

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

School Performance Review: Food Services Operations

PREPARED BY LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

WWW.LBB.TEXAS.GOV

NOVEMBER 2021

School Performance Review: Food Services Operations

PREPARED BY LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

WWW.LBB.TEXAS.GOV

NOVEMBER 2021

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. ALDINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT.....	13
2. CARTHAGE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	19
3. CHILTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	25
4. DRISCOLL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	31
5. FANNINDEL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	37
6. FERRIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	43
7. GEORGETOWN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT.....	49
8. KOUNTZE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	55
9. NAZARETH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	61
10. REAGAN COUNTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	65
11. ROSCOE COLLEGIATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	71
12. SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT.....	77
GLOSSARY	85
APPENDIX A – DATA SOURCES.....	89
APPENDIX B – BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	93

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW: FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 100,000 school districts in the U.S. operate federally funded child nutrition programs (CNP), administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service, to provide children access to nutritious meals and snacks in schools, summer programs, and afterschool programs. At the state level, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers CNPs and operates the programs through agreements with school districts. The USDA provides funding to CNPs by reimbursing school districts for each meal served that meets set requirements regarding nutrition content, portion size, and required meal components. A reimbursable meal is a complete meal that meets these requirements and qualifies a school to receive reimbursement. **Figure 1** shows several CNPs available to Texas districts.

The most widely utilized CNPs are the lunch and breakfast programs. According to the USDA, 32.5 million children nationally participated in the National School Lunch

Program (NSLP) in March 2020, and more than 18.2 million participated in the School Breakfast Program (SBP). During school year 2018–19, the last complete school year before the COVID-19 pandemic, Texas school districts served 552.0 million lunches to approximately 3.0 million students and 320.0 million breakfasts to 2.0 million students.

The majority of children receiving school meals are from households with low incomes. More than three-fourths of all students in the U.S. participating in CNPs qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Free meals are available to children in households with incomes at or less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), and reduced-price meals are available to children in households with incomes from 130 percent to 185 percent of the FPL. During federal fiscal year 2019, 4.8 billion lunches were served nationally through NSLP, and 74.1 percent of these meals were free or reduced-price. In Texas, 60.3 percent of all students, or approximately 3.3 million children, qualified for free or reduced-price meals during school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 1
EXAMPLES OF THE FEDERAL CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS UTILIZED IN TEXAS
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	The NSLP serves low-cost or free lunches to students. Lunches must comply with federal nutrition guidelines and are reimbursable to school districts based on the number of meals served within the benefit categories of free, reduced-price, and paid.
School Breakfast Program (SBP)	Through the SBP, participating campuses receive cash assistance for breakfasts served that comply with program requirements. Districts receive different amounts of reimbursement based on the number of breakfasts served in each of the following benefit categories: free, reduced-price, and paid. Texas law requires school districts to participate in the breakfast program if at least 10.0 percent of their students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals.
Seamless Summer Option (SSO)	The SSO is an option for school districts that participate in the NSLP or SBP. Its purpose is to reduce the documentation associated with feeding children in low-income areas during the summer months. Schools using SSO serve meals free of charge to children age 18 or younger in accordance with the school meal program rules.
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	The CACFP reimburses meals and snacks served to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child-care centers, day-care homes, and adult day-care centers. CACFP also reimburses meals served to children and youth participating in afterschool care programs, children residing in emergency shelters, and adults age 61 or older or living with a disability and enrolled in day-care facilities.
Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	The SFSP is a federally funded, state-administered program that reimburses providers that serve free healthy meals to children age 18 or younger in low-income areas during the summer months when school is not in session. See glossary for more information
Special Milk Program (SMP)	The SMP reimburses schools for the milk they serve to children in schools and child-care institutions that do not participate in other federal meal service programs. Schools participating in the NSLP or SBP also may participate in SMP to provide milk to children in half-day prekindergarten and kindergarten programs where children do not have access to the school meal programs.

SOURCE: Texas Department of Agriculture, March 2021.

Research has shown that participation in CNPs reduces household food insecurity among participating students, contributes significantly to students' daily dietary intake, and provides meals that typically are more nutritious than those from other sources, including home-packed meals. According to research published in the academic journal *Social Science & Medicine*, 2016, among households with at least one child receiving free or reduced-price meals, NSLP participation is associated with a 14.0 percent reduction in food insufficiency. In simple terms, food insufficiency is the condition of not having enough to eat, which represents a more severe phenomenon than food insecurity. Research from the nonprofit organization Food Research and Action Center in 2019 showed that the receipt of a free or reduced-price school lunch decreases obesity rates by at least 17.0 percent. In addition, school meals provide critical economic support to low-income families. Supplemental Poverty Measure data from the U.S. Census Bureau showed that, from calendar years 2017 to 2018, the NSLP assisted 1.4 million people in the U.S. to overcome the poverty level.

School closures and remote learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have disrupted access to school meals, increasing the risk of missed meals for students that rely on school nutrition programs. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, U.S. schools served almost 400.0 million fewer meals during March 2020 and April 2020 than during those months in calendar year 2019. From March 2020 to May 2020, Texas public school districts served approximately 66,475,984 lunches, a decrease of 61.8 percent from the 174,154,039 lunches served during the same period during calendar year 2019. Similarly, the number of breakfasts served decreased by 45.6 percent from 101,163,884 during spring 2019 to 55,057,852 during spring 2020. The challenges school districts faced involved the complexities of providing meal service for both on-campus and remote-learning students while also attempting to prevent transmission of COVID-19. School districts had to alter meal preparation and serving techniques to meet new safety guidelines and restrictions, modify food distribution methods to reach all students, and adjust to the economic impact of the additional expenses.

TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICT CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

During March 2021 and April 2021, the Legislative Budget Board's School Performance Review Team conducted a review of 12 Texas school districts to assess the food services programs during school year 2020–21. The review team

interviewed district staff and analyzed publicly available data to examine how districts adapted their food services operations to provide meal service for remote-learning students while protecting the safety of on-campus students and food services staff.

To include representation of districts throughout the state, the review team selected 12 districts that varied in geographic location, student enrollment, property wealth, and student demographics. The districts reviewed for this report were Aldine Independent School District (ISD), Carthage ISD, Chilton ISD, Driscoll ISD, Fannindel ISD, Ferris ISD, Georgetown ISD, Kountze ISD, Nazareth ISD, Reagan County ISD, Roscoe Collegiate ISD, and San Benito Consolidated ISD (CISD).

Figure 2 shows the locations of the districts reviewed.

The review compared district food services operations in the first six months of school year 2020–21 to operations in the same period of school year 2019–20. Specifically, the review examined how district food services departments adapted their programs, meal preparation processes, staffing and safety processes, purchasing processes, and meal delivery processes during school year 2020–21. This report discusses the common set of strategies, challenges, and outcomes experienced in adapting operations to feed students during school year 2020–21.

