



## True Food Nutrition Philosophy 2019-2020

*Nurturing all children through access to quality food and active living.*

Minneapolis Public Schools Culinary & Wellness Services strives to create an environment where students can develop positive eating habits, understand how food fuels the body, and experience the flavors of our local and global cultures. Balanced eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, optimal physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being. MPS Culinary & Wellness Services (MPS CWS) takes pride in shaping the food system surrounding our students.

We believe *true food* is the key to developing and maintaining the long-term health of our students. We define true food as whole, real ingredients that are minimally processed or preserved and provide substantial nutritional value. True food contributes necessary vitamins, minerals, and nutrients in natural forms for overall health and happiness. Real food—true food—tastes fresh and flavorful.

MPS CWS is committed to serving true food in all meal programs across the district. Our true food approach means students receive whole foods like grains, fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy. We are eliminating artificial preservatives, colors, flavors, sweeteners, and unnatural additives from our menus. We actively choose products that contain only functional additives that have a structural or culinary purpose, and do not contain unnecessary additives (such as chemical preservatives) or unnatural ingredients (including man-made or synthetic).

We recognize the need for moderate consumption of specific nutrients to reduce the risk of chronic disease like obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. We hope to impact students' health through limited use of sugar sweetened foods and beverages, saturated fat, and sodium. Research-based evidence supports decreased consumption of these nutrients to promote healthy habits among growing children and teens as well as adults. These nutrients are not banned from our menus but are intentionally used to elevate flavors and increase palatability. We recognize dessert is part of a balanced eating pattern and occasionally offer a locally made sweet treat.

MPS CWS supports our regional food system, community, and environment by consciously seeking sustainable food sources, investing in local farms, and purchasing from local businesses. This mission is practiced through our Farm to School Program in which we purchase locally grown and raised products directly from farmers and farm co-ops. Additionally, our monthly Minnesota Thursday menus feature foods and products from local businesses.

Sourcing, preparing, and serving local, true food is an achievement on its own, but MPS CWS aims to increase the frequency and depth of conversations about food choices. Our marketing materials generate talking points and entice students to learn about their food. Our educational resources are tools for teachers and administrators to build connections between the cafeteria and classroom. Our dining spaces and CWS staff create a welcoming environment, curiosity and courage to try new flavors, and safe spaces where all students are treated equal. Our supporting program areas encourage students to nurture themselves with nutritious food choices and enjoyable physical activity.

MPS CWS is committed to providing food choices that meet or exceed federal standards established by the USDA and the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. We are determined to improve the quality of ingredients used to feed impressionable generations and will regularly evaluate our nutrition standards.



The nutrition goals and guidelines below provide a framework that guides MPS CWS decisions and efforts to give students the best opportunity to learn and grow.

## **GOALS**

We are committed to:

- Provide healthy food choices that meet or exceed USDA guidelines and the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA 2010)
- Offer a variety of whole foods that are fresh, high quality and minimally processed
- Decrease the amount of saturated fat, added sugar and excess sodium
- Teach lifelong balanced eating habits that reinforce the belief of moderate consumption of all foods

## **GUIDELINES**

To provide a highly nutritious program that meets the goals established by MPS CWS, all foods served and prepared shall follow these guidelines. Menu planning will focus on providing a variety of fruits and vegetables, intact whole grains, legumes, lean proteins, and the use of healthy fats.

### **A. Provide healthy and diverse food choices within USDA National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program guidelines (See chart below)**

Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week						
	Breakfast Meal Pattern			Lunch Meal Pattern		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Calories	350-500	400-550	450-600	550-650	600-700	750-850
Sat Fat (% of total calories)	<10%	<10%	<10%	<10%	<10%	<10%
Sodium (mg)	<540	<600	<640	<1,230	<1,360	<1,420
Trans Fat	Nutrition label specification must indicate zero grams – MPLS CWS serves no food that contain partially hydrogenated oils					

Table 1: USDA National School Lunch Program Nutrition Guidelines from HHFKA 2010

### **B. Offer a variety of whole foods that are fresh, of high quality, and minimally processed**

- Offer a different fresh fruit daily for breakfast. Offer two fruits (minimum one fresh) and five vegetables (minimum three fresh and one legume) daily at all sites for lunch. Offer at least one Farm to School produce item daily on the Market Cart salad bar as seasonally available.
- Promote the use of intact whole grains in their natural state, such as wild rice, barley, quinoa, brown rice, and wheat berries by offering them at least once per week. Offer whole grain products with all meals through salad bars, sides, and entrees. Culturally appropriate grain items are used for an authentic culinary experience.
- Include legumes and beans as a plant-based protein option in quantities required for the meat alternate component of meal pattern.
- Offer a variety of lean proteins including animal and plant-based options that are minimally processed.

### **C. Decrease the amount of saturated fat, added sugar and excess sodium**

- A healthy oil blend or natural butter will be used as the oil/fat sources in food preparation to ensure a natural healthy balance of omega 3 and 6 fatty acids
- All milk is unflavored to reduce added sugar consumption



- By school year 2020-2021, aim to decrease average daily sodium levels to Target 2 standards established by the USDA Final Rule “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs (1/26/12)”

**D. Eliminate unnecessary additives and unnatural ingredients such as food dyes and artificial flavors.**

- These unnecessary ingredients serve no vital functional purpose. For example, chemical preservatives in frozen items are unneeded. Unnatural ingredients are man-made, synthetic, or genetically modified.
- The following unnecessary or unnatural ingredients are prohibited from menu items:
  - Artificial colors, flavors, preservatives, and sweeteners
  - Flavor enhancers
  - High fructose corn syrup
  - Partially hydrogenated oils
  - Unnecessary flour conditioners

**E. Animals raised for food should be treated without the use of hormones, steroids, or unnecessary antibiotics.**

- Due to growing public health concern of animal husbandry practices, MPS CWS only supports responsible use of antibiotics in animals. We are committed to sourcing poultry raised without the use of antibiotics ever.
- MPS CWS is opposed to the use of hormone and steroid growth promoters in beef and dairy cattle production. We prefer to purchase food products from beef or dairy cattle produced without hormone growth promoters.
- We acknowledge some USDA commodity products (beef, dairy and poultry) are purchased without the transparency of animal practices, and therefore we limit how often these products are served.

