



*September 15, 2021*

NKC Schools families,

Earlier this month, we shared that North Kansas City Schools, along with school districts across the country, is facing challenges in sourcing food for school meals. NKC Schools' two largest vendors dropped us as a customer last month. Friday, our third and final large food supplier broke our contract, informing us that they, too, can no longer fulfill our orders.

NKC Schools' commitment to serve healthy, delicious meals has not changed. We have offered to assist our vendors with transportation needs. We also appreciate the many offers of help from our families and community members! Unfortunately, the core issue is more complex. Labor and supply shortages have impacted every point along the supply chain. Even with our offers of support, vendors are unable to meet our needs as we seek to serve 16,000 meals each day.

As a result, we are forced to rely on a limited group of smaller companies to obtain food. As school districts across the state are doing the same, supply has been stretched severely thin. Vendors are raising prices and limiting the ability to order altogether. The district is also working with local grocery stores and retailers such as Sam's and Costco. We have been in touch with state government, national organizations and local media venues as we advocate for solutions. The current situation is simply not sustainable.

As we work through these challenges, here is what you can expect:

- Menu choices will be limited and may differ significantly from published menus. Substitutions will be the norm.
- Opportunities to purchase la carte and extra items may be limited.
- While water will always be available for students during mealtimes and throughout the day, it is recommended that everyone bring their own water bottle to school.
- Students may be sent with a home-packed lunch should you prefer. If your child has food allergies, this may be wise given the number of menu substitutions we will be forced to make.

We know that school lunches provide a critical service for many of our families. North Kansas City Schools is committed to ensuring that every student has access to healthy, nutritious meals at school. While the current situation is less than ideal, we appreciate families' patience and flexibility, and thank you for your support.