



WCPSS Child Nutrition Services

Meal Price Review

Tiffany Lawrence, Sr. Director of Child Nutrition Services
June 3, 2025 (*Updated June 19, 2025*)

YTD Program Overview

Schools	199
Students	161,115
% of Students Free & Reduced	36.59
Breakfast Meals Served Per Day	19,515
Lunch Meals Served Per Day	50,672



Problem Statement /Challenge

CNS revenues continue to be a challenge in order to sustain the program.

- Experiencing increases in food and supply costs
- Anticipated increased costs in salaries and benefits
- Participation levels continue to decrease

Problem Statement - Background

- Food, supply, and labor costs have increased
- The USDA reimbursement rate is \$4.54 per meal for a free student's meal. Our WCPSS lunch meal cost is \$3.75, which is \$0.79 less than the reimbursement rate.
- The USDA reimbursement rate is \$0.53 per meal for a paid student's meal. This is \$3.22 less than the WCPSS lunch meal cost of \$3.75.
- School meal value perception is limited.
- A students' ability to receive a meal at the free and reduced rate is based on Federal eligibility guidelines. It is not determined by the school nutrition department if a student qualifies for free and reduced lunch.

Where to start..

- Review Historical Data
- Review Performance Indicators and Industry Standards
- Determine what's feasible for WCPSS

Summarized CNS Trial Balance (FC1-A)

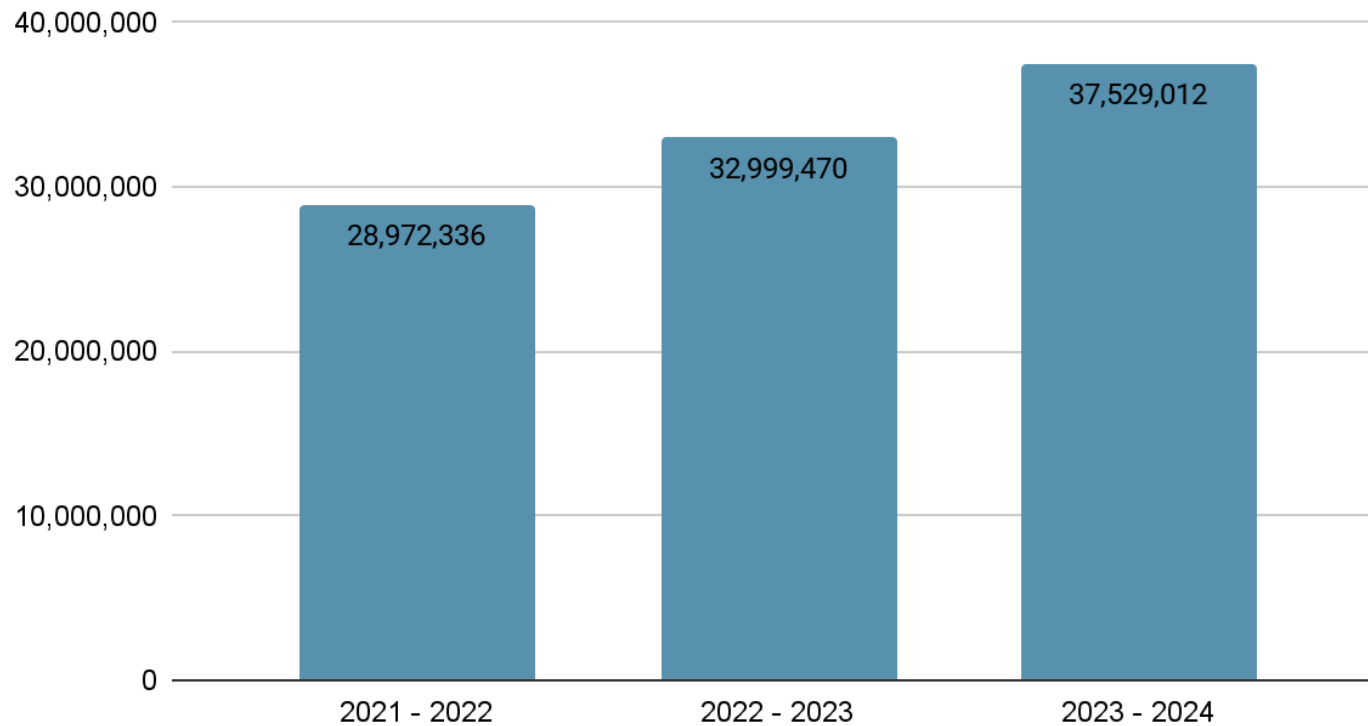
	Final FC1-A FY24	1st Quarter FY25	Semi-Annual FC1-A FY25	3rd Quarter FY25
Net Cash Resource	\$8,946,007.67	\$3,831,698.20	\$7,061,809.37	\$6,632,334.80
1 Month's Operating Cost	\$7,820,451.53	\$5,245,019.41	\$6,000,368.07	\$6,094,171.37
# Months Operating Balance	\$1.14	\$0.73	\$1.18	\$1.09

