



# What's Cookin'?

A School Nutrition Newsletter

## Message from the Director

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### Inside this issue:

Message from the Director	1
Reauthorization of the CN Programs	2
Army Recruits Weigh Heavy	2
Superbowl Food Safety	3
Good News About Food Prices	3
Recipe Corner	4
Good Links	4

From lowering trans fats to decreasing energy usage, we have had a busy first semester of school. The crisis we are facing with local lay offs and businesses closing is affecting all of us in some way. Thankfully, the local nutrition program is here to help those that are needing some relief from losing a job or increased grocery bills. We have seen an increase in participation of the free and reduced price meal program in our district of four percent compared to SY 07-08. While we are fortunate in America to only spend a fraction of our income on groceries, compared to what other countries spend, times are tough and people are tightening up. Our bid prices on some items have increased throughout the year, but we continue to provide low cost school meals to families because it's what we do. To help save pennies in households, parents should consider allowing students to buy a healthy school meal instead of packing a lunch. Independent research put the average cost of a packed lunch at \$3.41. Locally, one student paying \$2.00 for lunch can save a household \$318.00 a year. That amount is slightly less for a Junior High or High School student. The Bellville School Nutrition Department is nationally recognized by USDA for providing healthy, balanced school meals. For the cost of a meal, students have choices of fresh fruits and vegetables daily, whole grains, and meals that are 30 percent or less calories from fat, and less than 10 percent saturated fat. BISSD meals are also meeting the recommended dietary guidelines for vitamin C, vitamin A, iron, calcium and calories.

With a new Secretary of Agriculture just announced, we may see more changes in store for the child nutrition programs. Tom Vilsack, former Iowa Governor, was named as Secretary of Agriculture and is making the reauthorization of the nutrition programs a priority of USDA this year. Other key political appointments should be announced soon with a new Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services and a new Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. Our hope is the new Administration will go to bat for the nutrition programs and succeed in their request of additional funding so we can continue to provide fresh produce and whole grains daily to the students of BISSD.

## Muffins with Mom

The Muffin's with Mom breakfast celebration will be March 2, 2009 at West End, Primary and Intermediate School. March 2-6, 2009 is National School Breakfast Week and TAKS week. Tuesday, March 7, we will kick off the first day of TAKS with a TAKS POWER breakfast which will include, scrambled eggs, biscuits and gravy, sausage, juice and milk. The TAKS POWER breakfast will be served at all campus levels on Tuesday. We want to be sure all students have the opportunity to TEST their BEST and stay alert during the test.

March 2 we will start serving breakfast at 7 am in order to serve more parents quickly before school starts. We will have change available at the register. Adult price is \$1.75 and students are regular price. The Muffins with Mom menu is an Otis Spunkmeyer wrapped muffin, 4 oz. 100% juice, and choice of low fat or fat free milk. This is a great day to come see what your local School Nutrition Department has to offer for breakfast everyday and to encourage the students to eat a healthy breakfast.

We hope to see a great turn out of parents joining their students to celebrate the advantages of starting the day with a good breakfast! Don't forget, we serve a choice of great breakfast items daily for students until 8 am each morning. Students can eat a warm breakfast for \$1.25 which includes a choice of entrée, 100% juice and low fat milk. BREAKFAST IS BRAIN POWER!

## Army Recruits Weigh Heavy

It is simply ironic that the National School Lunch Program was created partly because young men, trying to enlist in the army during WWII were severely undernourished, and today recruits are being dismissed for being overweight. The Associated Press released an article stating the Army is considering implementing a fitness regimen that would run alongside its new school that assists aspiring troops to earn their GEDs.

It is stated that obesity could very well be the number one problem that keeps people from entering the military in the future.

According to Defense Department figures, 47,447 recruits failed to meet the requirements on induction physicals because they were overweight. That number is very small compare to the over 200,000 exams given in 2008, but has the army worried when now, more than ever, military recruits are needed.

The new Army Prep School at Fort Jackson is considering opening a "camp" for recruits that may need to slim down, in order to meet the physical requirements

of the Army. The school gives recruits the chance to earn a GED before starting basic training. Sgt. Darryl Bogan, a recruiter in Columbia, stated 3 out of every 10 recruits are denied due to them being overweight or obese.

