Food for Thought: How School Meals Can Support Learning
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Betti Wiggins
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2020 Education Week Leader To Learn From

Read about her work:
https://leaders.edweek.org/profile/betti-wiggins-officer-nutrition-food-services-equity/
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Good Food
A Look at HISD Nutrition Services

Betti Wiggins
Officer, Nutrition Services
Houston Independent School District
About HISD

- Seventh-largest district in US
- Largest district in Texas
- 280 schools
- 209,772 students
- 27,000+ employees
- 75% low income
- 86% Hispanic and African-American
- 100 languages spoken
About Nutrition Services

• 1,800 employees
• 226,000+ meals daily
• 46 million meals annually
  – 20 million breakfast meals
  – 24 million lunch meals
  – 2 million supper meals
  – Nearly 1 million summer feeding meals
• Breakfast, lunch, and dinner at no charge
• 240 schools with salad bars
A Parting of Ways

- Aramark contract over at end of 2016-2017
- HISD reverts back to self-operating model for first time in 20 years
- Ideas focus on feeding students in a nutritious, innovative manner
Opportunities Presented

• Raise the profile of Nutrition Services by sharing new vision
  – Serve stakeholders, not shareholders

• Increase utilization of chefs’ culinary expertise to create a menu reflecting district’s diversity
  – Create staff of research and development chefs

• Task dietitians with ensuring nutritional standards are met and conducting nutrition education outreach
Good Food is simple, wholesome, and accessible. Good Food is flavorful, colorful, and fresh. Good Food is made with seasonal ingredients, displayed intentionally, and served with love. Good Food is thoughtful, diverse, and educational. Good Food makes consumers smile, supports academic achievement, and meets all state and federal guidelines.
Hurricane Harvey Efforts

- Nine feeding sites created throughout district to provide free meals to the general public
- More than 90,000 meals served in aftermath of Hurricane Harvey
Breakfast in the Classroom

- Breakfast in the Classroom expanded throughout HISD
- HISD repeatedly selected as one of the top 10 school districts in the nation for highest student participation in the federal School Breakfast Program
Elementary Salad Bars

- Salad bars implemented in 240 schools, including all 160 elementary schools
- More than 600,000 salads served in 2018-2019
“…I want my kids to have more than a consumer relationship with their food…”
- Betti J. Wiggins
Increase Participation in Your Nutrition Program Today
CACFP Supper Program

- Federal initiative providing dinner at no cost to students at eligible schools
- Program offered at campuses across the district
Family Style Dining

• Prevents pre-K and kindergarten students from walking across campus for lunch each day
• Creates later lunch period for youngest students
• Allows pre-K and kindergarten students to eat lunch later in the school day
  – Noon instead of 10 a.m.
Special Event Tailgates

- Hosted at middle and high schools during football season
- Designed to get students excited about school lunch and encourage them to select healthier meal options
Food Literacy and Inclusion

• Inspire youth to have more than a consumer relationship with food through:
  – Fair-minded, critical thinking skills
  – Experiential and linked learning
  – Supportive environmental influences

• Helps students develop sustained, life-long nutrition and wellness habits
Athletic Nutrition Education

• Educational events focused on healthy nutrition for athletes
• Healthy food samples and recipes
• Helpful information about pre- and post-game nutrition
• Visual representation of an athlete’s plate
Employee Transition Program

• Partnership with 2 transition programs
  – HISD-HCC Lifeskills
  – HISD/HEART (Housing, Entrepreneurship, and Readiness Training)

• Students experience hands-on, work-related skills to aid in career development
Questions?

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An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
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Suggested Reading From Education Week:

**School Lunch as a Lever to Expand Equity and Improve School Climate**
Betti Wiggins, the officer of nutrition services for the Houston Independent School District, gives students from low-income families daily access to nutritious meals and provides family-style lunch settings that help teach kids social skills.

**Creating Healthier —and Tastier—School Meals**
Joe Urban, the director of food and nutrition services in Greenville County Schools, S.C., proves that giving students healthy food options and asking for their input can increase participation and be good for the district’s financial bottom line.