



QUICK STATS

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| PARTNER SINCE | 2014 |
| ENROLLMENT (2016-17) | 6,357 |
| SCHOOL BUILDINGS | 12 |
| MEALS SERVED MONTHLY | 2.6 Million |
| BRANDS | JUNIOR HIGH Home Zone Grab n' Go Pizza Mexican HIGH SCHOOL Custom Bros Grill Tortilla Fresh Mex Corner Crust Original Pizza Green Street Deli Java City Hurricane Grill (Outdoors) |

Increased year-over-year meals service by **100,000**

Student participation now at a record **95%**

Significantly increased annual dining program revenue

Innovative Menus, New Food Court Style Brands & Staff Engagement Combine to Increase Student Participation

It's not often that a school district has a dish named after it. But the Jonesboro School District has one created by the high school chef, called "Jonesboro Barbecue Chicken"—and the students love it. But that's not all they love about the district's new and improved dining program.

"The menus are awesome. The flavor of the food is unbelievable. We could never have created the menus we have now on our own. The number of kids who are eating now is unbelievable," said Sue Castleberry, Assistant Superintendent.

Since 2014, Aramark has introduced many dining innovations, including more than a dozen lunchtime food concepts, breakfast and smart snacks. The result has been a year-over-year increase in student dining participation of nearly 100,000 meals a year, as well as a significant increase in annual dining revenue. This is a dramatic difference from Jonesboro's years as a self-operated dining program.

Although 73 percent of district students qualify for free lunch, in the district's self-operated days few students were actually eating the meals. Lack of variety, inconsistent food quality and poor presentation turned students off.

"At one point, as district staffing was changing, officials asked themselves a critical question: 'How do we deliver a better product for our students?'" said Robert Ginder, Aramark District Manager. "They wanted to increase food quality. They wanted to increase participation.

They wanted to provide choices. They really wanted somebody to think outside the box when it came to service meals and nourishing students."

To accomplish its wish list, the district began interviewing potential outsourcing partners.

Aramark stood out for multiple reasons, including: its innovative K-12 dining programs, vast selection of grade-specific dining concepts, bulk buying power, student dining regulatory expertise and well-rounded human resources program.



Jonesboro BBQ Chicken is famous in the school district for its local flavor and great taste!

Aramark also introduced new breakfast programs. "Over 50 percent of our students were not eating breakfast, yet up to 80 percent qualified for free breakfast," explained Ginder. "We're happy that we're now able to provide them with a nutritious start to their day."

Along with a wider menu selection, the quality, flavors and food presentation have helped contribute to reaching an all-time high of 95-percent student participation.



"We told Aramark what we needed and what we expected in our dining program, and the team has made it happen in ways we could never have done on our own,"
— Sue Castleberry, Assistant Superintendent

Challenges

Limited Menu Options

Although a large percentage of its students qualified for free lunch, they were skipping them or throwing them out due to limited menu choices, inconsistent food quality and poor presentation. As a result, students who really needed the meals were going hungry.



Loyal Employees Fearful of Outsourcing

Many of the nearly 100 dining employees had been with the school district for over 15 years. Jonesboro wanted them to be a part of the transition.



Compliance Risk

During its self-op days, the district's dining program had not kept up with federal school dining requirements for student nutrition. It faced compliance risks and missed opportunities for growth and engagement.



Solutions and Results

Improved Quality and Selection

Aramark significantly improved the appeal of meals with branded high-quality menu items and great food merchandising all served in a number of different branded concepts. These along with increased dining options in all schools, led to an increase in student satisfaction.

Drastically Increased Participation

Year-over-year student dining participation increased to an all-time high of 95%, now serving nearly 100,000 more meals per year.

One-to-One Approach

Aramark's HR team met with each worker face-to-face to educate them about the transition process and their options, including training and career advancement to chefs or managers.

Happy, Engaged Employees

The employees have never been happier, better trained or treated more professionally. They enjoy their jobs and are proud of their contribution to the students' well-being.

Implementation of USDA Guidelines

Aramark applied its USDA best practices to the district's dining program to ensure every meal met the guidelines. It also found an opportunity to provide compliant Smart Snacks in the school system.

School Can Concentrate on Education

The district complied with USDA regulations and started earning additional income from the Smart Snacks a la carte program. Also, with the management team and school officials now free from managing complex regulatory issues, they could focus on their most important responsibility: providing a high-quality student education.

Aramark Serves the Jonesboro Community Often and with Excellence

Since taking over Jonesboro's food service program, Aramark has greatly enhanced the district's community support. They participate in and manage many local events that benefit the district and the community. These include: participating in the high school Habitat for Humanity group; cooking for school and district fundraisers and special events including the graduating seniors' luncheon and graduating sixth- and ninth-grader meals.

"Aramark has been a generous community partner," said Castleberry. "Anytime we say, 'We need your help,' the team is right there, ready to chip in. It's a wonderful relationship."

Interested in learning what Aramark can do for your district?

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