of the district.<sup>35</sup>

Schools can also award a *percent price preference* for local farmers, which decreases the proposed price of bids for local products.<sup>36</sup> For example, a school might grant a 10% price preference for foods produced locally, meaning that local bids will appear 10% less expensive; when a local farmer submits a bid to supply apples at \$20 per bushel, the purchaser would see the bid amount as \$18 per bushel. However, the buyer must still pay full price once the bid is accepted. This system allows local farmers to be competitive with prices offered by larger, national distributors.

## **2. Purchasing Outside the Formal Bid Process**

Schools can also increase their purchases of local foods by using an informal procurement process for smaller purchases. The “small purchase” exemption allows schools to use an informal process for smaller purchases, where the estimated amount of purchase does not exceed the federal small purchase threshold of \$150,000.<sup>37</sup> Because schools do not have to advertise publically for bids in the informal process, they may approach only local producers.<sup>38</sup> By requiring less paperwork, the informal process is less burdensome on the school and the supplier, and makes it easier for smaller producers with less formal procurement experience to participate.

However, states may set their own small purchase thresholds below the \$150,000 federal threshold. Pennsylvania has set a much lower small purchase threshold of \$10,000.<sup>39</sup> Thus, contracts must be under \$10,000 in order to be exempt from the formal procurement process. Increasing the small purchase threshold for Pennsylvania could be a key advocacy area for the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, and other food advocates, in order to promote local foods in schools.

The federal government relaxes procurement requirements further for “micro-purchases” under \$3,000.<sup>40</sup> For these very small purchases, schools can buy from producers without asking for quotes from several businesses, provided that the school has researched the market price of the goods, distributed the bids fairly amongst producers, and does not exceed \$3,000 from a specific buyer in a year.<sup>41</sup> Pennsylvania’s micro-purchase threshold mirrors the federal law.<sup>42</sup> It is also important to note that none of these procurement policies apply if products are donated or come from a school garden.<sup>43</sup>

### **3. Other Farm to School Strategies**

Many school districts find it challenging to source locally grown produce during the school year, outside of the growing season. While there are many cool weather crops that can be harvested in the fall and spring, such as lettuce, spinach, carrots and others, schools can also purchase summer produce and preserve it for the school year. For example, Independence Community School District in **Independence, IA** buys much of its produce in the summer and freezes it to use during the winter months.<sup>44</sup> This solution spreads food spending across the entire year, rather than concentrating it during the academic year. It also allows schools to buy fresh produce when it is cheapest.

School districts can also work through a distributor to purchase locally grown produce. While this means that the farmer receives less money, distributors ease several logistical challenges for schools, such as identifying farmers, coordinating orders across multiple farmers, and transportation. Working with a distributor can be an especially good option to pilot a program and evaluate its cost effectiveness.<sup>45</sup> PPS may be able to work with its existing distributor, Monteverde, to incorporate more farm to school practices.

## **D. Preparation**

When food is prepared such that it looks and tastes good, it can encourage children to try new and healthier foods. Some schools have run into challenges implementing the 2010 federal nutrition standards, while still making meals attractive to students. Investing in more from-scratch cooking and bringing in chefs to help with recipe development can both increase the taste and nutritional quality of school foods, while also decreasing food spending in the long term.

### **1. From-Scratch Cooking**

Transitioning to cooking more food from-scratch has many benefits. School food service staff can better control the ingredients in a dish, helping them meet federal sodium and fat standards.<sup>46</sup> Scratch cooking generally tastes better than pre-packaged food and can lead to higher student satisfaction. It also makes it easier to adjust recipes to address student feedback.<sup>47</sup> While scratch cooking may be

perceived as more expensive, schools are sometimes able to save enough in food costs to make up for the increase in labor costs.<sup>48</sup> For example, the Central Kitchen currently purchases pre-prepared sauces, mashed potatoes, and meat products; however, the canned tomatoes, raw potatoes, and raw meat that are the bases for these products are much less expensive than the pre-prepared items.

Moving to scratch cooking can require a significant initial investment. PPS would have to outfit the Central Kitchen with new equipment to enable scratch cooking and would experience increased labor costs.<sup>49</sup> The USDA Food Service Equipment Grant and reimbursements from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for energy efficient commercial cooking equipment can help offset some of these costs.<sup>50</sup> The Service Equipment Grant is a \$30 million dollar annual fund that provides schools with money to replace outdated or absent food service equipment.<sup>51</sup> The BPA reimbursements provide schools with cash reimbursements based on the energy efficiency of certain commercial kitchen appliances.<sup>52</sup> Labor costs inevitably increase when transitioning to from-scratch cooking, and PPS would need to work with the union and allocate funds to meet this increase. The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council could be supportive of these talks and bring information about the important benefits of from-scratch cooking that make this transition worthwhile.

As an initial investment in scratch cooking, PPS had purchased two new 100-gallon steam jacketed kettles, due in before the 2017/2018 school year.<sup>53</sup> These updated kettles will allow for more flexibility in scratch cooking. Additionally, a recently purchased packaging line will allow PPS to portion individual servings of from-scratch food, such as broccoli salad, to send to Central Kitchen schools.<sup>54</sup>

## **2. Chefs and Recipe Development**

In a 2015 study, researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health demonstrated that schools that hire a trained chef to create healthier menus experience a significant increase in fruit and vegetable consumption among students.<sup>55</sup> According to the study, 64% of students in schools with chef-designed menus chose a vegetable compared to only 33% of students in the control schools.<sup>56</sup> In addition to working behind-the-scenes to develop menu items, chefs can lead nutrition education workshops with students or conduct taste tests for new menu items.<sup>57</sup>

Hiring one chef for the Central Kitchen could have a significant impact on the 21 schools that receive meals from the Central Kitchen. Yet, this can be a costly investment. When cost has been prohibitive, neighboring school districts have sometimes partnered and split the costs of hiring a chef.<sup>58</sup> Schools may also be able to find a less expensive or no-cost chef through the national Chefs Move to Schools program, which encourages chefs to register on a website, indicating their willingness to collaborate with local schools.<sup>59</sup> Currently, there are ten chefs in and around Pittsburgh registered on the website.<sup>60</sup> The school district could collaborate with those chefs to design meal options that emphasize both nutrition and taste,

while remaining feasible for the Central Kitchen. As of October 2016, PPS has hired a new purchaser who is a chef and recent graduate of the Chatham University Food Studies program.<sup>61</sup>

Schools can also draw upon students to create healthy, tasty menu options. A national competition, **Cooking Up Change**, has teams of students compete to design a meal that is nutritious enough to meet the USDA nutrition requirements and inexpensive enough to meet the federal reimbursement rate.<sup>62</sup> The program started in 2007 and well over a thousand students have participated, with schools across the country utilizing winning recipes.<sup>63</sup> Competitions are organized on a city-by-city basis; each city sends winning contestants to the national finals in Washington, D.C.<sup>64</sup> Elements of this competition could be adapted to work at the district level. Pittsburgh students could compete in designing a menu item, with the winners working with food service staff to bring their creation to district schools.

PPS currently offers a culinary arts program at two high schools.<sup>65</sup> Students in this program could also help schools with recipe development. For example, culinary students at the Kapi'olani Community College in **Honolulu, HI** consult with schools and the Hawaii Department of Education to introduce healthier foods into the lunch room and train food service workers in scratch cooking.<sup>66</sup> The program has helped schools with limited resources comply with state law, which requires that schools cook 60% of meals from scratch.<sup>67</sup>

Recipes can become a source of pride for school districts. In **St. Paul, MN**, schools post their recipes to their website.<sup>68</sup> This allows parents the opportunity to not only see what their kids are eating, but also talk to their kids about their favorite meals and recreate those meals at home. Parents can also submit a recipe to the website, giving them the chance to contribute their own delicious, healthy, and culturally-relevant recipes.<sup>69</sup>

## **E. Competitive Foods**

Throughout the school day, students can purchase competitive foods at vending machines, fundraisers, sporting events, or a la carte at the cafeteria. School districts can limit access to unhealthy competitive foods and/or increase access to healthy competitive foods through several different strategies described below.

### **1. Limit Access to Unhealthy Competitive Food Options**

In 2013, the USDA created the Smart Snacks in School (Smart Snacks) standards to improve the quality of competitive foods.<sup>70</sup> Smart Snacks standards limit the fat, sodium, sugar, and calorie content of competitive foods; require that the foods be "whole grain-rich;" and set other nutrition-based requirements.<sup>71</sup> However, these requirements are minimums: districts can go beyond the Smart Snacks baseline and

set stricter nutrition requirements or set limits on the amount of competitive food sold.

In PPS's current Wellness Policy, PPS adopts the Nutritional Standards for Competitive Foods in Pennsylvania Schools.<sup>72</sup> As these standards are largely more lenient than the Smart Snack standards, the federal standards override Pennsylvania's. The only exception is classroom parties; under the Pennsylvania standards, classroom parties must offer fruits, vegetables, and water.<sup>73</sup>

The new PPS Wellness Policy should include nutritional requirements that go beyond the Smart Snacks standards. For example, while Smart Snacks standards set calorie limits on competitive beverages, they still allow flavored milk in elementary and middle schools and "diet" soft drinks and sports drinks in high schools.<sup>74</sup> Some school districts have set standards that prohibit some of these drinks. For example, the high schools in **Bozeman, MT** have removed all artificially-sweetened soft drinks from vending machines.<sup>75</sup>

The new PPS Wellness Policy should also include measures that restrict the amount of competitive foods that can be sold. In **Cambridge, NY**, the School District has set limits on the number of competitive foods that students can purchase in a day – kindergarteners cannot buy snacks, while elementary students can only buy a single snack per day.<sup>76</sup> Though this policy cut into food service revenues, the program still operated at a profit.<sup>77</sup> The **Pittsburgh Montessori School** eliminated snack sales entirely for pre-K-8 students.<sup>78</sup> The school had initially created a policy that removed snacks from student-trafficked areas and made them available only on request, which helped reduce student demand and paved the way for taking the competitive foods out entirely.<sup>79</sup>

## **2. Limit Unhealthy Fundraisers**

Food sold outside of regular school hours, such as at fundraisers or sporting events, is a significant source of unhealthy food for students. One study connected the elimination of unhealthy fundraisers with a 10% drop in student BMI.<sup>80</sup> Although Smart Snacks standards apply to food sold at fundraisers, states may authorize a set number of exempt fundraisers.<sup>81</sup> Pennsylvania, which allows ten exempt fundraisers (each lasting up to a week) in high schools and five exempt fundraisers in middle schools, has one of the weakest state policies.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, school districts and individual schools can play an important role in implementing stronger policies on fundraisers. For example, schools can hold healthy food-only or non-food fundraisers. Long Mill Elementary School in **Youngsville, NC**, for example, sold tickets to a student talent show as a fundraiser, and students in Warren County High School in **Warrenton, NC** accepted donations in exchange for giving blood pressure screenings to basketball spectators.<sup>83</sup> Both fundraisers were financially successful and promoted wellness while avoiding the sale of unhealthy food.<sup>84</sup>

Unlike Pennsylvania, many states, including all states bordering Pennsylvania, prohibit any Smart Snacks exempt fundraisers.<sup>85</sup> Districts can go beyond the standards of their individual states and can follow the examples of these states and allow for fewer or no Smart Snacks-exempt fundraisers. Districts can also implement stricter nutrition requirements for fundraisers or only allow non-food fundraisers. PPS's Wellness Policy currently allows for unhealthy fundraisers,<sup>86</sup> but also states that there should be nutrition standards for all foods sold on campus.<sup>87</sup> To address this contradiction and limit the amount of unhealthy foods at fundraisers and sporting events, districts wanting to promote healthy eating at all school functions should consider strengthening their policies on food sold through these events.

### III. ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

While many school districts around the country still struggle to increase participation in the school lunch program, PPS has been a leader in providing universal free breakfast and lunch to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP is a provision in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that allows individual schools and districts to provide free meals to all students.<sup>88</sup> In order to qualify for CEP, 40% of a school or district's students must be "Identified Students," meaning that they qualify for free or reduced-price meals through other means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).<sup>89</sup> PPS began participating in CEP in 2014.<sup>90</sup> Since then, PPS has provided free and universal breakfast and lunch to all its students.