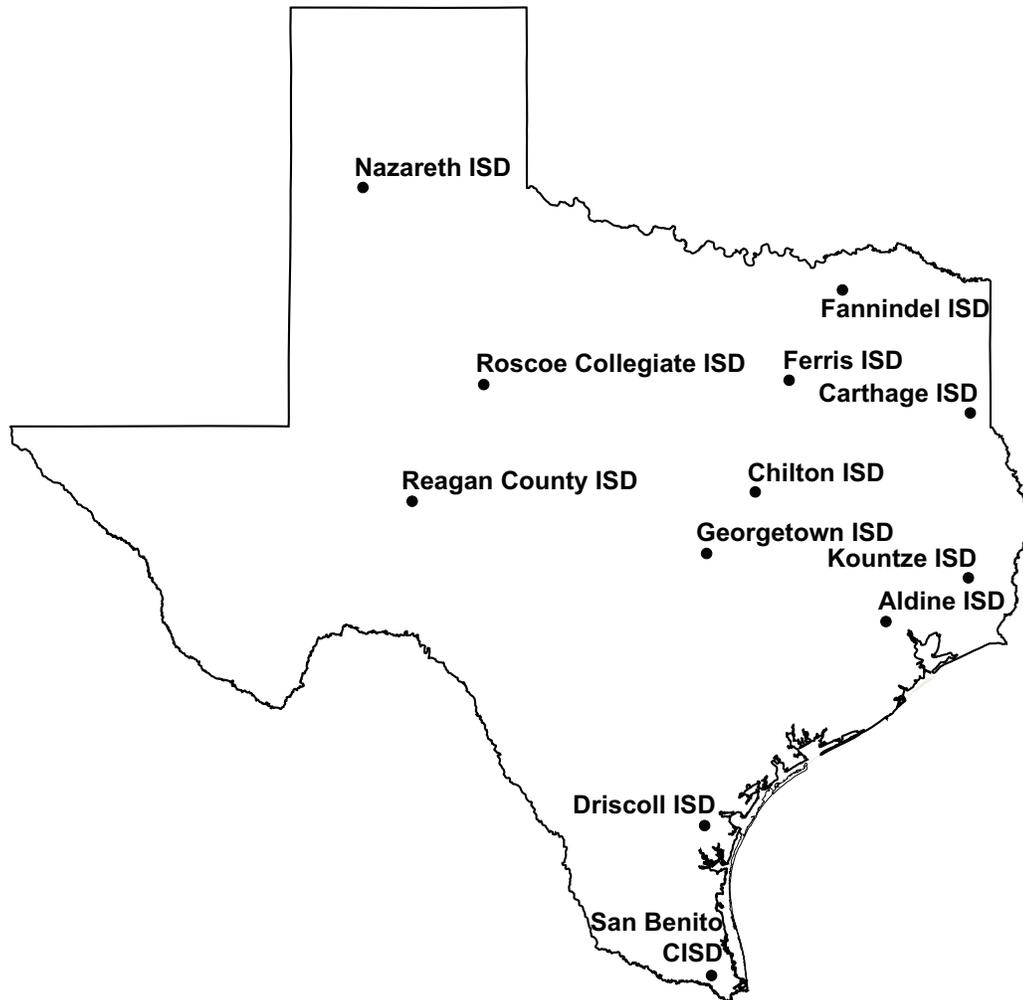
ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES

School districts implemented various strategies to provide meals for students and staff during school year 2020–21. The following sections highlight some of the strategies used by the reviewed districts.

PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION

Effective planning for school reopening involved coordination and communication with district stakeholders. Before school year 2020–21 began, school districts were required to determine when and how to reopen campuses safely. In addition to selecting start dates, learning models, and safety protocols, districts also had to develop strategies for food service delivery. Districts considered operations including the logistics of providing meals to students receiving on-campus instruction, the distribution of meals for remote-learning students, and the health and safety of food services staff. According to staff interviews, most districts considered food services operations critical to reopening successfully,

FIGURE 2
TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICT FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENTS REVIEWED
MARCH 2021



SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021.

and these districts involved their food services departments in planning and decision-making processes for school year 2020–21.

Approaches to planning varied among the reviewed districts. Some food services directors reported that they developed plans for providing food to students attending on campus and those receiving remote instruction and presented their plans to the superintendents or district leadership for approval. Other districts recruited staff districtwide to engage in group planning. For example, Driscoll ISD formed a committee to address issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. This committee guided the district's

decision making for school year 2020–21 and included representatives from each district department, including Food Services.

Some food services directors received fully developed plans from district leadership and expectations for implementing the plans. A minority of the food services directors interviewed reported that they did not receive communication from the district and that they had to pursue information about operating plans from district administrators. Food services directors tended to have less input into district planning at districts where these directors were employees of food service management companies.

After districts developed reopening plans, they communicated the plans to stakeholders to provide guidance to students, parents, and the community. A primary component of the information communicated concerned food services operations. Food services directors reported that using social media to deliver information was the most effective strategy, and nine of the 12 reviewed districts identified their social media accounts and district websites as the primary tools for communicating food services operations to the community. The other three districts reported that they primarily used recorded phone calls, automated texts, and emails to communicate to stakeholders. Three districts reported contacting news outlets, and two districts mailed information to parents.

FEDERAL WAIVERS

An important strategy for operating food services programs during school year 2020–21 was the application for federal waivers to implement unconventional and innovative methods for preparing and providing meals to students. To assist school districts in responding to the pandemic, USDA approved a series of waivers for states from certain federal regulations. These waivers provided food services programs with more discretion regarding how meals could be prepared, packaged, and served. USDA made these waivers available to districts in March 2020 and extended the waivers to May 2021. The USDA waivers include the following authorizations:

- Meal Times Waiver – authorizes schools to serve meals to students outside traditional meal times to maximize flexibility for meal pickup;
- Meal Pattern Waiver – authorizes school districts that may not be able to meet the meal pattern requirements of child nutrition programs (e.g., providing whole grain-rich foods) to use discretion and provide alternatives;
- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver – authorizes schools to serve meals in nongroup settings to support social distancing;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver – authorizes parents or guardians to pick up meals and bring them home to children not present on campus; and
- Summer Feeding Waiver – authorizes schools to operate the Summer Food Service Program and the Seamless Summer Option through June 30, 2021.

Several other waivers were available to districts, some of which include discretion for providing afterschool snacks and meals and offer-versus-serve requirements (see **Glossary**). Ten of the 12 reviewed districts received at least one waiver during school year 2020–21. The most common waiver received was the Non-congregate Feeding Waiver, and two-thirds of reviewed districts utilized the Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver. Additionally, six of the 12 reviewed districts used the Offer Versus Serve Waiver for high schools, and four districts received the Meal Times Waiver.

These waivers were important in facilitating meal delivery to students. The discretion to serve reimbursable meals outside of traditional places and times enabled the districts to develop solutions to the challenges of serving meals to remote-learning students. Utilizing these waivers, districts could set up drive-through distribution sites, bundle meals, deliver meals on buses, and serve meals on weekends.

In addition, the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) enabled districts to serve free meals to students and other children in their communities. SSO is a federal meal program that authorizes districts participating in the NSLP or SBP to provide meals in low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods. USDA authorized districts to operate SSO during spring 2020 and school year 2020–21. Districts using the SSO can provide free meals to any child age 18 or younger regardless of whether the child is enrolled in the district. Four districts, Aldine ISD, Carthage ISD, Reagan County ISD, and Georgetown ISD, implemented SSO in autumn 2020, and San Benito CISD implemented SSO at the beginning of school year 2020–21. All five of these districts identified the ability to serve free meals to all children in their communities as the reason they implemented this option.

MEAL SERVICE STRATEGIES FOR REMOTE-LEARNING STUDENTS

Developing and implementing strategies to feed remote-learning students was a primary goal of school districts. Most districts in Texas began school year 2020–21 offering students the option of receiving on-campus or remote instruction. As a result, food services departments developed and implemented new strategies to provide students who were not attending classes on campus access to nutritious meals. Districts employed several options, including the following strategies:

- the grab-and-go model – enabled parents or students to collect meals at portable meal carts in a central location in the district or directly from school nutrition staff in designated areas of a cafeteria;

FIGURE 3
MEAL DELIVERY METHODS FOR REMOTE-LEARNING STUDENTS
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

DISTRICT (1)	CURBSIDE MEALS	GRAB-AND-GO MEALS	BUS DELIVERY	BUNDLED MEALS	DISTRIBUTION DAYS PER WEEK
Aldine ISD	X			Yes	2
Carthage ISD	X			No	5
Chilton ISD	X			No	5
Driscoll ISD	X			Yes	5
Fannindel ISD		X	X (2)	No	5
Ferris ISD	X			No	5
Georgetown ISD	X			No	5
Kountze ISD	X			No	5
Reagan County ISD	X			No	5
Roscoe Collegiate ISD		X		No	5
San Benito CISD	X		X	Yes	5

NOTES:

(1) Data for Nazareth ISD is not shown because the district did not provide meals for remote-learning students during school year 2020–21.

