

As we proceed through this pandemic, we will continue to be transparent and up front with our customers. Production of some items we typically offer on our menus has been halted or delayed due to impacts related to COVID-19. Supplier shortages on some items have forced us to transition to alternatives that kids enjoy, and in a few cases, we have had to temporarily remove items from our menus. We are hopeful this is a short-term solution. Until things improve in the supply chain, we will continue making the best menu choices we can for your students.

One of the most significant changes your students may notice is that the classic rectangle lunch pizza has been temporarily replaced with a wedge/triangle-shape pizza. The taste and nutritional value are the same but, due to demand, the facility preparing the pizza has discontinued making the rectangle shape for a time. You may see rectangle or triangle as we work to source products.

Another supply chain challenge is the shortage and/or no availability of certain kinds of deli meat. Due to this shortage, your PreK-5 students may see some prepackaged sub sandwiches included in our menu offerings. They were popular in our student taste tests and meet all nutritional requirements.

We are making these changes to accomplish the following:

- Offer several menu options to students that they enjoy eating
- Utilize the deli meat we can procure as an ingredient in other items for various grade levels such as Snackables and subs, which are very popular with students we serve
- Supply individually packaged items that have not been touched or opened for additional safety
- Utilize items in a “Meals To Go” program for students who need to grab a meal outside, even if they are not in school due to virtual learning

Styrofoam and to-go containers of any kind are also a challenge to source. We are doing our best to package items in ways that are safe and uphold the integrity of the food. This will influence what we are able to serve for “Meals to Go” and in situations where students are not going through a line.

Some of these manufacturer decisions are directly related to schools being closed abruptly in March and not re-opening until August or September. Because production was halted for an extended period, manufacturers had to make decisions on how to best focus their production efforts. We are confident many companies will resume production of these products once they are fully staffed, and schools are back in full session. Until then, we are doing our best to focus on products of high quality and great taste that also mitigate risk and, most importantly, are what students like to eat.

Thank you for your flexibility as we work through supplier issues and shortages. Our goal is to always provide nutritious, delicious options that our student customers enjoy. That has not changed. We are putting all our creative efforts and energy into making sure you are still receiving the level of service and quality menu options you and your students desire.

If you have any questions or wish to speak about this, please feel free to contact me at 712-251-0427 or d.winter@luncthimesolutions.com.