While CEP helps make school meals accessible for all students, there are still barriers to full participation in school meal programs. There is also more work to be done to ensure that children are well-nourished on weekends and over the summer when school is out and they do not have access to free meals. This Section will examine these barriers and suggest strategies to address them.

#### KEY RESOURCE

Allies for Children and the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank's report ***Breakfast Basics: A Comprehensive Look at School Breakfast Participation in Allegheny County*** provides comprehensive information about breakfast participation across the County. It finds that Pittsburgh Public Schools have the highest breakfast participation throughout the entire county. It also provides best practices for increased breakfast participation, including breakfast in the classroom and grab-n-go breakfasts.

**Source:** Allies for Children and the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank, *Breakfast Basics: A Comprehensive Look at School Breakfast Participation in Allegheny County* (2016), [https://issuu.com/alliesforchildren/docs/afc\\_breakfast\\_report\\_final](https://issuu.com/alliesforchildren/docs/afc_breakfast_report_final).

## A. Breakfast

For kids to learn at their full potential, it is essential that they have a healthy breakfast to start the day. One recent study found that students are more focused if they have had breakfast and they are more likely to participate in class.<sup>91</sup> There is strong evidence that eating breakfast also contributes to higher standardized test scores.<sup>92</sup> In 2015, 60% of Pittsburgh Public School students regularly ate breakfast at school.<sup>93</sup> While this is a very high participation rate compared to other school districts across the country, it still means that 40% of PPS students are not taking free breakfast. This Section includes strategies to increase participation in school breakfast.

### 1. *Breakfast in the Classroom*

While every PPS school offers breakfast, less than half of schools allow students to eat breakfast in the classroom.<sup>94</sup> By contrast, of the ten school districts in the U.S. with the highest breakfast participation rates, all but one allowed students to eat breakfast in the classroom.<sup>95</sup> Students are more likely to participate in school breakfast programs if schools serve the food in the classroom rather than the cafeteria.<sup>96</sup> By moving breakfast to the classroom and making it a part of the school day, schools make breakfast more convenient and decrease the stigma related to getting to school early to eat breakfast.<sup>97</sup>

The Los Angeles Unified School District in **Los Angeles, CA** moved breakfast to the classroom instead of the cafeteria in 570 of its 692 schools.<sup>98</sup> Because of this initiative, breakfast program participation increased 24%.<sup>99</sup>

PPS recently piloted breakfast in the classroom, but rolled it back after custodial staff reacted negatively to the proposed change. Schools can look at ways to streamline breakfast cleanup, even by engaging students, and reduce the burden on custodial staff.<sup>100</sup> For example, schools could designate different activities for different age groups, and make students feel some pride and responsibility in helping clean up and bring food back to the cafeteria.<sup>101</sup>

Another concern regarding breakfast in the classroom is that this could cut into instructional time. Typically, however, the student's breakfast takes only 5-15 minutes in the morning and teachers already spend much of this time on administrative activities such as attendance and announcements.<sup>102</sup>

St. Paul Public Schools in **St. Paul, MN** instituted a district-wide Breakfast to Go program in which students grab plastic bags as they enter school and fill the bags with breakfast items on their way to class.<sup>103</sup> Students enjoy breakfast in the classroom, where they also sort their waste and deposit any trash in hallway.<sup>104</sup> The entire process only takes about fifteen minutes each morning.<sup>105</sup> Because of the program, some St. Paul schools have seen as much as a 100% increase in students

participating in breakfast programs.<sup>106</sup> The St. Paul school district claims that, with students sorting their own waste, there is little to no added burden for custodial services.<sup>107</sup> Additionally, teachers found their students to be more engaged; school nurses received fewer visits; and the district reported an 8% reduction in tardiness and 20% reduction in disciplinary incidents.<sup>108</sup>

## 2. Breakfast Breaks

Schools can also increase breakfast participation by offering a structured breakfast break after the students' first class. This method eliminates tardiness concerns and incorporates breakfast into the school day. In **Homer City, PA**, the Homer-Center School District transitioned to breakfast break after first period.<sup>109</sup> The District preferred this method because it found students were unlikely to choose breakfast over socializing with friends in the morning.<sup>110</sup>

### B. Increase Access to Water

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires that students have access to drinking water, free of charge, in any school setting that serves breakfast or lunch.<sup>111</sup> Water access helps children stay properly hydrated without drinking sugary beverages; currently in the U.S., 54.5% of students ages 6-19 are inadequately hydrated.<sup>112</sup> Dehydration has physical effects on the brain, including decreased blood flow, and results in compromised cognitive function and fatigue.<sup>113</sup> For these reasons, it is important for school districts to provide water to their students. At present, PPS has prioritized water access by installing water jets in all schools.<sup>114</sup>

A district can take several approaches to increase access to water. First, schools can provide students with free or reduced-price reusable water bottles. Although providing bottles at a reduced price requires an upfront cost, it reduces the need to continuously budget for disposable cups or plastic bottles. Cafeterias can install water jets in order to meet their students' water needs or provide 5-gallon jugs or other water coolers for students. **New York City's** Department of Education was able to install \$1,000 water jet machines (which oxygenate and cool water) across nearly half of the city's schools.<sup>115</sup> A study investigating the decision showed that schools with the water jets demonstrated a statistically significant reduction in average body mass

#### KEY RESOURCE

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published the toolkit **Increasing Access to Drinking Water in Schools** in 2014. The toolkit provides guidance on steps to increasing drinking water, including conducting a needs assessment and developing a school water access plan. It also identifies sources of funding a district can draw from – from city grants to corporate donations.

**Source:** U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, *Increasing Access to Drinking Water in Schools* (2014), [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/pdf/Water\\_Access\\_in\\_Schools.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/pdf/Water_Access_in_Schools.pdf).

index among students.<sup>116</sup> Alarmed by lead levels in the water, **Baltimore City** Public Schools transitioned to water coolers throughout its schools.<sup>117</sup> The District has created guidelines that establish access to the coolers for all students and a system for cleaning and changing the coolers.<sup>118</sup>

Coolers must be cleaned weekly, however, presenting logistical hurdles in schools without wash facilities.<sup>119</sup> For the 21 Pittsburgh schools that rely on the Central Kitchen, the Central Kitchen would have to supply and clean all containers.

Districts can prioritize water access by incorporating it into wellness policies. This could include a requirement for schools to provide water throughout the day, or encouraging teachers to give students water breaks and talk about the importance of water consumption.

### **C. Outside of School**

Eating nutritious meals each day, throughout the year, is important for furthering healthy eating habits and children's overall development.<sup>120</sup> School meal programs provide students with nutritious meals during the school day. However, once the school day ends or during school breaks, access to nutritious meals can be a challenge for food insecure families.<sup>121</sup> Several USDA programs and non-profits assist schools in offering meals and snacks after school and over the summer. There are, however, challenges to participating in these programs. Providing free, nutritious meals outside of school should be a priority; it can increase participation in after school and summer activities, alleviate strains on family food budgets, and create job opportunities and investments in local food economies.<sup>122</sup>

#### **1. After School Activities and the Umbrella Model**

After school programs can receive federal reimbursements through both the USDA's After School Snack Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for serving snacks or full meals.<sup>123</sup> The After School Snack Program provides only snacks to students, not full meals. To be eligible for the After School Snack Program, schools or other organizations must serve the food in conjunction with educational or enrichment activities.<sup>124</sup> Unlike the After School Snack Program, organizations that use CACFP funding can offer full meals.<sup>125</sup> Yet, like the After School Snack Program, CACFP also requires an educational component.<sup>126</sup> Currently, PPS has 19 schools participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and 20 schools participating in the After School Snack Program (ASSP).<sup>127</sup>

Recently, schools have adapted CACFP under a program called the Umbrella Model.<sup>128</sup> The Umbrella Model allows all students to receive meals, whether or not they participate in after school programming, so long as the site provides education and enrichment activities and is open to all students.<sup>129</sup> Organizations can serve

meals in a central school location, such as the school cafeteria or a multi-purpose room, or in a community location outside, such as a library or recreation center.<sup>130</sup>

The Umbrella Model provides for flexible after-school meal service but can be challenging for schools that are concerned about discipline and supervision issues.<sup>131</sup> Though students do not have to participate in an activity to receive meals, they may still need supervision.<sup>132</sup> The No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices provides comprehensive information on the Umbrella Model, including findings from pilot studies that identify both challenges and solutions in administering the model.<sup>133</sup> Overall, schools reported no behavioral issues and found that outreach about the program and roll-taking requirements were not as burdensome as expected.<sup>134</sup>

Serving free meals and snacks at after school programs can attract more students to participate while providing nutritious options and improving health.<sup>135</sup> Since students may not have eaten since lunch, after school meals and snacks can also be an important part of students' nutritional intake.<sup>136</sup>

Advocates can help develop afterschool programming by working with local and state legislatures to provide support and funding for improved food options and education activities.<sup>137</sup> Several states have passed legislation that specifically addresses afterschool meal service.<sup>138</sup> **Arkansas** and **Oregon** provide grants for resources and equipment to support afterschool programs, including resources for food service.<sup>139</sup> States have also passed legislation to encourage participation in after-school programs.<sup>140</sup> An **Illinois** House Resolution encourages participation in CACFP programs, while **Maine** established a task force to study issues with the afterschool meal program and develop strategies to increase participation.<sup>141</sup> **Boise, ID** received voter approval for a major bond to finance the construction of three new schools, with community centers at each school, and financial support for after school programs, including meal service, at each community center.<sup>142</sup>

## 2. Backpack Programs

Backpack programs are another strategy to provide nutritious meals outside of traditional school hours. Backpack programs support students who rely on school meals during the week and whose families could benefit from additional nutritious options over the weekend.<sup>143</sup> Currently, the Pittsburgh Food Bank works with PPS to coordinate a backpack program that provides students with two options for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and includes fresh fruits and vegetables.<sup>144</sup> This Section covers strategies to strengthen and expand backpack programs, including generating additional funds to help improve the quality of the meals.

Funding and operating costs are a central challenge to maintaining a backpack program. Feeding one child each weekend during a 38-week school year can cost \$80-\$100.<sup>145</sup> Since these programs are not usually affiliated with an educational or

enrichment program, schools are not eligible for reimbursements through federal meal programs.<sup>146</sup> One way to offset these costs is through financial and in-kind donations of fresh and packaged foodstuffs.<sup>147</sup> However, it is important that food be easy to prepare since children might be cooking alone or in kitchens with limited appliances.

Advocates can provide toolkits, like the one published by Hunger Free Colorado, and other informational resources to those interested in starting a backpack program. Advocates can also assist in organizing volunteers, setting a budget, and tracking the success of a program.<sup>148</sup>

**St. Louis, MO's** Food and Nutrition Service partnered with Operation Food Search, a local food bank, to create Operation Backpack to provide food to children over the weekend. The program provides students with a backpack on Fridays or the last day of school before a weekend or break. Staff and volunteers fill backpacks with nutritious, non-perishable foods, including two entrée items, a fruit and a vegetable, milk, a whole grain breakfast item, and one or two healthy snack items.<sup>149</sup> Operation Backpack has contributed to increased food access and measurable emotional and mental health improvements for both students and their families.<sup>150</sup> In addition, 60% of teachers see improvements in academic performance and behavior from participating students.<sup>151</sup>

#### KEY RESOURCE

Hunger Free Colorado's **Backpack Food Program Starter Toolkit** provides guidance on how to set up a backpack program and how to collaborate with other child nutrition programs and community organizations.

**Source:** Backpack Food Program: Starter Toolkit, Hunger Free Colorado 4 (March 2011), <http://www.hungerfreecommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/HFC-Toolkit-for-starting-a-BackPack-Food-Program.pdf>.

