



River Trails

SCHOOL DISTRICT 26

To: Board of Education
From: Ryan Berry
Date: July 21, 2026
Subject: Food Service Department Restructure

Introduction

The food service department is adequately staffed, but roles and responsibilities are not effectively aligned. There is insufficient division of responsibilities between the positions.

Recommendation

Restructure the food service department without adding additional FTE. This would involve creating two new roles; The School Nutrition Operations Coordinator and the School Nutrition Site Lead. An increase of \$1.00 in starting hourly rate for current kitchen staff employees is also recommended. The department would be comprised of the following roles:

- 1.0 FTE - School Nutrition Operations Coordinator (8 hours / day)
- 3.0 FTE - School Nutrition Site Leads at elementary schools (6 hours / day)
- 1.0 FTE - School Nutrition Site Leads at middle school (7 hours / day)
- 2.0 FTE - Kitchen Staff at middle school (7 hours / day)
- 1.5 FTE - Kitchen Staff at middle school (3 employees working 4 hours / day)

Background

After taking over our food service program from District 25 in 2022, the district's food service program has grown. With the addition of current Food Service Director, Jill Kersten, the program has expanded to breakfast at every building and the expectations for employees has risen. Mrs. Kersten's attention to detail and past experience working with food safety quality standards has helped her team increase the quality and quantity of the food they are serving.

However, while managing the department, it has been noticed by Mrs. Kersten and myself, that not all jobs are alike. Our current system does not allow for differentiation in regard to roles, responsibilities, or training. Creating specific job descriptions will allow the district to enforce and regulate the necessary quality standards for a high functioning food service department.

Financial Impact (If applicable)

The proposed restructuring will result in a cost increase due to the higher hourly rate for the new positions. The current kitchen staff start at a base hourly rate of \$15.00. The new School Nutrition Operations Coordinator will have a proposed starting hourly salary of \$22.00. Currently the district pays a \$2,400 stipend to a kitchen staff employee to complete the roles of this proposed position. The new School Nutrition Site Leads will have a proposed starting hourly rate of \$17.50. With the recent retirement of one long-standing kitchen staff employee, there will still be a reduction of nearly \$4,000 for the four positions with this proposed transition. Lastly, the starting hourly wage

increase for kitchen staff would increase the food service budget approximately \$1,200. All pay rates align with regional pay standards for similar positions.

Timeline and Next Steps (if needed)

Upon approval at the August 11, 2026 Board of Education meeting, the School Nutrition Operations Coordinator and the School Nutrition Site Lead positions will be posted on the district's website. We will then follow the district's standards hiring process.

Attachments

- School Nutrition Operations Coordinator job description
- School Nutrition Site Lead job description