

I hope you are having a nice spring!

Billy Rosenthal, Integrated Food Service, and Mary Beth Sachs, Affinity Group Midwest, are the latest members to be included in the Industry Advisory Board (IAB). It is great to have you on board!

To assist each of our MSNA members, let us look at two main topics that are sure to be on our minds as we enter May: Minnesota Free School Meals and Summer Schedule. While not all the questions have been asked and certainly not all the answers provided, consider the following:



Minnesota Free School Meals:

- *Potential increased participation levels:* How are industry food manufacturers planning to assist with demand? Will the passing of the Minnesota Free School Meals bill change the number of options offered for lunch each day – simplified menus? How do decision-makers envision universal meals affecting a la carte sales? It will be critical to have accurate usage forecasts from our school partners to ensure high-service levels. It is of utmost importance to obtain accurate forecasts, as manufacturers use forecasting to drive their production plans to ensure orders can be serviced at high levels.
- *Food distributors are currently considering these logistics:* Driver labor hours, truck space, and warehouse space.
- *Food products:* If your district is short-staffed, consider using convenience products such as heat-and-serve and thaw-and-serve items and meal kits.
- *Nutrition Directors and Managers:* Communicate your thoughts on your plans for menu planning and food and supply ordering to your vendor soon.
- *Equipment:* If determined that additional dry, cold, or frozen storage is needed, consider ordering refrigeration equipment and shelving soon so installation may be complete when needed. Exterior installed walk-ins are an alternative.
- *Building additions or renovation/remodeling:* If additional storage space is required, plan at least two months in advance for: design, drawings, specifications, utility engineering, bidding, shop drawings, ordering, delivery, construction, and training. More time is needed, as the work scope increases or substantial completion nears the first of September. General contractors, refrigeration subcontractors, electricians, plumbers, and equipment installers typically work night and day in a normal August in order to complete projects by the start of the school year. Hoping to receive last-minute labor may be impossible.

Summer Schedule:

- Remember to schedule equipment maintenance and service early so your equipment is in top operating mode for fall operations.
- Thoroughly clean out all rooms and equipment.
- Consider reviewing the operational status of delivery doors, dock bumpers, kitchen exhaust roof fans, grease traps, floor drains, water filters, and steam boilers.
- Order replacement and spare parts, including a spare water filter.

- Check all your safety gear, especially fire extinguishers, hood fire suppression systems, and emergency eyewash stations. Restock the first aid kit and verify your choking chart is current.
- Take some time to educate yourself on food and equipment products. Begin by contacting those in the “**Directory**” drop down of the “**Industry**” tab in the [MSNA website](#). Perhaps choose one that you have never met or heard of before.
- If you are planning to add new items to your menu or are dropping certain items, please make food vendors aware of this. This will assist them in high-volume forecasting.
- **Remember to have a little fun!**
- Lastly, plan to attend the Annual MSNA Conference on August 6-9 in St. Cloud.

Thank you Elite Level, Premier Level, and Industry Level Industry Members for your support of MSNA! MSNA appreciates that your membership levels exceed 30% more than at this time last year.

Thank you!

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