
RSU 9 FOOD SERVICE UPDATE

April 2022

Andrew Hutchins-Director of Food Services

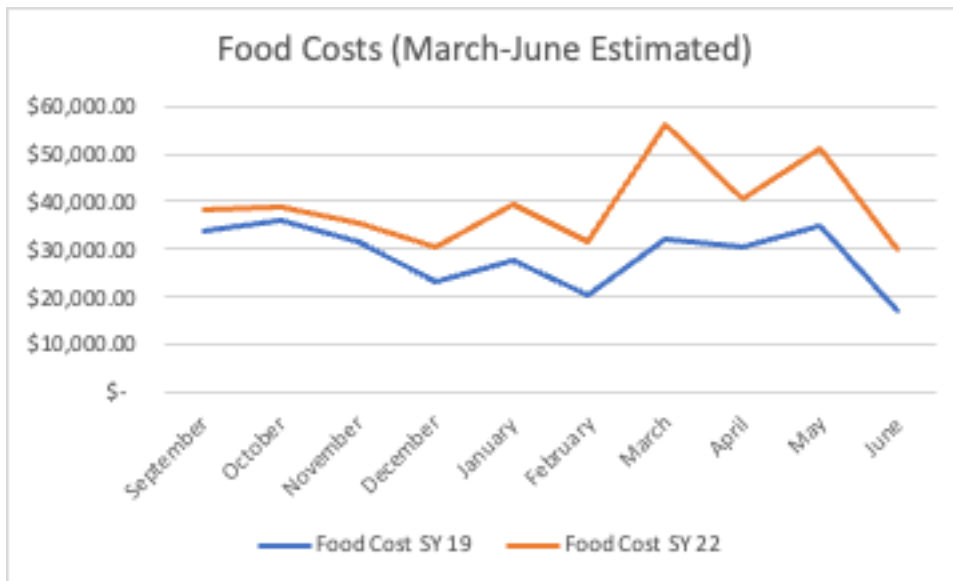
Meal Participation Trends

Meal participation continues to rise as more students are remaining in school. On average, we are serving 2200 meals per day. We expect this to hold steady or climb slightly through the rest of this year.

Beginning in the fall, all students will still be served breakfast and lunch at no cost. For students who don't qualify for free meals, the State of Maine will reimburse the district for the portion the parents would have paid.

Financials:

Food, labor, and supply cost are all rising with no relief in sight. Thankfully, revenues are holding strong and thus far are covering expenses. The USDA slightly increased the per-meal reimbursement rate as of Jan. 1st and also provided us with \$43,000 in supply chain assistance funding to help off-set rising food costs. The graph below compares this year to our last "normal" year.



Supply Chain:

- * **Equipment:** Equipment and parts are difficult to find and have extremely long lead times. This has caused repair times to go from a few days to several weeks in some cases.
- * **Food/Supplies:** Supply chain issues continue to be a daily issue with a number of items not available. Breakfast items have been particularly scarce. Staff is doing a great job adjusting and coming up with solutions “on the fly.” We expect this to remain a challenge into next school year.

Staffing:

- * We have experienced some turnover in the last few months but are fully staffed once again.
- * We’ve added a food service assistant to the team to handle some clerical duties and a culinary specialist to help cover kitchens, assist with professional development, and help execute special events.
- * Planning a multi-day “Culinary Boot Camp” for August where staff can learn new knife skills, culinary techniques, and obtain food safety certification.

Academy Hill School Kitchen Renovation: ESSER III

Planning for the Academy Hill School Kitchen renovation is well underway. The major kitchen equipment has been ordered and it should arrive in time for installation over the summer. Several pieces of 30-40 year old equipment will be replaced. The cafeteria will also receive a facelift as part of the project including new trim work, paint, window treatments, artwork and serving equipment.

Looking Ahead: We have lots of exciting things planned for this spring and into next school year. Some of the highlights are listed below.

- * Omelet Stations at breakfast at least once per month at each school.
- * Traveling Smoothie Stations & Cook-outs
- * Expanding our use of locally grown produce and other food products.
- * Transitioning away from canned and frozen fruits/vegetables to fresh alternatives.
- * Returning salad bars to all schools with increased offerings
- * Reducing the use of processed foods and incorporating more scratch made, and “Clean Label” products into the menu

