



# **Preliminary Report on Food Services**

**for the**

## **Bayport – Blue Point UFSD**

**Bayport, New York**

## Introduction

On May 16, 2008, Consultant met with BOCES Shared Food Service Director Susan Romano and Bayport – Blue Point’s own Resti Stio to discuss food service operations in the Bayport-Blue Point Schools, to tour the food service facilities and to observe meal service in each of the District’s five locations at Bayport High School, James Wilson Young Middle School, Academy Elementary School, Blue Point Elementary School and the Sylvan Elementary School.

After our tour, we all met with Michael Cipriani, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, to discuss our observations and some ideas for:

- ✓ decreasing a la Carte snacks and beverages
- ✓ expanding menu offerings
- ✓ increase nutritional value of products served
- ✓ expanding service
- ✓ equipment needs

## Observations

In general, your food service staff is doing a good job for what they are doing. However, there is a major focus at all schools on the sale of snacks and beverages rather than on the sale of reimbursable meals. A la Carte sales to students are very high; adult sales at all schools are minimal at best.

All kitchens are equipped with ovens to heat prepared food but pizza is the only food cooked on site at the middle school and elementary schools. The fact that most hot food, even items that only need to be heated in an oven, are pre-cooked at Patchogue – Medford may indicate a quality issue as the food is held in warmers for so long after it is cooked and before it is served. Pasta and other “casserole” dishes hold up better than the foods items that require simple heating.

For the most part, kitchens are generous in size but are not laid out in the most efficient or productive manner. With some “tweaking”, kitchens can be made more productive and more conducive to the expanded healthier menus alluded to in this report.

Based on observations this day, the lunch program is not using any whole wheat or whole grains products.

### High School

The high school does a very nice job on their combined hot and cold food line but the majority of students are lining up on the other line for snacks and beverages.

1. There is ample space in the serving area to create an additional cold food station offering an array of freshly prepared salads and made-to-order deli sandwiches.
2. The purchase of drop-in cold food units and protector cases into the existing snack counter would create a very nice station without a major monetary investment.
3. The snack and beverage station could be moved into some of the open space in the cafeteria offering a reduced array of snacks and beverages more in line with the healthier options recommended by the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the direction in which many districts are moving.
4. As for expansion of the hot food offerings, it is suggested that the District:
  - a. Expand the griddle concept to include both a charbroiler and a flat top griddle to allow the preparation of fresh grilled chicken, for burgers of all kinds (beef,

turkey and chicken), for frankfurters, quesadillas, grilled cheese sandwiches and so on.

- i. Expansion of hot food menu requires more heating in the existing ovens. To conserve space, the two existing ovens can be "stacked". This activity will create the open space needed for the conveyor oven to be positioned under the hood as required for its operation.
- b. Sell the existing fryer as the service of "fried" french fries has already been eliminated here due to staffing issues. As the fryer is in working condition, it may have some value to a used kitchen equipment dealer. There is no reason that fries or other potato products cannot be baked in the oven instead.
- c. Purchase a conveyor oven that could be used for the on-site preparation of scratch made pizza, calzones, Quizno's type sandwiches, open faced sandwiches, hot toasted bagels, fresh baked hot pretzels, etc.

Attached to this preliminary report is a spreadsheet of Prioritized Equipment Need and Comments that details, by school, issues raised by the Department of Health during their recent visits and by recommendations Consultant suggested during site visitations. The costs itemized on the spreadsheet do not include equipment installation (which is usually done by the equipment dealer and is included in their total bid price) and electrical or plumbing work that may be done by your in-house staff or by an outside contractor. We can prioritize the work here at the high school placing an emphasis on the creation of the cold food station as the initial focus for the summer of 2008 and bringing in the extra cooking equipment during the 2008-09 school year.

The high school dish machine is only used to wash the kitchen's pots, pans and utensils and not for washing student trays. The operating costs for such a large machine are high - high in its use of electricity, water and chemicals. Since the machine is already operating would it make sense to wash student trays as well? If you are going to continue to use this machine, you may want to perform a cost analysis of use of the machine versus the cost of using "green" trays for student meals this should be considered as part of the decision making process as to whether or not to keep the dish machine in use.

There is room in the kitchen itself for washing of the kitchen wares. It is suggested that at some future time, the District consider turning the current dish room area into a walk-in freezer or cooler, making much better use of the dish room space.

The Health Department has identified the need for an additional hand sink in this kitchen. Consultant found space for the new hand sink, at a 90 degree angle to the existing prep sink in the main work table. The sink must be accompanied by a soap dispenser and paper towel dispenser and be separated by a shield of some type from the food preparation function. This work should be done before the opening of the new school year.

#### Middle School

The middle school is operating well below expectations with, again, a major emphasis on snacks rather than on food.

A review of the March 2008 Daily Cafeteria Reports for this location showed that there were a number of days where the sale of deli sandwiches outsold the hot food menu. Pizza is sold on most days but only 20-30 portions are served.

The long lines at the Deli/Snack station could be reduced significantly by moving the snack station to an area in the cafeteria itself and converting the actual serving line into a full-blown made-to-order Deli Station and Salad Bar, with a focus on healthy eating.

The costs for this conversion are limited to the purchase of the drop-in cold pans and protector cases and the accompanying electrical work. No plumbing work is required for this project.

The Health Department has been very critical of the lack of hand washing sinks in this kitchen. To remedy this situation, a hand sink can be installed in the kitchen adjacent to an existing work table that has a sink in it. The large milk cooler that is now in the space to be occupied by the hand sink could be relocated to the area behind the main kitchen, outside of the restroom.

