

## **Presentation to Task Force for Fund for a Healthy Nevada November 12, 2003**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Dan McPartlin, and I am the Food Services Director for the Clark County School District. I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you this morning to share some of the activities that the department has conducted because of the Nevada Child Nutrition Initiative (from the Tobacco Grant). Before I go into that, however, I would like to take just one or two minutes to give you a summary of the things that occur on a daily basis within the department.

It is our job to feed children. We nourish the future. Every day the men and women of the food service department fill orders, transport food, receive food, store food, prepare food, serve it on time, account for the eligibility status of each student, collect money if appropriate, clean up, sanitize, put things away and prepare for the next meal.

The department serves approximately 25,000 students each morning through our breakfast program and at lunch we serve over 100,000 students. We do this on a strict schedule established by the site administrator in each school, and we provide the best possible customer service to students, staff, principals and the community. We prepare this food according to the nutritional guidelines and all the other regulations of the federal government. In addition to our basic breakfast and lunch programs, we participate in after school snack programs and furnish snacks and or milk to 166 schools. Many of these programs utilize USDA reimbursable snacks. We operate a Breakfast in the Classroom project at one elementary school, and we have applied for Breakfast in the Classroom at three more schools to begin as soon as the equipment arrives. We have tried this concept in a middle school during testing days with good results. Last school year we put 11 schools on Provision 2 which allows all students in the school to eat free of charge. This year we have expanded this program to include six more schools.

The Food Service Department has supported the Summer Food Service Program for at least 18 years. We have sponsored some sites and vended to every organization that requested that service and could get approval from the State Department. Last year we participated in the Seamless Waiver Program. We carry out these activities from a central office, kitchen and warehouse complex that was built in the early 1970's. The kitchen was designed to produce approximately 4,500-5,000 meals per day. Today we produce an average of 35,000 meals from that same small facility. The warehouse, built in 1974, was large at the time, but as of three years ago we have had to lease another warehouse of approximately the same size. We have a large freezer on site, but today we must lease space in a commercial freezer facility that is equivalent to the size of that freezer.

In addition to the 35,000 meals produced from our central kitchen, we bake approximately 8,000 cinnamon rolls and make 5,000 donuts each day. We serve an

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additional 30,000 elementary students by means of our Dish-Up program, where food is transported to the school then heated, put in steam tables and dished up on five compartment plates for students. Middle schools see a participation of approximately 20,000 students, and another 25,000 high school students eat a la carte.

We produce and serve all of this food, at 263 schools every day, using approximately 760 regular employees working 4.0 hours or more and another 614 temporary or part-time employees working 1.0 to 3.9 hours a day.

Now to your specific concerns about the Tobacco Grant.

When the tobacco grant was approved I met with Superintendent Garcia, his two Deputy Superintendents and the rest of his cabinet to discuss the concept of Seamless Waiver. At the time there were certain objections raised and it was decided that it would not be something that could be implemented district wide, but if an individual principal chose to participate, that would be acceptable. I had previously met at least once with the Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent of Instruction and met on at least two other occasions with her and the Deputy Superintendent for Instruction. We not only discussed the Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Waiver but also Breakfast In The Classroom during those meetings. At one of those meetings, Pat Cook, Consultant to the State of Nevada Office of Child Nutrition and School Health, also participated. There was at least one other meeting with the business manager of the Clark County School District, Pat Cook and Anne Keast who was at the time the Director of the Office of Child Nutrition and School Health for the State of Nevada. At each of these meetings the various components of the Seamless Waiver Program were discussed, as were some of the obstacles to implementing the program.

Following these meetings, and as a result of them, we trained our food service supervisors so that they could discuss all aspects of Seamless Waiver with school principals of Year Round Schools. During last school year we were able to put two schools on the Seamless Waiver Program prior to the summer of 2003. Also during that school year I attended several meetings with Cherie Jamason, including one in Reno where I observed the Kids' Café program as food was delivered to various sites by means of their special truck. I attended at least two meetings in Las Vegas with Anne Keast and Cherie Jamason. I also met at the Catholic Charity of Southern Nevada where four individuals representing the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, three individuals representing Nevada Department of Education, and 29 individuals representing 22 local agencies met to discuss ways that food could reach more children in Southern Nevada.

As a result of these meetings, and with the assistance of the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, we were able to add one of their employees to our efforts. During the summer of 2003, Sheila Rivera's job was to conduct an outreach program with principals, meeting with them to explain the benefits of summer food service for their off-track students. Seamless Waiver was a major part of her discussions with Year Round School principals.

I have included a list for you of the sites and programs that the Clark County School District Food Service Department sponsored, vended or conducted during the summer of 2003. We employed Seamless Waiver in 15 programs at 9 different sites. We also conducted extended school year food service programs at 17 additional school sites.

Late in the summer I met with Pat Marble after she was hired by the Food Bank Of Northern Nevada, and we spoke several times by phone to discuss additional ways we could promote the Seamless Waiver Program. We recently brought Jessica Scholl, who is also employed by the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, into our department as a Nutrition Program Outreach Manager. She will work in concert with our supervisors to promote the Seamless Waiver concept to principals of Year Round Schools.

At the beginning of the current school year, I reassigned one of the other two administrators in the Food Service Department to handle all special programs, with emphasis on Seamless Waiver, Breakfast in the Classroom, Provision 2, and After School Snack programs. We recently met with all food service supervisors and Jessica to again discuss the benefits of the Seamless Waiver Program as well as to go over the various other programs that are outside the mainstream breakfast and lunch activities that we conduct. We discussed all the aspects of the Summer Food Service Program including Seamless Waiver and vending meals to sites sponsored by other organizations.