The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council could work with city, county, and state governments to increase funding for the existing PPS and Pittsburgh Community Food Bank backpack program. Since 2013, **Ohio** Governor John Kasich has signed executive orders that earmark a portion of the State's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding for summer meal programs.<sup>152</sup> In the summer of 2013, this funding supported the delivery of 100,000 backpacks, or 600,000 meals, throughout the State.<sup>153</sup> The cities of **Springfield, MO** and **Missoula, MO** have awarded federal Community Development Block Grant funds to backpack programs.<sup>154</sup> Even if the City Government is unable to provide direct funding, it can provide other support, such as publicity. In **San Diego, CA**, the Mayor and City Council President teamed up with the San Diego Food Bank, the California Restaurant Association, and regional chefs and restaurateurs to launch a fundraising campaign for the Food Bank's Food 4 Kids Backpack Program.<sup>155</sup> The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council could also seek funding and support outside of government, and convene a meeting for local businesses and foundations to explain the importance of these programs. In **Yuma County, AZ**, the backpack

program is supported by the United Way of Yuma, Arizona Community Foundation of Yuma, Albertson's Foundation, Walmart, and Bank of America.<sup>156</sup>

One alternative to a standard backpack program is cost-free "markets." In **Washington, D.C.**, eight elementary schools have monthly food markets where parents can shop for groceries when they pick up their children from school.<sup>157</sup> Parents and students receive 23 pounds of food free of charge, at least 40% of which has to be fresh produce.<sup>158</sup> Bryan Station High School in **Lexington, KY** has a similar program; students can receive up to 30 pounds of food per week.<sup>159</sup> These markets also present an opportunity to interact with parents and provide healthy cooking demonstrations and recipes.

### **3. Summer Meals**

Summer can be a particularly challenging time for children from households who rely on school meals to supplement food budgets.<sup>160</sup> Without nutritious meals over the summer, these children are at a higher risk of weight gain and may develop behaviors that contribute to health complications and poor performance once school begins again.<sup>161</sup>

Schools and other organizations can apply for reimbursements for summer meals through the USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO).<sup>162</sup> SSO is only available to schools that receive National School Lunch Program reimbursements, allowing for a more streamlined administration process.<sup>163</sup> Through SSO, these schools can keep their kitchens open over the summer to prepare meals and snacks to serve in the school cafeteria or at community sites that may not have the resources or infrastructure to prepare food.<sup>164</sup> SFSP is available to a wider range of program sponsors, such as local government agencies, community and faith-based organizations, and other private non-profits with the capacity to operate a food service program.<sup>165</sup> SFSP provides a higher reimbursement rate than SSO; however, each sponsor organization must go through an application and training process to operate the program and receive reimbursements.<sup>166</sup>

Pittsburgh has an active summer meal program.<sup>167</sup> The largest coordinated program is a public/private partnership of several organizations including Live Well Pittsburgh and Just Harvest that serves meals at 125 locations, including 28 serviced by a food truck.<sup>168</sup> PPS prepares meals and snacks at the Central Kitchen and delivers the meals to the sites. In cooperation with the mayor's office, Live Well Pittsburgh piloted a publicity effort called GrubUp, which includes a website with a map showing locations of meal sites and a meal hotline.<sup>169</sup> In addition, private funding supports nutritional education programs such as cooking classes at parks.<sup>170</sup>

The PPS summer meal program has over 10,000 students enrolled to receive free lunch.<sup>171</sup> While this number is quite high, over 70,000 students are eligible for these

meals.<sup>172</sup> PPS needs additional support from public and private funding sources to further expand this successful program and provide nutritious meals to more of the Pittsburgh community.

### **a. Increasing Summer Meal Participation**

There may be an opportunity to increase participation in the summer meal program by identifying communities that currently have trouble accessing the meal sites. Providing transportation to summer meal sites for children in these communities is one way to ensure they can access the meals. For example, Mercy Hospital in **Independence, Kansas** partnered with the local school bus company to pick up children in low-access areas and bring them to the hospital for lunch.<sup>173</sup>

Another way to increase summer meal participation is to offer lunch to parents and caregivers. Generally, caregivers that bring their children to a summer meal site cannot eat the food themselves. The USDA does not allow reimbursements for meals served to parents or guardians; in fact, USDA rules explicitly prohibit adults from consuming any meal from a student's plate.<sup>174</sup> Several school districts throughout the country, including **Gettysburg, PA** and **Tucson, AZ**, offer meals for parents at a minimal cost.<sup>175</sup> Summer meal programs can use revenue from these meals to cover the costs of the meals and even generate some income. This income can then be used to increase the nutritional quality of the meals or fund the school meal program during the school year.

One of the benefits of summer meal programs is that students are more likely to participate in youth summer programs if the program also serves free meals.<sup>176</sup> Advocates can help by identifying existing summer programs such as day camps, library reading groups, and other education and recreation programs that can benefit from free meals. **Yuma County, AZ** runs a summer meal program at the Public Library in conjunction with their Children's Summer Reading Program.<sup>177</sup> Participants check out a book, go outside, and pick up a lunch to picnic at the adjacent park.<sup>178</sup> Schools can capitalize on these opportunities, when students are already participating in activities around the city.

### **b. Summer Meals and Job Training**

For public school districts, summer meals are an opportunity to provide both nutrition and education. Many summer meal sites provide education and enrichment activities, which mitigate the effects of summer learning loss.<sup>179</sup> Summer food service can also be a great opportunity to incorporate job training and leadership skill development for young people. Summer food service sponsors can collaborate with state and local government youth employment initiatives. **Tucson, AZ** combined academic programs, job experience, and summer meals into a program that teaches students throughout the summer and gives them paid job experience.<sup>180</sup> The **Washington D.C.** Summer Youth Employment Program, likewise,

engages young people ages 14 – 21 in the summer meal service, including preparing and serving meals at community sites.<sup>181</sup> At a local library café, youth staff paired meals with storytelling and music.<sup>182</sup> Pittsburgh also has a youth employment initiative, Learn and Earn, which schools could incorporate into summer meal programs.<sup>183</sup>

### **c. Farm to School in Summer Meals**

Many schools are introducing local foods into their summer meal programs through Farm to Summer programs.<sup>184</sup> The USDA's Farm-to-School Census found that 22% of school districts incorporate local foods into their summer meals.<sup>185</sup> Purchasing local food can help support local farmers while helping schools and other summer meal sites meet the USDA nutrition standards for summer meals.

Schools and summer meal sponsors can take advantage of the abundance of fresh produce in the summer when prices tend to be more competitive.<sup>186</sup> Since summer meal programs are generally smaller than school year programs, summer can be a good time to establish the costs and logistics of incorporating more local foods into meals.<sup>187</sup> School cafeterias can start with small purchases, so that they do not have to go through the formal bidding process. In **Kalispell, MT**, the summer meals program emphasizes local foods, including a variety of fresh vegetables, fruits, and herbs, as well as local meats for hot dogs and breakfast patties.<sup>188</sup>

## **IV. IMPROVING SCHOOL FOOD CULTURE**

The final Section of this Report considers how to improve the culture around school foods in PPS. Getting students excited about healthy eating and trying new foods increases the likelihood that students will adopt healthier eating habits. Improving school food culture also saves money; one study found that students' food waste amounts to 26.1% of the total food budget.<sup>189</sup> This Section highlights some of the innovative measures that PPS has already put in place to improve school food culture, and provides examples of other measures from schools across the country.

### **A. Marketing Healthy Foods**

As schools improve the nutritional quality of school meals, some students might be resistant to trying new, healthier foods. The USDA has published a guide on how to make school meals more attractive to students.<sup>190</sup> Even aesthetic changes, such as introducing natural light to a cafeteria, can make the mealtime experience more appealing to students.<sup>191</sup> Schools can decorate cafeterias with posters advertising healthy food options. The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement provides ideas for best practices designed to encourage students to make healthy meal choices.<sup>192</sup>

The PPS Food Service Department has worked with schools to implement many Smarter Lunchrooms practices. At these schools, brightly colored signs encourage students to “keep calm and carrot on” and make other healthy lunch choices. The District could use its Wellness Policy to promote Smarter Lunchrooms principles, giving the Food Service Department more authority to require individual schools to adopt those principles.

Students can also be a resource for ideas on cafeteria decoration and design. At one Pittsburgh elementary school, students had a classroom competition to rename the vegetables served as lunch. Winning names included reference to Steelers’ quarterback, Big Ben’s Broccoli.<sup>193</sup> Students in **Omaha, NE** designed an extensive information campaign where color-coded posters helped students decide what food options to purchase.<sup>194</sup> The students involved in this project felt more engaged in the school meal program.<sup>195</sup>

Students can also lead school-wide marketing campaigns to promote healthy foods. Students in **Great Falls, MT** created a student store to sell healthy snacks, advertised through daily nutrition announcements over the school-wide PA system, and advocated for healthier competitive foods in the main cafeteria.<sup>196</sup> In Pittsburgh, student groups such as the Student Envoys at **University Preparatory School** have already shown a desire to focus on school food concerns.<sup>197</sup> The District could use its Wellness Policy to recognize the importance of student groups and to give those groups encouragement through access to resources in order to focus on wellness projects.

## **B. Cafeteria Environment**

The District and individual schools can have a significant impact on students’ willingness to eat healthy items by improving the display of school foods and the general atmosphere of the lunch hour. Making deliberate changes to the cafeteria environment can both increase participation in the lunch program and improve students’ health by encouraging them to select healthier items.

### **1. Student Engagement**

Allowing students to actively engage with their school meal programs increases participation.<sup>198</sup> In some school kitchens, students take a direct role in food preparation. Clearview Elementary School, in **Clear Lake, MN**, allows a few students a day to work with the kitchen staff to prepare food.<sup>199</sup> By understanding the work involved in preparing food, students tend to have greater appreciation for the food service staff and the meals. The Clearview kitchen staff found that the students could also “be a big help” and take pressure off of the staff during busy times.<sup>200</sup> PPS food service staff could identify school kitchens where student participation would be feasible and a positive experience.

Allowing students to customize their meals can also increase consumption of school meals. In **Cincinnati, OH**, cafeterias contain “spice stations” where students can season their meals to their liking.<sup>201</sup> By implementing small changes such as these, Cincinnati’s meal programs have grown more popular and profitable.<sup>202</sup> Salad bars also offer an opportunity for students to pick their foods and feel ownership over their meals. A number of schools have benefited from grants from Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools, a program aligned with the Let’s Move! Initiative.<sup>203</sup> Twelve Pittsburgh schools already have salad bars, and the District could work to ensure that all schools have salad bars and that they are in full use.

## **2. Meal Length and Timing**

Currently, students in PPS receive 30 minutes for lunchtime, which includes the time waiting in line.<sup>204</sup> Fortunately, CEP has likely minimized the amount of time it takes students to receive their lunches since students do not have to pay for lunch.<sup>205</sup> Yet many students and staff report that students still do not have enough time to eat their lunch. Short school meal periods can lead to students hurrying through their meals, not trying new, healthier foods, and wasting food. One study found that students with less than 20 minutes of seat time waste 12.8% more food than students with at least 25 minutes.<sup>206</sup>

School districts and schools have the authority to require a longer lunch period. Arundel High School, in **Gambrills, MD**, doubled the length of its lunch program in 2008, increasing lunchtime from thirty to sixty minutes.<sup>207</sup> During this hour-long lunch break, students have the opportunity to meet with teachers for small-group tutoring.<sup>208</sup> Students were therefore able to eat lunch in a calmer, less-crowded environment.

Another approach is to reduce the amount of time students must wait before getting food. This gives students more time to eat without having to change the actual length of the lunch. In one survey, 80% of students cited long lunch lines as a negative factor in their cafeteria experience.<sup>209</sup> Rather than wait in line, students may be tempted to buy more conveniently located – but generally less nutritious – competitive foods.<sup>210</sup> The District could conduct routine surveys of cafeteria line time, and use the results to suggest layout changes at certain schools.

Family-style dining, where staff or students portion out meals at the table, can also significantly cut back on line time.<sup>211</sup> Family-style meals meet USDA rules, and the USDA has published guidelines for how to implement family-style meals.<sup>212</sup> People for People Charter School in **Philadelphia, PA** has successfully implemented family-style dining.<sup>213</sup> The school uses student “table captains” to manage the distribution of food at each table, which reduces staffing needs while increasing student engagement with the program.<sup>214</sup>

Factors other than line time can also prevent students from taking full advantage of their mealtimes. Teachers and cafeteria supervisors often require quiet and calm before allowing students to line up for food. While this is a useful tool for classroom control, it can come at the expense of mealtime. The District's new Wellness Policy could include a rule that the start of lunch cannot be delayed for behavioral or disciplinary reasons.