(2) Fannindel ISD provided bus delivery service for one week in January 2021 when a COVID-19 outbreak closed both its campuses.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Aldine ISD; Carthage ISD; Chilton ISD; Driscoll ISD; Fannindel ISD; Ferris ISD; Georgetown ISD; Kountze ISD; Reagan County ISD; Roscoe Collegiate ISD; and San Benito CISD, March 2021.

- curbside pickup – enabled parents or students to drive through a specific area on campus and collect packaged meals from food services staff without leaving their vehicles; and
- bus routes – Some districts delivered food to children by school buses, from which food services staff delivered meals to parents or children at specific locations, usually along typical bus routes. This strategy was especially convenient for families in rural areas, or for those who lived distant from curbside or cafeteria food distribution locations at school campuses.

Among the reviewed districts, only Nazareth ISD decided not to provide meals to its small population of remote-learning students during school year 2020–21.

Curbside pickup was the most common method for feeding remote-learning students, and it was used by nine of the reviewed districts, all of which chose a subset of campuses as distribution sites. Districts decreased the number of these sites throughout the school year as more students returned to on-campus instruction. Curbside meal pickup times also varied across the reviewed districts. Some districts offered a single block of time for pickup and distributed bundled meals, which enabled parents or students to collect several meals at the same time. Some districts distributed meals on

certain days of the week; others offered curbside distribution daily. Districts also varied the number of meals provided; some districts distributed breakfasts and lunches, and others distributed breakfasts, lunches, and suppers.

Fannindel ISD and Roscoe Collegiate ISD provided meals to remote-learning students through the grab-and-go method. Both districts reported providing breakfasts and lunches to students in bags or on disposable trays, and these meals were distributed from a food cart located at a central campus or from the cafeterias.

San Benito CISD used both the curbside pickup method and the bus-delivery method. The district established bus distribution routes that delivered food to various locations throughout the community. Bus delivery occurred one day a week, and food bundles included three meals for each day of the week, including weekends. Fannindel ISD provided a grab-and-go service for remote-learning students for most of school year 2020–21. However, both campuses in the district closed for a week in January 2021 due to COVID-19 outbreaks, during which the Food Services Department provided meals through a delivery option. Food services and other district staff, such as teachers and coaches who volunteered their time, delivered some meals to students' homes.

Figure 3 shows the delivery methods the reviewed districts used to provide meals to remote-learning students.

MEAL SERVICE STRATEGIES FOR ON-CAMPUS STUDENTS

As students returned to campus during school year 2020–21, food services departments developed various strategies to provide students access to nutritious meals while protecting the safety of staff and students. All the reviewed districts implemented some of the following processes to provide meals to on-campus students during school year 2020–21.

CHANGING DINING LOCATIONS

- Breakfasts served in the classroom – Seven of the reviewed districts either initiated breakfast in the classroom for the first time or expanded their existing breakfast in the classroom services to include more campuses.
- Meals delivered on carts – San Benito CISD eliminated cafeteria service for all meals. Breakfasts and lunches were delivered outside of classrooms, and students ate at their desks. Aldine ISD began serving breakfast from a cart in different locations on campuses, including classrooms.

SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

- Lunch periods – Four of the reviewed districts reported adding lunch periods during school year 2020–21 to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria at once. Nazareth ISD added 15 minutes between lunch periods for additional cleaning and sanitation. Driscoll ISD reopened an older cafeteria that had not been used during previous school years to reduce the number of on-campus students eating together in the same cafeteria.
- Serving lines – Nine of the districts required students to socially distance while standing in serving lines. Most districts accomplished this goal through staff monitoring of students and enforcing social distancing, and two districts reduced the number of students that could stand in line at once. Driscoll ISD eliminated serving lines, and staff delivered food to students seated at tables. Georgetown ISD and Fannindel ISD placed markers on the cafeteria floors to indicate where students should stand in serving lines to socially distance; additionally, these districts kept all food, utensils, beverages, and condiments behind the serving line and provided the items when requested.
- Seating – Seven of the 12 districts required students to socially distance while eating at dining tables, which

they accomplished by removing chairs or marking certain chairs available for student use. Georgetown ISD and Driscoll ISD also placed plastic partitions at dining tables to separate students.

FOOD SERVING MEASURES

- Disposable goods – During previous school years, all 12 districts reported serving meals to students on washable and reusable trays and providing them with silverware. However, during school year 2020–21, 10 districts served meals on disposable trays, and most provided disposable utensils.
- Prepackaging meals – Instead of placing food items on the serving line, most districts wrapped all individual meal components, including entrees and side items, and packed them in bags or boxes for distribution.

SAFETY STRATEGIES

- Training – Ten of the 12 reviewed districts provided staff at least some additional safety training during school year 2020–21. The training topics included safety procedures, sanitation, how to socially distance, and use of masks and gloves. Most of the food services directors reported that they developed trainings based on guidance from TDA and USDA protocol updates on the COVID-19 pandemic. Others reported that regional education service centers provided guidance.
- Personal protective equipment and hand washing – All reviewed districts required food services staff to wear masks while working in the kitchens and cafeterias. Other new safety protocols adopted by the reviewed districts included requiring staff to wear gloves and to socially distance while preparing and serving food. One district required staff to wash their hands every 20 minutes.
- Health monitoring – Eleven of the 12 districts required staff to have their temperatures checked before beginning work shifts each day, and five districts required staff to complete health assessment questionnaires daily.
- Facility upgrades – Six districts added equipment to their cafeterias or upgraded those facilities. One district added plastic partitions to dining tables, two districts added partitions at the cashier station, and Georgetown ISD added partitions at both of these locations. Additionally, some districts added

new hand-washing stations in the cafeteria, two districts added air purifiers, and two other districts purchased sanitation machines to help clean dining tables and equipment. Three districts added social distancing markers at dining tables to separate students while eating.

MAJOR CHALLENGES

Despite developing new strategies to operate food services in school year 2020–21, school districts faced several challenges related to staffing levels, food waste, product shortages, decreases in enrollment and student participation in meal programs, and financial impacts due to increased costs. The following sections discuss these common challenges reported by the reviewed districts.

STAFFING ISSUES AND INCREASED DEMANDS ON LABOR

Although most districts continued to employ the same number of food services staff during school year 2020–21, five districts reported that their departments struggled to staff kitchens and cafeterias adequately due to inconsistent staff attendance. Staff who tested positive for COVID-19 or who had contact with individuals who tested positive were quarantined, and the districts required staff to remain home if they exhibited symptoms of COVID-19. The districts addressed absences by employing substitutes or temporarily reassigning permanent staff to other kitchens to cover shortages. Food services directors also reported that, unlike in previous school years, they had difficulty maintaining groups of substitutes during school year 2020–21. Some districts reported that staff left employment, and the districts were unable to fill vacancies due to a lack of applicants.

Compounding the problem of absenteeism for some districts were increased labor requirements related to new meal preparation, serving, safety, and sanitation procedures. Preparing and individually plating, wrapping, and packaging meals for both on-campus and remote-learning students significantly increased the time and effort required for meal service. Several of the reviewed districts reported changing menu items during school year 2020–21 due to significantly greater labor requirements on food services department staff. A few districts said that they changed practices from preparing foods mostly from scratch to using more convenience foods during school year 2020–21. Overall, the reviewed districts reported that meal preparation required significantly more intensive labor compared to previous school years.

Serving meals to remote-learning students also required additional staff time. Many districts prepared large numbers of meals for remote-learning students that had to be delivered to a particular campus for curbside pickup or to be served on food carts. Most districts maintained these new services for remote-learning students while simultaneously operating their standard cafeteria services for on-campus students.

Staff also reported that providing meals to on-campus students required more intensive labor during school year 2020–21. For example, delivering meals to classrooms for on-campus students required more time than serving meals in the cafeteria. Additionally, staff reported that maintaining the correct temperatures for hot and cold prepackaged items was a new and challenging process. Adding more meal times also increased the labor for food services staff. Likewise, the additional sanitation requirements increased the amount of cleaning and disinfecting that food services staff were required to complete. For most districts, food services staff performed these additional tasks while working the same amount of hours as during previous school years, which resulted in increased stress for some staff and food services directors overseeing operations.

