

School Lunch Program Update: April 26, 2018: Thanks to Public for Lunch Forum Participation, Video Posted, Kitchen Resolution Passed

We would like to thank those who attended the district's Lunch Forum Monday evening, April 23.

Community members, including representatives from our three building PTAs, the district's Lunch Committee, the BoE, administration, parents, Mayan Axelrod of Mayan Woods Catering, and others contributed to a productive and informative conversation.

The goal of the event, co-hosted with the PTAs, was to hear from community members about their visions and desires for the district's ongoing and future lunch programs.

- Please see the video of the [Lunch Forum](#)

During the event, the BoE reviewed its criteria for making a decision on the lunch program. These included the health and safety of students, costs to the district and families, feasibility and implementation constraints, and community preference.

The following evening, Tuesday, April 24, the BoE included a lunch program discussion as part of its work session agenda.

- Please see the video of the [work session](#)

During the work session discussion, the Board discovered that the community's lunch program priorities, that were crystallized during the Forum, helped it to reach a resolution sooner than it anticipated or stated it would during the Board's wrap-up at the end of the Lunch Forum.

During the Forum, the Lunch Committee recap of its survey results reminded the Board of the strong community support that exists for a school lunch program. The forum conversation led to an identification of the following community priorities for its lunch programs: to present a variety of nutritious and attractive food options to all students at a reasonable rate (identified between \$3 and \$5).

As the Board discussed possible options with Diane Chaissan, Assistant Superintendent of Business, and other district administration during Tuesday's work session, it was further ascertained that the catering (the kind of program presently at PVC) and concession (the kind of program presently at CHHS) options, while attractive on individual school levels in the short term, would not be financially sustainable on a district-wide level long term.

The Board thus determined that building a functional kitchen on the PVC premises would provide the greatest opportunity and flexibility to meet the community's stated priorities for a district-wide lunch program.

To move forward with this plan, the Board will need public approval to release funds already in the district's capital reserve. The Board therefore passed the resolution mentioned during the Forum on Monday night and will hold a special election in June (the district will be able to employ the voting machines already rented for the May 15 budget vote). Additional funding requests were also included to support district drainage and security upgrades.

More information about the June special election will be made available in the upcoming weeks.

It is important to note that while the Board has recommended the kitchen build-out, the district has not yet determined the specifics and shape of its proposed program. The most successful school lunch programs always include the participation of students and community members. We will be looking for additional community engagement as we move forward.

If you have any questions, board members will be available at the Black Cow this Saturday, April 28, and you can address the full Board at our monthly business meeting on May 3, or feel free to email us at boe@chufsd.org.

We want to thank all those who have worked diligently to provide hot and nutritious lunches to our students through their generous volunteer efforts. Your spirit of volunteerism enriches the district and is a model to our students.

Sincerely,

The Croton-Harmon Board of Education