Data Related to Wages & Benefits



WCPS CNS Wages and Benefits

Wages and Benefits Over Time



FY22 \$15.00 min or 4%

FY23 \$17.00 min or 4%

FY24 \$17.75 min or 4%

CNS Wages and Benefits Comparison

New Slide

	Min. Hourly Rate
WCPSS	\$17.75
Durham	\$17
Charolette-Mecklenburg	\$20 - effective Jan 2025
Guildford	\$16.34

WCPS CNS Wages and Benefits

New Slide

	Min. Hourly Rate	Salaries and Benefits
FY16	\$11.58	\$21,459,055
FY17	\$11.58	\$22,332,276
FY18	\$11.58	\$23,924,369
FY19	\$11.58	\$27,106,327
FY20	\$11.58	\$25,727,143
FY21	\$13	\$34,776,670
FY22	\$15	\$28,300,305
FY23	\$16	\$31,292,153
FY24	\$17	\$38,890,763
FY25	\$17.75	\$40,987,882
Projected FY26	\$17.75	\$44,020,148

WCPS CNS Wages and Benefits

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	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	% Change
Retirement	15.32%	15.32%	16.33%	17.13%	20.86%	21.68%	24.19%	24.50%	24.04%	25.72%	25.72%	36.51%
Medical	5471	5471	5754	6104	6330	6326	6326	7397	7397	8095	8419	31.65%
Dental	291	291	287	290	290	312	324	336	348	336	336	14.58%
Worker's Comp.	.016%	.016%	.016%	.016%	.028%	.028%	.028%	.028%	.028%	.028%	.028%	42.14%



Data Related to Food Costs

SY24/25 Key Performance Indicators

	WCPSS SY24/25	Industry Standard SY22/23 *most recent data
Food Cost Per Meal	\$1.45 - \$1.89	\$1.97 - \$2.60
MPLH	17.4	16.8
Breakfast ADP	13%	25.8 % - 43.3 %
Lunch ADP	34%	49.2% - 59.1%

**Industry standards are from the Council of Great City Schools' data.

Ten Year Price Review for Key Menu Items

New Slide

FY:	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Notes:						Covid						
Chicken Sandwich	\$0.38	\$0.70	\$0.70	\$0.70	\$0.70	\$0.70	\$0.82	\$0.86	\$1.26	\$1.12	\$1.12	\$1.15
Pepperoni Pizza Slice		\$0.26	\$0.23	\$0.34	\$0.34	\$0.34	\$0.34	\$0.34	\$0.43	\$0.45	\$0.46	\$0.47
Chicken Bites	\$0.43	\$0.48	\$0.54	\$0.53	\$0.53	\$0.53	\$0.48	\$0.60	\$1.02	\$0.84	\$0.88	\$0.91
Broccoli	\$0.11	\$0.16	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.20	\$0.21	\$0.15	\$0.13	\$0.17	\$0.16	\$0.12	\$0.15
Green Beans	\$0.14	\$0.14	\$0.13	\$0.12	\$0.13	\$0.16	\$0.17	\$0.16	\$0.21	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.20
Milk-Skim 8oz	\$0.24	\$0.24	\$0.24	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.23	\$0.26	\$0.26	\$0.29	\$0.25

**Although, Covid happen in 2020, some food prices begin to rise as companies began passing some Covid price increases along to the customer.

Key Menu Items Price Review Continued...

New Slide

Food Item	Servings Per/Item FY25	Cost Inc/Item FY20
Chicken Sandwich	674,783	\$303,652.35
Square Pizza Slice	272,133	\$35,377.29
Chicken Bites	300,194	\$114,073.72

*District-wide data

Distribution Case Fee Increase

New Slide

FY		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Distribution Case Fee		\$1.12	\$1.12	\$1.12	\$1.12	\$1.12	\$1.25	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$2.78	\$3.57
Avg.# of Cases/Year	445,906										
FY26 Expected Cost Increase	\$352.257										

Data Related to Meal Pricing



Historical Wake County Meal Pricing

	BREAKFAST			LUNCH		
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-2025	2022-23	2023-24	2024-2025
Student Full-Paid K-5	1.50	1.50	1.75	3.00	3.25	3.50
Student Full-Paid 6-8	1.75	1.75	2.00	3.25	3.50	3.75
Student Full-Paid 9-12	1.75	1.75	2.00	3.50	3.50	3.75
Student Reduced-price	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*
Adult	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	Ala Carte
	*State Paying Student Co-Pay					