Even where schools cannot extend the length of lunch, they can improve nutrition outcomes by moving recess before lunch. Studies suggest that when recess and lunch occur in direct succession, students waste 30% less food and consume 54% more fruits and vegetables.<sup>215</sup> In **Montana**, dozens of schools started putting recess before lunch (RBL) in 2003.<sup>216</sup> Students, staff, and parents were so pleased with the results of this change that the **Montana Office of Public Instruction** compiled a RBL toolkit to help other schools make the transition.<sup>217</sup>

In Pittsburgh, many schools assign students to either a lunch-first schedule or a recess-first schedule. The District Wellness Policy could specifically describe the advantages of a recess-first model, and encourage schools to reorganize schedules in order to optimize the number of students who get the benefit of the more healthful timing.

### **3. Smarter Lunchrooms**

Districts can implement policies to make healthier competitive foods more accessible. Changing the location of healthy foods and drinks can increase the likelihood that students will take these items, as consumers are more likely to prefer the most convenient option, regardless of its healthiness.<sup>218</sup> Schools should design their cafeterias such that students see the approved lunch options first. Moving unhealthy competitive food options out of the cafeteria entirely can discourage students from associating competitive foods with a lunch replacement.<sup>219</sup>

In all Pittsburgh elementary schools, staff moved the chocolate milk behind the plain milk, making it harder to reach. After this change, students were much more likely to choose plain milk. By making plain milk the first choice that students see, this no-cost strategy has decreased the amount of flavored milk chosen by students. The PPS Wellness Policy should include a provision that encourages PPS food service to implement such low and no-cost strategies across the District. In addition to this example, PPS has implemented several other Smarter Lunchroom practices. These include student-created advertising, vegetable naming, as described above, moving trashcans, utilizing tablecloths, and other innovations.<sup>220</sup> PPS also maintains a blog to highlight its Smarter Lunchroom practices, keeping the community informed about its efforts and also serving as a model for other districts throughout the country.<sup>221</sup>

## C. Education

Health and nutrition education initiatives can promote healthy eating habits during and after the school day. The most successful programs engage students directly and create a personal stake and sense of ownership in their food choices and education, while also drawing upon existing resources in the local community.<sup>222</sup> Successful programs also incorporate teachers, staff, and parents as essential partners. Teachers and staff can model healthy eating and praise children for choosing healthy options, which can significantly contribute to the success of a program. Advocates and schools can provide resources for parents to promote consistency by modeling behaviors at home. This Section provides an overview of school health and nutrition initiatives, including examples and best practices from other cities.

### 1. Online Resources

Providing simple, user-friendly resources to inform and engage the school community about food service helps to develop relationships and engagement. Since 2014, PPS has operated a blog that provides frequent news stories about initiatives to improve health and nutrition in schools.<sup>223</sup> Online tools like blogs are easy, efficient ways of distributing useful information. In **Minneapolis, MN**, schools offer a variety of online resources including educational materials to pair with food service, graphic materials to post in classrooms, and videos about their farm to school programs.<sup>224</sup> Resources like these can be helpful for teachers, parents and students alike to incorporate health and nutrition messages in class, at home, and throughout the day.

Currently, the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh implements the Healthy Schools Program, which uses frameworks from the CDC and Alliance for a Healthier Generation to build healthier environments in schools. This year, over 50 PPS schools are participating.<sup>225</sup>

### 2. Taste Testing and Cooking Classes

Cooking classes can be effective tools to educate students about health and nutrition in an engaged, hands-on learning environment. Cooking classes can take a variety of forms from simple lessons to full meal preparation demonstrations. Parents and food service staff can also be involved to learn how to prepare healthy meals. Public schools in **St. Louis, MO** have partnered with Operation Food Search, a local food bank, to implement *Cooking Matters* during after school programming.<sup>226</sup> *Cooking Matters* is a national program that provides parents and students with instruction on smart grocery shopping and easy, healthy meal preparation.<sup>227</sup> St. Louis has also collaborated with Southwest Foodservice Excellence, a private organization, to coordinate the Chef 2 School program, bringing over 60 chefs to work with students.<sup>228</sup> Through existing culinary arts

programs, districts can integrate similar instruction with culinary students leading healthy cooking classes for students and parents. In Pittsburgh, several schools have already implemented the Common Threads Program, which is a hands-on cooking program for students that promotes health and nutrition.<sup>229</sup>

Schools can also implement their own cooking curriculum. In **Tulsa, OK**, schools have a variety of programs to engage students in preparing healthy meals. Bread in the Bag gives elementary school students hands-on experience in bread making, from mixing and kneading to baking.<sup>230</sup>

Taste testing is a simple way to encourage healthy eating choices while introducing students to new and potentially unfamiliar ingredients and recipes.<sup>231</sup> Offering samples of an unfamiliar item increases the likelihood that a student will select that item from the cafeteria line.<sup>232</sup> A typical way of implementing samples is to offer small portions of the new food at the beginning of the line, allowing students to try the item before committing to a meal-sized portion. Students can sample the food while staff or teachers facilitate discussions about where it comes from, how it is made, how to eat it, what nutrients it contains, etc.<sup>233</sup> Weston Public Schools in **Weston, MA** runs a weekly taste test program called “Taste Test Tuesday” that introduces students to new foods.<sup>234</sup> For example, in May 2015, the school featured jicama and, each Tuesday, the school offered students a different preparation of jicama.<sup>235</sup> **Community Kitchen Pittsburgh** successfully uses taste testing to introduce students to new ingredients and get them excited about new recipes. In one example, students who were unfamiliar with pesto did not want to eat it. However, once facilitators deconstructed the recipe and allowed students to taste the individual components of herbs, olive oil, and cheese, students were more receptive and reported liking pesto.<sup>236</sup>

Food service staff can also use taste testing as a way to get feedback from students on new recipe ideas. Including students in menu planning generates a sense of ownership in school meals. PPS’ Health and Wellness Coordinator engaged the **Student Envoys at University Preparatory School** in a taste test of potential school foods.<sup>237</sup> Students are able to provide their feedback while sampling healthy foods that may be new to them. Food service staff also benefit by learning what students like and dislike.<sup>238</sup> Frequent taste tests at a variety of schools across the District can help to streamline the introduction and acceptance of new foods.

These taste tests could also play a role in the bidding process. Rather than considering only price, the responses from students, as the ultimate consumers, could have some influence on who wins a procurement contract with the school for food-related products. For example, in Toledo Public Schools in **Toledo, OH** vendors tour the school district with food for students to taste test.<sup>239</sup> Students rank the ten or more foods that the vendors provide, and foods that students rate positively are more likely to appear on the menus in the following academic year.<sup>240</sup> For ways that schools can strengthen their taste testing activities, **Action for Healthy Kids Ohio**

has a comprehensive toolkit with suggested lesson plans, evaluation forms, and ideas for additional resources like visual aids.<sup>241</sup>

#### D. School Gardens

Nutrition education programs that incorporate hands-on learning through school gardens often show more success in altering eating habits than nutrition classes alone.<sup>242</sup> Students that are active participants are more willing to try new vegetables and consume more vegetables in their diets.<sup>243</sup> Food service teams can also incorporate produce from school gardens into cooking classes or school meals.

Establishing school gardens can be challenging for schools with tight budgets. For schools that do not already have gardens, funding and resources are often the greatest challenges.<sup>244</sup> Advocates can assist by connecting schools to funding sources and community partners. Community members, such as adult volunteers, can also be good partners by maintaining the gardens, thus taking some of the burden off students, teachers, and staff.<sup>245</sup> The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council or other Pittsburgh organizations could also apply to be a service site for **FoodCorps** volunteers.<sup>246</sup> FoodCorps service members volunteer for eleven months to help maintain school gardens, educate students about food and nutrition, and increase access to locally grown, minimally processed foods.<sup>247</sup>

When many schools already struggle to meet state academic standards, school gardens may seem like an added stress rather than a beneficial teaching tool. Yet, numerous schools and organizations have developed lessons that utilize hands-on garden based learning to complement Common Core State Standards in math, science, history, and social studies. In this way, gardens can become outdoor classrooms.<sup>248</sup> Several studies suggest that garden-based learning in core curriculum areas improves test scores and overall student engagement.<sup>249</sup> Teachers also report that students who typically have trouble sitting still and listening in the classroom are more focused and engaged while working and learning in the garden.<sup>250</sup> In addition, a study by REAL School Gardens, a non-profit that trains teachers and creates garden learning environments for schools, found a 12-15% increase in standardized test scores from schools that utilized garden-based programming and curriculums.<sup>251</sup> With the help of a nonprofit, CitySprouts, teachers at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School in **Cambridge, MA** turned planting peas into a math lesson in which students measure the growth of the plant.<sup>252</sup> Educators can teach Biology and other sciences through garden features, such as the life cycle of an insect or the anatomy of seeds. Planting produce from specific regions around the world and different historical periods can also complement History and Social Studies.<sup>253</sup>

A local example is **Edible Schoolyard Pittsburgh**, a program of Grow Pittsburgh. Edible Schoolyard works with several “flagship” schools to build and maintain onsite gardens, provide weekly garden-based lessons, and facilitate community events and outreach.<sup>254</sup> As of the writing of this memorandum, Edible Schoolyard does not

have the capacity to take on new flagship schools. Other schools can join as affiliate schools and receive assistance in garden design and maintenance, programming and lesson implementation, funding, and community outreach.<sup>255</sup> Additionally, PPS recently announced it has plans to build five gardens at five PPS schools.<sup>256</sup> The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council can push policymakers to provide more funding for school garden programs and encourage schools to incorporate garden learning into the curriculum.

### **1. Garden Produce in School Meals**

Schools can use gardens as a source of fresh ingredients for meals or snacks. The USDA encourages using produce from school gardens as part of meal service; it provides guidance on the safe handling of fresh produce grown by and for students.<sup>257</sup> Schools must have adequate resources and equipment to prepare raw, uncut produce from school gardens, as it requires extra training and equipment to prepare for meals. Pittsburgh schools could work with organizations like Edible Schoolyard, which offers cooking classes, to bring produce from school gardens into the kitchen.<sup>258</sup>

Many Pittsburgh schools, especially elementary schools, do not have full service kitchens and have limited, if any, preparation equipment. Schools that grow produce on site would have to ship their produce to the Central Kitchen, where it would be prepared and incorporated into recipes, and sent back to the schools. School gardens likely will not yield enough harvest for this to be financially viable. If school resources do not allow for incorporating garden produce into school meals, there are other options for using produce. Schools can grow produce, such as lettuce, herbs, carrots and cherry tomatoes, which can be served without additional extra prep work. Additionally, as mentioned in the Backpack Program Section, schools can send produce home with students.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

The Pittsburgh Public School system and, specifically, the Food Service Department have made great strides in ensuring that all students in Pittsburgh schools are able to access healthy meals during the school day. The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council and their member network can work with PPS to make further improvements to the school food environment by taking action on items outlined in *Appendix IV, the Policy Action Chart*. These items include increasing the nutritional quality of school meals; incorporating more locally-grown, fresh produce into school meals; ensuring that students have access to nutritious foods outside the normal school day; and making the school food environment more conducive to healthy eating habits. Since many children eat the majority of their daily food intake at schools, the school setting is critical for encouraging the consumption of healthy foods and developing habits that will stay with children throughout their lives.

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# **APPENDIX I**

## School District of Pittsburgh Wellness Policy (August 24, 2005)

# ***School District of Pittsburgh***

## **Wellness Policy**

**August 24, 2005**

# Pittsburgh Public Schools' Wellness Policy Adopted August 24, 2005

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## Preamble

### *Alignment with the School District's Mission and Strategic Plan*

This policy is reflective of the School District of Pittsburgh's mission statement as contained in its 2002-2007 strategic plan:

*The mission of the Pittsburgh Public Schools is to improve academic and social achievement to state academic goal standards for all students, one child at a time, by providing outstanding staff, curriculum and instructional practices, and a wide range of productive opportunities for parent/community involvement. This will enable all students to be successful school and community citizens who can become contributing adults.*

The school district's strategic plan contains a broad goal area on safety nets for students, including a specific focus on health, safety, and wellness.

