

Great Hearts Texas

Meal Program Advisory Board Minutes

Meeting #1 Tuesday, November 28th, 2023

Meeting Details		
Program:	School Nutrition Advisory Board Meeting	
Date:	Tuesday, November 28 th , 2023	
Time:	7:00 pm to 8:10 pm, CST	
Location:	Great Hearts Texas Home Office	
Facilitator:	D'Ann Hart, Director of Child Nutrition	
Minutes Recorder:	Dalia Harvey, Outreach Manager	
GHTX guest:	Bridie Chaudoir, Director of Family Advocacy	
Attendees:		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Campus</i>	<i>Attended</i>
<i>Wendy Greenaway</i> wjgreenaway@gmail.com 210-848-8916	<i>Teacher at GH Monte Vista</i>	No, but will provide feedback. Will participate in next virtual meeting.
<i>Heather Beardsley</i> heather.beardsley@yahoo.com 817-454-1612	Great Hearts Arlington	Did not attend meeting
<i>*Shawnnita Buckner</i> shawnnita.buckner@icloud.com	<i>GH Arlington</i>	Yes, provided feedback.
<i>Olivia Hernandez</i> olivia.hernandez@greatheartstxschools.org	College Counselor at GH Arlington-upper	Did not attend
<i>Angel Beverly</i> angel.beverly@greatheartstxschools.org	Apprentice Teacher & Parent at GH Alington Lower	Did not attend
<i>*Phillip Vernon</i> onefreetobe@gmail.com 817-983-4177	GH Arlington Parent and Volunteer	Yes, provided feedback
<i>*Andrea Cornell</i> andedaus@gmail.com	GH Parent and Volunteer	Yes, provided feedback
<i>Mark Puente</i> mjp777@gmail.com	Parents at GH Arlington	Did not attend
<i>*Emily Puente</i> foertschec@yahoo.com		Yes, provided feedback
<i>Gbolabo Oluwatoyin</i> gbolabooluwatoyin@gmail.com	Parent at GH Arlington	Did not attend
<i>Evangeline Inyama</i> evangelineinyama@yahoo.com	Parent at GH Arlington	Did not attend.
<i>Viktoriah Holgin-Afify</i> viktoriah2009@yahoo.com	Parent at GH Arlington	Did not attend

Agenda Topics

- I. Welcome by D'Ann Hart
- II. Welcome by Dalia Harvey and Bridie Chaudoir
- III. Brief Overview of the National School Lunch Program
- IV. Learn: What makes a meal?
- V. Participant Feedback and General Questions:
 - *What do you like about the program and menus?*
 - *What do you wish you could change about the program and menus?*
 - *What would be one thing you would like to see us implement that we are not already doing?*

I. Welcome

II. Review of Mission

D'Ann gave a brief history of Great Hearts Texas and discussed the importance of the lunch program.

“Great Hearts is a network of state-chartered public schools providing an honors level liberal arts curriculum in the tradition of the finest independent private schools. As such, we offer an outstanding opportunity for families who want the absolute best in a college preparatory institution.”

Great Hearts Texas Meal Program website: <https://texas.greatheartsamerica.org/academy-life/meal-program/>

Mission: “Great Hearts focuses on our students by feeding the hearts and minds of our students through good food, sound nutrition, and active fun.”

The Advisory Board was held via Zoom. The reasons for the meetings are for maintaining accreditation and to receive participant feedback to improve our lunch program.

Action Items from previous meeting	Execution	Deadline
In progress- next meeting 2024	“	“

III. Review of Lunch Program

Structure of lunch period: Time ____ Monday-Friday.

Vendor: SLA Management <https://slamgmt.com/>

Lunch periods: ____

D'Ann Hart, Program Director (PD), explained that the lunch program is held on-campus. The Nutrition Advisory Board meeting invite was sent to all campuses across south and north Texas.

The PD spoke about lunch cost. Mrs. Hart extended additional components to help with the program by reading Great Hearts Texas' lunch program mission.

IV. Lunch Meal program trends

The Program Director presented a colorful PowerPoint presentation on nutrition and made it available to all participants on the online platform.