FOOD WASTE

Districts' staff reported they had difficulties determining how many daily meals to prepare for remote-learning students, which resulted in food waste and increased food costs for some districts. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, food services departments typically prepared a predetermined number of meals each day based on student attendance data and previous student meal participation data. However, staff said that because they had no pre-existing data for serving meals to remote-learning students, they had to establish new methods for determining meal counts. Among the districts reviewed, some contacted students' families about their interest in meals, and others estimated counts based on the number of remote-learning students who received meals on previous days. One district prepared meals for remote-learning students only if the families requested them from the food services department. Determining how many meals to prepare for remote-learning students was especially difficult for the reviewed districts that had large student enrollments. All districts had to discard uneaten meals because they could not be served again safely.

PRODUCT SHORTAGES

Disruptions to supply networks due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in shortages of some food services

products. Eight of the 12 districts reviewed adjusted menus in accordance with what manufacturers and distributors could deliver. The most common interruptions involved the limited availability from vendors of popular menu items, disposable packaging supplies, and shelf-stable food products. Several staff also reported that, although they did not have difficulty supplying staff with sanitation gloves, the prices of these gloves were significantly higher than previous school years.

Most districts reported finding comparable alternatives for food items that were unavailable through their suppliers, purchasing cooperatives, or local businesses. Nazareth ISD reported that, due to its small number of students, food services staff obtained food items that were unavailable from their typical vendors at the local grocery store. Due to food shortages, more than half of the reviewed districts reported limiting student choice and providing fewer meal options for secondary students than were offered during previous school years.

LOW STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Despite implementing various strategies to prepare and serve meals to remote-learning students, most of the reviewed districts fed fewer students and served fewer total meals during school year 2020–21.

Average daily participation (ADP) is a metric used to estimate the average number of students that eat school meals each school day. **Figure 4** shows a comparison of each of the reviewed districts' lunch and breakfast ADP from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21. Eleven of the 12 districts reported decreased ADP for school lunches during school year 2020–21. Eight of the 12 also reported decreased ADP for school breakfasts.

The decreases in lunch ADP among the reviewed districts ranged from a loss of four meals a day to 35,146 meals a day. Similarly, the decreases in breakfast ADP ranged from a loss of seven meals a day to 29,747 meals a day. Fewer students eating meals each day resulted in fewer total meals served during the six-month period from August 2020 to January 2021. **Figure 5** shows the total meals served during school years 2019–20 and 2020–21. Eleven of the 12 districts reviewed served fewer meals in school year 2020–21.

One contributing factor to decreased participation during school year 2020–21 was an overall decrease in student enrollment. As of October 2020, total student enrollment in Texas school districts decreased by 156,596 students or 3.0

percent compared to October 2019. More than half of that decrease, 54.0 percent, is represented by early education, prekindergarten, and kindergarten, which are optional enrollment grades. Enrollment in grades one to 12, for which school attendance is mandatory, decreased by 1.0 percent during school year 2020–21. School year 2020–21 is the first year in which overall student enrollment has decreased among Texas students in more than 25 years.

Of the 12 districts reviewed, enrollment decreased at nine districts during school year 2020–21. The decreases ranged from 3,929 students, or 5.7 percent, in Aldine ISD to 53 students, or 2.0 percent, in Carthage ISD. **Figure 6** shows the changes in enrollment at all reviewed districts during school year 2020–21.

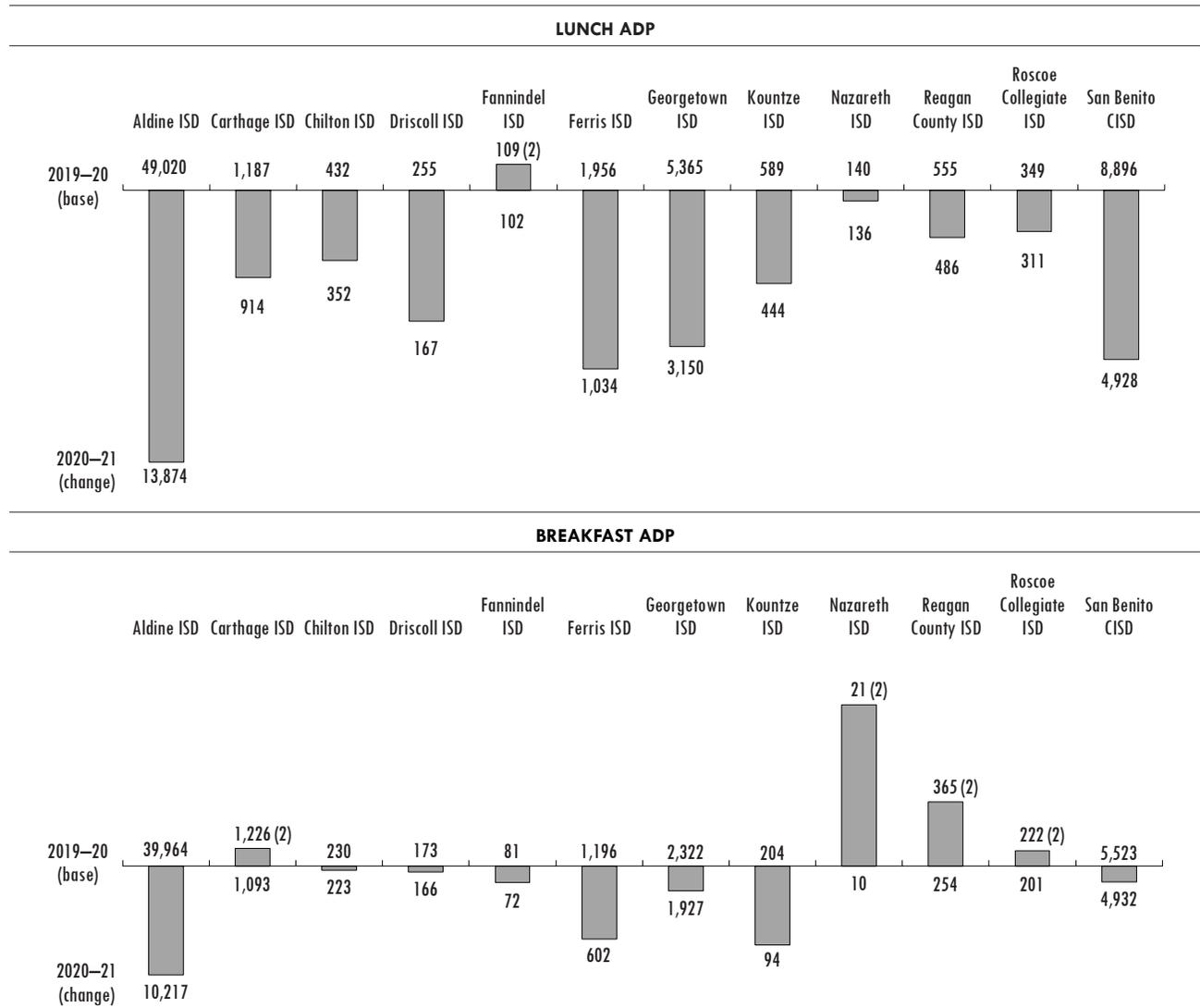
The decrease in enrollment for many of the reviewed districts corresponded to a decrease in the number of students eating meals every day and the total meals served during school year 2020–21.

Another reason for decreased participation reported by food services directors relates to the implementation of remote instruction. The 12 reviewed districts reported substantial variance regarding how many students received remote instruction at the beginning of the school year and the percentage at which students returned to on-campus classes. Five of the reviewed districts began school year 2020–21 with 100.0 percent of students receiving remote instruction, which included the three largest districts in terms of student enrollment, Aldine ISD, Georgetown ISD, and San Benito CISD. Among the remaining seven reviewed districts, six began school year 2020–21 with 70.0 percent or more of their students attending classes on campus. Three districts, Chilton ISD, Roscoe Collegiate ISD, and Nazareth ISD, all started the school year with more than 90.0 percent of students on campus.