### *Responsiveness to Federal and State Legislative Requirements*

The following policy has been created in support of the district's mission and in response to state and federal requirements including Public Law 108-265—more commonly known as the Federal Child Nutrition and School Lunch Reauthorization Act of 2004. In its current re-authorization, Public Law 108-265 includes the following new requirements:

- **New Federal Requirement #1:** inclusion of goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local educational agency determines is appropriate
- **New Federal Requirement #2:** inclusion of nutrition guidelines selected by the local education agency for all foods available on each school campus under the local educational agency during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity
- **New Federal Requirement #3:** provision of assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to established federal regulations

- **New Federal Requirement #4:** establishment of a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of 1 or more persons within the local education agency or at each school as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy.
- **New Federal Requirement #5:** involvement of parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy

Additional requirements at the state level that are anticipated include House Bills 185 and 191 regarding student health and nutrition issues. These bills, if adopted as law, may result in the following requirements:

- **Anticipated New State Requirement #1:** regulation of contracts for the sale of food and beverages sold in competition to a school's cafeteria
- **Anticipated New State Requirement #2:** requirement for school districts to establish advisory health councils to assist with developing a health and wellness plan. Councils would address issues related to physical education, health education curriculum, the nutritional value of food and beverages sold in the district, and more
- **Anticipated New State Requirement #3:** establishment of the executive team of Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Advocacy (PANA) as the Pennsylvania Child Health and Nutrition Advisory Committee. As such, the advisory committee would draft a state-wide child health and nutrition plan and advise state authorities on issues related to child obesity and related illnesses.

### *Responsiveness to Local Requirements*

In addition, this policy is reflective of the School District of Pittsburgh's commitment to incorporating all facets of wellness into its work in order to better the health of students and other key internal and external stakeholders who serve as role models to students—including staff, parents, and the community—as the school district recognizes that good health among all stakeholders is the basis of strong student success and lifelong —academic, social, and personal. In that spirit, the following two local requirements were added as the basis of the following policy:

- **New Local Requirement #1:** inclusion of goals to support nutrition education, physical activity, and awareness of other health promoting behaviors among district staff, teachers, parents, and siblings.
- **New Local Requirement #2:** development of a framework component to ensure policy is adopted and implemented widely across all partners—school-based, faith-based, and community-based—and embedded in the strategic plan of the district (Section F-2 Safety Nets: Health Services)

### *Statement of Resolve*

Whereas, all children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive in the areas in which they live, work, and play;

Whereas health promotion and disease prevention is the foundation for student achievement, attendance, and long-term success;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, obesity related diseases including heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States;

Whereas the following major risk factors for those diseases are often established in childhood and are highly preventable: unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity;

Whereas 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

Whereas community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Education for the School District of Pittsburgh (hereinafter referred to as Pittsburgh Public Schools) is committed to maximizing the health and wellness of its students and staff, and as a measure of this commitment formally sets into place this policy which visibly affirms the district's steadfast intent to support the following:

- providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating, physical activity, and wellness;
- engaging students, staff, parents, teachers, and community members in health promotion, disease prevention, and developing, implementing, monitoring, and upholding the district-wide wellness goals established in this policy;
- maximizing all resources available to the district—including fiscal and non-fiscal related resources (such as U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans) pertaining to health and wellness—to the greatest extent possible and practicable that will ensure the adoption of lifelong habits of health and wellness among students, staff, and the community we serve;
- establishing this policy as a framework to guide program and curriculum development as it relates to health and wellness in the district;
- establishing a continuing advisory board to assist in monitoring outcomes and advising on continuous improvements that can be made to further enhance health and wellness in the district;
- establishing an ongoing annual evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy in improving health and wellness outcomes for students, staff, and the community

## General Provisions, Expectations, Definitions, and Key Caveat

This policy makes visible the importance of all aspects of wellness as the basis of student learning. This policy clarifies the relationships between and among these various aspects of wellness and advocates for collaboration across these areas—internally and externally—in order to ensure that wellness remains student centered as opposed to service centered or department centered.

Furthermore, this policy is predicated on research-based, proven effective practices for health intervention and health promotion. Specifically, this policy is modeled on the Center for Disease Control's Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP), which is comprised of the following eight elements: 1) health education, 2) physical education, 3) health services, 4) nutrition services, 5) counseling, psychological, & social services, 6) healthy school environment, 7) health promotion for staff, and 8) family/community involvement. The CSHP model has been replicated widely in school systems across the country with great success. This policy is predicated also on a case study of a practical working model of a CSHP that has been established and maintained for several years in McComb Mississippi's school system.

Community School Health Programs are most effectively realized through the establishment of Coordinated School Health Councils (CSHC), which include stakeholders from each of the aforementioned eight elements of the CSHP. Therefore, Coordinated School Health Councils are encouraged to be established in each school, as well as at the district level, in order to ensure an array of opportunities for health promotion are available to each school community and district staff. Students should be included as stakeholders on each CSHC. Therefore, this policy shall form a framework on which School District of Pittsburgh programs supporting each element should be developed. This policy also shall form a framework on which external partners working with Pittsburgh Public Schools' students and staff shall be expected to base their own program development.

As such, this policy is supported also through the School District of Pittsburgh's Internal Review Board Policy of 2005 regarding research involving Pittsburgh Public Schools' students, as well as through FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974) and HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) regulations on family and student privacy with which all internal and external stakeholders must abide.

The following definitions shall apply:

- a) health literacy: knowledge of the various aspects of health in all of its dimensions—including health and wellness, physical education, health services, healthy environments, nutrition, health promotion practices/disease prevention and risk avoidance, mental and behavioral health, intergenerational and family health care.
- b) holistically: various aspects/elements integrated as “one”
- c) psychosocial: mental health as impacted by social and environmental factors, such as age, life experiences, peer influences, stress, etc.
- d) stakeholders: those individuals who have a motivating interest, or “stake” in ensuring the goals of this policy are met in order to assure Pittsburgh Public Schools' students, staff, and families attain and maintain good health.

### Key Caveat

It is understood that nothing in this policy shall be considered to supersede the federal requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act or IDEA, nor shall this policy supersede state standards and legislative requirements pertaining to public schools.

### Key Goals of this Policy

The School District of Pittsburgh shall adopt the following nine key goal areas, which form the framework of this wellness policy. Each goal area is supportive of the other goal areas, thus ensuring that outcomes for each will increase outcomes for the policy as a whole. The goal areas shall serve as programmatic guidelines to school staff, parents, and community partners, and all other internal and external stakeholders, as they engage in their work. These goal areas shall serve also as a framework for evaluation for all programs involving Pittsburgh Public Schools that hold wellness as desired goal and outcome. Each goal area is supported by one or more critical elements which will serve as the basis for specific strategies to be formed for action and outcomes.

#### *Key Goal Area 1: Health and Wellness Education*

Element 1-1: A planned, sequential, pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum involving hands on learning opportunities that addresses the physical, emotional, mental, behavioral, and social dimensions of health, which provides life-long habits of health that become for students a whole school experience/ learning laboratory wherein wellness principles are holistically integrated with actual nutrition in the available foods on campus, physical education, and other learning opportunities involving not only students, but also parents, staff, and neighborhood and community members as fully as possible.

Element 1-2: The curriculum focuses on health literacy to enhance each student's independent thinking skills and decision-making and is empowered to enhance personal responsibility.

### *Key Goal Area 2: Physical Education and Physical Activity*

Element 2-1: A planned, sequential, pre-school-12 curriculum that provides cognitive content and learning experiences, such as basic movement skills, physical fitness, rhythms and dance, games, team, dual and individual sports, tumbling and gymnastics, and aquatics which will develop life-long habits and love of being moderately to vigorously physically active for an ideal goal of 30 minutes each day.

Element 2-2: Teachers, paraprofessionals, and others school partners, etc., are encouraged to creatively engage students in physical activity in the context of other classroom exercises, after-school, and extended year experiences.

### *Key Goal Area 3: Health Services*

Element 3-1: Services provided for students in a school setting to appraise, protect, and promote health; to provide services in harmony with community, parents, and other constituencies and to ensure all students have access to services.

Element 3-2: Each school has an array of comprehensive health and wellness services that are provided by nurse practitioners (with an ideal ratio of at least 1 nursing professional for every 750 students), school staff, community partners, registered dietitians, and the Student Assistance Program Team to focus on prevention and early intervention, that would involve all stakeholders .

Element 3-3: A centralized district health office is administered by a health service supervisor for the purpose of program development, consistency/standardization of service delivery utilizing "best practice model," and quality assurance monitoring.

Element 3-4: Parents are educated and informed of the availability and variety of health services for their children.

### *Key Goal Area 4: Healthy School Learning Environment*

Element 4-1: Provide physical and aesthetic surrounding that align with healthy school building recommendations and provide a safe, caring, and psychosocial climate and culture in schools and the workplace environment that maximize the health of students and staff .

Element 4-2: Pittsburgh strives to ensure district staff, its parents and its partners, receive ongoing education and training opportunities on creating and maintaining a safe and attractive learning and workplace environments that are conducive to learning and are supportive of children reaching their full potential.

Element 4-3: Adequate security procedures and protocols—which may include security officers—are on site at each school to promote a safe and secure climate in each school and to liaise with each neighborhood to ensure students are safe and secure on their way to and from school.

Element 4-4: Self-esteem and positive interpersonal relationships and communication are promoted between and among the school community and the community in large .

### *Key Goal Area 5: Nutrition Services*

Element 5-1: Provision of services to students and staff that promote health and nutrition through access to a variety of nutrition and appealing snacks and meals; including all available on-site food—vending machines, fundraisers, special luncheon events, etc. to be phased in consistent with the attached framework of Nutritional Standards for Competitive Foods in Pennsylvania Schools. Individual Parent School Community Council's may choose to implement the framework at an accelerated pace, and the Board would encourage and support this acceleration.

Element 5-2: School nutrition programs reflect or exceed (i.e., as based on emerging scientific consensus) the U.S. dietary guidelines for Americans and respond to health and nutrition needs for all students with respect to ethical, religious, medical, and cultural needs, which include not just a breakfast and lunch nutrition program, but are inclusive of all foods on campus. Registered dietitians will consult on school nutrition programs in order to ensure the programs are reflective of these guidelines.

Element 5-3: Students will have adequate time in which to eat and enjoy their meals. Consideration will be given to the needs of different age groups, such as younger children who have specific developmental needs related to meals.

Element 5-4: Students and staff will be encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands before and after eating.

### *Key Goal Area 6: Health Promotion*

Element 6-1: Programming for school staff that provides health assessments, health education (including health education intervention training and programs) and health related fitness activities including but not limited to physical, emotional, mental, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions, as well as providing counseling and psychological services through the Employee Assistance Program and other programs, such as university and college partnerships, hospital and health care provider partnerships, etc. Coordinated School Health Councils are encouraged to be established in each school, as well as at the district level, in order to ensure an array of opportunities for health promotion are available to each school community and district staff.

Element 6-2: Programs encourage and motivate school staff to live healthier lives and model their individual commitments to healthy lifestyles in both a physical and mental capacity. The ultimate goal shall be to establish a culture that promotes health and wellness on a daily basis. Access to programs and resources that are available within the school as well as within the community and the region will be highlighted and made clearly visible to students, staff, and community members.

### *Key Goal Area 7: Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services*

Element 7-1: Services provided include broad-based individual and group assessment, interventions, and referrals that attend to the mental, emotional, and social health of students. Services should include those currently offered by the Office of Student Wellness and Student Services as well as appropriate enhancements that are or become available from various partners.

Element 7-2: Each member of the school community has timely and appropriate access to social workers, counselors and community resources.

Element 7-3: Behavior interventionists provide all with timely and appropriate prevention training and will implement interventions to address behavior issues at each school.

### *Key Goal Area 8: Family/Community Involvement*

Element 8-1: An integrated school, parent and community approach that establishes a dynamic, collaborative partnership to enhance the health and well-being of students in compliance with Public Law 108-265 “wellness policy”.

Element 8-2: Parents have the opportunity for training in key areas of health education, including physical activity, nutrition, smoking cessation prevention, alcohol and drug abuse, premature sexual activity and pregnancy and STD prevention, literacy, parenting, safe and healthy choices preventing violence and other risky behaviors, health and wellness, keeping in mind the need to address emerging issues.

