

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

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To: Board of Education  
From: Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent  
Jennifer LeBarre, Executive Director- Nutrition Services and Warehouse & Distribution,  
Subject: **Nutrition Services Rethinking School Lunch Oakland & Good Food Purchasing Program**  
Date: October 11, 2017

**OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVE**

During the 2010-11 school year, the Center for Ecoliteracy commissioned a team of expert consultants to conduct a comprehensive review, in collaboration with Oakland Unified School District, of the District's Nutrition Services program. The purpose of the study, entitled "Rethinking School Lunch Oakland," (RSLO) was to create a roadmap for comprehensive reform of school food in the District. The study focused on Nutrition Services facilities, since inadequate facilities presented the primary obstacle to realizing the District's vision for school food reform in Oakland. The study examined the feasibility of improving the nutritional quality and content of District meals through a new green Central Kitchen and an upgrade of current school site kitchens.

Simultaneously, in order to improve Nutrition Services in its entirety, the study applied the Center for Ecoliteracy's Rethinking School Lunch planning framework. This whole systems approach, developed after more than 15 years of engagement with school food issues, identified ten interrelated dimensions of school food operations including facilities, finances, food & health, wellness policy, teaching & learning, the dining experience, procurement, waste management, professional development, and marketing & communications.

More recently in 2017, researchers and faculty at The University of California Berkeley embarked on a longitudinal study of Oakland's implementation of RSLO. One of the aims of this study is to understand how RSLO is serving students and families in need of increased access to healthy free food at the site level, both now and after the completion of the Central Kitchen project. To answer that question, the team recruited 16 elementary school sites from each of the seven board districts (2 schools from Districts 1, 2, 3, 4; 3 schools from District 5, 1 school from District 6, and 4 schools from District 7) that represent the spatial and demographic diversity of the City and the District, and the varied state of kitchen facilities across the District, to participate. During 2016-2017, these researchers conducted 54 in depth interviews with site & central staff and parent focus groups with 110 parents, observed over 7000 students eating breakfast and lunches, and analyzed this data along with the 2017 California Healthy Kids Survey responses from parents, staff and students, to determine how well the current school meal program is serving students.

This analysis produced several key findings which yielded recommendations for the continued implementation of RSLO. For example, whether a school site has access to freshly prepared food (as opposed to packaged food) impacts student and parent perception of the quality of the food being served, and impacts participation and consumption. Particularly important, lack of access to freshly prepared food appears to reduce student consumption of the school food--even when the food is of high quality and even when the student may be at risk for being hungry. These findings suggest that beyond the already planned facility



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upgrades, it is important to contemplate all strategies to increase parent, student, and staff knowledge of current improvements (possibly through offering the California Thursdays menu at community engagement events), and to consider what additional kitchen facilities changes are needed at the site level to fully implement RSLO during master planning efforts. We also know from other work that improving facilities to increase access to freshly prepared food will benefit the budget because it will increase participation.

Simultaneously, Nutrition Services has partnered with the Center for Good Food Purchasing to evaluate procurement based on their Good Food Purchasing Policy (GFPP). GFPP provides five criteria through which Nutrition Services food purchasing were reviewed. Those are:

1. Nutrition
2. Animal Welfare
3. Environmental Sustainability
4. Valued Workforce
5. Local Economies

The following link is a video explaining the policy:

<https://goodfoodpurchasing.org/>

The Center for Good Food Purchasing, working with OUSD's Farm to School Supervisor Alex Emmott, reviewed food purchases made during the 2011-12 school year, before the implementation of California Thursdays, and awarded Nutrition Services two out of five possible stars. The GFPP review of Nutrition Services' procurement during the 2015-16 school year yielded a four out of five star rating, which is the highest rating ever awarded to a school district by The Center for for Good Food Purchasing and qualifies OUSD to use the Center's "good food purchaser seal." During this time, Nutrition Services made significant changes to the meal program and procurement efforts. For example, Nutrition Services began California Thursdays during the 2013-14 school year and introduced local chicken raised without antibiotics, organic grass-fed beef, and locally grown produce. While also improving the quality of the food provided to students, this work allows Nutrition Services to measure how it supports the local economy, including Oakland based businesses like Community Grains Pasta in a meaningful way.

We have also learned that improving the quality of food for students is good for the budget.. While we have drastically improved the quality of the food purchased, Food costs have decreased from 52% of the overall budget in 2014-15 SY to 42% in 2016-17 SY.

