

***“What a Long Strange Trip It’s Been”*** This was high school & college music for me. And it is still, or maybe even more, true today. Only ours has been deliciously packed with good nutrition!

Our entire dedicated Nutrition Service staff has continued to participate as called upon from the first announcement building closures last March. With their steady presence and adaptability, we have made this work. That includes covering and stretching efforts as various members have had to quarantine themselves or with their families. But gladly, none of them have been ill with COVID.

Throughout the course of this year, we have had shortened hours and adjusted schedules. These were based on program activity during various levels of shut down in each building, and updated as things changed again. Everyone is glad and relieved to finally be back to full schedules and 5-day work weeks with the return of our students on April 19<sup>th</sup>. We are also finally seeing some more significant numbers in a la Carte sales as student mobility and vitality are both returning.

As this year has been unfolding, the creativity that we have seen and the “to go” meal items that have been suggested, created and refined are a source of pride in the Nutrition Service Department. With so much inventory available as a result of last year’s late spring commodity deliveries, coupled with running a smaller volume program for the past year, we had a great variety and resources to build with. These offerings have brought both smiles and a sense of adventure to our Remote Meal participants as well as to our staff.

The abundance of available inventory has also been fully incorporated into our school menus as well. Working with only 2 different menus each week (repeated for A & B days), our managers and cooks created mini feasts of flavors for the students that they did see each day. It was challenging to keep it simple enough to keep the line moving smoothly, without any self-serve, and to keep styrofoam trays from being lopsided and unsafe to carry.

All of these efforts have helped to keep food expenditures as low as possible. Additionally, the change to requiring preordering of Remote Meals this school year has resulted in far less food waste than was experienced last spring. We still have lost some perishables when unexpected closures occurred, but at least food pantries were open constantly. They have appreciated our donations, and we have appreciated that they are able to make this food available here in Raymond.

Our Remote Meals program peaked in December and January while we had the most days of everyone being fully remote. We have made many acquaintances through this, and listened when the feedback came in regarding meal distribution. A number of parents indicated that 5 days’ worth of meals was a lot to try to store at once, especially in households with more than one child. On our anticipated “return to Hybrid” date in January, we changed our program to a split week distribution, like the model used last spring. This was also helpful in maintaining fresher production and storage of the volume of meals being produced at the time. Additionally,

it became even more essential to our production teams as the students did return to the buildings so that both in-school and remote production had to occur in tandem. The coordinator from Dail Transportation and some very spirited drivers helped us to make deliveries possible through trips with closed roads, downed trees and snowbanks where bus stops should be. For families with multiple children of various ages and online class schedules, having to only get to the bus stop instead of all the way to RHS for pick-up was certainly an asset.

As we did return to five day in-school learning April 19<sup>th</sup>, bus delivery has understandably ended. Our Free Remote meals are still available to fully remote students and other children under the age of 18 who live in Raymond. The online order system was updated right away to reflect the changes. Emails and phone calls were also made to our current regular participants to make sure that they were aware.

Through the pick-up and delivery experiences of the Remote Meals program, getting to see our families and kids has helped us to stay grounded and build relationships. Especially in the early days, feeling connected was so crucial to us all. We found that to be true all over again when we had to all go Fully Remote again in December.

Connections and communications have been a huge piece of our ability to adapt, then readapt to the changes in student population and building situations. Building secretaries and social media coordinators have become our first line “go to” partners when it comes to getting word out about these events. An example of this would be reaching out to families as one grade went into quarantine to reassure them that the remote pre-order deadline had been extended so that they could still be added on for the next pick up/ delivery date. SAU emails and Press releases have also been crucial when it came to events affecting district wide.

This year we have created a “News from Nutrition Service” piece that is updated monthly and posted both on the website, and as a link to the School Newsletters each week. It contains information on the Free Meals for All, Remote Meals, (including the link to Online ordering), and encouragement to still apply for Free & Reduced to help other benefits that the district receives from those numbers. This also includes the link to our Online Application app to help make applying directly accessible at any time. Finally, an email list is generated each week from the online order information to contact those families with pick up/ delivery reminders or any unforeseen changes in schedule.