Element 8-2: Parents have the opportunity to work collaboratively with members of the Coordinated School Health Councils—at both the district and the school levels.

Element 8-3: Parents are provided with tools and networks that will enable them to share knowledge of resources and available trainings with other parents in order to ensure as many children as possible have access to care and remain healthy and well as they enter and remain in school.

Element 8-4: Promote and encourage additional partnerships between universities and colleges and schools in order to further support activities and to leverage shared resources, such as mini-grants to support innovative ideas of health improvement at the school level, or district-wide collaborative events highlighting aspects of health and wellness.

### *Key Goal Area 9: Creative, Cross-Cutting, and Targeted Use of Resources to Support Wellness*

Element 9-1: Using every appropriate and available means to the school district to ensure that every student has the chance to succeed academically, emotionally, and socially and remain in school.

Element 9-2: Early identification and intervention ensure all children begin their formal education experiences prepared for success.

Element 9-3: Teachers have sufficient time to provide appropriate instruction and students have sufficient time in which to learn.

Element 9-4: Utilize research-based best practices and programs on model programs that have shown proven results, such as, the Center for Disease Control's Comprehensive School Health Program, McComb Mississippi Schools Health Program, Success for All, Character Counts!, Quest, Imagine U and Second Step and others.

Element 9-5: Provide numerous opportunities for community and school partners should be offered to dialogue and exchange information and ideas for ensuring strategies are implemented in order to realize the goals of this policy, such as through existing school partnerships, the district's central Coordinated School Health Council,

Element 9-6: The district and its partners will seek supplemental funding and resources wherever possible in order to support the full implementation of this policy.

## Key Strategies for Realizing Policy Goals

Strategy by Department	Health and Wellness Education	Physical Education	Health Services	Healthy School Environment	Nutrition Services	Health Promotion	Counseling, Psychological and Social Services	Family/Community Involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nutrition and Food Services:</b> meal planning and service, professional education for Food Service staff, technical support to principals and teachers, liaison to food vendors and external nutritional advisors/partners to the district</li> </ul>	√			√	√	√		√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Physical and Health Education:</b> curriculum design/instructional delivery/assessment; professional education for professional and para-professional teaching and administrative staff; training outreach to parents and community partners; liaison to external physical fitness providers/partners to the district</li> </ul>	√	√		√		√		√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student Support Services :</b> Health and wellness outreach and education – including school safety, mental health, and social services—through school nurses, counselors, and external partnerships; cross collaboration on Employee Assistance Program</li> </ul>	√		√	√		√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Human Resources &amp; Labor Relations:</b> Health promotion and Employee Assistance Programming,</li> </ul>	√			√		√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Family/Community Involvement;</b> including parent engagement, parent leadership development—Head Start Policy Council, Title I, PSCC, etc; parent training on key district curriculum, programs, and policies</li> </ul>	√			√		√		√

## Policy Development, Dissemination, and Evaluation

This policy has been developed jointly and collaboratively with a diverse group of internal and external stakeholders, including but not limited to the following: students, parents, teachers, student service personnel, curriculum personnel, human resources personnel, administrative personnel, health care agencies, university partners, faith-based partners, community-based partners, foundation partners, corporate partners, and others. Stakeholders were drawn from each area of the City in order to ensure the full geographic boundaries served by the School District of Pittsburgh were represented.

This wellness policy shall be distributed to all students, parents, and staff. Principals are requested to post this policy in a visible and accessible location in their respective schools and to ensure that students and staff are aware of and supportive of this policy. Staff development at the administrative level will be provided so that all offices and services throughout the district are aware of, and are supportive of, the elements of this policy.

The district shall conduct an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy. This evaluation will include measures of public awareness of this policy, programmatic outcomes for those programs that respond to one or more elements of this policy, and correlations to improvements in student attendance, achievement and health. Sources of data may include but are not limited to the health service department, school records—such as CEIP plans and attendance records, parent/student/faculty surveys, etc. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be studied. The findings of this evaluation will be used to further improve wellness efforts and outcomes for all internal and external stakeholders, especially the students we serve.

## Building Capacity for the Realization of this Policy

Pursuant to the formal adoption of this policy, the district authorizes a “Wellness Advisory Board” to be formed that will be representative of the foregoing stakeholders who engaged in the development of the initial policy. The purpose of this advisory board shall be to give input to the ongoing implementation of this policy, including the degree to which it is disseminated and embraced among stakeholders. This feedback will be based on evaluation results that will be shared on an annual basis with the advisory board. Additionally, the advisory board will assist the district in developing recommendations on sources of programming and funding support that may be necessary to ensure each element of the policy is fully realized.

To encourage full programmatic development of this policy, a core team of district leaders shall be established representing the following key district functions and program areas: human resources, budget and finance, operations, student services, curriculum, development, parent engagement, and public relations, and a registered dietician that will serve as an advisor on this team in either a consultative or volunteer capacity. The core team will serve also as a Coordinated School Health Council at the district level. These key staff leaders serving on the core team will serve also on the Wellness Advisory Board as district liaisons reporting back to the Superintendent and his Cabinet on the progress of the overall wellness policy and its associated programs as well as the Wellness Advisory Board’s recommendations on continuing progress. The core team will be responsible at the district level for initiating the evaluation request and for ensuring that the evaluation is shared with the Superintendent and his Cabinet, the Board of Education, and the Wellness Advisory Board in that order.

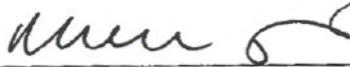
To ensure the policy will be implemented at the school level, the Coordinated School Health Councils should be activated to plan carefully across time for specific activities within the school that will bring forward the core elements of the Comprehensive School Health Plan identified herein via the nine elements listed within this policy and therefore ensure a culture of health and wellness is established and maintained at each school and throughout the district as a whole.

**Signatures, Assurances and Approvals**

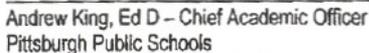
Adopted this 24th day of August 2005



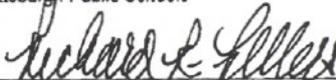
William Isler – Board President  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



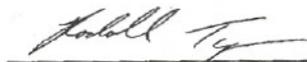
Mark Roosevelt- Superintendent of Schools  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



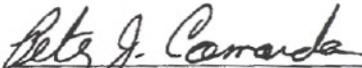
Andrew King, Ed D – Chief Academic Officer  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



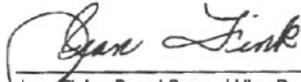
Richard R. Fellers – Chief Operations Officer  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



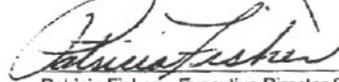
Randal Taylor – Board First Vice President  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



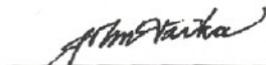
Peter Camarda – Chief of Budget Development  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



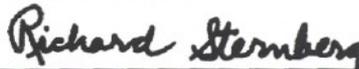
Jean Fink – Board Second Vice President  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



Patricia Fisher – Executive Director School Management  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



John Tarka – President, Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers



Richard Sternberg – President, Pittsburgh Administrators Association

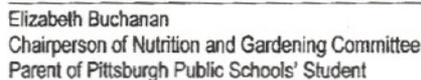
Attested by:



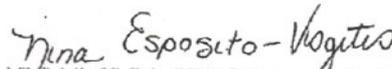
Robbie Ali, M.D.  
Center for Healthy Environments and Communities  
Univ. of Pgh. Graduate School of Public Health & Member  
of Peabody PSCC and Coordinated School Health Council  
– Parent of Pittsburgh Public Schools' Student



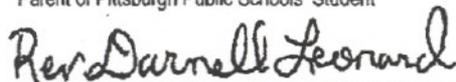
Kate Bowers  
Coordinator of Private Funds  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



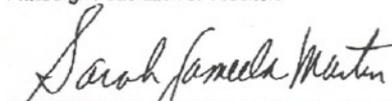
Elizabeth Buchanan  
Chairperson of Nutrition and Gardening Committee  
Parent of Pittsburgh Public Schools' Student



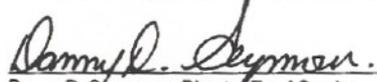
Nina Esposito-Visgitis  
Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers



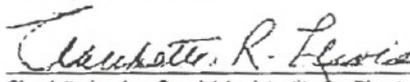
Reverend Damell Leonard – East End Cooperative  
Ministries – Parent of Pittsburgh Public Schools' Student



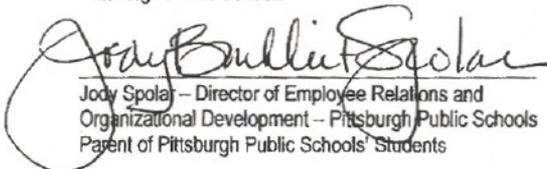
Sarah Martin – Program Officer for Physical Education  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



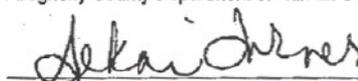
Danny D. Seymour – Director Food Service  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



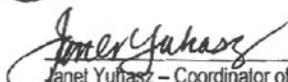
Claudette Lewis – Special Assistant to the Director  
Allegheny County Department of Human Services



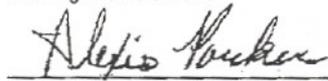
Jody Spolar – Director of Employee Relations and  
Organizational Development – Pittsburgh Public Schools  
Parent of Pittsburgh Public Schools' Students



Sekai Turner, PhD – Center for Minority Health  
University of Pittsburgh – School of Education and  
Graduate School of Public Health



Janet Yuhasz – Coordinator of Student Wellness  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



Alexis Parker – Student – Carrick High School – Grade 11  
Pittsburgh Public Schools



Shannon Fashion – Student – Langley High School – Grade 11  
Pittsburgh Public Schools

Pittsburgh Public Schools: Wellness Policy Adopted 8/24/05 Page 1 of 10

# **APPENDIX II**

## Pittsburgh Public Schools Food Service Produce Request for Proposals (2015)



**Pittsburgh Public Schools  
Food Service**

8 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15203-1230

Phone: 412-488-3300 | Fax: 412-488-3311 |

# 12-002  
Produce

<b><i>RFP</i></b>	
<b>Number</b>	<b>12-002</b>
<b>Name</b>	<b><i>PRODUCE</i></b>
<b>Mail or Deliver to:</b> <small>(no fax bids accepted)</small>	<b>Pittsburgh Public Schools, Food Service 8 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street Pittsburgh, PA 15203  ATTN: Donna Dugan</b>
<b>Deadline</b>	<b>2:00 PM on Wednesday May 13, 2015</b>

We, the undersigned, here with propose and agree to furnish the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) all of the items that we have priced, at the net prices set opposite each item on the attached sheets.

This proposal is subject to all the terms of the contract documents, as defined in the “Conditions of Bid”. We hereby agree to enter into a written contract to furnish such item(s) and all bid prices remain as quoted on the RFP #12-001 regardless of award status.

We understand that PPS reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any portion thereof not deemed satisfactory, or to select single items from any bid.

The undersigned bidder certifies to having read all the contract documents and offers to furnish items as specified to the school districts participating in the council in exact accordance with these specifications and conditions at the prices stated on the attached forms.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

TYPED NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

# Pittsburgh Public Schools Food Service Standard Bid Requirements

Sealed bids for material listed herein will be received in the Food Service Administrative Office until 2:00 PM on the day specified herein and will be opened at the same hour in the Food Service Center Conference Room.

