

July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Huron Valley Schools Food & Nutrition Staff

Hello Everyone!

Hope you are enjoying a safe and happy summer. We all are trying to adjust to these crazy times – and our school year is going to reflect that as well. For those of you who were involved in our Unanticipated School Closure Meal Service (Emergency Feeding) you experienced a whole new service model – delivering to sites and parent pick-up. We can expect to do that this year so we can provide for our virtual learning students. The State of Michigan requires school meals to be available to all students enrolled in public schools whether they are in a building or learning virtually from home.

You are now all aware of Governor Whitmer’s Return to School Roadmap. How does this affect us? There are four scenarios for school opening in Fall 2020:

1. Schools open for in-person instruction with minimal required safety protocols – Safe Start Phase 6 (we would still be responsible for providing meals to virtual learning students).
2. Schools open for in-person instruction with moderate required safety protocols – Safe Start Phase 5 (again, still provide for virtual student meals).
3. Schools open for in-person instruction with more stringent required safety protocols – Safe Start Phase 4 (HVS is currently in this phase – we will still provide for virtual meals).
4. Schools do not open for in-person instruction and instruction is provided remotely – Safe Start Phase 1-3 (it is possible we will start the school year in Phase 3 – meal service for all students through delivery and pick up only – just like emergency feeding and summer feeding).

To accommodate our students we will be looking at new service models, including meals in the classroom, delivered meals, pre-ordering, additional lunch periods, grab & go’s, parent pick-up, ala carte ordering, etc. However, less choices will be offered and all schools will be using a cycle menu. We will experiment with new ideas, see how they work – and move forward.

Our plans will be fluid and flexible. They may completely change several times a year.

So – there is a lot we don’t know – but there is also a lot we do know. First of all – USDA has granted waivers for our meal service for during the 2020-21 school year. These include:

1. Parent pick from schools and sites – multiple meals allowed – a parent may pick up meals for the day or meals for the entire week. Students may also take meals home.

Meals are only allowed to be provided on instructional school days – holidays, snow days, etc. are excluded.

2. Non-congregate feeding – meals may be served off site and eaten at home
3. Meal service time waiver – breakfast and lunch may be served at the same time for pick-up, delivery and during the in-school day.
4. Offer vs Serve is not mandatory for High Schools.

So one of the most challenging issues we face is: overt identification. How do we know what a parent's status is when they pick up their student's meals? The School Nutrition Association of Michigan, along with every other state – are trying to resolve this challenge and come up with a plan that is efficient and doesn't slow down meal service. How do we handle ala carte purchases? How do we serve in classrooms, cafeterias etc. with the new Health Department regulations that are required?

So, let's review the new Health Dept. regulations:

1. Masks are mandatory. It is up to the school district to determine whether or not there are allowances for medical issues.
2. We are required to adhere to a 6' social distance – however, a plexi-glass barrier is permitted if a 6' separation is not possible.
3. Self-service student vending machines in our cafeterias and throughout our schools are not allowed.
4. Sneeze guards are required as usual – however it is important to remember that sneeze guards protect the FOOD, not the CUSTOMER. If a 6' distance from server to customer cannot be established then a plexi-glass barrier must be installed.
5. Pre-wrapped items such as sandwiches, fast food choices, individual containers, nutrigrain bars, chips etc. are allowable. Students should be monitored so an item is not picked up and put back.
6. Cash is allowed.
7. A parent/student pre-ordering system is encouraged. We are working with Nutri-Slice now to establish ours now.
8. Once a student has purchased a meal or item the responsibility of safety – for instance sitting 6' apart, is determined and monitored by our school district.
9. There are no self-serve stations, including condiment stations, permitted.
10. Hot meals may be served to a student as long as sneeze guards are in place.
11. Everything must be wrapped and sealed – utensils, fresh fruit, vegetables, cookies, Little Caesar's pizza slices (yes, we are planning on serving Little Caesar's – it's allowable).

Ok – in-service meeting for this year? **I am planning on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am to 3 pm.** This will enable 1A and Summer Feeding staff to attend. The opening meeting will be a virtual one,

as all back to school staff meetings will be. At that time we will be discussing meal service models. Please email any questions you would like to discuss beforehand (you can start right now). I will send out the meeting information closer to the 13<sup>th</sup>. When it comes to opening our kitchens managers and staff will collaborate with the information we have at that time. So far, school is scheduled to start on August 31<sup>st</sup> and IA on August 17<sup>th</sup>. I will be posting the manager and cook positions for IA this week. Also, congratulations to Stefanie Kuhn who has accepted a position with the Teaching and Learning Team. She will be a wonderful asset to their department and will be missed. Congratulations Stefanie! Her position will be posted this week too.

You should have all received an email from Kim Root on behalf of Dr. Salah. An overview of the district's Return to School plan will be presented on July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 3 pm to 4:30 pm. You will need to sign into your HVS google account for instructions on how to view the livestream video feed. It's important to make sure you plan on viewing this.

I want to remind you all that change is nothing new to our department. Our Food & Nutrition Department is the best equipped program within our school district when it comes to adapting to and meeting challenges head on.

Looking forward to "seeing" each of you soon.

Thank you all so much,

Sara