

Washington State Farm to School Network

Local Food in School Meals

Dec. 17 Community of Practice Call

Agenda:

- **Introductions & Member updates**

- **Melissa Miller – Oak Harbor School District (Sodexo)**

- Starting with new local vendors (3 Sisters Meats beef franks, Little Red Hen Bakery for buns and loaves, Bell Farms for produce on HS Salad Bar and Harvest of the Month food rotation)
- Featuring items and testing things out, hope to grow as much as we can depending on available vendors and budget

- **Bethany Fong – Northwest School**

- Just starting buying apples from Collins Family Orchards. Local apples have been expensive, sizing is hard to get right. Apple variety and quality is good!
- Trying out pork from Alluvial Farms, 200 lb in January.

- For more local meat: Need to assess future menus and forecast needs. Look at total pounds of meat, find source for 600 lb of ground beef. Committing to buying a certain amount will help farmers.

- Oak Harbor: January is first month for beef dogs (30cs), testing out on grills. Printing and highlighting on marketing materials.

- Local bakery might not be able to do all the buns needed, augmenting from distributor

- Working with Culinary students at Oak Harbor SD, making sauces and lunch menu items to have it be part of the class

- **Shoko Kumagai – Bellevue School District**

- Haven't done very much direct purchasing
- Local sourcing for some specific products: Seattle Bagel Company, Tacoma Tofu
- Delivery to each kitchen, 30 schools, is a logistical challenge. Bellevue has a warehouse, but bringing in to warehouse and distributing from there is added labor they can't rely on
- Tofu – US Foods wasn't meeting needs. Partnered with Asian grocer to get deliveries from Tacoma Tofu, pickup at grocery and deliver to schools.
- Record participation with customizable Pho noodle soup; choosing the protein between chicken and tofu, and dress their noodle bowl at the bar.

- **Follow-up discussion on challenges, questions**

- **Food costs and doing local products within budgets**

- Can be more costly to order local product, but can get better pricing by shopping around various vendors to find the best price. Can figure out who will have the best price, and other chances to save on costs, with vendor relationships over time.
- Some farms and suppliers will have competitive prices for some products.
- Seconds for produce, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, have been good options too. Undersized "lunchbox" size apples can be cheaper, but not be advertised.
- Online ordering through food hubs or farms makes it easier to compare prices
- Recent study did show that buying through a broadline distributor *and* local farms vendors makes it more likely to save on costs
- USDA Foods and Net off Invoice, focused on protein items to have more flexibility with other products

- Bulk items: switched to #10 cans from individual cups, PNW canned pears. Conscious decisions to change how we spend money and look for cost savings
- Center of Plate – using USDA dollar on Center of Plate, protein items
- Input on 2020 School Buyer & Farmer Planning Meetings co-hosted by WSDA
 - Melissa – Oak Harbor SD, had successful pre-season planning meetings with community college and local farm in Bend at previous college job. Planned Harvest of the Month around what they would have for next year. Tied farm in with education, teaching students what can be grown here.
 - Met with farm at end of school year, took a few months to figure out logistics.
 - Met in May to start up in September
 - Shoko – Bellevue SD, interested in partnering with nearby schools to identify co-operative distribution, aggregators that can reach individual school buildings for school districts that might need that. Auburn faces the same challenge.
 - Maybe a follow-up meeting for BSD, SPS, Auburn just on distribution options?
 - Need a volume of orders for it to work on both ends.
 - Would need to assess how this interacts with other current contracts and distributors

Members can post questions, resources, and comments on the Community of Practice listserv at:

waf2s_food sourcing@lists.cahnrs.wsu.edu