



Garland ISD: CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meal

Snapshot of Garland ISD

Students Enrolled in District ¹		Campuses in District ¹	
Total Students	57,517	Total Campuses	72
Eligible for Free/Reduced Meal	37,704 (66%)	Campuses eligible for CACFP	59
Average daily participation in CACFP "at risk" Supper program	1,853	Campuses Serving Supper	29

The Garland ISD At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program...

Background. Garland Independent School District is the second largest school district in Dallas County, serving nearly sixty thousand students. More than half of the student body qualifies for a free or reduced meal, and 22 of their campuses currently participate in the Breakfast in the Classroom program. With these statistics in mind, Student Nutrition Services in Garland ISD recognized a need to expand their meal offerings to include an Afterschool Meal. Since beginning this program, more than 120,000 meals have been served to students, ensuring that no child leaves school on an empty stomach.

Afterschool Meals Champion. For several years prior to beginning the CACFP Afterschool Meal Program, Garland ISD provided afterschool snacks through the National School Lunch Program. While these snacks were beneficial, Student Nutrition Services decided that providing a full meal would benefit their students even further. The Department immediately sought buy-in from an Associate Superintendent and Superintendent. Both individuals fully supported the transition to a supper program. They provided opportunities for the Student Nutrition Services to speak at District Principal meetings in order to gain buy-in from campus leaders. Student Nutrition Services Leadership of Brad Trudeau and Jennifer Craig championed the transition to Afterschool Meals, and felt the support provided by district administration was essential.

Getting Started. With the support of district administration, the first step of implementation was to bring awareness to school principals. The Afterschool Meal Program is available to individual schools based on two factors, the campus' percentage of students eligible for free and reduced meals and the availability of an afterschool enrichment program for students. The meal cannot be served without a program in place, therefore, the Student Nutrition Services needed an opportunity to fully explain the afterschool meal program to campus leadership. This happened

during a Principal meeting, which was made possible through the support of District Administration. After this meeting, the Department continued to advertise the program through weekly administrator emails, and worked with field supervisors to spread the word to campuses as well. Campuses that were already serving the snack program, were the first group of schools targeted for outreach. The district also partnered with Community Partners who were able to visit with principals to further explain the program and begin to connect interested principals to Student Nutrition Services. This partnership helped to greatly expand the Afterschool Meal Program to an additional 18 schools.

Supper at a Glance

- Free supper provided to 29 campuses district-wide
- Daily average participation of 1,853 students
- **122,000** meals served in the 2016-2017 school year to date!

1. NSLP and SBP Meal Data for 9/2013 through 5/2014, Texas Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition, 2015.

2. *The Curious Case of No-Charge School Breakfast*. Center for Public Policy Priorities, 2013. Retrieved from <http://forabettertexas.org/>

Program Structure: The Afterschool Meal Program can be served through several different models utilizing several different meal options. When considering their staff capacity, Garland ISD knew they had to identify a meal that could be served with minimal labor costs, as the higher labor costs would be prohibitive for their smaller school campuses. The district decided to offer a shelf-stable, unitized meal that would both be simple to serve and cut down on waste. Garland ISD's program is structured so that the meal is served by the Enrichment Program staff, rather than the nutrition staff. This cuts down on staff time needed to operate the program. Prior to beginning the program, the campus Cafeteria Manager and Field Operation Supervisor work with the school to determine a best-fit service model. In some cases this might mean students come to the cafeteria to pick up their meal or that meals are served from a cart in the hallway. The enrichment staff member will then fill out a form stating which days the meals will be offered for Student Nutrition Services to keep on record. On a day-to-day basis, the campus reports to the cafeteria staff an estimate of the meals needed for that afternoon, and when the school day is over, the enrichment program staff can pick up those allotted meals and milks and begin service to the students. Once the meal has been served, everything is brought back to a designated location, and the cafeteria staff will reorganize the next morning.

At-Risk Afterschool Meal Challenges and Solutions: An additional piece of implementing the Afterschool Meal Program is the requirement of staff training. This can be difficult to achieve as the district is responsible for ensuring all staff, both in and out of the district, are trained on how to properly serve the afterschool meal. To create continuity and structure, Student Nutrition Services worked hard to streamline their logistics and created best practices for staff involved. A training presentation was also created in order for the district to train anyone associate with the program, with this presentation, it allows the district to train everyone the same way, every time. Another challenge with operating the Afterschool Meal Program is to ensure the program is being implemented according to all policies. Student Nutrition Services uses exempt employees to monitor the program, and to constantly train and follow-up with spot checks. This helps to ensure compliance with the program guidelines, and allows for on-the-spot retraining if necessary.

For More Information about Garland ISD's supper program, please contact Jennifer Craig, Assistant Director, Menu and Nutrition Operations
Phone: 972-487-4172
Email: jmcraig@garlandisd.net
Visit Garland ISD's website at <http://www.garlandisd.net/school-basics/school-meals> to learn more.

Tips for Successful Implementation

- **Keep it simple!**
- **Minimize waste**
- **Be Flexible**
- **Create best practices with service, so that everyone starts with correct procedure knowledge**



CHILDREN AT RISK is a research and advocacy organization promoting the wellbeing of children in Texas. We are reaching out to school districts across the state encouraging and supporting their participation in the CACFP "AT RISK" supper program. As part of our outreach efforts, we are developing a series of case studies featuring the best practices of school districts already implementing the "At Risk" supper program. These case studies will serve as a reference and guide for districts expanding their meal programs.

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