



# FRAC: Model Year Round Programs

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## Model Program

### **Montebello School District Feeds Children Year-Round with Federal Nutrition Programs**

**Montebello School District, CA**

#### **District Demographics**

- 33,500 students
- 76 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals
- Urban district

#### **Afterschool Snack Program**

- Approximately 1,300 children receive a snack each day.
- Fifteen afterschool programs participate- all of them are located on school grounds.
- All of the afterschool programs are located in low-income areas.

#### **Snack Menus**

- All of the snacks meet the nutrition guidelines for the afterschool snack program.
- Some of the children's favorite snacks include trail mix, sliced apples with peanut butter, yogurt, and string cheese.
- The food service department tries to serve seasonal fresh fruit whenever possible such as bananas, oranges and recently started serving packaged sliced apples because they are more kid-friendly than whole apples.
- The food service department places a lot of emphasis on variety in the menu cycle because the children get tired of eating the same snack and they want to make sure that the children are excited about what they are eating and have a chance to try new menu items.

#### **Process for Serving the Snack**

- The cafeteria staff prepares the snacks and leaves them in a designated area so they can be picked up by the afterschool program staff.
- The afterschool program staff are responsible for serving the snack, cleaning up, and keeping accurate meal counts and attendance rosters.
- The food service department staff works with the afterschool program employees to ensure that all employees know how to fill out the paperwork properly.

#### **Funding and Costs**

- Because the food service department is very focused on providing quality snacks including fresh fruits and vegetables, they consistently use their entire reimbursement to cover the cost of the snacks.
- To make sure the program is financially viable; the food service department balances high cost menu items such as yogurt and fresh fruit with lower cost menu items such as milk and graham crackers throughout the menu cycle to make sure that they are able to operate the program without losing money.
- They believe the key to breaking even is making sure that they are preparing enough snacks so they have an adequate economy of scale. The easiest afterschool snack programs to run are the ones that serve the most children.

### **Challenges and Solutions**

- Food safety is always a big concern so the food service department works with afterschool program staff to make sure they understand how to store and serve perishable food items and that they are following all of the food safety guidelines.
- To ensure that all of the afterschool snack paperwork is filled out properly and turned in on time so that the overall NSLP claims do not get slowed down, the food service director explains the importance of accurate paperwork with the afterschool program staff and follows up with them via email if there are any problems.
- The school food service department also has found it helpful to get buy in from top level staff such as the heads of the afterschool programs and principals so everyone understands the importance of timely and accurate paperwork, which allows snack programs to operate efficiently.

### **Response to the Program**

- All of the school district's afterschool programs use the afterschool snack program because they realize the importance of providing food to children after school.
- The afterschool program staff believes that it is easier to get children to meaningfully engage in the afterschool enrichment activities if they provide a snack.
- Staff have also pointed out that they think it's comforting for the children to get the snacks- it helps curb their hunger until dinner and is a good transition to their afterschool activities.

### **Summer Food Program**

- Approximately 2,250 children receive lunch each day during the summer.
- Fifteen sites participate in the Summer Food Service Program.
- Twelve of the programs are located at schools and 3 of the programs are run by the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

### **Lunch Menus**

- The lunches served during the summer are similar to the meals prepared during the traditional school year although more of them are cold meals, which are easier to prepare and serve. And cold meals often seem more attractive to students when the weather is so warm.
- Frequent menu items include cold sandwiches, hamburgers, burritos and pizza.
- All of the meals include fruits or vegetables and the food service department tries to serve whole fruit when possible because it is healthier than canned fruit and easier for staff to serve.

### **Process for Serving Lunches**

- The school primarily operates the summer food service program for students that are participating in their summer school program however it is advertised to the community and all students in the area are welcome to attend.
- Food service staff prepare the meals, serve them, keep track of the meal counts and clean up after the meal service.
- If the sites have kitchens, the meals are prepared on site.
- The only meals that are transported from another kitchen are those for the Parks and Recreation programs since they do not have kitchen facilities.
- Typically, if the site serves less than seventy children, only one food service staff member is employed at the site. If the site has more than 70 on a daily basis, two food service employees are hired.

**Funding and Costs**

- The school uses all of the reimbursement dollars to cover the cost of food and labor and is able to break even with the program each year.
- Each of the school sites prepare enough meals for the amount of children they expect and the school district sends a set number of meals to the Parks and Recreation Department.
- The Summer Food Service Program allows the school district to employ many food service employees during the summer months.

**Challenges and Solutions**

- One problem that the district faces each year is convincing site administrators to run open sites so that students from the community can participate. Often, they are reluctant to open up sites to children outside of their program.
- To overcome this challenge, the food service department highlights the benefits that summer food brings to the students, families and the entire community.

**Response to the Program**

- Many school administrators have observed that if the children did not receive lunch through the Summer Food Service Program they would be left on their own to prepare the meals themselves and would probably be eating less healthy meals.
- Providing lunches ensures that all of the children have access to a variety of healthy food throughout the summer months.
- The Parks and Recreation Department appreciates receiving the meals from the school because it is easier and more cost effective than sponsoring the program themselves or using an outside vendor.

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