Price each item as indicated including delivery to approximately 25 building locations as well as the FOOD SERVICE CENTER located at 8 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street Pittsburgh, PA 15203-1230

1. These bids are being received according to law as set forth in the Public School Code of 1949, as amended.
2. All bids shall be returned in a clearly marked envelope according to bid number, bid name and date of opening and addressed to The Food Service Center, 8 South 13th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203. NO FAX BIDS ACCEPTED.
3. The Bidder is responsible for ensuring that the Bid document inside a sealed envelope is deposited into the locked bid box in the Food Service Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Lobby prior to 2:00 PM on the date of the Bid Opening. Delivering that Bid document to a school district employee, even if a signature is obtained, **is not** sufficient to meet the requirements of this Bid Condition. The School District will not be responsible for the failure of any of its employees or any mail delivery service to place this bid document in the designated bid box prior to the time and date for the public opening of this Bid.
4. One copy of this Bid Inquiry is provided to each bidder. One copy is to be filled out, signed, and returned to the Board of Public Education's Food Service Center Administrative Office. ONLY DESIGNATED BID NUMBER PER ENVELOPES WILL BE ACCPETED.
5. Bids shall be submitted on this Inquiry Form which must be signed by a duly authorized agent or officer of the company making the bid. Absence of original signature of person duly authorized to sign for the company submitting this bid document will automatically leave this bid null and void.
6. Bidders will quote prices on the unit as specified (i.e. "each", "lot", "dozen", etc.) unless the unit as used in the trade differs from that requested on the Inquiry. In such case, the unit being bid should be changed on this bid document to reflect the industry standard.
7. Prices quoted will be considered net unless otherwise noted on bid. No escalator clauses will be permitted unless provided for in the Bid format.
8. Prices quoted must include all costs for transportation to the location indicated above including delivery inside the building. Any discount, standard rebate, or promotional allowance must be indicated on this inquiry. For USDA processed items, the processor shall invoice Pittsburgh Public Schools at the net case price which shall reflect a discount for the value of the donated commodity. Pittsburgh Public Schools will not accept the Refund and Hybrid systems for commodity valuation and/or payment processing.
9. Not more than one alternate product may be quoted on any single item of the bid. Description and pricing for such alternate must be typed in on this document immediately below space for pricing of primary bid.
10. All bids shall be effective for a period of 30 days from the opening date of this bid, and no bid may be withdrawn prior thereto.
11. In all cases where no sample is submitted by the bidder, it will be understood that the bidder agrees to furnish the exact article or articles as specified, or to exactly match the Board's sample. Where samples are requested on items bid, failure to provide such samples may result in the automatic disqualification for the bid for those items.
12. Samples to receive consideration must be delivered to the Food Service Center located at 8 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203, unless otherwise specified, and all charges for transportation, including drayage, must be paid by the bidder. Samples must be delivered on or before the day and hour for opening this bid.
13. The Director of Food Service shall have full power and authority to reject any and all materials furnished which in his/her opinion, are not in strict compliance and conformity with the requirements of the specifications, or equal in every respect to the samples submitted. The decision of said Director shall be final, conclusive, and without exceptions or appeal. All articles so rejected shall promptly be removed from the premises of the Board at the cost of the Vendor.
14. The Board of Public Education reserves the right to increase quantities of items to be purchased to reflect actual Board needs at the time that order(s) are issued. Such additional quantities will be purchased at the price indicated on this bid.

15. This is a request for pricing only, not a guarantee of an order. Orders will be placed through official Board of Education Purchase Orders generated by the Food Service Department.
16. Every effort must be made to comply with the “Buy American” mandate: All domestic commodities or food products for use in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and/or the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) should be processed in the United States using domestic agricultural commodities where over 51% of the processed food and/or food products comes from American-produced products.
17. Vendors must have active knowledge with the Green Seal Program, involving sustainable food; energy management & conservation; water consumption & management; air quality; waste reduction & management; cleaning & landscape management; and overall company responsibility.

**THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS BID HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:**

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# STANDARDIZATIONS

## A. USDA STANDARD

All portions must conform to the standards published in the USDA food-buying guide for the school lunch program.

## B. ADDITIVES

The use of natural preservatives is to include a wholesome vitamin/mineral blend for use in the foodservice industry and approved by USDA (for use in keeping produce looking and tasting fresher longer). Artificial colors and dyes are prohibited. The use of synthetic preservatives is prohibited.

## C. APPEARANCE

Components will appear full and robust, not squashed or misshapen. Ingredients will appear fresh and wholesome, free of off colors, dehydration or faulty assembly

## D. NUTRITIONAL VALUE ANALYSIS *Must be available in electronic PDF file*

The manufacturer is to include with the bid submission, on a separate sheet, a complete nutritional analysis of each applicable product being quoted. The following minimum information, if applicable, is required of each item. Serving size by weight and gram equivalent

Calories per serving	Potassium (mgs)
Sodium (mgs)	Protein (grams), (% RDA)
Vitamin (IU), (%RDA)	Thiamin (mgs), (%RDA)
Total fat and breakdown of fats:	Riboflavin (mgs), (%RDA)
Saturated (grams); Monounsaturated (grams);	Niacin (mgs), (%RDA)
and Polyunsaturated (grams)	Iron (mgs), (%RDA)
% Calories from Fat	Trans Fat
Vitamin C (mgs), (%RDA)	Dietary Fiber (grams)
Cholesterol (mgs)	Sugar:
Carbohydrate (grams)	Refined Sugar (grams); Processed Sugar (grams)
Declarations of all known allergens	

## E. INGREDIENT VERIFICATION

CN Label or information verifying the protein, bread, and vegetable equivalents on the National School Lunch Program **must be included with bid, if applicable.**

## F. PACKAGING

All packaging must be approved by the USDA and the Food and Drug Administration for contact with food.

## G. LABELING

All markings and labeling shall be on one panel of the carton. Marking material shall be waterfast, non-smearing, and of a color contrasting with the carton. All carton markings conform to USDA labeling requirements and should include a minimum of the following:

- Description of contents
- Product Code Numbers
- Processing Date: month/day/year
- Lot Number: Manufacturer's lot or batch number listed under the processing date.
- Wholesomeness Stamp: USDA plant number (if applicable)
- Ingredient Statement: Ingredients must be listed in order of predominance.
- Count per case.

## H. SPECIFIC PRODUCE VENDOR SPECIFICATIONS

- Products must be packed under continuous USDA inspection where applicable.
- Vendor's facility must be locked 24 hours a day. All vendor trucks must be locked nightly after packing.
- Vendor's receiving area and trucks must be refrigerated, and vendor's trucks must be cleaned and sanitized weekly.
- Vendor must have a Quality Control Team to monitor the quality of fresh produce entering and leaving the facility daily.
- Upon delivery, the PPS Food Service Center warehouse will spot check for external and internal damage, cleanliness, defects, spoilage, count, temperatures, and any other inspections deemed necessary by the Warehouse Supervisor. PPS reserves the right to make final disposition of all internal damaged materials at a later date.
- Vendor must be HACCP Certified.
- Vendor must have a written Standard Operational Procedure for product recalls.

- h) Vendor must be registered with the FDA as compliant with the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (PL107-188)
- i) Additional fees may be imposed due to the following: Requiring Over Time for school district staff for deliveries that arrive after normal receiving hours (7:30 AM - 11:30 AM); Violating City and County ordinances regarding Idling Regulations (maximum idling time of 5 minutes; 20 min./hour if less than 40° F or more than 75° F - see <http://www.dgs.state.pa.us>).

I. PAYMENT PROCESS

- a. Upon receipt of delivered goods along with proof of delivery (i.e. invoice, packing slip, etc), PPS will issue payment within 60 days.
- b. Statements shall be sent to the administrative billing office of the food service department.
- c. Bidders are encouraged to offer cash discounts based on expedited payment by PPS. PPS will make efforts to take advantage of discounts, but discounts will not be considered in determining the lowest bid.
- d. Discount periods shall be calculated starting from the next business day after the recipient has accepted the goods or services with a properly signed invoice.
- e. Payments issued within 30 days are eligible for \_\_\_\_\_% discount deducted from invoice (fill in the blank).
- f. PPS may offer the opportunity for vendors to be paid through the procurement card (P-Card). Purchasing transactions utilizing the P-Card will usually result in payment to vendor in three days.
- g. Bills submitted cannot exceed price quoted.
- h. All charges must be reflected in the original bid price.

J. ONLINE ORDERING

Vendors must have operational an on-line ordering system, web-based, using Internet Explorer available 24/7, in which all sites are capable to place orders as well as one central “Super Buyer” to approve all orders (return and/or reject). Each site manager/director will have a unique username/password to their school district. Order Guides must include the vendor’s item number, description, pack size, etc. Site managers/directors must have the ability to save orders, submit orders, edit saved orders, order “No Order”, and create standing orders as well as review past orders. They must be able to print the order guide, past orders, and submitted orders. Each site will have default delivery dates, not allowing orders to be placed for non-designated dates.

K. DELIVERIES

Deliveries will be made to approximately 33 K to 8, Middle, and High School locations, as well as the Central Warehouse. A complete listing of building locations can be found at <http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/domain/11>

L. LOCAL PRODUCE /FARMS

Every effort must be made to procure local produce during the appropriate seasons with appropriate produce when available (\*local produce defined as within 150 miles of Pittsburgh, PA). Successful vendor will provide supporting demonstrations/educational opportunities and/or tours of local farms upon request. See list of local items highlighted in GREEN and indicate date/range of availability, the % of local produce that can be procured and your cost. Please write in any additional local produce in the empty spaces on the form. Vendor shall provide a list of all farms which supply produce.

M. SAMPLES

The following full case samples are required at the time of RFP submission on Wednesday May 13, 2015 by 2:00 PM to the Food Service Center Warehouse:

Line #4 Apples, Washington State Red Delicious U.S. Grade Fancy

Line #8 Broccoli/Cauliflower Florets, U.S. No. 1 Grade Standard, packaged in gas-permeable package, code-dated, sulfite-free

Line #10 Carrots, Baby Peeled, U.S. No.1 Grade Standard, 1.3 oz. bags

Line #13 Celery Sticks, U.S. No 1 Grade Standard, 1.6 oz individual bags

Line #17 Grapes, Medium Size Red Seedless, Grade Standard for U.S. No. 1

Line #25 Lettuce, Romaine Chopped, U.S. No. 1 Grade Standard

Line #28 Oranges, Navel or Valencia, U.S. No. 1, size 125 or 113

Line #32 Pears, U.S. No. 1 Grade Standard, Anjou or Bartlett (any summer or winter variety except Keiffer)

Line #39 Salad Mix 4 Part, U.S. No. 1, (80 % chopped iceberg lettuce, 20% chopped romaine lettuce with carrots & shredded red cabbage) uniformly cut 1/8 to ¼” widths, gas-permeable package, code-dated, sulfite free

Line #45 Tomatoes, Grape, Stage 6 Ripening, U.S. No. 1 Grade Standard

N. PRICING

Prices must be held firm from **July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. Weekly pricing will be verified using the USDA Wholesale Market Price Report for Pittsburgh PA using MONDAY pricing.**

Any additional rebates, promotions, etc. must be clearly indicated. All prices are inclusive of delivery.

O. AWARD

This RFP will be awarded on **COST PLUS FIXED SERVICE FEE PER CASE** using the USDA Wholesale Market Price Report for Baltimore MD as of **Monday May 11, 2015**. When price range is given, use the HIGHEST amount. See website [http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/ps\\_fv010.txt](http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/ps_fv010.txt)

An overall grading system by categories will be used based on the following (best out of 50 points):

1. Price (0-20 points)
2. Quality of samples (0-10 points)
3. Specific Produce Vendor Specifications, listed under Letter H (0-10 points)
4. Online ordering capabilities (0-5 points)
5. Procurement of Local Produce (0-5 points)

P. EXTENSION CLAUSE

The School District may wish to extend this contract for **one additional school year** (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017) Any contract resulting from this solicitation may be extended for a period not to exceed 1 year in total, upon the mutual agreement of both parties. All prices indicated in #12-002 would remain *at the same cost* for School Year 2016-2017, with the exception of commodity allowance values and any pre-determined variations that are agreed upon by both parties. Should this contract be canceled for reasons of non-availability of funds, cancellation would take place on the last day of the original appropriation period, June 30, 2016. In the event of cancellation of non-availability of funds, the school district will not be obligated to purchase any items remaining in inventory. Vendors will be notified well in advance of a pending cancellation.

Indicate your company's willingness to extend this contact for one additional school year:

YES: \_\_\_\_\_ NO: \_\_\_\_\_

Q. PROGRAM OPTION

The School District reserves the right to accept or reject all or part of this Bid Inquiry, and to accept or reject any item or group of items, for which bid is submitted.

# **APPENDIX III**

## Pittsburgh Public Schools Key School Food Successes (2016)

# Pittsburgh Public Schools Key School Food Successes



Pittsburgh Public Schools have been successful in implementing several changes to their school food system. Below are the highlights of some of these successes. This list is not meant to be exhaustive.

