



Connect With Us

School Lunch Director:

Email:

Phone:

Program Specialist:

Email:

Phone:

Free Meals for All Students

During the current school year, our school district will be participating in the Community Eligibility Provision program, which provides no-cost meals to all students.

CEP is a federal provision that allows qualifying schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. This option increases school meal participation by removing stigma, maximizes federal reimbursements, and eliminates unpaid school meal debt, all while upholding nutrition standards and meal quality.

Food Service Family Portal

LINQ Connect allows families to view menus and manage student meal accounts. You can set up one-time payments, set spending limits, transfer funds between students, set low-balance notifications, and more. It's an easy way to manage meal payments without the hassle of sending cash into school. If you have any difficulties accessing your LINQ account, please contact LINQ support at support@linqconnect.com.



Local Sourcing

We strive to support New York State food producers. Our school district endeavors to utilize as many local farms and vendors as possible.

New York State requires CEP schools to collect information from families through the **CEP Household Income Eligibility Form**. The information gathered on this form is used for state education funding purposes. Also, individual families may be eligible for certain benefits based on the data collected through these forms. **Complete the form by scanning the QR code:**



Our school district is supported by the Capital Region BOCES Shared Food Services Team. Our participation in this service provides many benefits to our students and school community, including:



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- Increased access to a wide variety of wholesome food choices.
- Optimized quality and customer service in our food service programs.
- Shared staff with expertise in school nutrition, including a registered dietitian and program specialists.

Dining at Our District

The café provides dining services for students through the use of their student ID numbers. All the meals offered exceed the nutrition standards set by federal guidelines. The menu follows a seasonal rotation, with variations for fall, winter, and spring. The grain products served are whole grain rich, and there are daily vegetarian choices available for both breakfast and lunch. Every meal includes fresh fruits and vegetables, and students must select at least one at each meal. Milk is offered but is not required to K-12 students. Full meals are available, as well as daily à la carte choices.



School Breakfast

Students may select three to five breakfast items each day. All students must select a fruit and/or 100% fruit juice at breakfast. Please refer to the website for daily menus.

School Lunch

Daily entrée choices are a balance of traditional student favorites and global flavors to introduce students to new foods and cultural foodways. All students must select a fruit or vegetable at lunch. Alternate lunch options are available daily. Please refer to the website for daily menus.

If your child requires menu modifications due to allergies or other concerns, please contact your food service director.

Too much on your plate? Let us put it on ours.



Why should you participate in School Nutrition Programs?

School Meals Are Cost-Effective



Recent regulations have revamped school food into more nutritious and appealing meals while still at a low cost. Students that are eligible for free and reduced lunches receive meals that are packed with nutrition. Students that are not eligible for free or reduced meals are still receiving a bargain by purchasing school meals. Quite often, the price paid for a healthy school meal is less than the price of a packed meal from home.



School Meals Save Time

An average family can spend up to 30 minutes preparing breakfast and lunch. Doing that for every school day adds up to over 5,500 minutes, or 92.5 hours. That is more than two full work weeks! Our food service professionals are ready to serve your students and eliminate your time crunch.



School Meals Support Academic Success

Students spend around six hours per day in the classroom. Without the proper fuel, students can quickly run out of steam and lose interest in schoolwork. Nutritious meals, such as those provided by the School Nutrition Program, provide students with adequate fuel that can keep them energized and focused all day. Plus, a healthy diet will also support a healthy immune system, which means fewer sick days for your children!

Academic Benefits

Improved Cognitive Function

Short-term memory, the ability to conceptualize, and abstract reasoning skills improved when students ate more nutritious foods.

Higher Test Scores

Students who received the necessary levels of iron in their meals scored better on math and IQ tests.

Better Attention Spans

Parents reported that their children could concentrate better after they had eaten more nutritious meals.

- source: FRAC Food Research & Action Center frac.org

Behavioral Benefits

Better Classroom Behavior

Students have been shown to get along better with classmates and cause fewer class disruptions when they have been eating properly.

Fewer Absences

Students who consistently eat enough throughout the day are less likely to miss school days or extra-curricular activities.

Improved Mood

Hungry children tend to be angrier and more irritable. They also cannot socialize as well.

- source: Journal of School Health, 2005

Please refer to the School Nutrition page of the district website for further information about programs and policies, such as:

Wellness • Meal Charge • Affordable Connectivity (ACP) • Smart Snack Guidelines • LINQ Connect FAQ

<https://berlincentral.org/>