



## NUTRITION SERVICES

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### Central Kitchen, Education Complex

Nutrition Services provides meals to all Tk-12 & Child Development Centers (CDC's) throughout the District. Lunch is served at all Tk-12 schools, breakfast at 77 schools, supper at 22 schools, and after school snack at over 60 schools. Breakfast, lunch, & snacks are served at CDC's depending on the programs offered. Annually, OUSD Nutrition Services serves over 6 million meals. The meals we serve must meet minimum standards set forth by Federal, State, & local regulations. Following these standards ensures reimbursement for the meals served. Reimbursement rates vary based on whether the student that received the meal qualifies for free or reduced meals. There is also a small reimbursement for paid meals.

Nutrition Services also prioritizes increasing participation in these programs. To this end we provide breakfast free for all students & alternative serving times & locations. We also believe that we should make accessing meals as easy as possible for parents. At schools with high free & reduced we've implemented programs that allow us to feed all students at no charge & eliminate need for applying for meals. This has had another positive effect of increase reimbursement/revenue. All this work is done by over 200 employees working at central office, central kitchens, schools, including charters, & CDC's. Our employees are among the lowest paid in the District and some only working 3 hours per day. Until Measure FF many were making less than \$10 per hour. Yet, they are some of the most dedicated people. They work daily to provide the best possible meals for "their babies".

Oakland Unified School District has been working for several years to improve the nutritional content and quality of meals provided to our students. Often, OUSD is a trend setter in this work. For example, OUSD was the first school district in the country to stop the sale of sodas and candy to students. The work goes beyond what is sold to students to the meals, breakfast, lunch, snack & supper. Starting in 2006 we started making substantive changes to the meals. Some examples are:

1. Reducing chocolate milk service to just one day per week.
2. Replacing items containing high fructose corn syrup & partially hydrogenated oils
3. Increasing availability of fresh fruit & vegetables by implementing salad bars & eliminating canned vegetables
4. Adding whole grain items like brown rice & whole grain pastas
5. Replacing chicken nuggets with chicken legs

Nutrition Services expanded our work with fruit & vegetables to include a Farm to School Initiative in 2009. Working with Community Alliance with Family Farmers, OUSD developed and implemented purchasing standards to ensure that produce would be sourced from within 250 miles from Oakland. Schools with full cooking kitchens started cooking again. Central kitchens started providing more freshly prepared foods. For example, instead of bringing in spaghetti with meat balls from an outside company, kitchens were making their own spaghetti bolognese with ground turkey.

All these efforts were not enough. In 2010, the Oakland School Food Alliance (OSFA) was formed by parents representing schools throughout the District that were dissatisfied with the meal program. These parents had children that attended schools that received meals from our two central kitchens



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located at Oakland High & PLACE @ Prescott. The schools served by these locations almost exclusively receive individually pre-packaged meals wrapped in plastic. This system does not allow us to provide the best possible meals for our students. Parents, students, & teachers couldn't believe that many of the items were freshly prepared. The individually pre-packaged meals wrapped in plastic were a huge deterrent. Some parents wouldn't let their students eat these meals because they were wrapped & cooked in plastic. It was very reasonable that the parents were not satisfied. OSFA's solution was to allow these schools to contract with a local restaurants & companies.

Through several conversations between OSFA & Nutrition Services, parents began to understand the progress that had been made, the vision of the meal program, and the challenges achieving that vision. We all agreed that a feasibility study was needed to determine how OUSD could improve the quality of school food, elevate the status of school meals, and solidify the nutrition program's role as a central component of students' academic experience. In other words, align Nutrition Services work with our Strategic Plan & help to ensure that the District was caring for the whole child.

Zenobia Barlow, Executive Director for The Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL) approached OUSD about conducting a feasibility study using their Rethinking School Lunch as a planning framework based on a positive vision: healthy children ready to learn, "food literate" graduates, invigorated local communities, sustainable agriculture, and a healthy environment. CEL had years of experience working with Districts to improve school meals as well as educate students on several related topics. OUSD & CEL embarked on Rethinking School Lunch Oakland during the 2010-11 school year. Over 50 schools were visited reviewing facilities & tasting meals. CEL staff reviewed procurement practices, financials, and other aspects of the program.

