

VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 1 • FALL 2023

CAFE CONNECTIONS

CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FREE! REDUCED-PRICE STUDENTS EAT FREE!

Former Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction, Kathy Hoffman, announced in late December 2022 that the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) would allocate \$6.75 million in pandemic relief funds to waive breakfast and lunch fees for students qualifying for reduced-price school meals.

Since January 2023, students qualifying for reduced-price meals have received breakfast and lunch at no cost. These fees will continue to be waived through the end of the 2023-2024 school year, or until funds run out.

We are so thankful to have the resources to provide student meals at no-cost to qualifying families. We know that every penny counts! As a reminder, families may apply or reapply for free or reduced-price meals at www.EZMealApp.com.



2023 MEALS – ADD MONEY TO YOUR STUDENT'S LUNCH ACCOUNT!

Create and fund your child's lunch account online at EZSchoolPay.com. You can set low balance alerts, check your child's balance, make payments and review transaction history. Breakfast is FREE for all students. Lunch costs \$2.60 and reduced-price lunch is provided at no cost for the 23-24 school year due to a subsidy provided by the Arizona Department of Education. Please review our meal charge policy by visiting our website at www.laveenschools.org.



NEW MENU ITEMS

Check out these amazing new items that we have added to our monthly menu rotation! All of these items have been taste testing at various schools and the students voted that they wanted them to be on the menu for the 23-24 school year. Thank you, voters!



CHILAQUILES WITH DICED CHICKEN



CINNAMON BREAD PUDDING



APPLE NACHOS



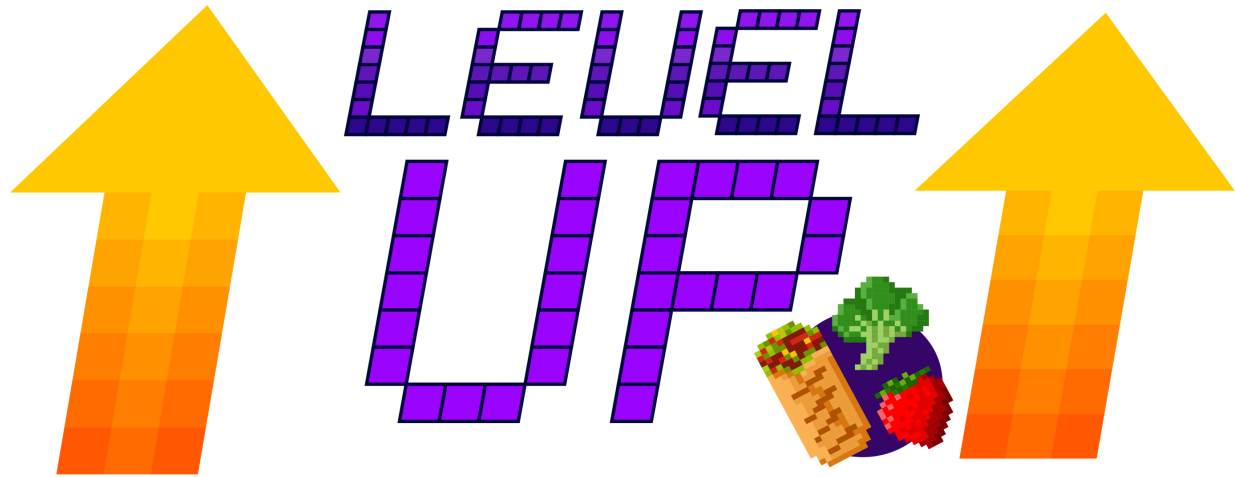
YUM

P-EBT Benefits Distribution Schedule

Students enrolled in a Laveen Elementary School District school in May 2023 **and** who were approved for free or reduced-price meals during the 2022-2023 school year were eligible for \$120 per student in P-EBT benefits. These funds are being distributed by the Department of Economic Security from 9/12-9/24. For questions, please call the P-EBT hotline at: 1 (844) 841-3802.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK

**CELEBRATE WITH US!
OCTOBER 16-20**



WITH SCHOOL LUNCH

LEVEL UP WITH SCHOOL LUNCH!!

Each year we celebrate National School Lunch Week (NSLW), which recognizes and brings awareness to The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) that serves nearly 30 million children every school day. President John F. Kennedy created National School Lunch Week (NSLW) in 1962 to promote the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child's life and the impact it has inside and outside of the classroom. The theme for NSLW this year is Level Up with School Lunch, which is intended to engage students and encourage them to eat healthy school meals by linking nutritious foods to video games that resonate with them. This year we will be offering FREE lunch to all students all week long! In addition to the fun menu names that we have like Smash Bros Soft Beef Tacos, Mario's Mac and Cheese, and Pineapple Tetris Tidbits, our cafeteria managers will be decorating their cafeterias. Join us and LEVEL UP with School Lunch!



UNLIMITED FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLE BAR

Did you know that when a student or adult purchases a meal, they have access to an unlimited Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Bar? This is a great way to Eat the Rainbow, a concept adopted by the United States Department of Agriculture that teaches people that eating a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables will provide them with a variety of vitamins and minerals.



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BUILD-YOUR-OWN TACO BOWL

INGREDIENTS

- Rice, steamed
- Beans (Black or Pinto)
- Your Choice of Protein (Chicken, Ground Beef, Pork)
- Fajita Veggies (Onion and Colorful Bell Peppers)
- Shredded Cheese
- Sour Cream
- Lettuce
- Diced Tomatoes
- Black Olives, Sliced
- Crunchy Taco Shell, broken into small pieces OR tortilla strips

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook rice and beans in separate pots.
2. Cook your choice of protein - chicken, ground beef, pork, etc.
3. Chop up the fajita vegetables, lettuce, and dice the tomatoes.
4. Combine all of the ingredients in your desired order.
5. Enjoy!



CNS SUMMER RECAP



This summer we served 32,396 breakfasts and lunches utilizing the Summer Food Service Program, which provides free meals to children 18 years old and younger.

Some of our cafeteria managers and admin team traveled to Denver, CO for the School Nutrition Association's Annual National Conference. They learned about nutrition, leadership, recipes, food programs, and more!



Our entire team came together for a 2-day all-employee training before the start of school. Our team brushed up on policies and procedures and completed hands-on training with our Life Time Foundation partner chef, Kent Getzin, to review recipes and expand on our culinary skills for the upcoming school year. We prepared a tasty lunch and enjoyed time together.



FROM OUR DIRECTOR



In Good Health,
Jennifer

These cooler mornings are getting me excited about Fall and the upcoming holiday season. Our school year kicked off by getting our entire department together over two days to address several training topics and conduct hands-on culinary training with our Life Time Foundation partner, Chef Kent Getzin. We've worked closely with Chef Kent over the years and were thrilled to bring him back, as many of our new staff had never worked in person with him. We worked on knife skills, vegetable roasting techniques, utilizing various kitchen equipment and step-by-step training on new recipes. You might have noticed some additional variety and new items on our menu this year. The past few years, we have had to simplify and scale back our menu due to pandemic-related issues, including curbside meal service, supply chain challenges and staffing shortages. This year we are pleased to offer two hot entrée choices at lunch, something we hadn't done since March 2020. Speaking of training, many of our staff will be attending the School Nutrition Association of Arizona's Annual State Conference in Phoenix, where we will be networking with peers from around the state, learning about school nutrition topics and seeing all the latest and greatest from industry partners. I look forward to coming back to the office with fresh, new ideas. Lastly, please join us for National School Lunch Week, October 16th-20th, for free student lunches all week long. Happy Autumn!



@LaveenChildNutrition



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