As the school year progressed, the number of students returning to on-campus classes for all 12 reviewed districts increased. By the end of September 2020, the average percentage of students on campus among the 12 districts was 68.0 percent. One district, San Benito CISD, had no on-campus students before November 2020. As of January 29, 2021, 10 of 12 districts reported more than 75.0 percent of students receiving on-campus instruction.

An analysis of the differences among districts in the number of students attending classes on campus shows that the districts with the lowest lunch and breakfast participation during the first month of school had no students on campus.

**FIGURE 4
COMPARISON OF REVIEWED DISTRICTS' AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION (ADP) IN SCHOOL MEALS FROM SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21 (1)**



NOTES:

- (1) The data for both school years includes the total average daily participation (ADP) from August to January for Aldine Independent School District (ISD), Chilton ISD, Driscoll ISD, Ferris ISD, Georgetown ISD, Kountze ISD, Nazareth ISD, Reagan County ISD, and Roscoe Collegiate ISD. The data for both school years includes the total ADP from August to December for Carthage ISD and Fannindel ISD. The data for both school years includes the total ADP from September to December for San Benito Consolidated ISD (CISD). These date ranges provide the most recent data available for school year 2020–21 for each district as of March 2021.
- (2) Fannindel ISD reported an increase in lunch ADP from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21. Carthage ISD, Nazareth ISD, Reagan County ISD, and Roscoe Collegiate ISD reported increases in breakfast ADP from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, District Profiles 2020 to 2021.

By contrast, the districts with the highest lunch participation at the start of the school year had the highest on-campus percentage of students in August 2020, ranging from 88.0 percent to 98.4 percent of on-campus students. Analysis by month for each district also shows that, as students returned

to campus for instruction, meal participation typically increased during the school year.

These data points show the challenges the reviewed districts encountered in feeding students during school closures and periods of remote instruction. Staff identified transportation

FIGURE 5
REVIEWED DISTRICTS' TOTAL MEALS SERVED
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21

DISTRICT	2019–20	2020–21	DIFFERENCE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Aldine ISD	8,201,486	3,012,852	(5,188,634)	(63.3%)
Carthage ISD	187,809	179,134	(8,675)	(4.6%)
Chilton ISD	65,848	51,699	(14,149)	(21.5%)
Driscoll ISD	53,811	34,465	(19,346)	(36.0%)
Fannindel ISD	15,342	13,946	(1,396)	(9.1%)
Ferris ISD	310,453	162,612	(147,841)	(47.6%)
Georgetown ISD	788,038	473,662	(314,376)	(39.9%)
Kountze ISD	82,829	55,731	(27,098)	(32.7%)
Nazareth ISD	15,497	15,711	214	1.4%
Reagan County ISD	80,891	77,478	(3,413)	(4.2%)
Roscoe Collegiate ISD	60,454	54,941	(5,513)	(9.1%)
San Benito Consolidated ISD	1,052,401	1,005,711	(46,690)	(4.4%)

NOTE: The data for both school years includes the total average daily participation (ADP) from August to January for Aldine Independent School District (ISD), Chilton ISD, Driscoll ISD, Ferris ISD, Georgetown ISD, Kountze ISD, Nazareth ISD, Reagan County ISD, and Roscoe Collegiate ISD. The data for both school years includes the total ADP from August to December for Carthage ISD and Fannindel ISD. The data for both school years includes the total ADP from September to December for San Benito Consolidated ISD. These date ranges provide the most recent data available for school year 2020–21 for each district as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture District Profiles 2020 to 2021.

barriers as the greatest challenge that remote-learning students faced in receiving school meals. Many students in the reviewed districts lived miles away from campuses and did not always have access to transportation to pick up meals on campus, especially if both parents worked outside of the home. Staff consistently reported that parents of remote-learning students in urban districts could not always commute from their homes or workplaces to pick up meals from campuses.

Additionally, several food service directors reported that on-campus students also participated less in school meals during school year 2020–21. The directors attributed this decrease to some parents and students exercising caution during the COVID-19 pandemic and reporting feeling safer eating food brought from home.

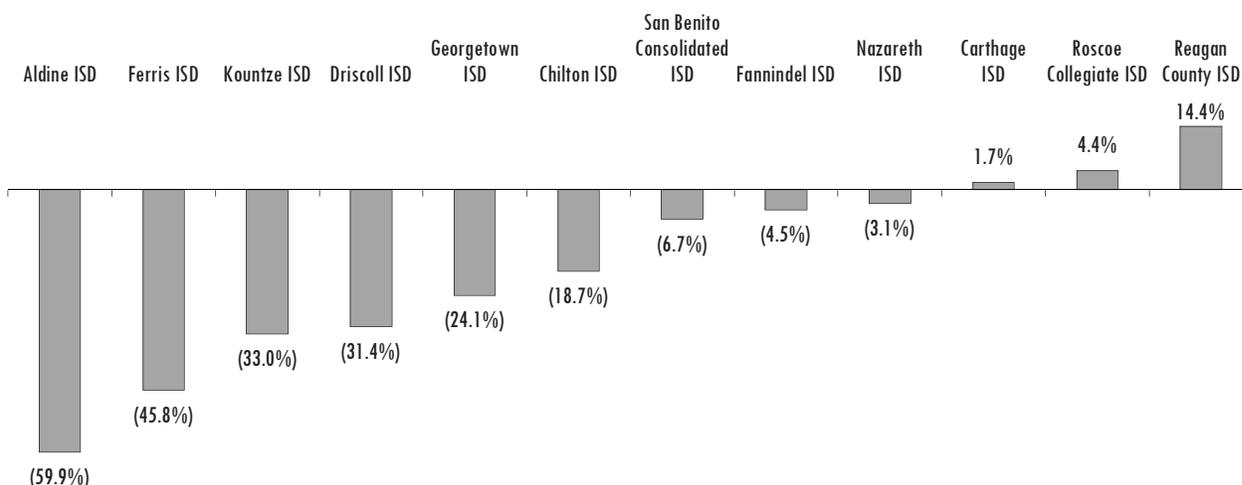
Lower meal participation raises concerns that many students may have missed meals during school year 2020–21, particularly in districts with large populations of economically disadvantaged students who rely on school meals for much of their daily nutrition. A student is categorized as economically disadvantaged if he or she is eligible for free or reduced-price meals in accordance

FIGURE 6
REVIEWED DISTRICTS' CHANGES IN STUDENT
ENROLLMENT
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (ISD)	2020–21 ENROLLMENT	PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20
Aldine ISD	63,330	(5.7%)
Carthage ISD	2,643	(2.0%)
Chilton ISD	519	(3.4%)
Driscoll ISD	292	(3.3%)
Fannindel ISD	158	28.5%
Ferris ISD	2,586	(3.3%)
Georgetown ISD	11,871	(2.1%)
Kountze ISD	1,078	(4.3%)
Nazareth ISD	249	0.4%
Reagan County	856	(5.3%)
Roscoe Collegiate ISD	649	1.3%
San Benito Consolidated ISD	9,719	(5.1%)

SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Reports School year 2019–20.

FIGURE 7
REVIEWED DISTRICTS' PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN TOTAL REIMBURSEMENTS
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21



NOTE: The data for both school years includes the total average daily participation from August to January for Aldine Independent School District (ISD), Chilton ISD, Driscoll ISD, Ferris ISD, Georgetown ISD, Kountze ISD, Nazareth ISD, Reagan County ISD, and Roscoe Collegiate ISD. The data for both school years includes the total average daily participation from August to December for Carthage ISD and Fannindel ISD. The data for both school years includes the total average daily participation from September to December for San Benito Consolidated ISD. These date ranges provide the most recent data available for school year 2020–21 for each district as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture District Profiles 2020 to 2021.

with the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Research has shown that missed meals can affect children's health, nutrition, and academic performance negatively. See **Appendix B** for a bibliography of research regarding child nutrition.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Food services departments are funded primarily through federal reimbursements and a la carte sales, which are snack items available for purchase outside of the CNPs. During school year 2020–21, school closures and remote learning affected cafeteria revenue negatively and caused decreased meal participation that resulted in a significant loss in federal reimbursements for food services programs. According to the School Nutrition Association, schools nationwide lost \$2.1 billion in federal revenue from March 2020 to November 2020 compared to the same period during 2019. A comparison of the reviewed districts' total reimbursements from August 2019 to January 2020 and August 2020 to January 2021 shows a similar negative impact. **Figure 7** shows that total reimbursements decreased for nine of the 12 districts reviewed from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21. The decreases in reimbursements

from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21 ranged from 3.1 percent to 59.9 percent.