In 2012 the study was complete and several recommendations were made. Top among these was a new central kitchen. A new central kitchen was needed because the two existing central kitchens could not be changed to meet the goal of eliminating 80% of the pre-packaged meals served in schools. Oakland High is a closed campus high school of over 1700 students. As a Central Kitchen, they are also serving over 20 sites including CDC's, elementary, middle & high schools. Trucks have to travel where students walk to & from class & there is no space to expand operations. PLACE @ Prescott was designed as a central kitchen in the early 1990's by adding on large walk-in freezer & refrigerators to the back of a school kitchen. The kitchen was intended to prepare 9,000 meals per day & now currently prepares 20,000. Just as with Oakland High, placement of a central kitchen at PLACE has posed problems for the students there. Recently, we had to reduce playground space to provide access to delivery trucks.

The recommendations of the study were approved by the Board in 2012. As a result these recommendations were then incorporated into the Facilities Master Plan. This was an unprecedented move for OUSD, never before had facilities for school meals been specifically called out as a priority in the plan. The Facilities Master Plan ultimately provided the basis for Measure J.



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Zenobia Barlow & OSFA Founding Member Ruth Woodruff became co-chairs of the bond committee. They ensured that the bond committee knew the importance of the kitchen work outlined in the bond. Polling was completed to determine how Oakland voters felt about school meals. Over 90% of potential Oakland voters believed that it was the school district's obligation to provide nutritious meals to students. These were all voters, not just those that were parents or from a certain political party. Measure J passed by over 80% in November of 2012.

After the passage of Measure J, the central kitchen facility expanded its purpose to include education facilities & an instructional farm. These were key because so many of our students are disconnected from where their food comes from. It also would provide an excellent opportunity for linked learning. The addition of these programs made this one of the most unique facilities in the country. CEL researched districts across the country and could not find a similar facility.

Since 2013 Facilities, Nutrition Services, & CEL have been working with the architecture firm Cody Anderson & Wasney & their team of consultants. This is a complicated facility with unique programmatic needs and the team has stepped up with some amazing designs. The building is set up to:

1. Prepare 35,000 meals per day with potential growth to 50,000. This will allow Nutrition Services to provide support for all District schools including charters. There is also potential to serve our community programs like Head Start, City of Oakland Summer Programs.
2. Prepare & provide catering services for all District functions.
3. Provide space & facilities to increase the amount & frequency of deliveries from local companies & small family farms.
4. Provide sufficient administrative offices for Nutrition Services
5. Provide professional development space for Nutrition Services employees, teachers, other District employees, & community members and organizations.
6. Provide education spaces for all grade levels including traditional classroom space, culinary arts classroom, & outdoor spaces.
7. Provide Linked Learning & Career Pathways opportunities.
8. Provide garden/farm learning experiences.
9. Provide community space like a community garden.
10. Provide event spaces.

During the design process, attention has been paid to the standards outlined by the Collaborative for High Performing Schools (CHPS). This building will be CHPS certified ensuring sustainable design, energy efficiencies, & the facility as educator.

During the feasibility study, the Foster site was determined to be the best District owned property for the facility. The intention was that the program could fit into the existing building. The facility was evaluated and the changes required proved to be cost prohibitive. Due to this a new building was needed. Nutrition Services has reached out to former OUSD employee Denise Saddler asking her help



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reaching out to Marcus Foster's family to determine the best way to honor his life & service to Oakland's students.

While the design is now 90% complete we have been actively engaging the community, community organizations, & neighbors. The District has contracted with Malo Hutson & his consulting firm. They have held six (6) meetings regarding the project including the first CEQA meeting. They have also conducted door to door 1:1 meetings with the surrounding neighbors. These meetings have provided some great insights which are being considered for inclusion in the final design.

Until a recent letter from some community members, there has been little to no negative comments about the project. The biggest issues are that the District did not engage community members earlier and the blighted Durant Park adjacent to the property. We've acknowledged & apologized for the delay in engagement. We have also reached out to Oakland Parks & Recreation regarding the park. To date there has been no response from the City, but we continue to pursue these efforts. The following outlines some of the concerns from the group of community members (taken from an email sent to Jumoke Hinton- Hodge):

*There is definitely a need for a stay on the decision to demolish Marcus Foster School. We ask that the following issues be addressed now:*

- 1. A community engagement process is needed. We are asking that the plans for the Marcus Foster School demolition be put on the next School Board agenda.*
- 2. Options for reuse of the existing structure should include the community's need for a public library, the continued community use of the playfields and gymnasium, the possible development of a skill center for the unemployed, a child development center or other educational community uses.*
- 3. The community needs to be notified regarding the environmental review process. We understand that there is an EIR being prepared and that there should be notices issued regarding scoping meetings.*
- 4. Demolition should not be planned until the full community process is complete.*

Working with Director Hinton-Hodge & our community engagement company we will work to address these issues.

