

The Inside Scoop!

Your guide to happenings in the Plainville School Cafeterias!

Jim Bondi -Food Service Director

860-793-3234 or bondij@plainvilleschools.org

PLAINVILLE CAFETERIAS TO CAPITALIZE ON TECHNOLOGY!

We are pleased to announce the addition of a computerized point of sale system to the Plainville Cafeterias! This system will replace our traditional cash registers and eliminate the need for lunch tickets, lunch charges, and cash handling! We hope to have the system up and running by early June. We will concentrate on installation in Linden/Toffolon first, MSP and Wheeler next, and then the High School. I will forward an implementation schedule as soon as possible.

A point of sale system is a computerized cafeteria record keeping system that acts similar to a debit card system. Here is how it works:

Each student in the school is entered into a computer database and assigned a four digit identification number. This number may correspond with the official student identification number or may be random; it will remain to be seen. Free and reduced meal eligibility is also entered into the computer, as well as any allergy alerts. All information entered into the database is kept confidential by a series of secure passwords and codes.

Parents or students can send in payment as they normally do, and parents will eventually have the option of adding money to the student's account via the internet or by phone, thus limiting cash transactions. At the elementary and middle school level we can also offer the option of lunch payments via secure lunch account drop boxes. Once payment is received a student debit account is set up in the database. Those students entitled to free and reduced meals will not need to take any action, as they will automatically be set up in the database. Administrators, teachers, and staff in each school will also have the ability to set up accounts within the system.

Students procure their lunch as they normally would, and proceed to the checkout. They will then enter their four digit I.D. number onto a pin pad located a few feet from the checkout. The student will then proceed to the checkout, where cafeteria staff will check the student's identification via the student's picture on the screen, and check the lunch for all components. The cafeteria staff will then press one button, and the student is on his or her way, thus limiting the time a student will need to wait in the lunch line. My prior experience and the experience of other school systems tell us that the learning curve for elementary school students is about one week, and middle and high school students approximately two weeks.

This new system will feature many advantages to both parents and students. Parents will have the ability to monitor their children's eating habits and spending with usage reports on exactly how the student has spent money deposited in the account. Parents do not need to worry about giving their child lunch money each day, and may place as much money in the child's account as they wish.

Parents will also have the ability to state whether the money in the student's account is for lunch only, or if the student is allowed to buy snacks. The students will spend less time waiting in lines at the register, and will not have to deal with fishing money out of pockets. Both students and parents can have instant access to the balance of their lunch account, either at checkout, or by e-mail or phone. Students can also be verbally reminded when their lunch account needs to be replenished before it is depleted.

We are very excited to install this system in the cafeterias and look forward to its success! More notices will be distributed to staff, parents, and students in the coming days, along with a complete installation plan. I.D. Numbers will also be issued to students beforehand.

Jim Bondi

Food Service Director