



The Future of School Meals in San Francisco Unified School District

Snapshot prepared for SPUR's September 6, 2012 Lunchtime Forum

Student Nutrition Services at a Glance

The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) Student Nutrition Services (SNS) Department operates the **largest public food service program** in San Francisco, serving students from all schools and neighborhoods. **Every day**, SNS provides **over 27,000 meals** (5,500 breakfasts and 21,500 lunches) and **6,000 snacks** to students in San Francisco, and **every year**, SNS provides **over 4.8 million meals** and over **1 million snacks** to students in San Francisco.

SNS's mission is to provide nutritious, appealing meals to all SFUSD students in a welcoming environment.

SNS Team: SNS is staffed by four managers (Director, Assistant Director, and two Area Supervisors), 12 full time administrative staff, and 237 school based staff.

SNS Budget: \$17,742,666 total operating budget for 2012-13.

Projected expenditures:

- \$9,933,922 – 56% - Food / Supplies*
- \$5,968,706 – 34% - Employees / Benefits
- \$1,058,000 – 6% - Contracts**
- \$ 782,038 – 4% - Indirect

* Includes some services such as the warehouse function

** Food distribution, equipment maintenance, garbage, pest control

Projected revenues:

- \$12,461,650 – 70% - Federal
- \$ 936,083 – 6% - State
- \$ 2,000,000 – 11% - Local
- \$ 234,000 – 1% - DCYF Salad Bar Grant
- \$ 2,110,933 – 12% - Contribution from UGF

School Meals: All meals offered are reimbursable under the National School Lunch Program. 114 schools receive pre-plated meals and 28 schools also prepare some meals onsite. Fresh fruit is served daily including a piece of fresh fruit with breakfast.

School meal prices:

- Lunch \$3.00 / Free if eligible for free/reduced price
- Breakfast \$1.50 / Free if eligible for free/reduced price
- Snacks Free for students enrolled in after school

The Importance of School Meals

Taking Action to Educate Every Child Now

- 31% of households in San Francisco with children are living below the self-sufficiency standard and are at risk of food insecurity.
- In the 2011 Youth Vote, out of 11,790 middle and high school students, 1 in 5 reported not eating lunch on most school days, and schools with higher rates of students not eating lunch often had lower test scores.
- Access to healthy food improves attendance, alertness, health, behavior, and academic success.



School Meal Milestones

Since the development of the SFUSD ***Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy*** in 2004, SNS has been working collaboratively with school and community partners to improve the school meal program.

- ✓ **School meal improvements** include implementing salad bars, removing unhealthy food, adding healthier options including whole grains, lowering sugar content of items, and removing high fructose corn syrup.
- ✓ The district implemented a **system wide point of sale (POS) technology** to build the department's capacity to develop new models for improving the program and to manage the complex operation. The **upgraded technical infrastructure** has allowed SNS to **continuously improve** the department's business processes and supply chain logistics. For instance, capturing critical site level sales and inventory data electronically in real time has allowed central office management and staff to better support the sites, and to adjust the staffing and business operations as needed.
- ✓ SNS rolled out **Grab 'N Go breakfast stations** in high schools in locations most convenient for busy students at the beginning of the day, such as close to the front door of the school. SNS was awarded grants to roll out Grab n Go breakfast stations at 9 high schools during SY 2011-12. SNS applied for and was awarded additional Breakfast Expansion Grant funds from the California Department of Education to expand Grab 'N Go to 9 middle schools in 2012-2013. **The new breakfast model increased breakfast participation by an average of 35% in high schools.**
- ✓ SNS **eliminated the competitive à la carte food program** in 2010-11 that had been operating at middle and high schools for decades. This significant operational change ensured that all SFUSD students, regardless of their ability to pay, had access to balanced meals including entrée, fruit, vegetables and milk, and that all meals served were reimbursable under the National School Lunch Program. This initiative included expanded menu choices, more points of services, and increased federal reimbursements. SNS evaluated the impact of this change and found **that participation in the lunch program at middle and high schools increased an average of 17%.**
- ✓ SNS successfully piloted the introduction of a **vending machine** at Lincoln High School that **offered reimbursable fresh lunches**, such as deli sandwiches, fruits and vegetables, and milk. This pilot was supported through funding from San Francisco Food Systems and the San Francisco Department of Public Health. The machine offered an additional location where students were able to get a healthy lunch.
- ✓ The annual Meal Application process has benefited from improvements in technology as well with the introduction of the **online Meal Application**. For the 2011-12 SY, 40,000 applications were processed. As of September 4 2012, 10,500 online applications were submitted. This means a **significant reduction in the wait time for parents** and a reduction in administrative workloads for both school staff and student nutrition staff.



