

# Focus on Nutrition

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An Overview of Wellness Committee Recommendations  
and MTSD Next Steps

# A Focus on Nutrition

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## TIMELINE OF WELLNESS COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

- **11/16/18** Nutrition sub-committee meets, **develops key areas of focus in food service program review and recommendations:** peanut/nut allergies, Smart Snacks, and overall quality and nutritional value, such as access to whole foods.
- **1/28-2/15/19** Families and students (grades 6-12) invited to provide feedback through **school nutrition survey** on key areas of focus developed by nutrition sub-committee.
- **3/18/19** Nutrition sub-committee **reviews survey results and develops recommendations.**
- **April 2019 MTSD develops action steps** in response to nutrition sub-committee recommendations and survey results.

# Committee Recommendations

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## **Peanut and nut allergies:**

Cultivate a partnership rather than a restrictive environment. A successful partnership requires two-way communication that is based on the needs of each student. Creating a restrictive environment can create a dangerous false sense of security. We must also be mindful that there are an array of allergies.

- Important to make families aware of global procedures regarding all allergies.
- Important to make all students, with a specific focus on elementary students, aware of
  - ◆ dangers of reactions to food allergens
  - ◆ nutrition (i.e., how to read a label)

# Committee Recommendations

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## Smart Snacks\*:

Education and awareness is important.

- Ultimately all families have different expectations and values around foods. Families should be encouraged to have conversations with children to discuss their family's values, and establish expectations based on each child's unique needs.
- Schools should be teaching students about healthy eating, reading a label, and making decisions.

*\*All schools currently offer snacks that may be purchased by students a la carte. These snacks are in compliance with National School Lunch Program (NSLP) guidelines. The NSLP refers to these items as Smart Snacks.*

# Committee Recommendations

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## **Enhancing the overall food service program:**

Incorporate more fresh food options in food offerings.

- Work with the food service provider to analyze food offerings at each school and find opportunities to incorporate diverse and healthy food options (e.g., elementary breakfast pairings).

Awareness of the nutritional value of the food service offerings is essential.

- Work with the food service provider to enhance access to nutrition information (ingredients, carb counts, allergen info, etc.).
- Provide orientation at middle and high school for students conducted by the food service provider.
- Seeing photos of the fresh fruits and vegetables that are available changed our perceptions. Provide visuals (photographs of lunch line or a virtual tour).
- Work with the food service provider to offer samples for parents/students at beginning of year events (Meet the Teacher, Curriculum Night, or Registration Day).

# District Response to Recommendations

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- MTSD administrators reviewed the wellness committee's findings and the survey results, then drafted next steps to enhance the food service program. The recommendations were balanced with certain non-negotiables necessary for compliance with Department of Public Instruction guidelines and sustained fiscal viability. **MTSD's planned next steps follow.**

## *Food Service Program Non-Negotiables*

- Cannot increase lunch prices higher than allowed by Department of Public Instruction.
- Operation needs to be fiscally responsible/cannot incur expense.
  - ◆ Serve foods that students prefer and will eat.
  - ◆ Food and drink expenditures cannot exceed revenue.
- Offerings need to meet or exceed National School Lunch Program guidelines.
  - ◆ NSLP guidelines include purchasing commodities required by USDA.

# Next Steps

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## **Peanut and nut allergies:**

- Direct the food service provider to develop a series of communications for families regarding topics such as the procedures it follows to mitigate allergen cross-contamination in food preparation, who to contact if your child has a food allergy, information about top seven allergens, etc.
- MTSD will develop allergy awareness curriculum to include elementary lessons on allergens, to build greater awareness among all children regarding the seriousness of food allergies.
- Direct the food service provider to provide greater access to nutrition information on website (ingredients, carb counts, allergen info, etc.).

# Next Steps

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## Smart Snacks:

- Direct the food service provider to limit student access to Smart Snacks to students in grades 3-12.
- Provide guidance to food service provider on diversifying Smart Snack offerings.
- Work with the food service provider to build community awareness of the differences between Smart Snacks and products that can be found on store shelves (i.e., same packaging and brands, different ingredients, different serving sizes, etc.).
- Work with food service provider to make community more broadly aware of controls available to monitor and/or restrict student purchases, if families desire.

*\*All schools currently offer snacks that may be purchased by students a la carte. These snacks are in compliance with National School Lunch Program (NSLP) guidelines. NSLP refers to these items as Smart Snacks.*

# Next Steps

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## Enhancing the overall food service program:

- Work with the food service provider to analyze food offerings at each school and find opportunities to incorporate diverse and healthy food options.
- Work with the food service provider to enhance access to food service nutrition information (ingredients, carb counts, allergen info, etc.)
- Provide time for the food service provider to give new middle and high school students orientation to lunch lines, including how to understand what constitutes a “meal” according to National School Lunch Program guidelines.
- Work with the food service partner to extend families’ awareness of what the food offerings typically look like through visuals, such as a video virtual tour.
- Work with the food service provider to offer samples for families at beginning of year events, such as Meet the Teacher, Curriculum Night, or Registration Day.
- Work with food service provider to seek ways to limit the reliance on single-use plastics, such as plastic tableware.

# Wellness Committee FAQs

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Learn more about the wellness committee and find meeting minutes at [www.mtsd.k12.wi.us/wellness](http://www.mtsd.k12.wi.us/wellness).