

Innovations in Supper: Virginia Edition

In Virginia, for every 100 school lunches served to children in need, there are just 2 afterschool meals served.



The At-risk Afterschool Meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides reimbursement for meals served to students staying afterschool to participate in enrichment activities in low-income areas. The benefits of offering afterschool meals include increased interest in afterschool programming, focused and alert students, and higher revenue for school food service programs.

Norfolk City Public Schools and **Henry County Public Schools** adopted innovative methods to serve more suppers to more students after school.

Umbrella Model in Norfolk City Public Schools

How does it work?

Students staying after school for any enrichment program can pick up supper in the cafeteria at the school's specified serving time. Because activities at the school site are open to all children, those from the neighborhood are also welcome to come into the school's cafeteria for supper. There is one entrance/exit to the cafeteria for children entering the school for supper. Using an offer vs. serve method allows students to choose their meal components.

What do the meals consist of and when are they prepared?

Hot supper is prepared both during and after the regular school day. Suppers consist of the 5 components that constitute a reimbursable meal under CACFP meal requirements.

Who prepares and serves the meals?

School food service staff prepares and serves supper. Staff adjusted work schedules and hired additional full-time staff to accommodate the addition of supper. The increased revenue gained through supper reimbursements more than offset increased labor costs.

How are meals recorded?

To account for attendance and the number of meals served, students sign their names on a sign-in sheet.

How do students hear about supper?

Large menus are posted in the cafeteria. The supper program is promoted in monthly flyers and afternoon announcements. Special afterschool events are coordinated with supper service. Supper attracts students staying after school for programming and walk-ins.

How is afterschool meal waste reduced?

Students use a share table, and cafeteria staff refrigerate leftover food and incorporate it into the next day's lunch offerings.

"CACFP allows me to better meet the nutrition needs of our students. Reimbursements from this program help me sustain our nutritional programs, feed more hungry kids, and advance afterschool enrichment programs throughout the division."

- Helen Phillips, Norfolk Public Schools

Opening up afterschool meals to all students using the umbrella model has the potential to increase participation by 53%, based on No Kid Hungry pilot studies.

Campus Model in Henry County Public Schools

How does it work?

Students pick up portable unitized meals from the cafeteria right after the school bell rings and take the meals to their respective activities or gathering places around the school's campus. Students have a 15 minute window to pick up meals after the bell, but the cafeteria stays open for about 30 minutes after the bell rings to allow for later meal pick-up.

What do the meals consist of and when are they prepared?

Super snacks meet the requirements of supper and include minimum portion sizes of snack-like items. Meals are prepared both during and after the regular school day. Many students prefer super snacks over traditional hot supper because students eat hot meals for lunch and the cold components make it easy for students to eat as they head off to their activities. Super snacks are reimbursed at the full supper rate.

Who prepares and serves the meals?

Super snacks are prepared by school food service staff. They serve super snacks to students in the cafeteria after school.

How are meals recorded?

To account for attendance and the number of meals served, students sign their names on a sign-in sheet.

How do students hear about supper?

Menus are posted in the cafeteria. Super snacks are promoted via afternoon announcements. Coaches encourage student athletes to pick up super snacks.

How is afterschool meal waste reduced?

Leftover food is refrigerated and then incorporated into the next day's lunch offerings. Share tables are also used.



Henry County sample portable meal: deli turkey and cheese on a croissant, sliced cucumbers with dip, sliced fresh apples, and chocolate milk.

“High schools kids’ schedules are just as busy, or busier, than our schedules, and we saw a way to meet their nutritional needs so that they could finish their days.”

- Marci Lexa, Henry County Public Schools

Supper Logistics FAQs:

• Can non-food service staff serve meals after school?

Yes! Coaches, activity leaders, volunteers, teachers, etc. can be trained to serve afterschool meals, keeping school nutrition labor costs low.

• Who takes care of the clean-up?

School custodians typically clean the cafeteria and empty trashcans throughout the school at the end of the day. Supper service may require custodians to rearrange their cleaning schedule. Norfolk Public Schools offers a free meal to custodians who clean up after supper service. Meals served to adults who help with meal service are allowable costs but not reimbursable.

• Can you serve a combination of hot and cold meals?

Yes! Many sponsors offer cold items 2-3 days per week and hot items the remaining days of supper service. Friday is typically a good day to serve cold meals in order to reduce waste since Friday attendance after school may be lower or unpredictable.

• Can you serve supper outside the cafeteria?

Yes! You can serve meals wherever makes the most sense in your building (i.e. cart in the hallway, courtyard), and you can even deliver meals directly to classrooms or different activity locations at a time that works for them.

If interested in starting an afterschool meals program, transitioning your existing program to an expanded model, or talking through supper logistics, please contact Ellen Eichenbaum, No Kid Hungry Virginia: ellen.eichenbaum@doe.virginia.gov.