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# Report

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## Marysville High School Food Service

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# MARYSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE

## SUMMARY

Members of the Yuba County Grand Jury conducted on-site visits to the Marysville High School, located at 12 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Marysville California. Grand Jurors met with the school principal, Food Service Managers and staff. The visits were initiated on a complaint filed by a student, alleging an inadequate amount of food available and an early suspension of service.

Members of the Grand Jury found that the food service at Marysville High School is a very efficient operation with tasty, nutritious meals from a varied menu that provides many options to the students, who do have ample opportunity to enjoy their lunch.

During visits, members of the Grand Jury did not observe the early suspension of food services, as alleged in the complaint. However, it is such an important issue; we recommend the school Principal and Food Services Manager internally address the potential for early suspension of services.

## GLOSSARY

MCSA: Marysville Charter School of Arts

MHS: Marysville High School

MJUSD: Marysville Joint Unified School District

## BACKGROUND

Marysville High School (MHS) was established in 1871. It is located on a 65 acre campus that is shared with other educational organizations; The Marysville Charter School of the Arts (MCSA) is the largest co-located school with approximately 300 students. The Marysville Joint Unified School District (MJUSD) offices are also located on the campus in the original MHS buildings on the campus.

Marysville High School enrollment varies between 950-1000 students. The high school has 50 Certificated and 25 Non-Certificated staff members.

## APPROACH

Members of the Grand Jury visited the MHS campus twice and conducted interviews with the school principal, The MJUSD Director of Food Services and the MHS Food Services Manager. Jurors were escorted on tours of the food preparation and food service facilities and had an opportunity, thanks to the food service staff, to enjoy lunch. During the lunch period, various students were randomly interviewed about their lunch experience.

## DISCUSSION

Members of the Grand Jury and the school principal were greeted by the MHS Food Services Manager and MJUSD Director of Food Services. We were informed that approximately 700 MHS students were served meals daily. A nutrition break (in lieu of breakfast before school) is available from 9:57 am to 10:07 am (10 minutes), and lunch is served from 12:11 pm to 12:46 pm (35 minutes). The daily selections are also available to approximately 300 MCSA students from 11:15 am to 11:50 am (35 minutes), which is before the MHS lunch period. The MHS Food Service Manager is also responsible for meals at five other schools.

Since the visits were during lunch time, members of the Grand Jury were able to observe the waiting lines, which were open and moving efficiently without any delays. None of the serving windows appeared over-crowded, which could cause students to be delayed getting their lunch, eating, and returning to class on time.

There are eight serving windows. The cost for all lunches is \$1.75. Serving windows are configured as follows:

- One line (inside) for hot lunch (menu varies).
- One line (inside) for nachos every day.
- Two lines (outside windows) serving pizza (4 types made from scratch) everyday.
- Four lines (outside windows) for the MHS Café serving deli sandwiches, burgers, salads, burritos, etc.

No carbonated soft drinks are served. Milk, water and electrolyte replacement drinks (Gatorade) are available. Fruit is also available at all windows.

Each serving window averages three students per minute. Therefore, it is possible to serve 840 students (8 lines x 3 students x 35 minutes) during the lunch period. However, it would be difficult to purchase lunch at 12:46 pm (closing time) and eat it prior to 5<sup>th</sup> period starting at 12:51 pm. Since approximately 700 students are served lunch daily, and 600 students can be served in the first 25 minutes, this does not appear to be a problem.

An additional visit was arranged in order to observe the transition between the MCSA serving period and the MHS serving period. We wanted to ascertain whether either serving period had an adverse effect on the other. We observed a smooth and orderly transition between the two schools' lunch periods.

Additionally, we also took the opportunity to time one student in a lunch line. When the student entered the end of the line, there were 10-12 students in front of him. He received his lunch and left the window in approximately four minutes.

With the permission of the Principal, we randomly interviewed students at lunch to gain an understanding of their perspective on the food service. Typical responses were:

- “I don’t like everything they serve.”
- “It’s good some days, and not so good other days.”
- “The food is not always hot.”
- ”The pizza is greasy.”
- “The [morning nutrition] break [10 minutes] isn’t long enough.”

These responses sounded very similar to those often heard in a home with teenagers. This reflection was addressed to some students, who responded with laughter and nods.

The student lunch accounts are prepaid and debited for each meal. One student was not eating lunch because his account was overdrawn. When this was conveyed to the Principal, he said when he learns of this he usually buys the student lunch. We were told that students are not immediately cut off when their account is over-drawn. Parents are notified when the student’s account becomes overdrawn.

One issue members of the Grand Jury investigated was the allegation that the food service ran out of food before the end of the serving time. The MHS Food Service Manager told us the quantity of each item prepared is determined from past history, the day (holiday, etc.), and the students’ preference for the item. One of the Grand Jurors is a vegetarian and had requested the vegetarian pizza, but the vegetarian pizza was sold out. This was an example of one item running out, but more choices were available. It is inevitable that some menu items run out each day, particularly if it is something well liked. However, it is highly unlikely that all menu items would be depleted on the same day.

Meals are served with a plastic utensil called a Spork, (half spoon, half fork), which does not function well in either service. When we inquired whether this could be changed to plastic knives, forks and spoons, we were told it is mainly an issue of cost. The MHS Food Service Manager related a story to us about the desire to replace the Styrofoam serving tray/plate with a paper or other biodegradable item. Since they serve in excess of one million meals a year, the cost of replacement would be in excess of \$100,000.

It is particularly noteworthy that we observed a group of students helping with clean up after meals. Upon inquiring, the MHS Principal informed us that the students were from the Virginia School, a special education program run by the Yuba County Office of Education and co-located on the MHS campus. These students receive an opportunity to learn the discipline required of a work routine and also the satisfaction of performing a useful service.

## FINDINGS

- F1. Members of the Grand Jury found that the food service at MHS is an efficient operation with a tasty, nutritious, varied menu that provides many options to the students who do have an ample opportunity to enjoy their lunch.
- F2. Members of the Grand Jury did not observe any early suspension of service.
- F3. Members of the Grand Jury did not observe any student being denied a meal.
- F4. Students are not readily made aware when a menu item is no longer available.
- F5. Members of the Grand Jury observed students from Virginia School helping the custodial staff in the after lunch clean-up.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The Grand Jury commends the Marysville High School Principal, Food Service Manager and staff for performing the difficult task of providing a varied menu and nutritious meals in a first-rate manner.
- R2. The Grand Jury commends the students of Virginia School and MHS custodial staff for their hard work and efforts in the after lunch clean-up.
- R3. If a window runs out of a particular menu item, a sign should be posted to inform students of that fact, i.e. "Item No Longer Available," or "Sorry, Ran out of this Item, but more choices available at other windows."
- R4. The Grand Jury recommends that the school principal and Food Services Manager internally address the potential for early suspension of services.

## REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following individuals:

- Marysville High School Principal: F2-F5, R2-R4
- Marysville High School Food Service Manager: F2-F5, R2-R4
- Marysville Joint Unified School District, Director of Food Services: F2-F5, R2-R4

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person, or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929 prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Civil Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.

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