- National Lunch Program Overview- The PD began the meeting by introducing the USDA- rules, regulations, policies, procedures and process for nutritional requirements and limitations for free and reduced programs. USDA also reports, tracks, and gives money to the Texas Department of Agriculture to help with reimbursements and grants. TDA enforces the rules. The PD also reports to the TDA.
- All campuses abide by policies and procedures and utilize the Administrators Review Manual which consists of 1100 pages.
- Reviewed and presented daily and weekly charts. The chart goes over daily requirements by grade levels. The chart ensures that children are receiving the nutrition that is required for their grade level.
- Reviewed and provided program resources links for the TDA- Square Meals.org, Helper Sheets and Charts which include graphics and conversions, and GHTX District website for links to our policies, refund links, and campus websites.
- Discussed what makes a meal.

The PD opened the online platform for questions and comments:

Shawnita Buckner asked about the vegetable and grain chart. Is that per day, week, or month?

The PD explained that we are required to offer one cup of vegetable and a choice. For example, we could offer a cup of tomatoes, carrots, broccoli, hot vegetables (baked beans) and that would be fine, but the next day we will have to offer students a different variety and categories. All categories are weekly, but we offer a variety every day. The PD also explained that our lunch program utilizes the Garden Patch as a guide.

The PD also discussed meals due to the questions that parents ask. *What makes a meal?*

The PD explained that the USDA does not want to feed snacks because they are required to feed students' full meals and went over five components: 1) Protein, 2) Grain (80%), 3) Milk, 4) Fruit, 5) and Vegetables.

The PD explained that we are using a new vendor and utilizes a process called Offer vs. Serves which means that students can choose what is on their plate and provided examples for entrees and fruit requirements. Explained that students need three items to make a plate.

Philip Vernon asked the PD to explain the reimbursement from the TDA and if milk is counted towards the meal (?).

The PD explained that children do not have to take the milk as they are selecting products because a lot of children are lactose intolerant at our campuses. The PD provided examples for reimbursements.

Lunch meal for reimbursement:

The PD went over the five components for lunch and provided examples. She also explained that we cannot force children to take certain products while they are selecting their meals.

Andrea Cornell asked if there are maximum requirements or amount of sugar in a breakfast meal (?) Do they use an alternative to sweeteners? What is the graham requirement? How much protein is required? What is the percentage of protein?

The PD explained that we use a Smart Snack calculation for square meals. When too much sugar is added, foods approach the calorie limit. The PD provided an example and stated that pop tarts and cocoa puffs are made specifically for schools and have less sugar (with an emphasis on less sugar). The PD stated that we do not serve cinnamon rolls every day.

The PD also explained that with breakfast, the goal is to wake kids up in the morning and that the sugar content is less than what we find in traditional home pantries.

The PD stopped sharing her PPT presentation and asked what you like about the program and menus? 2) What would you wish to change about the program and menus?

Andrea Cornell stated that she sees that our lunch program at GHTX offers more fruits and vegetables at our school and would like to see sliced apples and more variety in fruits.

Emily Puente provided fruit examples that are difficult to eat and would like to see children offered a variety of fruits, such as oranges, apples, and bananas to guide and grow a desire to eat them.

The PD explained that the staff is lean, and SLA is working hard to have the right number of staff in the kitchen. The PD also mentioned that she has visited campuses and has seen cafeteria workers staff cut oranges but is unsure about Arlington. The PD explained that it is a best practice when kitchen workers slice oranges so that parents do not have to peel them for their child.

The PD also stated that we will have USDA foods next year and are looking forward to implementing fresh food such as cantaloupe and a variety of other food products.

Phillip Vernon asked who we use as a contractor and has seen a USDA food truck at the Arlington campus. He also asked, does the USDA bring the food? Do we serve it? Is the food hot every day? Is it a cold sandwich?

The PD explained that Great Hearts contracts with a food service management company. The PD explained the process for food service workers and mentioned that she ensures that our kitchen management and kitchen workers work for the SLA. The PD also explained her role and is responsible for compliance, procedures, and runs the Free and Reduced program at GHTX.

The PD explained that we cook on site and provided examples of how the following foods are prepared: pizza, fruits, vegetables, and canned products. She also clarified that a US Foods truck is also delivering fresh and frozen foods to our campuses.

Shawnita Buckner stated that she likes the turkey options our meal program provides but usually prepares her son's meals. Shawnita and her family also look at the menu closely and would like to see a variety of milk alternatives and meatless options.

Shawnita asked the PD to explain our lunch programs vendor options and understands that SLA is our current contractor. Shawnita also asked the PD to explain the process for what if the vendor is not staffed appropriately and is not able to meet expectations (e.g. unable to slice/shop oranges and other fruits and vegetables).

