

Case Study: Twin Cities International Middle School

Grades: 6-8



Good Food, Great Service Turnaround Struggling Food Service Program

Nearly 100 percent of the students at Twin Cities International Middle School qualify for free and reduced lunch. And yet, in 2016-2017, only about 50 percent of the students ate school lunch and 50-60 percent ate school breakfast. Staff participation was non-existent. Everyone was bored with the food and disappointed in the quality. The school's food service vendor of 12 years rarely updated its menu, which was limited in daily choices, variety and creativity. Despite requests from the school, the vendor refused to make changes.

So, the school made a change – to CKC Good Food®.

“The kids’ favorites are the cheeseburgers, orange chicken, chicken patty and mashed potatoes. Pizza Friday is also a big hit since it’s much higher quality than the overly processed pizza they were previously served.”

In its first year serving the school, CKC Good Food increased lunch participation to 99 percent and breakfast to 90 percent.

Fardos Jama, the school's Office Manager, noted the significant change from one year to the next. “The kids love the food! They are so fascinated, so excited for the menu. They like that they get different veggies and foods - that they have different choices every day. We have no complaints!”

The kids' favorites are the cheeseburgers, orange chicken, chicken patty, mashed potatoes and “Pizza Friday.”

Even the staff responded favorably to the change. “We probably have 70-80 percent of the staff eat every day, which is a huge change the kids notice,” Jama said. “They tell us, ‘Our teachers never ate the food before. Now they’re in line eating the same food we eat.’”

CKC Good Food boosted the school's breakfast participation to 90 percent by introducing grab-and-go breakfast bags pre-filled with the necessary components of a USDA-compliant reimbursable meal. This approach simplifies service, minimizes messes and clean up, and most importantly, ensures students are nourished for learning.

To round-out the school day, CKC Good Food also provides snacks for after-school enrichment programs. The kids even rave about the snacks.

(more)



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The increased participation across the board has bolstered the school's food service budget significantly – both from the staff's paid meals, and the margin between the contracted price-per-meal and the USDA reimbursement rates.

CKC Good Food's Difference Extends to High-Touch Service

The school has found the differences between food service vendors also goes beyond the food. CKC Good Food made Jama's first year as Food Director a smooth one.

"I was nervous coming into the position but CKC Good Food was absolutely awesome. They were so willing to answer my questions," she said. "Our program is more organized now and there's less paperwork. CKC is on top of everything and has great communication."

CKC Good Food's on-site Kitchen Manager works closely with the school and the CKC Good Food team to ensure that smooth communication and the kids' satisfaction. He often talks with students about the food and tweaks meals based on their feedback. If needed, he works with CKC Good Food's Recipe Development Chef to create menu items the students will like better, such as curried chicken instead of turkey and gravy. He has introduced the students, who are of East African descent, to a wide variety of herbs and spices. Cilantro and garlic are especially popular with the kids.

At times, the Chef has gone the extra mile to make sure the kids have food. He scrambled to provide food for a field trip when the order hadn't been placed and assembled ready-to-go bag lunches when the school was without power one day.

Even the state has noticed the difference with the school's change in vendors. Minnesota Department of Health violations went from 7 to 0 from one year to the next.

Twin Cities International and its students are thrilled with CKC Good Food's delicious, nutritious meals and the concierge-level service that eases the day-to-day stress and workload.

Jama's recommendation to schools evaluating food service providers? "Go see CKC Good Food!"



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