- Early adopter of the Community Eligibility Provision
- Participation in Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and distribution of sample application to schools across the district
- Request for Proposals (RFP) procurement considers factor of produced “within 150 miles of Pittsburgh”
- Backpack Program coordinated with Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and Focus Pittsburgh in some district schools
- Active summer meals program
- Cafeterias across the district employ Smarter Lunchroom Movement best practices including:
  - Making white milk more convenient and visible in the lunchroom
  - Giving vegetables fun, creative names
  - Using fruit bowls and table cloths to enhance presentation of healthier items
  - Displaying menu boards at the entrance of the cafeteria to get kids excited about their meal
- Health and Wellness Coordinator organizes taste tests for potential menu items in different age groups
- Food Service online blog that helps to keep families and communities up-to-date and informed ([www.pittsburghpublicschoolslunch.wordpress.com](http://www.pittsburghpublicschoolslunch.wordpress.com))
- Active school garden community partners that help maintain gardens at a number of schools
- Featured in the Food Research & Action Center *School Breakfast* report among large districts that reached the goal of 70 students eating school breakfast per 100 participating in the NSLP
- Collaboration with the UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh & the Healthy Schools Program to assess school wellness environments, create action plans, and transform schools into healthier places for kids
  - Adoption of Common Threads cooking program in several district schools with the goal to grow throughout the district over the next several years
- Food Service Department makes donations to local food rescue organization 412 Food Rescue as able
- Culinary training newly incorporated into Food Service employee training to expand scratch cooking capabilities throughout district
- Works with local produce company to provide fruit/vegetable demos during lunch periods for interested schools
- Salad bars available in 12 district schools
- Water jets/water filters have been installed in all Pittsburgh public schools



In partnership with



# **APPENDIX IV**

## Food Policy Action Chart (2016)

TASK	COST	KEY ACTORS
Implement higher nutrition standards for District (e.g. whole fruits, minimally processed foods, no sugar added)	\$ Low	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Actions:</b> Review existing standards and room for improvement (e.g. sodium, vegetable servings, etc.); draft new policy language</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Support initiatives to bring healthier, fresher foods to students. This may involve more from-scratch cooking and other labor-intensive practices</p>
Increase Farm to School Procurement	<p align="center">\$\$ Moderate</p> <p><b>Funding Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (\$50-\$75/student)</li> <li>- USDA Farm to School Grant Program (up to \$100,000)</li> <li>- Healthy Farms and Healthy Schools Program (up to \$15,000 per school)</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Actions:</b> Hire farm to school coordinator; fund kitchens that can process farm-fresh products; attend PA Depts. of Education and Agriculture and PSU trainings; purchase fresh produce in the Summer and freeze for use during the school year</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Farmers</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Engage with District to create relationships necessary to implement farm to school programs</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Monteverte</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> When possible, locally source produce</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Support initiatives to bring farm fresh produce to schools; adapt to changes in produce and other food items</p>
		<p align="center"><b>State, City, and County Governments</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Provide more funding and technical support for farm to school initiatives</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Pittsburgh Food Policy Council</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Attend statewide farm to school training hosted by PA Depts. Of Education and Agriculture and PSU; look into hosting a FarmCorps service member, or identify organization to serve as host</p>
Simplify Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program Applications	\$ Low	<p align="center"><b>State Government</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Allow District to apply collectively for FFVP funding</p>
Adjust Procurement Process to Accommodate Local Producers and Other Needs	\$ Low	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Amend RFP procurement to take into account issues such as labor standards, use of pesticides, and other requirements</p>
		<p align="center"><b>State Government</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Increase thresholds for small and micro purchases to better accommodate local and small producers</p>
Increase From-Scratch Cooking	\$\$\$ High	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Retrofit kitchens with industrial cooking equipment that can accommodate from-scratch cooking</p>

	<b>Funding Opportunities:</b> - USDA Food Service Equipment Grant (varies) - Bonneville Power Administration Reimbursements (varies)	<b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Amend RFP procurement to take into account issues such as labor standards, use of pesticides, and other requirements <b>Pittsburgh Food Policy Council</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Work with District and unions to identify strategies to enhance meal nutrition
Chef-Created and Innovative Recipes	Varies	<b>School District</b> <b>Requested Actions:</b> Hire full-time chef to organize Central Kitchen and create recipes; consult with chefs to create new recipes; invest more in Culinary Arts Program and utilize those students in recipe creation
		<b>Chefs Move to Schools Volunteer Chefs</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Partner with school kitchens to create innovative delicious recipes using existing equipment
		<b>Students</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Design and submit recipes; those in culinary arts programs work with schools to improve meals and teach cooking
Stricter Requirements for Competitive Foods	\$ Low	<b>School District</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Write Wellness Policy to place nutrition or quantity per student limits on competitive foods, limit/remove fundraiser exemptions
		<b>State Government</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Limit/remove fundraiser exemptions statewide
		<b>Parents</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Understand need to reduce unhealthy fundraisers; choose not to provide students with unhealthy food to sell as fundraisers
Breakfast in the Classroom	\$\$ Moderate	<b>School District</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Include in Wellness Policy priority of breakfast in the classroom over other delivery methods
		<b>Janitorial Staff/Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Work with district to create solution to increased labor demands of breakfast in the classroom
		<b>Students and Teachers</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Be accountable for cleanliness of own classrooms, so as to not rely on janitorial staff
		<b>Food Service Staff/Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Work with district to help ensure smooth delivery of breakfast in the classroom
Breakfast after Bell	\$ Low	<b>School District</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Include in Wellness Policy priority of breakfast after bell over other delivery methods
		<b>Teachers/Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Work with school to determine how to move breakfast later in the day without extending school day or, if the day must be extended, ensure teachers are appropriately compensated

		<p align="center"><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Work with school to determine how to move breakfast later in the day without extending school day or, if the day must be extended, ensure staff are appropriately compensated</p>
Install Water Jets	\$\$\$ High	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Invest in infrastructure to provide water jets</p>
		<p align="center"><b>State Government</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Provide increased funding for supplying schools with water jets</p>
Supply Students with Free or Reduced-Price Water Bottles	\$\$ Moderate	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Provide water bottles at no-cost or a subsidized price</p>
		<p align="center"><b>State Government</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Provide funding for individual water bottles</p>
Provide 5-Gallon Water Jugs	\$ Low	<p align="center"><b>State Government</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Provide funding for facilities to clean water jugs</p>
		<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Provide funding for facilities to clean water jugs, or coordinate with the Central Kitchen</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Central Kitchen</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Pick up dirty water jugs and drop off clean jugs</p>
Prioritize Water Access	None	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Include access to water in Wellness Policy</p>
Increase Access to Meals at Afterschool Programs	\$\$ Moderate <b>Funding Opportunities:</b> - USDA After School Snack Program (varies) - Child and Adult Care Food Program (varies)	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Offer more afterschool programs that provide meals; find partners to provide transportation</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Community Partners</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Offer more afterschool programs that provide meals after school, provide transportation</p>
Increase Participation in Backpack Programs	\$\$ Moderate <b>Funding Opportunities:</b> - In-kind food donations	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Expand backpack programs to reach more students; incorporate more fresh produce</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Community Partners (including Pittsburgh Food Bank)</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Work with District to provide more healthy options through the backpack program</p>
		<p align="center"><b>City Government</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Allocate funding for backpack programs; provide publicity and support</p>
		<p align="center"><b>State Government</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Allocate funding for backpack programs; provide publicity and support</p>

		<p align="center"><b>Parents</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Volunteer to fill backpacks; raise funds</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Pittsburgh Food Policy Council</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Convene local and regional funders to highlight the importance of the program</p>
Operate Cost-Free Markets for Food Insecure Families	<p align="center">\$\$ Moderate</p> <p><b>Funding Opportunities:</b> - In-kind food donations</p>	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Create and provide resources to maintain cost-free markets where food insecure families can get food for weekends and holidays</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Work with District on food storage and logistics to provide a cost-free healthy market to families</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Parents and Students</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Staff Cost-Free Market and harvest produce from school gardens for use in market</p>
Offer Low-Cost Summer Meals to Parents	<p align="center">\$\$ Moderate</p>	<p align="center"><b>School District and Summer Meal Sites</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Prepare and sell low-cost meals for parents; use revenue to improve nutritional cost of meals or cover school-year meal program</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Community Partners</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Market and advertise meals for parents</p>
Increase Prevalence of and Access to Summer Meals Programs	<p align="center">\$\$ Moderate</p> <p><b>Funding Opportunities:</b> - USDA Summer Food Service Program (varies) - USDA Seamless Summer Option (varies) - Financial and In-Kind Donations</p>	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Increase number of sites providing summer meals to students; market and advertise sites; provide transportation</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Community Partners</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Increase number of sites providing summer meals to students; market and advertise sites; provide transportation</p>
		<p align="center"><b>State Government</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Increase funding for summer meals</p>
Incorporate job training into summer meals	<p align="center">\$\$\$ High</p>	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Provide resources to create and maintain programs that incorporate job training into summer meals; work with community partners to create innovative opportunities</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Work with District and students to integrate students into meal preparation and delivery</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Community Partners</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Partner with workforce development programs and offer paid job opportunities</p>
Incorporate local produce into summer meals	<p align="center">Varies</p>	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Retrofit kitchens with industrial cooking equipment that can accommodate from-scratch cooking necessary for fresh produce</p>

		<p><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Support initiatives to source farm fresh produce; adapt to changes in produce</p>
		<p><b>Farmers</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Engage with District to create relationships around farm to school programs</p>
		<p><b>Monteverte</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> When possible, source locally</p>
Market, Promote, Nudge Healthy Foods	\$ Low	<p><b>School District</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Affirm commitment to Smarter Lunchroom principles in Wellness Policy; support of student organizations focused on healthy eating</p>
		<p><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Encourage students to take healthy options; accommodate Smarter Lunchroom principles</p>
		<p><b>Individual Schools</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Market healthy foods</p>
		<p><b>Students</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Create posters for healthy foods</p>
Engage Students in Lunchtime	\$\$ Moderate <b>Funding Opportunities:</b> - Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools (varies)	<p><b>School District</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Invest in infrastructure for salad bar and spice stations</p>
		<p><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Engage students in the cooking process; support shift to salad bars and spice stations; provide samples</p>
Increase Meal Length	\$\$ Moderate	<p><b>School District</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Amend Wellness Policy to include a minimum seat time at lunch, routine surveys of cafeteria line time, and rules that teachers and staff may not delay the start of lunch for behavior control; if necessary, extend day to accommodate longer lunch; work with teachers' and staff unions to ensure appropriate compensation</p>
		<p><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Allow for longer meal period/work day</p>
		<p><b>Teachers/Staff</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Do not delay lunch for behavior control; if necessary, accommodate longer school day</p>
		<p><b>Teachers/Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Work with District to allow for longer school day, if necessary</p>
Family-Style Dining	\$\$ Moderate	<p><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Accommodate family-style serving</p>
		<p><b>School District</b> <b>Requested Action:</b> Promote family-style dining and spread best practices</p>

		<p align="center"><b>Students</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Work with district to create family-style dining practices that appropriately utilize students</p>
Move Recess Before Lunch (RBL)	None	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Amend the Wellness Policy to recommend RBL</p>
Cooking Classes for Students	<p align="center">\$\$\$ High</p> <p><b>Funding Opportunities:</b> - USDA Food Service Equipment Grant (varies) - Bonneville Power Administration Reimbursements (varies)</p>	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Invest and maintain kitchens in classrooms where students can learn to cook</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Teachers/ Union</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Incorporate cooking classes into curriculum</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Local Chefs and Community Partners</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Partner with district to offer cooking classes to students and their families</p>
Taste Testing	<p align="center">\$ Low</p>	<p align="center"><b>Food Service Staff/ Union</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Distribute samples to students; accommodate changes recommended by students</p>
School Gardens	<p align="center">\$\$\$ High</p>	<p align="center"><b>School District</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Obtain necessary permits for school gardens; implement and maintain gardens; sponsor FoodCorps volunteer to maintain garden</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Teachers</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Incorporate school garden into teaching, including Common Core requirements</p>
		<p align="center"><b>State Government</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Provide additional funding for school gardens</p>
		<p align="center"><b>Community Partners</b></p> <p><b>Requested Action:</b> Continue to work with schools to maintain gardens and identify more sources of funding and programming for gardens</p>



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