The PD explained that she is in constant contact with the Area Managers and pushes to ensure that staff keeps up with her urgent and important requests. The PD also explained that she will contact legal counsel if needed to do what is best for our meal program at Great Hearts Texas.

Regarding other questions, the PD explained to Shawnita and the board that Great Hearts does not offer pork and is in the process of adding vegetarian options to our menu.

The PD explained that we do not accommodate foods due to religious or other beliefs, but we do accommodate if there is medical need. However, parents will need to provide a Meal Accommodation Form, signed by a doctor, to meet their requests. The PD also mentioned that Arlington has a higher percentage of vegetarians and has tweaked menus for several campuses to meet students' needs.

The PD also explained that our lunch program can provide soy milk with a parent note (doctor/medical note not required) and explained the process to submit the request.

Emily Puente stated that she submitted documentation for an alternative product and has a note from her pediatrician and has tried to gain approval for two years. Emily also mentioned that her children do not participate in the meal program at Great Hearts Arlington due to limited food options.

The PD will work on Emily's urgent request and provided her email address via Zoom messenger.

Last question 3: What would be one thing you would like to see us implement that we are not already doing?

Andrea Cornell mentioned that she prepares her fourth-grade daughter's meals due to portion sizes and because she is still hungry. Andrea asked if there is a different portion size per grade?

The PD explained that portion size is limited and provided examples by utilizing the food chart. The PD also provided examples of what is set by the USDA. The PD also reminded participants that they can purchase an additional entrée at an extra charge.

The PD also explained that cafeteria workers encourage students to select more food to ensure their plate is full. The PD will continue to encourage cafeteria workers to push more food on students' light plates to ensure they are eating the correct portion size.

Phillip Vernon provided examples of TDA guidelines for reimbursable meals and asked the PD to clarify the amount.

The PD explained that children who are hungry are usually the ones who “only” select pizza and juice. The PD provided examples on how portion sizes are served (apples, pizza, etc.). The PD also mentioned that we offer five components and cannot force students to take certain foods but will continue to encourage them to select more foods at the registers.

Shawnita Buckner would like to see nutrition programs at Great Hearts to educate children on healthy nutrition and foods and will advocate for programs at GHTX Arlington.

The PD explained that campuses are supposed to incorporate nutrition into our curriculum and mentioned that our PE teachers discuss nutrition. She also mentioned that GHTX Headmasters are solely responsible for implementing educational programs at all campuses.

Andrea Cornell would also like to implement ways to help improve our lunch program at GHTX and emphasized that education is a process.

The PD mentioned that the Arlington campus has a gardening club, and it would be great to get other educators and students involved in the program.

The PD stated that her goal is to ensure that every kid is fed so they can learn and grow as they eat healthy food. The PD will continue to praise children when they select full meals and encourage students to select more food if she sees light plates.

Additional comments:

Emily Puente stated that she loves the Garden Club in Arlington, but the program should be offered to younger students too, not just fifth grade and above. Emily also provided examples for community gardens.

The PD mentioned that teachers or parents are usually the ones who run the clubs and to reach out to the Director of Campuses to see if they would be open to explaining or implementing new innovative programs.

Andrea Cornell mentioned that she participates in community gardens and communicates with Ms. Garthune at GHTX Arlington. Ms. Garthune is working on her request.

Shawnita Buckner volunteered to donate seeds to GHTX Arlington.

Phillip Vernon offered to donate gluten-free bread to one of the Advisory Board participants.

The PD thanked all participants and ended the meeting at 8:10 pm.

January 12, 2024, 12:20pm – PD and Wendy Greenaway spoke on the phone and covered much of what was taught in the meeting and the goals of the CNP. Wendy also inquired about healthier, protein based hot breakfast items like scrambled eggs or sausage biscuits. PD agreed to see what was available to add to the breakfast menu. When Wendy asked about possible community members in the Advisory Committee, PD expressed that we were interested in incorporating medical personnel and other nutrition professionals in menu planning. Wendy said that she knew some parents at Monte Vista that were doctors that might be interested. She will email the details to Dalia.

Follow-up Action Items from meeting	Responsibility	Deadline
Meeting request from:		
Meeting request from:		
Meeting request from:		
Meeting request from:		

Approval			
	Name		Date
Reviewed by:	Lisa Zerbonia, Vice President of Operations at Great Hearts Texas		Click here to enter a date.
Approval (check the appropriate box):	XX	YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Comments:			