- ✓ SNS has benefited greatly from the leadership of the SFUSD Facilities Department and their partnership with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, School Health Programs, San Francisco Department of Public Health, and SF Environment **to develop and pilot a plan to ensure that free drinking water is available** at all areas where SNS serves meals, and that students are informed of the health and environmental benefits of drinking tap water and using refillable bottles.
- ✓ During 2011-2012, SNS received a very **positive review from the California Department of Education Nutrition Services Division** for compliance with applicable federal and state regulations, and for the first time a follow-up review is not required. This positive review demonstrates the success of the district's strategic investments, including the installation of a POS and the **addition of two Area Supervisors** to ensure increased program oversight and site monitoring.
- ✓ SNS developed a **newsletter, Meal Times**, to communicate with schools, parents and the community about the school meal program. The newsletter has been distributed to the community and is available on the SNS website.
- ✓ SNS benefits from **strong partnerships with city agencies and community organizations** including the SFUSD Food and Fitness, San Francisco Food Security Task Force, San Francisco Department of Public Health (Food System Program), Department of Children, Youth and their Families, and San Francisco Food Systems.

Major Challenges

- There is a significant gap between the federal poverty measurement and the income that is actually required to live in San Francisco. As a result, there **are thousands of San Franciscans that do not qualify for federal nutrition programs, yet need food assistance.**
- Since 2009, **breakfast and lunch participation has decreased.** Participation has decreased in greater numbers at sites with competitive (but well-meaning) programs.
- There has been a **historic and structural lack of funding from federal, state, and local sources.** Increases in federal and state reimbursement rates, averaging a maximum of 4.7% per annum, have not kept pace with the escalating cost of food, supplies, labor and transportation over recent years. As a result, **additional investments are needed** to enhance our infrastructure and increase participation rates. For example, SFUSD has insufficient and/or aging kitchen equipment, and SNS has insufficient management staff.

Projects Underway for the 2012-13 School Year

- ✓ SNS applied for and received funding from the California Endowment **to develop a new meal service model that focuses on onsite meal preparation** at a pilot middle/high school during 2012-2013, as well as marketing and outreach activities for students, staff, and parents. The project will also include the **promotion of healthy beverages**, and will work to **expand food stamp outreach** to eligible parents from the pilot school site.



Funding from the California Endowment has been **leveraged to obtain additional support** from San Francisco Food Systems and the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Funding will support **technical assistance to help develop new menu items, engage students**, as well as other program activities.

- ✓ **Expanding our Grab 'N Go breakfast program to nine middle schools** with funding from the California Department of Education, Breakfast Expansion Grants.
 - Aptos, Denman, Everett, Francisco, Giannini, Hoover, Lick, Marina, ML King, and RooseveltAfter the rollout of the middle schools, over 21,000 busy middle and high school students in SFUSD will have access to Grab 'N Go breakfast in their schools.
- ✓ **Implementing the new USDA nutrition standards** for the National School Lunch and Breakfast program. Implementation for each provision/section of law has statutory deadlines for the various actions, and changes to the nutrition requirements will be phased in over three years starting this school year. The changes require additional quantities of fruits and vegetables including a variety of dark green, red, orange, etc., whole grains, low fat or nonfat milk, and specific nutrition requirements tailored to age group.

On the Immediate Horizon

- ✓ **Implement additional reimbursable vending machines.** We are thrilled to have received funding from the City and County of San Francisco for additional reimbursable vending machines, and are appreciative of the support from Supervisor Wiener, Commissioner Mendoza, the Department of Children, Youth and their Families, and members of the SFUSD Food and Fitness Committee.
- ✓ **Reissue meal service bid.** We currently purchase approximately 16,000 pre-plated meals daily from a national vendor for all of our schools. We are reissuing this meal service bid in late September 2012 and will award the bid by December 2012.
- ✓ **Develop strategic plan.** Develop plan to strategically and comprehensively guide future improvements to the school meal program. We are currently identifying the information that must be collected and the analyses that must be conducted to help make sound decisions. We believe decisions regarding the future direction of school meals should be informed by recent community input, and must include a plan for site level facilities and equipment including cafeterias, as well as a feasibility analyses for production options including expanded onsite preparation, centralized production, and improving meal quality through food specifications in bid language.

At this stage, we are compiling existing data, piloting the onsite production model, including higher food standards in the new bid language, and working to secure funds to support the additional data collection and feasibility analyses necessary for the planning process.