Meal Price Comparison

2024-2025

	Wake	Johnston	Nash	Chatham	Durham	Guilford County	Orange	Chapel Hill Carrboro	Winston-Salem/Forsyth	Charlotte Mecklinburg
BREAKFAST										
Student Full-Paid K-5	1.75	Breakfast provided at no cost to all students	Breakfast provided at no cost to all students	Breakfast Provided at no cost to all students	Breakfast Provided at no cost to all students	1.00	Free for All	1.60	2.00	Breakfast Provided at no cost to all students
Student Full-Paid 6-8	2.00					1.00	1.75	1.60	2.10	
Student Full-Paid 9-12	2.00					1.00	1.75	1.60	2.20	
Student Reduced	0.00					0.00	0.00	0.00		
Adult	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	2.50	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	2.15	Ala Carte	Ala Carte
LUNCH										
Student Full-Paid K-5	3.50	Lunch provided at no cost to all students	Lunch provided at no cost to all students	Lunch provided at no cost to all students	Lunch provided at no cost to all students	2.85	2.75	3.10	2.90	2.75
Student Full-Paid 6-8	3.75					2.85	3.25	3.35	3.00	2.75
Student Full-Paid 9-12	3.75					2.85	3.25	3.35	3.10	3.00
Student Reduced	0.00					0.00	0.00	0.40	0.00	0.00
Adult	Ala Carte	4.00	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	4.50	Ala Carte	Ala Carte	4.25	Ala Carte	Ala Carte
ISP% APR 2023	30.12%	38.16%	59.26%	41.07%	49.39%	57.15%	42.32%	31.76%	57.06%	43.07%
Schools on CEP	22%	100%	100%	100%	100%	87%	30%	0%	85%	60%

Potential Revenue Impact from Price Increase

Projected Revenue Increase Using Paid Lunch Served 7/1/24-4/30/25		
		Revenue
\$	0.10	\$ 228,605
\$	0.20	\$ 448,197
\$	0.25	\$ 554,612
\$	0.40	\$ 860,339
\$	0.50	\$ 1,052,889
\$	0.75	\$ 1,494,831
\$	1.00	\$ 1,880,437
\$	1.25	\$ 2,209,708
\$	1.50	\$ 3,496,680

	Lunch		% increase	Applied Part %
	ES	MS & HS		
Current	\$ 3.50	\$ 3.75		
→	\$ 3.60	\$ 3.85	2.8%	1.933%
→	\$ 3.70	\$ 3.95	5.5%	3.867%
→	\$ 3.75	\$ 4.00	6.9%	4.833%
→	\$ 3.90	\$ 4.15	11.0%	7.733%
→	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.25	13.8%	9.667%
→	\$ 4.25	\$ 4.50	20.7%	14.500%
→	\$ 4.50	\$ 4.75	27.6%	19.333%
→	\$ 4.75	\$ 5.00	34.5%	24.167%
→	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.25	41.4%	29.000%

10% ↑ = 7% ↓

Districtwide Angel Account Process

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- Processed Districtwide Angel Fund donations are deposited into a central CNS account tied to a budget code designated strictly for these donations
- CNS central office staff monitors each school's Angel Fund account and when a school account begins to get low, staff transfers funds from the CNS central account to the school cafe's Angel Account
- When a student has reached their charge maximum and other sources to pay for their meals are not available, the school cafeteria staff uses the school café's Angel Account funds so the student can receive their chosen meal

YTD Funds Received and Distributed to Students for Meals

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As of June 19, 2025:

- **\$127,598.00** Total donations received
- **\$16,000.00** Funds located at individual school accounts
- **\$55.00** Funds Remaining

Students we've Fed!

Breakfast	5,800
Lunch	27,000

Stakeholder Actions

Board Support

Direction on meal pricing

Assist with stakeholder education on CNS budget challenges

Assist with stakeholder education on smart snack sales

CNS Central Office

Provide training to CNS staff

Creation of innovative menu ideas

Improve value perception of meals

Monitoring of food cost, inventory, and waste

Seek to ensure identification of free eligible students is maximized

CNS School Level

Maintaining and monitoring proper inventory levels

Providing quality meals with quality presentation

Ensure that labor hours are maintained as planned according to performance indicators

Impact of the Current Situation

- Depleted Fund Balance
- Perception of value vs meal price
- Potential negative impact for the district's operating budget.

Solution Pathways/Opportunities

● Increase Revenue

- Increase meal participation (Breakfast and Lunch)
- Increase efforts to extend Free and/or Reduced student eligibility status
- Adjust meal prices
- Increase a la carte sales (Smart Snack Sales)

● Decrease Expenses

- Food Cost - Changes are being made to streamline the entree' offerings
- Increase the direct ship items to our CNS Warehouse to reduce the impact of the increased case cost from our distributor
- Increase inventory monitoring and efficiency

Support Opportunities

- Educate parents, school administrators, and other stakeholders on smart snack nutritional guidelines so that they are perceived more favorably
- Explain the overall CNS operating budget and how it impacts the district
- Advocate with legislative representatives to maintain and increase state and federal funding sources
- Decide on a financial sustainability plan moving forward.

Questions ?