Another key engagement was with Programs for Exceptional Children (PEC) & their families. PEC is currently housed at Marcus Foster. We met with the CAC to discuss the project. They too were disappointed in the lateness of engagement but overall support the program & are happy to be leaving Foster. Working with PEC leadership, Facilities identified Cole as the best option for PEC. This required that Technology Services be relocated. Working with Tech Services leadership, McClymonds & Lafayette were identified as the best locations. This was a thoughtful process that also included engagement with the host school. Some added benefits are provided to these schools as a result of Tech Services relocation:

1. Aligning Tech Services work with STEM West Oakland Corridor
2. Participation in school support & student learning



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The Tech Services move was completed over Winter Break. Construction has begun at Cole. The anticipated move in date for PEC is July 2015.

Planning continues on this project as engagement & moves occur. As mentioned previously, the design is 90% complete. Construction Design (CD) has begun with 50% completed by March 2015. We anticipate 90% completion of CD by October 2015 which will allow the architect to submit plans to the Department of State Architecture (DSA) that month. DSA takes approximately six months to review design. This approval must occur in order for construction to begin. However, site prep & demolition can begin once PEC has moved to Cole. The construction team is a joint venture between West Bay Builders, Digital Design Communications, & Eclipse Electric LCD.

Other facility upgrades related to this work include new kitchens at Laurel, Piedmont Ave., Hillcrest, & Kaiser Elementary Schools. These schools were selected to receive updated facilities because they have no kitchen facility. Meals are served out of a corner in the Multi-Purpose Room. They do not have sufficient sinks to have a salad bar. If these schools did not have these substantive upgrades, the students would not benefit from the new meals provided by the central kitchen. These upgrades should be completed by the Fall of 2016.

While the central kitchen represents a pivotal change in how we provide meals to students, we aren't waiting to improve the meals. Since the inception of Farm to School in 2009, OUSD has experienced marked improvement in the sourcing & quality of produce. Depending on the season, 40-80% of produce is sourced within 250 miles of Oakland. We are now working with Oakland & San Leandro based produce companies. With this success, we have now moved our efforts to proteins & grains.

California Thursdays is an initiative begun in partnership with CEL to increase the amount of California foods served to California kids. This program was started as a monthly initiative during the 2013-14 school year. On Earth Day 2014, the effort was expanded to a weekly program. Every Thursday at schools & CDC's throughout the district all produce & one entrée is exclusively sourced from California farmers, growers, & companies. Some examples of meals are:

Lemon Oregano Chicken with Brown Rice

BBQ Chicken with Brown Rice

Chorizo & Greens

Tofu & Bok Choy with Yakisoba Noodles.

Not only are we sourcing from California but also from Oakland. The tofu is from Hoda Soy, an Oakland based company. Now, California Thursdays has been implemented in 15 additional school districts. By Earth Day 2015 a total of 43 school districts will have implemented California Thursdays, an initiative begun in Oakland!

We are proudly serving Mary's Chicken from Sanger California. Not only is this chicken raised & processed in California it has never been treated with anti-biotics. OUSD NS is committed to better





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food and one way to ensure better food is to focus on the processes used by farmers & producers. This procurement change has been done with our partners at School Food FOCUS, San Diego USD, & Riverside USD.

The Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL) is working with OUSD to develop potential education programs for the new Foster Center Central Kitchen, Education Center, and Instructional Farm. Based on input from OUSD administrators, CEL is focusing on ways that the new facility can serve as a learning laboratory for Linked Learning, STEM, and student field trips to the site. Due to input gleaned in recent community engagement meetings (led by Malo Hutson), CEL has added community education as a forth area of emphasis.

On February 11, CEL hosted 35 educators, informal education providers, and community members at an all-day design charrette focusing on educational programs. This group formed design teams based on the four areas of emphasis listed above and each will hold at least two more meetings between now and June to craft a set of program recommendations for submission to OUSD.

CEL is also developing a pilot program with Met West High School administrators and the principal to experiment with ways to engage students in an academic program that integrates ecological principles, urban agriculture, and food systems. A pilot course will commence on March 4, 2015 and will be expanded during the 2015-16 academic year. CEL and Met West see this pilot project as a vehicle for testing ideas for future programs at the new education center.