



## **NEW YORK CITY AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY FORM URBAN SCHOOL FOOD ALLIANCE TO SERVE HEALTHIER MEALS AND KEEP COSTS DOWN**

The New York City Department of Education today announced a partnership with other school districts to form the Urban School Food Alliance to encourage the healthy meals while keeping costs down. New York City, with the Los Angeles Unified School District, Chicago Public Schools, Dallas Independent School District, Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Orange County Public Schools in Orlando will coordinate menus to improve purchasing power from food providers so that costs are kept low. The initiative will serve the same lunch menus across the six school districts, which together represent 2.9 million daily lunches served a day - of which 860,000 are served in New York City. Today's lunch will include roasted chicken, brown rice with seasoned black beans, steamed green broccoli, fresh fruit and assorted milk.

"Our goal is to offer our students nutritious and delicious meals while keeping costs down," said Deputy Chancellor of Operations Kathleen Grimm. "Costs for food throughout the country are going up and the Urban School Food Alliance will help us to band together and control costs by buying in large quantities."

"The Alliance will help us with costs and quality as we introduce more nutritional options for our students," said Eric Goldstein, Chief Operating Officer for School Support Services that includes the school lunch program. Since 2004, the City has introduced a more nutritious menu; including offering fresh fruit at both breakfast and lunch. In recent years, the City introduced whole grain pasta, replaced white bread with whole wheat bread and installed more than 1,000 salad bars in schools.

"This show of solidarity is unprecedented," said Los Angeles Unified School District Food Services Director David Binkle. "It demonstrates that all the school districts in the alliance can work together to implement the same programs while serving nutritious meals to our students."

"We created this menu based on the most popular items we commonly serve in each of our Districts," said Leslie Fowler, director of Nutrition Support Services at Chicago Public Schools. "Our goal moving forward is to identify these commonalities and work with our vendors to capitalize on our purchasing power so that we're providing the best and freshest foods possible to our students at the lowest costs possible."

The Urban School Food Alliance first met in the summer of 2012 and has worked to combine purchasing power and coordinate menu creation and food service. As a whole, the alliance procures more than \$530 million in food and food supplies annually. About 14 percent of New York City's food supplies are purchased from local produce and dairy vendors. The first-of-its-kind alliance will allow the districts to coordinate bulk item purchases from large venues to keep costs competitive.

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