



Arlington
Public
Schools

FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

BRIEFING REPORT

NOVEMBER 2018





FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

The Food and Nutrition Services (F&NS) department is a self-supporting \$9.8 million business. Over 150 food service professionals take pride in serving 18,000 customers daily at 34 schools and satellite centers.

The food service program, as an extension of the educational programs in the schools, is operated under the federally-funded National School Lunch Act and Child Nutrition Act.

MAJOR SERVICES PROVIDED

- Administering the school breakfast and lunch programs
- Processing, verifying and maintaining the federal free and reduced meal program
- Creating menus that meet all federal nutrition standards
- Allowing and monitoring all online meal payments and accounts

BRIGHT SPOTS

F&NS was honored to be selected for three visits from the USDA FNS National Nutrition staff last year. The intent of these visits is for the staff to see nutrition programs in the real world, learn about some of the

opportunities and challenges that are faced at a local level, and glean lessons learned from the field that can be applied to their work. The first visit was to Yorktown High School for Farm to School month in October. Staff observed the Farm to School program in action and enjoyed a bowl from the new Café Teria line. In March they visited Carlin Springs for National School Breakfast Week and observed students making healthy choices at breakfast. In May staff and interns joined APS for a farm visit featuring local kale on the serving line. This model will be incorporated into training for Team Nutrition recipients.

APS was selected to participate in the *Washington Post* School Lunch Photo Contest. Districts from Northern Virginia who feature healthy meal options were invited to submit their best school lunch photos, which were featured in the living section of the newspaper.

Amy Maclosky, Director of Food Services, was appointed to serve on the DOE Food Services Advisory council for a term of two years and to represent APS on the public policy and legislative

committee for the Virginia School Nutrition Association.

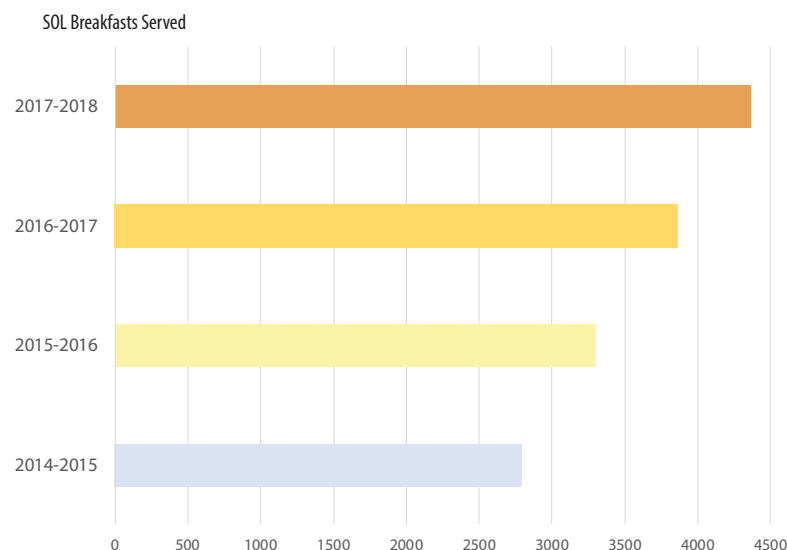
During National School breakfast week, APS not only increased breakfast participation during SOL testing but featured a cafeteria-line decorating contest in the elementary schools. Students were encouraged to draw posters and create videos describing why they love to eat breakfast at school. Ashlawn ES and Drew ES both won the contest with amazing school-wide collaboration and participation.

During the summer months, APS served 82,847 free meals to students participating in summer school programs throughout the county. This represents a 9.2% increase from the prior year.

Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church City and Manassas City schools' food service departments participated in a Department of Education sponsored professional development opportunity in August. The school districts came together to learn about excellence in customer service. During the training, APS was invited to showcase our new Café Teria line and served lunch to almost 100 participants.

DATA THAT PROVIDES INSIGHT

Children who eat a good breakfast tend to perform better in school, have better attendance and exhibit fewer behavior problems. For the past four years, F&NS has focused on expanding the breakfast program. This year F&NS began Breakfast in the Classroom at Hoffman Boston ES, and pre-K and Kindergarten at Randolph ES. F&NS also continues to offer breakfast at no cost to APS students who are eligible for reduced priced meals, and breakfast at no charge for all during SOL testing.



WHAT WE LEARNED

F&NS learned that traditional breakfast models are not necessarily the optimum for student participation. With determination, hard work, and a little creativity, the department could significantly increase breakfast participation. When breakfast becomes a routine part of the school day, more students are encouraged to participate, resulting in more students who start the day ready to learn.

MOVING FORWARD

F&NS will continue to focus on breakfast expansion and increasing consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. This year the department kicked off the next step in the Farm to School program with a Harvest of the Month program. This program features recipes on the regular cycle menu that encourage new ideas about how to add produce to a healthy diet. F&NS continues to offer the Café Teria line in APS high schools, with the addition of a new Italian bowl featuring school-roasted vegetables.

APS meal participation is on the increase – this year F&NS served 623,095 customers the first 40 days of schools, a 9.2% increase over last year on the same day. The F&NS team hopes to continue this trend by responding to customers' requests, focusing on local foods and continuously improving food quality.

