

October L-H Principal Coffee Q&A



Lunch

Q: I am concerned about the amount of time my kids have to eat lunch, especially my slow eater. I appreciate the extra time given for recess as kids need the downtime, but nutrition is just as important. 20 minutes is barely enough. My child has been telling me that there are times when the lunch aides cut their lunch short to line up for recess or that they arrive late to lunch, resulting in lunch being only 10-15 minutes. Would you be able to check in and see what's going on? Also, would you consider making the lunch period 25 minutes, or allowing kids who need more time to finish eating an extra five minutes?

A:

- As in past years, lunches are scheduled for 20 minutes. This year - it actually becomes a little more than 20 minutes because there is a 5 minute - transition/clear down allocation. This means that the clear down provides a minimal 5 minute gap between the arrival of any other student cohorts. During this time, students finish lunches and aides prepare to transition to the recess area. We actually improved the lunch model by building in a cushion.
- As in past years -many students are observed talking while their lunches are sitting there waiting for them to begin eating. This requires us to provide continually reminding them to focus on eating
- Observations are also that students can eat in most cases within 10-15 minutes. These are probably very similar timetables in the home setting when children are eating lunch at the kitchen table.
- To also confirm - we keep explicit track of times via cell phone - so we mark times of arrival, engagement in lunch, aforementioned transitional times. We have not had any incidences of overlapping lunches - with the exception of 1 time for grade 1 a few weeks ago when the lunches were not delivered on site from Pomptonian Food Service. This resulted in my reassignment of two lunch staging areas - so we could run both grade 1 and grade 2 lunches concurrently. The students and staff rolled with it - and everyone had their lunch.
- To also confirm - I check in on both lunch and recess and as recently as Wednesday of this week - I personally ran all lunch periods for every grade, as our lunch aide was out. My direct observations were - fluid delivery of lunches, students knowing their spots, teachers ensured transitions, and we even managed to sneak in birthday recognition and for grade 5 - a few rounds of Freeze Dance.
- I would offer the following suggestions:
 1. Please take a look at the amount of items you are putting in your child's lunch - too many items and is that why they may not be eating everything
 2. Review lunches with your child - as sometimes students say they don't like/don't want it
 3. Oversee your child making his/her own lunch - so they have ownership, yet you can ensure it is healthy
 4. If you have a specific concern about your child not eating lunch - contact Mrs. Diakos/Class Teacher - so they can monitor.
 5. If there is a medical need - please contact Mrs. Diakos.

Q: *When will students have more of a "regular" school lunch menu? I am questioning how these current selections meet the nutritional needs of our students.*

A:

- As mentioned in previous communications and coffees, I do not oversee the menu development for the daily lunches. Our District has a contract with Pomptonian Food Service - who must also be in compliance with State and Federal regulations in terms of nutritional value.
- Parents can contact Pomptonian directly to make inquiries regarding menu development and food offerings: <https://summit.fdmealplanner.com/>
- As always, students may also bring lunches to school, in lieu of the free Grab and Go option that is being offered through the District this year.
- NOTE - Per Heather G. - discussed @ recent PTO President's Council meeting with Superintendent Hough - following up.

Select Chorus

Q:

- ***If children elect to do Select Chorus - can there be a crossing guard or someone to watch when they are crossing main roads? Eg on between Hawthorne and Woodland Avenue across from Main Entrance please?***
- ***Anyway Choir can become part of a regular day or end of day vs early morning?***

A:

- Select Chorus is a voluntary activity done before school across the District. The reason it is scheduled before school is because the vocal music teachers teach throughout the day, are shared staffing - meaning they can teach at one school in the morning and another school in the afternoon, they have a contracted preparation period and contracted lunch period. This does not leave time to introduce Select Chorus in the daily schedule.
- Crossing Guards are contracted and overseen through the City - specifically the Summit Police Department - Traffic Bureau. That is out of my realm of oversight and control.
- Parents are also welcome to drop off in the parking lot before school for Select Chorus - as this is before school hours and staff arrival. This has been the case in previous years. Another option would be to coordinate carpooling among participating parents. If you need a roster of other students in Select Chorus - please reach out to Mrs. Schoderbeck.

Covid

Q: *How often is covid case data reported to the district for the purpose of the District updating its dashboard?*

A: As noted on the District Covid Dashboard:

<https://www.summit.k12.nj.us/resources/covid-19-dashboard>

This data reflects the number of current COVID-19 cases, including students and staff, reported to the District. Current cases include those in isolation due to a positive COVID-19 test. This data will be regularly updated as new cases are reported.

Last updated: October 21, 2021

Instruction

Q: *What type of support/mentorship are new teachers provided with at L-H?*

A:

- New teachers are matched with a mentor and buddy teacher - mentor meeting State requirements for certification and instructional practice and buddy for orientation to more building specific items. In many cases - the mentor and buddy can be same staff member
- New Teachers attend a full week of S.E.T. (Summit Educator Training) in August - which is a mandatory orientation and onboarding week of presentations and professional development, including orientation to Summit
- New teachers at L-H have mandatory meetings with me on a weekly basis - these are our 1 on 1's
- Our Literacy Coach and Instructional Facilitator work out a calendar of support for new teachers - to focus on instruction, student needs and areas of focus
- Ongoing Year 1 trainings - i.e. Tech Training that happened on Monday's PD afternoon
- Required District Professional Development - Including Brain Based Learning - years 1 & 2
- We have a state SCIP (or school improvement team) made up of two tenured teachers and myself that focus on the progression of support for new teachers and develop actions accordingly
- We have non tenure teacher meetings at L-H - all teachers working to achieve tenure have a support system of collaboration, learning, hot topics and orientation to professional requirements. This takes place in Years 1 -4
- This year - we are revisiting the model for "L-H TLC - Teacher Learning Community" - that will engage our teachers in a series of professional lunch and learns on topics that include:

Communications - Drafting goals and comments - specificity in communications

Parents are our allies - why proactive approaches equate to connectedness and support - now and down the road

Modeling, Modeling, Modeling - why

Time management in planning and lesson implementation - not "on the fly"

Celebrating the victories and reflecting on the day