

## Message from Chartwells K12 Regarding National Supply Chain Issues September 2021

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Over the past few months, you may have seen news stories about disruptions in the supply chain across the country, resulting from effects of the pandemic. Industries, including food and foodservice, as well as construction and automotive, have been impacted by manufacturing and labor shortages across the country in ways that we've never experienced before.

At Easthampton Public Schools, students and families can continue to count us for great-tasting meals kids love to eat every day, but as you may have already seen, there will likely be more frequent menu changes based on product substitutions from our suppliers.

Understanding these supply chain challenges will likely continue for the next several months, we wanted to reach out and let you know we're doing everything we can to proactively address issues before they inevitably arise. Working in partnership with Foodbuy, our group purchasing organization and the largest procurement organization in North America, some of the proactive steps we have taken, include:

- We have changed our ordering schedules to allow distributors more time to identify new sources for out-of-stock products in the event it occurs.
- We've identified alternate suppliers and products where we found that existing ones wouldn't be able to meet our needs. For example, we learned our previous supplier for pizza dough would not be able to commit to serving our schools, so we contracted with a new one that can.
- In June, we planned menus for this fall and began placing orders for food at that time. This process was designed to help suppliers and distributors plan well ahead for stock we need to serve kids now.

If there's one thing the past 18 months has proven, it's that flexibility is in our DNA. From turning cafeteria operations into emergency feeding programs overnight when the pandemic hit to serving kids in classrooms and through meal-kit pick up sites through the past school year, our team is passionate about the meals we serve your students and they're skilled at quickly adapting to ensure that kids are always fed.

One additional note for families with students who have allergies: please remind your child to be sure to check with the cafeteria manager regarding product substitutions that may not be reflected in the menu posted. We will make every attempt to update Nutrislice in real-time, but out of an abundance of caution, please do not solely rely on the digital nutrition panels to accommodate allergies or medical conditions.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your student's meals, please don't hesitate to reach out to Ken LePage, Food Service Director, or Kristyn Zantouliadis, Administrative Assistant, at 413-529-1535.

Thank you in advance for your patience and flexibility during this time.