The majority of recruits are close to the age of 18 or 19. This is just another reality check that children are over eating and under active.

Is it more unsettling that the Army turns away 3 out of ten recruits for not meeting the physical requirements or that they have to provide schools for potential recruits to get their GED and complete their High School education?

Obesity is also affecting recruits for other physically demanding jobs such as firefighters. Fire departments are making a major push to encourage better fitness among young people who want to join.

This article again proves that education, eating and exercise are all parts of the puzzle for turning out productive, healthy children, that can succeed in society in whatever professional field they choose.

## Reauthorization of the Federal Child Nutrition Programs

Every five years, the Child Nutrition Programs come up for reauthorization. These programs include the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which play a significant role in preventing hunger and promoting healthy diets among children from birth through High School.

This year, the United States Department of Agriculture held 7 listening sessions throughout the United States. Many School Nutrition professionals provided information on concerns and challenges faced in the School Nutrition programs.

The cost to provide and prepare a school meal on average reaches \$2.90. School meal programs lose money on each meal provided. Financial losses in school meal programs mean more dollars supplemented by the school district go to the nutrition programs instead of to curriculum and teacher salaries. Fortunately, in Bellville, we are self-funded and do not use the local tax dollars to support our program.

Other hot topics include; doing away with the reduced category for meals and expanding the free category,

expanding the breakfast program, simplifying the application process, and increasing commodity assistance.

Many school nutrition programs feel there should be additional funding for programs to continue to respond to the problem of poor nutrition and childhood obesity among the nation's children. Increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains increases food cost.

Congress will be asked to improve the modernization of the school nutrition programs by offering alternatives to paper meal applications, and building a more effective management information system infrastructure.

Nutritional improvement of meal programs will be discussed, suggesting the reauthorization of the child nutrition programs will be consistent with the anticipated reform of the health system in the United States.

More information will be available after the Legislative Action Conference in March.

To read more about the reauthorization visit [www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org).

## Good News...About Food Prices

The American Farm Bureau Federation's grocery list of 12 items estimated the average cost of a Thanksgiving meal for a family of 10 in 2008 was \$44.61 compared to \$2.35 in 2007. With the plunge in oil and grain prices, consumers may still see up to a 4 percent increase in grocery bills.

Currently, food prices are expected to increase 5.5 percent this year marking the largest increase in twenty years. The good news may be that the commodity prices for corn, soybean and wheat have fallen about 50 percent in recent months. Beef, pork and poultry are expected to rise 3 percent this year instead of the 4 percent expected across the board. Dairy products are expected to only rise 2.5 percent with cereal and bakery items rising 3 percent.

The United States Department of Agriculture lowered its food inflation forecast for 2009 by a 0.5 percentage point reflecting lower prices for meats, eggs, dairy, and cereal. Despite this, 2009 will mark the third straight year consumers will see food prices increase by at least 4 percent.

The falling cost of energy used to transport packaged and processed foods has started to make its way into food prices. Oil is down about 66 percent compared to the highest cost per barrel on July 11th of \$147.00 per barrel.

Consumers may start to see some relief at the grocery registers just as they have seen relief at the gas pumps.

## Fast Food—Too Close

New research, published in the American Journal of Public Health, suggests that adolescents who went to school within a half-mile of a fast food restaurant were more likely to be overweight or obese than kids who schools were further away. The children participating in the study were also less likely to eat fruits and vegetables throughout the day and drank more soda. Several studies have determined that fast food restaurants are often clustered within walking distance of schools.

In this study, Drs. Brennan Davis and Christopher Carpenter used data on more than 500,000 middle and high school students from the Healthy Kids Survey to see if location of fast food restaurants had any impact on students eating habits or weight. Roughly 28 percent of the participants were overweight and 12 percent were obese. Over half of these participants attended schools within a half mile radius of fast food restaurants. The students were heavier compared to other students of similar age, ethnicity and activity level.

When asked about eating habits, these participants were reporting having sodas more often rather than drinking any fruit juice or eating any fruit or vegetables.

