



To our Northwest Shool District Partners,

As I'm sure you have heard on the news or experienced in your own daily life, our country's food supply chain has been dramatically impacted by shortages in both labor and products. K-12 child nutrition hasn't been immune to this impact. Most recently, the School Nutrition Association has issued an open letter to the USDA asking for procurement and meal pattern flexibilities as well as other support related to these supply chain disruptions.

As you know, we are experiencing these procurement issues in our district as well. Unfortunately, the dilemma reaches beyond one single vendor, and is widespread across all suppliers and food manufacturers. We understand that this is a cause for concern for our students, faculty, staff, and parents.

SFE, however, is not satisfied with simply accepting that food shortages are a part of our business. We are working with our onsite team, distributors and others to ensure every student in our district has a great meal every day. Some of the tactics we are leveraging to mitigate the impact and to continue to provide our students with great meals every day include:

- With our national distribution partnership, we are pulling in product from across the country to minimize product shortages and substitutions,
- We are actively soliciting food suppliers to fill product gaps,
- We have informed our state agency representatives of supply chain hurdles and have requested relief to meal pattern requirements,
- We have instructed our onsite teams to prepare for menu substitutions to ensure all our students continue to receive healthy, great tasting meal every day,
- We remain in constant communication with our manufacturers and distributors to understand product availability, fulfillment projections, and allocation estimates.

Despite these challenges, you have my full commitment as well as the commitment of our entire SFE team to provide the best possible service under these circumstances.

As difficult as it is to say, the supply chain challenges faced by the entire food service industry are both persistent and widespread. This is a national crisis that is touching all aspects of the foodservice industry and certainly creating a challenge within K-12 child nutrition. Our menu options and serving locations may need to be streamlined in the near term and our offerings will be based upon daily/weekly product availability. We will do everything in our power to minimize this impact to you and our students.

I assure you we are doing everything we can to provide the best meals possible during this time. We will scale up programming as soon as food shortages subside.

Thank you for your partnership and please reach out to your onsite team or myself, with any questions.

Pat McKee
General Manager of Food Services
Northwest Community Schools c/o SFE
