August 27, 2020

Dear Families,

As we prepare for the start of the 2020-2021 school year, we wanted to inform you of a few changes to the meals distribution program we've offered since school buildings closed due to COVID-19.

Since March 16, the Division of Food Services, in partnership with the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Children and Family Services, has provided more than 5 million meals to children and families throughout Philadelphia. We were able to provide these "grab and go" meals to children, regardless of what school they attended, through a special waiver provided by the federal government so that we could help families during this challenging time.

Unfortunately, this special waiver has ended. Effective Thursday, September 3, parents or students must provide a School District of Philadelphia Student ID number in order to pick up a “grab and go” meal box for their student. This means we will no longer be able to provide "grab and go" meals to children who are not Pre-K-12th grade students enrolled in the School District of Philadelphia.

School District students can pick up meals at any one of the 62 "grab and go" School District pick-up locations throughout the city. If the District school your child attends is not serving as a meal distribution site, please find a complete list of "grab and go" pick-up locations by visiting www.phila.gov/food. If there are other members of your family who are not School District of Philadelphia students, please go to philap.gov/food for a list of non-School District sites distributing food boxes. You can also call 311 or call the Why Hunger hotline at 1-800-5HUNGRY or text your ZIP code to 1-800-548-6479 to receive a list of nearby food pantries.

Rest assured, children who are enrolled in a District school will receive ten meals each week, even as we begin the school year with a 100 percent digital platform. The "grab and go" meal box weighs approximately 6 lbs and is rotated every few weeks with some of your child’s favorite menu items such as pancakes, yogurt & granola, cereals, chicken strips, spaghetti & meatballs, mac & cheese, as well as a variety of fruit cups, fruit juices, and vegetables. Each box, which includes five breakfast and five lunch meals and a ½ gallon of milk, will be ready for pick-up every Thursday at 62 District schools from 9 a.m. -12 p.m. A complete list of meals to be offered can be found at https://www.philasd.org/foodservices/about/menu/

We do need to remind you that meals are designed to coincide with the five school days of the week. Therefore, if there is a week on which a federal holiday or District break falls
and there is no school on the calendar, meals will only be provided for the days in which classes are scheduled to take place.

We look forward to continuing to serve our students and school communities, especially as we all do what's necessary to best handle changes to our lives caused by the pandemic. While the Back to School season looks very different this year, we do want you to know that one thing remains the same - our commitment to supporting the health and well-being of our students. If you have any questions or comments about our Food Services Division, please reach out https://www.philasd.org/foodservices/contact/.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

Wayne Grasela
Sr. Vice President
Division of Food Services