

Why Buy a School Lunch?



Shelby County Schools
Child Nutrition Program (CNP)



Studies have shown that children who eat a well-balanced lunch often do better in school and are more alert.

The average cost to prepare a sack lunch from home is \$3.43. Each child in your family can save about \$1.43 each day by buying a lunch at school. Over the course of a school year that is a savings of \$257.40 per child!

Convenience and time saver for Mom and Dad! School meals are not only nutritious and delicious but students have a choice of at least 2 entrees daily.

Menus can be found on our website at <http://www.shelbyed.k12.al.us/cnp.htm>.



Good nutrition and learning go hand in hand. Wishing you and your family a healthy new school year!

School Lunch vs. Lunch from Home		
	Elementary School Lunch	Prepackaged Lunch
Nutrient Content	low fat low saturated fat low in sodium high in calcium zero trans fats	higher fat higher saturated fat higher sodium content trans fats
Variety Entrees	numerous choices plus chef salads	limited choices
Fruit/ Vegetables	several choices	generally lacks fresh fruit
Beverage	fat free milk high in calcium and Vitamin D	fruit drink
Food Safety	prepared under strict sanitary conditions	may not be held at correct temperatures in the classroom

School Lunch: Good for Kids and Good for Your Wallet



As the cost of everything increases – there is one meal that is still a great value: both nutritionally and economically! School lunch is still an incredible bargain at less than \$2.08 nationally!

Every School Lunch Includes Five Great Choices:

- Milk – Fat free or 1% - flavored or regular
- Vegetables – From jicama slaw to fresh carrot sticks
- Fruit – Everything from kiwi to locally grown apples; often fresh
- Grains – More whole grain items like rolls or sandwich bread
- Meat or meat alternate –White meat chicken, bean chili, lean beef

Save Money: Eat School Lunch

- On average it costs less to buy a school lunch than to bring a lunch from home.
- The estimated national average of a school lunch from home was \$3.43 last school year.¹

School Lunch vs. Bagged Lunch
\$2.08 \$3.43

(comparison of national averages)

There *is* Such a Thing as a Free Lunch (and a Reduced Price One Too)

- All children at participating schools may purchase meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- Families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals.
- Families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals; these students can be charged no more than 40 cents.
- Contact your school nutrition department to fill out a school meal application.



Healthy Meals Feed Eager Minds

- Meals served under the NSLP must meet nutrition guidelines based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- No more than 30% of calories can come from fat and less than 10% from saturated fat.
- School lunches provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium and calories over the course of one week of menus.
- Students who eat school lunches consume less calories from fat than students who bring lunch from home.
- Compared to lunches from home, school lunches contain:
 - Three times as many dairy products
 - Twice as much fruit
 - Seven time the vegetable amounts
- NSLP participants have substantially lower intakes of added sugars than do non-participants.

For more information contact your district's school nutrition director or the School Nutrition Association: servicecenter@schoolnutrition.org (703) 739-3900

¹ According to a meal cost analysis by Alice Jo Rainville, PhD, RD, CHE, SNS of Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI