



Aramark Student Nutrition Sets a New Standard for Student Wellbeing This Back-to-School Season

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Simple-ingredient menus, acoustic cafeteria enhancements, and expanded wellness programming headline the company's 2026-2027 rollout

PHILADELPHIA--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug. 6, 2026-- Aramark Student Nutrition is launching the 2026-2027 school year with a nationwide effort to remove artificial dyes and additives from school menus, as announced in June, becoming the first national K-12 foodservice provider to implement the change across participating school districts. The initiative will impact thousands of students in more than 350 school districts and is part of Aramark's broader strategy to support student health, academic success, mental wellness, and positive cafeteria experiences.

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In addition to introducing simpler-ingredient menus, Aramark Student Nutrition is expanding student wellness programming and launching new cafeteria design solutions, including acoustic enhancements that create quieter and more inclusive dining environments.

"Every school district we serve has unique students, needs, and goals, and our teams

work closely with school communities to support student success," said Brisbane Vaillancourt, President and CEO of Aramark Student Nutrition. "Removing artificial dyes and additives from our menus is an important step forward, but nutrition is only part of the equation. We believe healthy meals, supportive environments, and student wellness programs work together to help students focus, learn, and thrive."

Artificial Dye-Free School Menus and New Student-Inspired Recipes

[Aramark Student Nutrition's updated 2026-2027 school menu program](#) removes artificial dyes and additives from core menu offerings across participating districts. The changes were developed through student taste-testing panels, registered dietitian review, and feedback from school district partners, while allowing local teams to adapt menus to regional tastes and preferences.

More than 300 new recipes were added to Aramark's operational database during the past year, with many developed directly from student and operator feedback. Menu items are tested for taste, nutritional compliance, operational efficiency, and student appeal before being introduced in schools.

The company also expanded its [limited-time offering \(LTO\) program](#), bringing trend-inspired menu items to cafeterias throughout the school year. Key menu trends for 2026-2027 include high-protein and high-fiber options, made-to-order concepts, globally inspired sweet-and-spicy flavors, and alternative bread carriers that align with student preferences and K-12 nutrition standards.

Cafeteria Design Enhancements Support Student Wellness

Aramark Student Nutrition continues to invest in school cafeteria design as part of a comprehensive approach to student wellbeing. Working with environmental design experts, Aramark has developed dining spaces that support focus, inclusion, participation, and positive social experiences.

New for the 2026-2027 school year are decorative ceiling installations that also serve as acoustic panels, helping reduce cafeteria noise levels. The enhancement responds directly to student feedback and supports students who may experience sensory sensitivities, creating more welcoming spaces for all students.

Student Mental Wellness Programs for K-12 Schools

Aramark Student Nutrition provides wellness programming through two age-specific initiatives.

- **Beyond the Bites**, designed for K-8 students, delivers monthly social-emotional learning content integrated into cafeteria environments through the Ace and Friends program. Topics include resilience, emotional regulation, healthy relationships, and positive decision-making.
- **Take 15**, for middle and high school students, offers a structured 15-minute wellness break featuring mindfulness activities, reflection exercises, stress-management techniques, and creative engagement opportunities for both students and staff.

Supporting Academic Achievement Through School Nutrition

As a foodservice partner to hundreds of school districts nationwide, Aramark Student Nutrition focuses on programs that increase student meal participation and support academic success. Research from the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) shows students who participate in school breakfast programs score higher on standardized math assessments and demonstrate improved school attendance.

Research also shows that Gen Z and Gen Alpha students increasingly view mental and emotional health as equally important to physical health. These findings helped guide Aramark's investments in school nutrition, student wellness initiatives, and cafeteria environment improvements.

"No other national K-12 foodservice provider brings together updated menus free from certain dyes and additives, student-centered wellness programming, and cafeteria environments designed to support learning and wellbeing," said Vaillancourt. "Nutrition, wellness, and environment are interconnected. By addressing all three, we are helping school districts create stronger foundations for student success."

About Aramark Student Nutrition

[Aramark Student Nutrition](#) is at the forefront of powering student potential through exceptional food services in K-12 schools and school districts. With more than 60 years of industry experience and serving over 270 million meals annually to 1.5 million students nationwide, Student Nutrition fosters brighter futures through creative, diverse, and nutrition packed menus featuring fresh, local ingredients. Connect with [Student Nutrition on LinkedIn](#) to learn more.

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