Also at the beginning of the current school year I attended a meeting of Year Round School principals and after answering their questions took the opportunity to discuss with them again increasing breakfast participation in their schools, the Seamless Waiver Program for students who are off track, the Provision 2 programs that are available in schools with high percentages of needy students and the Breakfast In The Classroom Program.

Our most recent efforts to make use of the opportunities afforded us by the Tobacco Grant include a meeting with all of our supervisors, and their setting a goal to increase breakfast participation in all schools by 10%. It should be noted that the Clark County School District has had a breakfast program in effect in every school in the county except one since I can remember, and I've been here 22 years. The only school where the breakfast program is not in effect is at Mt. Charleston where only a few students attend and none participate in a breakfast program.

Jessica Scholl is onboard and is well trained and is making appointments with principals to discuss Seamless Waiver and increasing breakfast participation. She will concentrate her efforts first on those schools currently participating in Provision 2, and we are at this time assembling a list of schools that we think might be worthy candidates to move into Seamless Waiver.

I have been asked also to give you a sense of some of the obstacles that have been raised in implementing Seamless Waiver and increasing breakfast participation. Please understand that my remarks that involve school scheduling or concerns of school

principals are not intended to speak for the principals. They merely reflect concerns brought to our attention by school administrators.

In the Seamless Waiver Program one of the concerns voiced is that of safety. Principals have expressed concern about students coming to and from their campus without adequate safety precautions or crossing guards. Some are concerned about safety of students once they are on campus. The requirement for open sites is a major concern because we must permit all students ages 2 thru 18 to come on campus for the purpose of eating meals. Principals worry that older students could represent a danger to the younger students on campus. We are currently investigating through USDA whether sites could remain closed and serve only those students who attend that school. It is possible that if no extra activities are planned, students from that school out on track break might be able to attend just for meals and the site would be spared the requirement to be open to all children. We are awaiting a response from USDA.

Additional supervision is required when more students partake of meals, especially when those students are not currently attending classes. The fact that additional money is available to pay for additional supervision does not in and of itself solve that problem. It is very difficult to hire a part time worker for the one or two hours that additional supervision is required. It is equally difficult to take an employee who may work four, five or six hours and add one or two hours to their workday. Often the times they are needed in their primary job coincide with the time that they would be needed to supervise students in the cafeteria.

There is also an issue of how to pay part-time workers, as the school's budget does not have the ability to pay them, the Food Service Department cannot hire people for the purpose of supervising and the money to compensate them cannot come directly from the grant. They would have to be attached to some department within the district in order to receive their district paycheck and the grant would then reimburse that department at a later date. This concern may be negligible if prompt payment is made.

The issue of occupancy ratings in the schools has been mentioned. If we had a very successful program we might exceed the number of students we can actually seat in a cafeteria. Staggering their serving times, however, and allowing the off-track students to eat first or after the students who are attending school, would solve that problem. Principals have expressed a concern that it would be difficult to understand which students belong in school and which students are there just to eat. Again increased supervision would be needed.

From the Food Services standpoint, the provision that all students eat free when they are off track leads to some confusion because some are reduced price or full paying students when their track is in session. If off-track students were segregated into a separate mealtime, it would be easy for us to know that they are free. But if they were included with the students that are on track, we would have a difficult time separating them and not charging them as they come through the lunch line. Conversely it is confusing when those students return with their track, because it is difficult for them to understand how

they were able to eat free for three weeks and now must pay. It is difficult for their parents to understand as well.

Lastly, if participation were to grow in the Seamless Waiver Program to the extent that the equipment we now have could not handle the additional food, we would not only have an equipment problem, but also a power problem in older schools. We have already experienced blown breakers when we have added equipment to some older schools. That, however, is a challenge we would feel privileged to address.

One of the overriding challenges that we face with the Summer Food Service Program, whether it be in the summer or during track breaks, is that activities help attract students. Outside organizations that are in the business of providing programs for students become very important to the success of a Summer Food Service Program. If there is an activity that keeps their interest and brings them back day after day, we can partner with that organization and be much more successful in running Summer Food Service Programs. We are currently investigating whether Seamless Waiver could be used in conjunction with agencies such as Parks and Recreation or the Boys and Girls Clubs.

As far as increasing breakfast is concerned, we feed between 10 and 20 percent of those students eligible for breakfast in elementary and middle schools. We could easily double or triple that number and not have to put in place any additional resources. We have the equipment, labor and distribution routes in place. Our breakfast operations open as soon as we are permitted and close when school starts. What we would need to increase breakfast participation is more willingness on the part of students to be there and to participate. In some schools I think busing interferes with our breakfast program because buses get to school very close to the time that school starts. In order for large numbers to get to school earlier, additional supervision would be necessary.

The Food Services Department will continue to present the Seamless Waiver Program to Year Round Schools. Every effort will be made in the Food Services Department to overcome the obstacles inherent in the program. We will continue to work with Jessica Scholl as she meets with principals in an effort to make the best possible use of the resources available to us through the Tobacco Grant. We will pursue the questions we have raised about closed sites, and the possibility of operating Seamless Waiver programs off campus. We are also working with the Food Bank of Northern Nevada on a marketing program to inform parents and students of the benefits of our Breakfast Program. I understand that the promotional effort should be underway shortly after the first of the year.

Thank you for allowing me to share these activities and concerns with you.