

Policy 3550: Food Service/Child Nutrition Program

The Governing Board recognizes that adequate, nourishing food is essential to student health and well-being, development, and ability to learn. The Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies to increase students' access to and participation in the district's food service programs and maintain fiscal integrity of the programs in accordance with law.

Each school day, a nutritionally adequate breakfast and lunch shall be made available at no cost to any student who requests a meal, including a student enrolled in an independent study program on any school day in which the student is scheduled for in-person educational activities of two or more hours. A nutritionally adequate breakfast or lunch is one that qualifies for reimbursement under the most current meal pattern for the federal School Breakfast Program or National School Lunch Program.

After a student has been provided a school meal at no cost, the district may sell the student the entrée from an additional nutritionally adequate meal that qualifies for federal reimbursement, from the same meal service. (Education Code 49431)

Foods and beverages available through the district's food service program shall:

1. Be carefully selected to contribute to students' nutritional well-being and the prevention of disease
2. Meet or exceed nutrition standards specified in law
3. Be prepared in ways that will appeal to students, retain nutritive quality, and foster lifelong healthful eating habits
4. Be served in age-appropriate portions

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall communicate information related to the district's food service programs to the public through available means, including, but not limited to, the district's website, social media, flyers, and school publications.

The district's food service program shall prioritize serving freshly prepared onsite meals, using whole or minimally processed sustainable foods that are locally grown or produced, including fresh fruits and vegetables, and providing plant-based or restricted diet food options for students.

District schools are encouraged to establish school gardens and/or farm-to-school projects to positively impact students' knowledge related to food and nutrition, and support the district's nutrition education program.

To the extent possible, the school meal program shall be coordinated with the nutrition education program, instructional program for teachers, parents/guardians and food service employees, available community resources, and other related district programs.

To encourage student participation in school meal programs, schools may offer multiple choices of food items within a meal service, provided all food items meet nutrition standards and all students are given an opportunity to select any food item.

The Superintendent or designee may invite students and parents/guardians to participate in the selection of foods of good nutritional quality for school menus.

Students shall be allowed adequate time and space to eat meals. (Education Code 49501.5)

To the extent possible, school, recess, and transportation schedules shall be designed to promote participation in school meal programs.

The Superintendent or designee shall periodically review the adequacy of school cafeterias and facilities for food preparation and consumption.

In accordance with law, the Superintendent or designee shall develop and maintain a food safety program to reduce the risk of foodborne hazards at each step of the food preparation and service process.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually report to the Governing Board on student participation in the district's nutrition programs and the extent to which the district's food service program meets state and federal nutrition standards for foods and beverages. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall provide all necessary and available documentation required for the Administrative Review conducted by the California Department of Education (CDE) to ensure the food service program's compliance with federal requirements related to nutrition standards, meal patterns, provision of drinking water, school meal environment, food safety, and other areas as required by CDE.