Although it would be drastic to try to police the number of fast food restaurants within walking distance of schools, more fast food restaurants today are offering healthy options. Getting adolescents to make the healthy choices will still remain a challenge.

## Football Fan Food Safety Guide

**Personal Foul**—if you or a guest fails to meet the basic food safety rules:

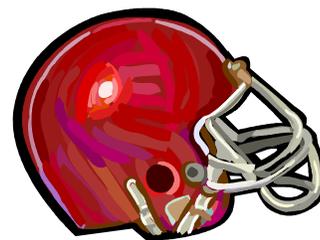
- Clean - Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate - Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat and poultry apart from cooked foods.
- Cook - Use a food thermometer to be sure meat and poultry are safely cooked.
- Chill - Refrigerate or freeze promptly.

**Illegal Use of Hands**—when one of more of the party goes do not wash their hands before preparing or eating food. Wash hands in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds.

**False Start**—This can occur when rushing to get the food cooked and undercooking meat items. Color is not a factor when cooking meat to the proper temperature. Check internal temperatures with a meat thermometer.

**Intentional Grounding**—This can occur when a guest has eaten potentially hazardous food that has been left out in the danger zone for more than two hours. Guests may eat these food items and miss the second half of the game. Refrigerate hazardous food items as soon as possible. Try to associate the two minute warning with the two hour rule.

**Chop Block**—This can occur when someone uses a cutting board intended for meat and poultry to chop vegetables and other ready to eat foods. Use separate cutting boards to decrease cross-contamination or sanitize thoroughly if using only one by washing in hot soapy water between use.



## Recipe Corner

### Cucumber Dip By: Stephanie Jurek

1 pkg (8g) cream cheese, softened  
1 c Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise  
3 medium cucumbers, peeled, seeded, chopped  
2 Tbsp sliced green onion  
1 Tbsp lemon juice  
2 tsp snipped dill weed or ½ tsp dried dill weed  
½ tsp. hot pepper sauce

Beat cream cheese until smooth. Stir in remaining ingredients until well mixed, cover, chill.

Makes 2 ½ cups

### Raspberry Streusel Bar

By: Melinda Vincik

1 1/2 cup flour  
1 1/2 cup oats  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
1 cup jam (raspberry or blackberry)  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1/4 tsp salt  
1 cup chilled butter

Combine flour, oats, sugar, baking powder & salt  
Cut in butter until crumbled then set aside 1 cup of the mixture. Press remaining ingredients into a 8 x 8 pan and bake for 10 minutes at 350 degrees.

Spread jam over backed crust, sprinkle remainder of crumble mixture over the top and bake for 30-35 minutes again at 350 degrees.

## Good Links

[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)  
[www.squaremeals.org](http://www.squaremeals.org)  
[www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com)  
[www.3aday.org](http://www.3aday.org)  
[www.whymilk.com](http://www.whymilk.com)  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)  
[www.fb.org](http://www.fb.org)  
[www.powerpanther.org](http://www.powerpanther.org)  
<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>  
[www.foodandhealth.com](http://www.foodandhealth.com)  
[www.rimag.com](http://www.rimag.com)  
<http://fs.bellinstitute.com>  
[www.bam.gov](http://www.bam.gov)  
[www.nationalnutritionstandards.com](http://www.nationalnutritionstandards.com)

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## Did You Know?

- ▲ Almost one in ten working Americans are restaurant employees
- ▲ Almost one in three American adults got their first job in a restaurant
- ▲ Nearly half of all Americans have worked in a restaurant at some point in their working careers
- ▲ Restaurant jobs represent 9.5 percent of total employment in Texas
- ▲ America's eat and drinking establishments employ more minority managers than any other industry
- ▲ Every \$1.00 spent in Texas' restaurants generates an additional \$1.44 in sales for Texas' economy
- ▲ Each additional \$1 million dollars spent in Texas' eating establishments generates an additional 31 jobs in Texas
- ▲ In 2007 there were 35,890 eating and drinking places in Texas
- ▲ IN 2008, Texas restaurants will register \$33.7 billion in sales