

Here's an important message regarding new federal guidelines governing meal requirements offered through public schools.

August 29, 2012

Dear Families,

Many changes will occur in our school cafeteria during the 2012-2013 school year. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 and the United States Department of Agriculture are requiring schools to implement revised nutrition standards in the National School Lunch Program. The most obvious differences will be seen in portion sizes, meal components, and the variety of food items that can be part of a lunch meal. These changes are a result of the rising rate of childhood overweight and obesity, health complications such as diabetes, and the increased costs to treat those complications.

The objectives are to promote healthy foods in their natural form, identify appropriate portion sizes, and educate our children to make positive dietary choices. The new program requirements will ensure exposure to a greater variety of fruits and vegetables. In addition, whole grains, meats, and meat alternatives will reflect the 2010 Guidelines for Americans that specify portion sizes based on grade levels (grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12). Over consumption and distorted portion sizes will be greatly reduced with the revised nutrition standards. Low fat and fat free milk varieties will be the only milk choices available.

Although these changes may result in higher prices to accommodate the purchase of more nutritious options, our children will truly benefit in the end. We have already set our prices as follows: the price for lunch and breakfast have each increased by 25 cents, while the cost of a reduced lunch or breakfast meal remains the same as last year. The obesity epidemic, as well as the increase prevalence of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other health complications, affects an increasing proportion of our nation's youth. Access to a healthier school environment will promote a healthier lifestyle. By educating our children on how to make smart food selections, we will create a positive message for a longer and healthier tomorrow.

For more information, contact Mr. Brian Nolan, the food service manager we share with the Cohoes City School District, at Bnolan@cohoes.org.

Dr. Michael Mugits, GIUFSD Superintendent