The districts reviewed reported a combined decrease of \$14.8 million in reimbursements compared to school year 2019–20.

Exacerbating the financial impact from lost reimbursements were the increased costs incurred. Most of the districts reported that labor-intensive food preparation, serving, and sanitizing processes involved in responding to the pandemic increased labor costs. In addition, most districts increased their use of individually wrapped food items, prepackaged meals, disposable trays, and disposable utensils during school year 2020–21. These additional purchases of paper and disposable goods resulted in an increase in overall expenses, which sometimes were exacerbated due to product shortages that often resulted in inflated prices for these materials. The combined effect of lost reimbursement revenue, decreased sales revenue, and increased operating costs negatively affected many food services department budgets. Seven of the reviewed districts anticipate financial losses for their nutrition departments for school year 2020–21.

OUTCOMES

Despite the multiple challenges posed by operating food services in school year 2020–21, food services directors reported several positive outcomes.

SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

District staff reported that some of the programs implemented had a positive effect on student participation. Breakfast in the classroom and SSO appear to have been successful for all districts that operated these programs. Six of the 12 reviewed districts reported an increase in breakfast participation from school year 2019–20. Among these districts, five either introduced breakfast in the classroom during school year 2020–21 or expanded the program to include more campuses than in previous school years. Three of these five districts also increased their total reimbursements from school year 2019–20. Food services directors in the five districts that introduced breakfast service in the classroom attributed the improvements to this implementation, and all said they will continue operating the program after the pandemic.

The implementation of SSO had a similar positive effect for districts that struggled with student participation at the beginning of school year 2020–21. Although Aldine ISD and Georgetown ISD reported some of the largest decreases in student participation in August 2020 compared to August 2019, these districts regained participation in part by implementing the SSO option in October 2020. Food services directors in these districts reported that the availability of free meals for all students appeared to have had a positive effect. Georgetown ISD in particular increased lunch participation significantly, from an average of 207 students eating daily in August 2020 to an average of 4,409 students in January 2021, an increase of 2,030.0 percent.

EXPERIENCE SERVING MEALS DURING AN EMERGENCY

Food services directors reported that their experiences responding to the pandemic demonstrated that their departments are capable of operating food services during extreme events, which has left them better prepared for future situations. Directors praised their staffs' ability to adapt to changing rules, regulations, and procedures, even as meal preparation and serving became more laborious. Directors also said that they learned from the challenges and now are prepared better with the knowledge, proper equipment, and resources to respond more quickly to a subsequent public health crisis.

District staff also reported that safety and sanitation precautions implemented during school year 2020–21 gave both students and staff a greater understanding of how to prevent the spread of germs. Several staff reported that outbreaks of flu and colds among staff and students in their districts decreased this school year and attributed this outcome to increased sanitation procedures. These staff reported that they likely will continue utilizing these cleaning and sanitizing procedures.

RECOGNITION FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENTS

Food service directors said that feeding students and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic brought public attention to food services staffs' efforts to operate these programs, and that their departments received unprecedented recognition for their efforts. These directors expressed pride in their districts' abilities to meet the needs of the community during a challenging period, and pride in their staffs for continuing to prepare meals for students despite their personal risks.

1. ALDINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Aldine Independent School District (ISD) serves students in parts of Houston and unincorporated Harris County. The district's student enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 63,330 students. The district operated 80 campuses, including: 12 schools for early childhood, prekindergarten, and kindergarten; 39 elementary schools; one intermediate school; 13 middle schools; five schools for grade nine; nine high schools; and one alternative campus. **Figure 1–1** shows Aldine ISD's student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 87.9 percent of Aldine ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, greater than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 38.3 percent of students as English Learners, greater than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 71.8 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was greater than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Aldine ISD's wealth per student, as determined by the district's weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$247,349 during school year 2019–20. This amount is less than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Aldine ISD was not subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is not considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, Aldine ISD used a self-management model and operated its Child Nutrition Department without assistance from an outside entity. The district operated 82 cafeterias and 82 kitchens. Aldine ISD participated in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and Afterschool Snack Service, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Figure 1–2 shows the organization of Aldine ISD's Child Nutrition Department, which consisted of approximately 600 staff. Approximately 20 staff, including the executive director of child nutrition services, worked at the Child Nutrition Department central office. Each campus had a child nutrition manager and staff. Approximately 450 staff worked in the district's kitchens and cafeterias.

FIGURE 1–1
ALDINE ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	22.2%	12.6%
Hispanic	73.4%	52.8%
White	2.2%	27.0%
American Indian	0.3%	0.4%
Asian	1.0%	4.6%
Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.2%
Two or More Races	0.8%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	87.9%	60.3%
English Learners	38.3%	20.3%
At Risk	71.8%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Aldine ISD began school year 2020–21 as scheduled August 17, 2020. Aldine ISD's student enrollment decreased by 3,800 students, or 5.7 percent, from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

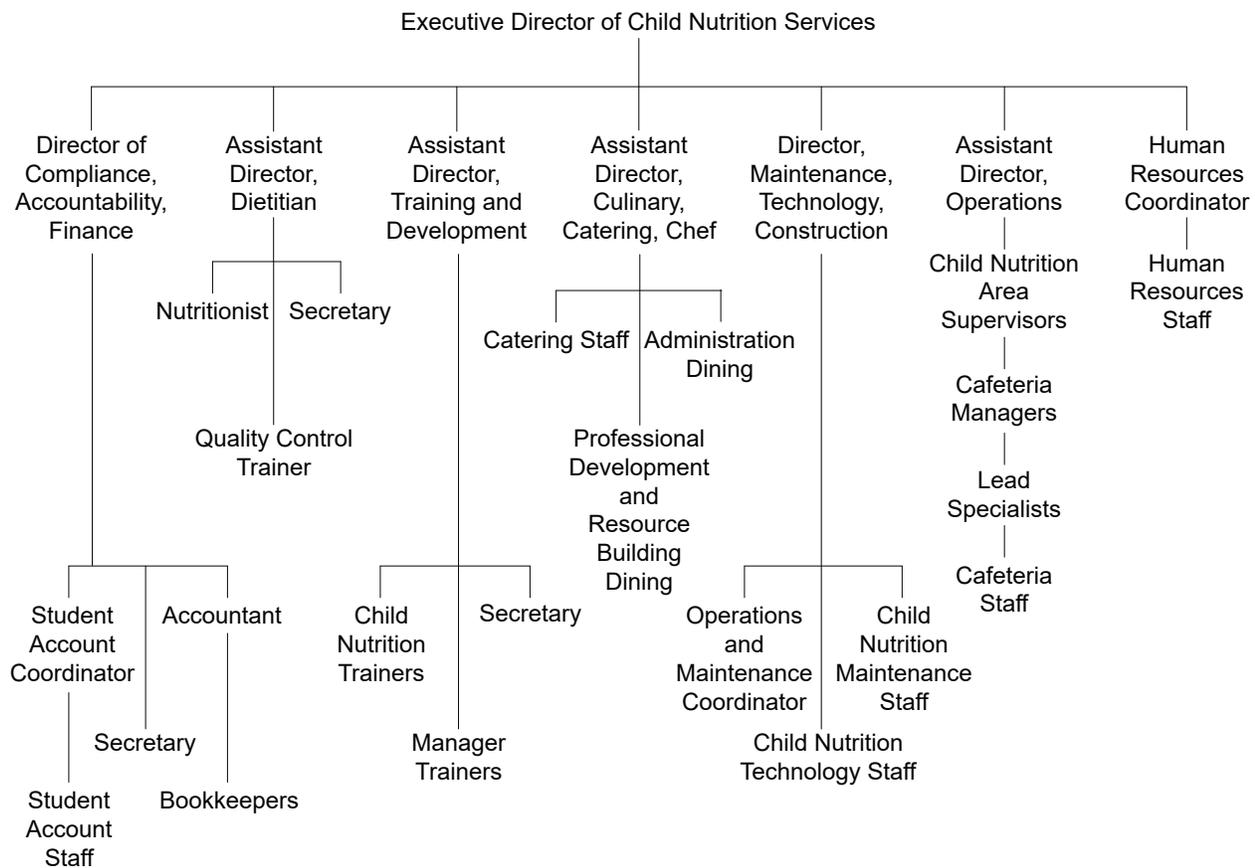
Aldine ISD offered students the option of receiving instruction in person or remotely. By the end of September 2020, 20.0 percent of students in the district attended on-campus classes. However, as the school year progressed, more students returned to campus, and 51.0 percent of students attended in person by the end of January 2021. **Figure 1–3** shows the percentage of Aldine ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

During school year 2020–21, Aldine ISD's Child Nutrition Department continued to offer students the NSLP, SBP, Afterschool Snack Service, and CACFP. On October 1, 2020, Aldine ISD opted to operate these federally reimbursed food programs through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). SSO is a federal meal program that authorizes districts

**FIGURE 1–2
ALDINE ISD CHILD NUTRITION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21**



SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Aldine ISD, March 2021.

participating in the NSLP or SBP to provide meals to children in low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) authorized districts to operate SSO during spring 2020 and school year 2020–21. Districts operating the SSO provide free meals to any child age 18 or younger, regardless of whether the child is enrolled in the district. According to staff, Aldine ISD implemented SSO because the program enabled students to receive all meals for free.

The Child Nutrition Department also maintained the same number of cafeterias and kitchens in school year 2020–21. However, to help continue to operate its child nutrition programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the district applied for and received the following USDA waivers for school year 2020–21 (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver;
- Meal Times Waiver;
- Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools Waiver; and
- Meal Pattern Waiver.

MEAL PREPARATION

Aldine ISD’s meal preparation process was not affected significantly during school year 2020–21. The only additional requirements for the year were that Child Nutrition Department staff practiced social distancing, wore masks to prepare and serve food, and increased the frequency of sanitation procedures, such as hand washing and cleaning.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

The district reported that staffing absences did not pose significant challenges to the operations of the Child Nutrition Department during school year 2020–21. The department employed the same number of food service workers during school year 2020–21 as during school year 2019–20. However, child nutrition staff received approximately one-third more training hours in school year 2020–21 due to increased training to address pandemic-related safety. Staff received weekly training in person and remotely at the beginning of the school year, which transitioned to monthly training as the year progressed. Staff also were required to complete an online health assessment before they arrived at their assigned work areas.

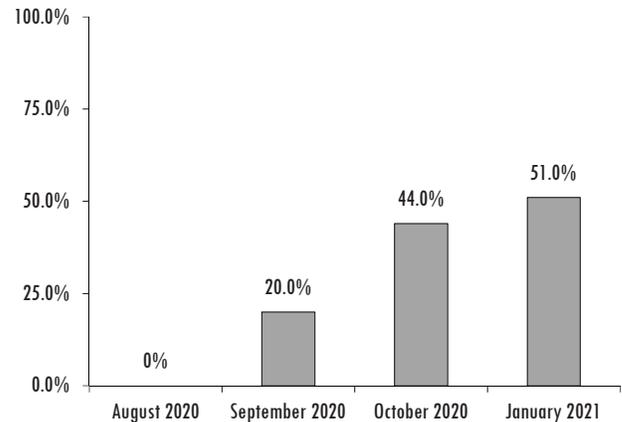
PURCHASING

Aldine ISD experienced shortages of some food and supplies due to supply-chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic during school year 2020–21. Aldine ISD collaborated directly with food manufacturers and distributors to source the food and goods needed for preparing meals. Although shortages of various items affected the department throughout the school year, Child Nutrition Department staff said that they communicated frequently with suppliers to determine what food was available. Suppliers informed the district when ordered food was not available at least two weeks in advance, and Child Nutrition Department staff modified menus when necessary. The district also decreased the number of menu choices for school year 2020–21, which simplified ordering.

MEAL DELIVERY

Aldine ISD altered various aspects of its meal service to accommodate remote-learning students and those receiving instruction in person. The district provided remote instruction to 100.0 percent of students at the beginning of school year 2020–21. To feed these students, the Child Nutrition Department provided prepackaged breakfast and lunch via curbside pickup at 25 campuses, including all high school campuses. Meals were available two days per week at multiple times to accommodate working families. At the designated times, students, parents, or guardians could drive up and receive the prepackaged meals from Child Nutrition Department staff. Staff placed both individually bagged daily meals per student in one bag, enabling parents to collect breakfasts and lunches for two days at the same time. Meals were prepared and bagged in an assembly-line process in the district kitchens and transported to the curbside pickup

FIGURE 1–3
PERCENTAGE OF ALDINE ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING
ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
AUGUST 2020 TO JANUARY 2021



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

locations in batches. The meals included foods that did not require refrigeration, and the district provided reheating instructions. Aldine ISD also distributed bundles for weekend meals after implementing SSO in October 2020. The district estimates that it distributed approximately 55,000 weekend meals per week.

When some students resumed on-campus learning at the end of September 2020, the Child Nutrition Department began offering meals on campus and gradually reduced the number of curbside meal distribution locations to 13. The district also implemented SSO to provide free breakfast, lunch, and weekend meals to all students and children age 18 or younger in the community. The district electronically recorded the number of meals served in accordance with SSO.

To help promote the safety of students and staff, Aldine ISD modified several aspects of cafeteria meal service for on-campus students. The district previously had served all grades breakfast in the cafeteria, but it began serving breakfast from carts in different locations on campuses, including classrooms, during school year 2020–21. The Child Nutrition Department also reduced the number of menu options offered to students due to food shortages and to streamline production of meals. During previous school years, students could serve themselves certain foods, select utensils, and

enter their district identification (ID) numbers or scan ID badges at the cashier stations to pay for meals. During school year 2020–21, students attending class in person received prepackaged meals that contained all food and utensils. Child Nutrition Department staff placed beverages, condiments, and food items behind protective partitions, and distributed them to students on request. Students were not required to enter account numbers or exchange money for food. As a result of implementing SSO, all meals were free to students, and staff tallied meals served. To accommodate social distancing during meal service, the district decreased the number of students in serving lines and placed floor markers to indicate where students should stand. Staff placed sanitizer stations in all cafeterias, and students were required to wear masks when not eating. Cafeteria staff directed students to specific seating areas and sanitized tables as soon as groups of students left.

According to staff, the Child Nutrition Department faced several challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most significant difficulties was providing meals to remote-learning students, particularly those whose families lacked transportation to school for meal pickup.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

Overall, the Child Nutrition Department's operational outcomes changed significantly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. First, the average daily participation (ADP) rate for the district's child nutrition programs decreased substantially during school year 2020–21. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. Aldine ISD's lunch ADP decreased by 71.7 percent during the first six months of school year 2020–21 compared to the first six months of school year 2019–20. Similarly, the district's breakfast ADP decreased by 67.0 percent during school year 2020–21. On average, the district served 35,146 fewer lunches and 20,747 fewer breakfasts each day during school year 2020–21 than were served during school year 2019–20.