To add hand sinks by the serving stations can be accomplished with the purchase of mobile self-contained sink units that are fed by bottled water.

The cost for the equipment detailed above is included on the attached spreadsheet.

All of the work detailed above is essential to creating the environment that would encourage healthier eating and increase meals and overall revenues.

#### Academy Elementary

This facility could function more efficiently with the placement of a milk cooler in the cafeteria, at the beginning of the serving line. This move requires the approval of the building principal and fire department to insure that the proper aisle space is maintained. Buildings and Grounds will have to be asked to add an electrical outlet for the unit as none exists in the area designated for the cooler.

#### Blue Point Elementary

Large numbers of bagels are sold a la Carte here rather than combined with other components to make a reimbursable meal thus encouraging students to eat healthier by including fruits and vegetables, milk and protein choices.

This facility does have some equipment challenges:

1. The convection oven should be relocated to the other side of the wall it now occupies to allow food service staff easier and safer access to it. This move will require the relation of the fire suppression system to the new location.
2. The kitchen does not have any way to heat soup or vegetables. Therefore, it is recommended that some sort of heating apparatus be provided here. A 2-burner stove would suffice.
3. This facility requires a replacement prep sink and a new hand sink (Health Department requirement) to replace the existing old prep sink.

#### Sylvan Elementary

This school has a very large kitchen but still lacks the hand sinks required by the Health Department. The situation can be remedied by:

1. The addition of a hand sink at a 90 degree angle to the existing prep sink in the main work table. The sink must be accompanied by a soap dispenser and paper towel dispenser and be separated by a shield of some type from the food preparation function.

2. The designation of the sink near the dish machine as a hand sink, properly equipped with the required soap dispenser and paper towel dispenser.

Consultant identified a dangerous condition in this kitchen, a curb that extends around an area now used by the custodian for washing trash barrels. The place for barrel washing should not be in the main kitchen area and should be relocated. Once done, the tiled curb should be removed to eliminate this potential hazard.

Of the three elementary schools, this facility and staff requires the most attention and special training in food preparation and presentation.

#### **Vending Services**

Vending machines in the high school and middle school operate during the school day and after school offering a variety of snacks and beverages, some of which can be considered "healthy". A change to healthier vending products can be accomplished either through a conversation with your current vending company, Answer Vending, or by soliciting proposals from other vending companies. The solicitation should include a listing of the items to be sold and the prices to be charged for each item in the machines. The prices charged in the vending machines should be consistent with the prices charged on the serving lines for the same products.

#### **General Statements**

The District will have to spend money to come into compliance in the areas identified by the Health Department. Those "fixes" have to be done in the near future as compliance with Health Department mandates is of prime importance.

Secondary in importance to the Health Department issues are the program improvements (equipment purchases and installations) that will allow for healthier options and increased program participation. The spreadsheet forming part of this report identifies those concerns required for Health Department compliance in the left column while program improvements are identified in the right column.

A review of the current price and portion listing indicates that many prices have not been adjusted in the last year or two. The District should review its pricing policy and consider raising meal and a la Carte prices while eliminating the sale of many of the "less" nutritious items now offered.

There is tremendous potential in Bayport-Blue Point to minimize the sale of a la Carte snacks and beverages while improving the quality, variety and nutritional value of the hot and cold foods offered. That said, the potential cannot be fully realized under current operating conditions for the following reasons:

- o School district facilities do not have enough storage for food and supplies without an outside central production facility or an addition to one of the Bayport Blue-Point schools to accommodate the extra food and supplies and production space needed to create a full blown school lunch program focusing on healthy and nutritious meals, snacks and beverages.
- o A District vehicle (and driver) would be needed to move food and supplies within the District's five (5) kitchens, adding program costs.
- o The payroll costs for your own Food Service Director could increase overall costs if the salary and benefits for your own Director would be higher than you are now paying for your shared BOCES person.

- Current food service workers are part-time non-benefited employees. Additional workers or extended hours for current employees are needed to expand hot food offerings.
- Tracking of the various menu items offered will provide management and Consultant with some necessary tools to determine menu frequency, possible elimination of menu items, inclusion of certain items as lunches rather than as an a la Carte sale, etc.
- Current method of tracking meals/revenues and expenses may not be completely accurate. A computerized Point-of-Sale (POS) system is highly recommended to more accurately report meals and a la Carte sales and to record prepaid payments to student and adult accounts. The cost for a POS system for a district of your size is estimated at \$45,000 for the first year with ongoing support costs in future years.
- Current method of tracking and detailing revenues and expenses (Profit & Loss) may be incomplete or inaccurate and give false information.

Current method of operation, sharing a Food Service Director with the Patchogue-Medford under a COSER arrangement through BOCES, and the ability to obtain prepared foods from Patchogue-Medford, appears to be most advantageous to the Bayport-Blue Point Schools providing BBP with the best of both worlds. Until such time as the district is ready, willing and able to take on the challenge of a full blown school lunch operation, it is recommended that the District focus its attention on compliance with the Health Department requirements and to make the equipment purchases and line changes outlined in this report to maximize the potential possible under present conditions.

In the interim, it is recommended that the District determine the actual costs of operating its current program. A complete analysis of the terms of the agreement with Patchogue-Medford should be made to insure that both districts are receiving all appropriate revenues and that Bayport-Blue Point UFSD is only being charged for those expenses that can be substantiated.

Consultant has already begun to explore this area by reviewing Patchogue-Medford's billing for the first half of the 2007-08 school year and by requesting additional data and information from Food Service Director Sue Romano. Once this analysis is complete, Consultant will prepare an additional report for your review with comments and recommendations as appropriate.

Please review the information presented in this report and call me with any questions or comments.

End of report.