## SUMMARY

Nutrition Services is requesting that the Board officially adopt the Good Food Purchasing Policy. The October 11, 2017 Board Meeting is intended to be the first read of the policy. The goal is to have GFPP adopted by end of 2017-18 SY along with Administrative Regulations. Based on prior data, we do expect food cost to maintain or decrease. This is also tied to the completion and opening of the new central kitchen.



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The Rethinking School Lunch Oakland study will continue through the opening of The Center and upgrades of school kitchens, although it will continue to yield findings at different intervals over the next academic year. The study will be longitudinal and examine how the facilities upgrades serve students and families at the site level after the opening of The Center and completion of finishing kitchens. This year, one aspect of the study has expanded to include four other districts across the state engaged in similar work, and another aspect of the work will directly support the revision of OUSD's Wellness Policy. The research team with Nutrition Services and Health and Wellness will periodically update the Board on the findings.

# OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Board Policy

BP 3555

### Business and Noninstructional Operations

### Good Food Purchasing

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In support of community schools and thriving students, the Governing Board of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) recognizes that access to good food is essential to students' health, wellness, and achievement. As a school district that serves meals to the vast majority of enrolled students daily, OUSD has an important opportunity to ensure dollars spent on food support student wellbeing, as well as the local economy and environment.

This Good Food Purchasing Policy encompasses five distinct but inter-related values, which collectively define "good food" as local, sustainable, humane, fair, and healthy, and shall be used to guide OUSD's food procurement practices. The good food values are:

1. Local Economies
2. Environmental Sustainability
3. Animal Welfare
4. Valued Workforce
5. Nutrition

The Executive Director of Nutrition Services or designee shall be responsible for the oversight, implementation, and evaluation of this Policy. The Oakland Food Policy Council and the OUSD Nutrition Advisory Council, comprised of community representatives and stakeholders, shall serve as advisory groups to oversee implementation of this Policy.

Through this Good Food Purchasing Policy and related policies, the Board seeks to ensure that foods procured and served as part of the OUSD school meal program:

- Meet or exceed Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the United States Department of Agriculture's menu pattern requirements for school meals;
- Are delicious and support student health and wellness;
- Ensure all participants in the food supply chain receive fair compensation, fair treatment, and are free of exploitation;
- Are equitably accessible and culturally diverse; and

- Are produced, processed, distributed, and recycled locally using the principles of environmental stewardship (in terms of water, soil, and pesticide management) and the humane treatment of animals.

## **BACKGROUND:**

OUSD has partnered with the Center for Good Food Purchasing since 2014 to evaluate its procurement based on the criteria set forth in the Good Food Purchasing Standards and was awarded a three-star rating (out of a possible five stars) in the Good Food Purchasing Program by the Center for Good Food Purchasing for its food procurement in the 2014-15 school year. In November, 2016, the Board adopted the Good Food Purchasing Resolution (Resolution # 1617-0079 to declare its commitment to the principles of Good Food Purchasing.

## **GOOD FOOD VALUES:**

1. Local Economies – Support small and mid-sized agricultural and food processing operations within the local area or region.
2. Environmental Sustainability – Source from producers that employ sustainable production systems that reduce or eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers; avoid the use of hormones, antibiotics, and genetic engineering; conserve soil and water; protect and enhance wildlife habitats and biodiversity; and reduce on-farm energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Valued Workforce – Provide safe and healthy working conditions and fair compensation for all food chain workers and producers from production to consumption.
4. Animal Welfare – Provide healthy and humane care for livestock.
5. Nutrition – Promote health and well-being by offering generous portions of vegetables, fruit, and whole grains; reducing salt, added sugars, fats, and oils; and by eliminating artificial additives.

## **IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:**

Using the 2014-15 school year as a baseline, OUSD will annually increase procurement of Good Food through strategic menu planning and procurement, to meet multi-year benchmarks for the five good food values.

## **PROCUREMENT AND VENDOR MANAGEMENT:**

Good food procurement refers to the sourcing and purchasing of food to supply District Nutrition Services operations, including school meals, catering, grant programs and for-profit subcontracts.

OUSD will expand and establish supply chain accountability and traceability systems with vendors and distributors to verify sourcing commitments and incorporate Good Food Guidelines into bids, Requests for Proposals (“RFPs”) and contracts for food products, where available.

## **EVALUATION AND ANNUAL REPORTING**

OUSD Department of Nutrition Services will evaluate progress and report annually, on or before June 30<sup>th</sup>, on good food purchasing to stakeholder groups and the Board. The Center for Good Food Purchasing will continue to provide evaluation support to measure progress toward Good Food Purchasing Program benchmarks using the Good Food Purchasing Standards criteria.