The joint effort and mutual understanding among our very active Administrative Team of how our departments overlap and interconnect has also been instrumental as our staff continues striving to serve our students and their families. From coordinating space requirements to keep our lunches in the Cafeteria and finding ways to make breakfast service possible during student screening and check in to the current changes in schedules, it has created multi-level involvement. And I.T.’s part in just plain keeping us connected and virtually accessible goes without saying!

The same thing is true of our 3 Nutrition Service Managers. Our combined experience in this profession and affinity for our purpose has shown in virtual meetings, strategy sessions and multiple revisions towards creating our constantly changing program. And we have all learned more about Technology than we ever thought possible!

As always, the State Office of Nutrition Programs and Services and the New Hampshire Buying Group have been an integral source of clarification, networking and support. No one could have navigated all of the waivers and regulatory changes, process changes, product shortages and discontinuations alone. Having colleagues that you know and can respect has leant stability and trust in our decision making processes.

As we once again reinvent ourselves for the final weeks of the school year, we hope to continue to show in school program growth within the still existing waivers and health guidelines. This has definitely been the most challenging and exhausting year that we have ever experienced. But we have certainly not gone it alone, and thankfully, most everyone still has a sense of humor intact. All of these things the silver linings as we continue to rise up and feed the children in Raymond.

Raymond School Nutrition Services  
Meal Counts by Month  
Under COVID, SY 2020-2021

	IHGMS			LRES			RHS			Remote Meals		
	Days in School	Breakfast	Lunch	Days in School	Breakfast	Lunch	Days in School	Breakfast	Lunch	Days of meals	Breakfast	Lunch
Sep-20	18	315	1324	18	500	804	18	105	1007	20	224	244
Oct-20	18	507	1579	18	849	1113	18	105	1189	20	801	801
Nov-20	12	385	1004	13	680	869	13	45	701	16	605	605
Dec-20	1+	18	35	1+	129	164	0+	13	50	16	1154	1154
Jan-21	8+	207	363	8+	703	724	0+	19	68	18	840	840
Feb-21	10	292	877	10	703	721	8	49	398	14	518	518
Mar-21	17	514	1606	17	1337	1392	17	140	1020	21	667	667
Apr-21	13	457	1455	13	1520	1449	13	111	1031	16	399	399
<b>Totals</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>2695</b>	<b>8243</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>6421</b>	<b>7236</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>5464</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>5208</b>	<b>5228</b>

Please note: Number of Days in School reflects only the days in which at least one grade of students was physically present in the building.  
(There were days when only a very small group was in the building, indicated by a + rather than as additional days)

*Additional Note: as a point of reference to the same period in a "normal" year, here are the numbers for this same period in SY 18-19.*

Aug 18- Apr 19	146	4583	28035	146	13306	33035	146	3123	18205	0	0	0
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Raymond School Nutrition Services  
a la Carte Sales Comparison

	Days*	IHGMS	LRES	RHS	TOTAL
Aug 2018-April 2019	143	\$ 14,141.95    98.98/day	\$ 2,312.55    16.17/day	\$ 41,059.20    287.13/day	\$ 57,513.70
Aug 2018- Mar 13, 2019	114	\$ 10,055.44    88.21/day	\$ 1,168.70    10.25/day	\$ 35,850.80    311.75/day	\$ 47,074.90
Aug 2020-Apr 2021	126	\$ 3,668.05    29.11/day	\$ 465.55    3.69/day	\$ 4,853.75    38.52/day	\$ 8,987.35

\*Days = Number of days with students in buildings, even if only a few as in January and February.

***Factors limiting A la Carte Revenue during COVID:***

- 1) Hybrid or even fewer students actually present in building up until April 19th. (less than 40% of normal population)
- 2) Limited mobility of students for social distancing and contact tracing enabling, Especially at RHS this has impacted the New Wave Deli. For example, in SY 18-19, average Breakfast a la Carte was \$94.16/ day. This year to date it has only been \$3.51/ day. This is, however changing since the full reopening April 19th.
- 3) The inability to use vending machines at either IHGMS or RHS
- 4) Some popular a la Carte items are not currently available to us. Students are now picking up interest in other choices.