

Beauregard Schools Celebrate National School Lunch Week

To recognize the National School Lunch Program and the 30 million children it serves every day, Beauregard Parish schools will recognize *National School Lunch Week* from October 9-13, 2107. The week is sponsored by the School Nutrition Association. The theme for the week is “Recipes for Success.”

National School Lunch Week emphasizes the healthy foods that are offered daily in school cafeterias across the country. School nutrition guidelines require that fruits and vegetables are served with more whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy.

“School lunches are healthier than ever, with more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and less fat and sodium,” said Terrie Smith, School Food Services Supervisor. “National School Lunch Week helps us educate students and the community about the benefits of our school lunch program.”

A typical workday begins at 6:00 a.m. for school food service personnel. They cook breakfast and begin lunch items, serve and clean up, and then continue the cooking and preparation for serving lunches. On a daily basis, the eleven cafeterias in Beauregard Parish serve approximately 3200 lunches and 1500 breakfasts.



There has been a trend in the school food service sector to move to pre-packaged meals, explained Smith. However, in Beauregard Parish, school food service staffs still prepare meals in-house.

“In Beauregard, most of our daily menus are cooked from scratch,” Smith said. “Our cafeteria ladies take pride in what they prepare and serve to our students and staff.”

USDA research shows that students who participate in school lunch programs have better nutritional intake than those who do not. *The Wellness Impact Report of 2013* stated that healthy eating at schools correlates with higher test scores and lower absenteeism.

“Studies have proven over and over that healthy eating correlates to healthier children who are better prepared to take on the rigors of the school day,” explained Smith. “Students who eat a well-balanced breakfast and lunch are better able to concentrate on school work and to have a more productive time in class. Those who eat healthy overall enjoy better health, and that correlates to higher attendance rates at school.”

The federally-funded National School Lunch Program provides nutritionally balanced, healthy meals to students every day. The program, which has been serving the



nation's children for over 60 years, requires schools to meet federal nutritional standards that promote better general health for students.

"The School Food Service program in Beauregard Parish is a vital part of the school day," concluded Smith. "The program strives to meet both the nutritional and educational needs of our students each day by serving healthy breakfasts and lunches."