Aldine ISD's lunch ADP for school year 2020–21 followed the trend of students returning to campuses. Lunch ADP was lowest in August 2020, during which all district students were engaged in remote learning. Participation increased by 222.5 percent from August 2020 to October 2020, which coincided with an increase in the number of on-campus students from 0.0 percent to 44.0 percent during this period. Lunch ADP peaked at 21,338 in November 2020, after the district implemented SSO and more students returned to

campus. Participation decreased during December 2020 and January 2021, even as the number of students returning to campuses increased to 51.0 percent at the end of January. As of March 2021, Aldine ISD's monthly lunch ADP during school year 2020–21 was significantly less than every month of school year 2019–20.

Figure 1–4 shows Aldine ISD's lunch ADP by month for the first six months of school year 2020–21 compared to the same period during school year 2019–20.

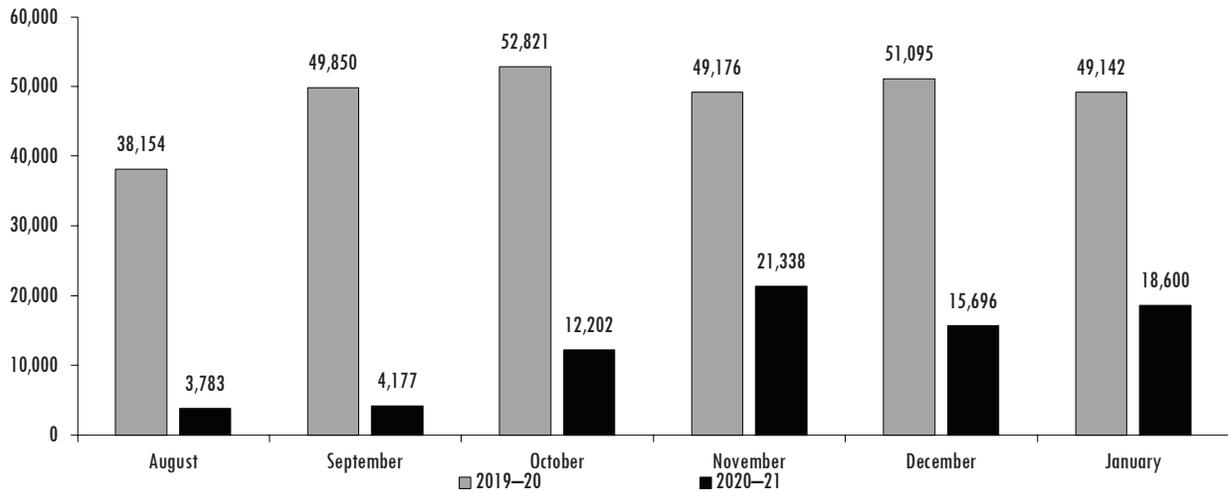
Aldine ISD's breakfast ADP during school year 2020–21 followed a similar trend to its lunch ADP. Breakfast ADP increased as more students returned to campus, but the increase was smaller compared to lunch ADP. Breakfast ADP increased from 3,783 in August 2020 to 15,902 in November 2020. However, breakfast ADP decreased after November 2020 to 12,068 in December 2020 and 13,212 in January 2021. This decrease occurred at the same time the number of on-campus students in the district increased to 51.0 percent. The largest decrease in breakfast ADP was in September 2020, during which the district served 27,207 fewer breakfasts on average each day than were served in September 2019. As of March 2021, monthly breakfast ADP during school year 2020–21 was significantly less than every month of school year 2019–20.

Figure 1–5 shows Aldine ISD's breakfast ADP by month for the first six months of school year 2020–21 compared to the same period during school year 2019–20.

Aldine ISD staff reported that decreases in the district's ADP during school year 2020–21 were due to lower meal participation by both on-campus and remote-learning students. As more students transitioned from remote to on-campus learning, meal participation increased. District staff noted that the increase in participation from September 2020 to November 2020 was attributed to the implementation of SSO in October. However, staff said they were not certain why ADP decreased again in December 2020 and January 2021.

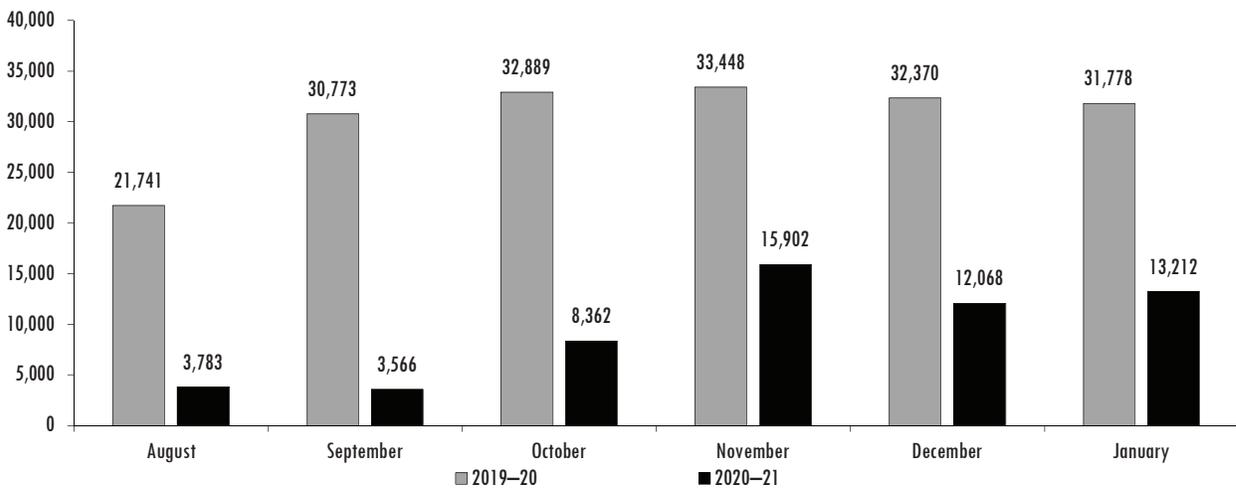
The district also served fewer total meals during school year 2020–21. From August 2020 to January 2021, the Child Nutrition Department served 3,012,852 meals, including 1,734,264 lunches, 1,277,078 breakfasts, and 1,510 snacks. This amount is a 63.3 percent decrease in total meals served compared to the same six-month period during school year 2019–20. **Figure 1–6** shows the total number of meals served during school year 2020–21 compared to those served within the same period during school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 1-4
ALDINE ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Aldine ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FIGURE 1-5
ALDINE ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Aldine ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

Along with the decrease in meal participation, district staff reported that the decrease in total meals also may be connected to the 5.8 percent decrease in overall student enrollment for school year 2020-21. A total of 87.9 percent of students enrolled in Aldine ISD are

eligible for free and reduced-price meals. The 63.3 percent decrease in meal production may indicate that many low-income students who rely on school breakfast and lunch as their primary sources of nutrition did not receive these meals.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The decrease in meals served resulted in a corresponding decrease in the total federal reimbursement the district received. As of January 2021, the district reported receiving \$9.1 million in meal reimbursements for school year 2020–21. This amount is \$13.6 million less than it received during the same period during school year 2019–20, a 60.0 percent decrease in reimbursement funds. **Figure 1–7** shows a comparison of meal reimbursements for breakfast and lunch from August to January for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

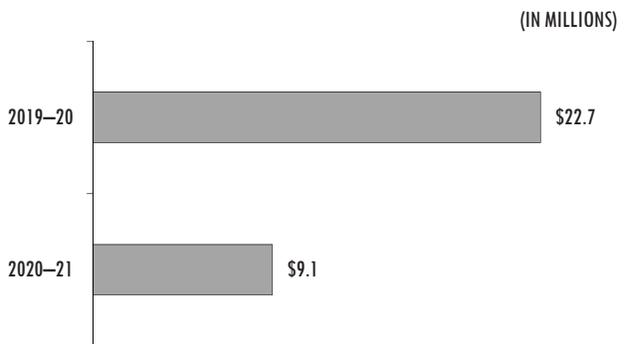
District staff reported that the Child Nutrition Department had a net loss of approximately \$6.0 million for school year 2019–20. The district had sufficient operating fund balance reserves to cover the loss. It is unknown if the district’s expenditures will exceed revenue for school year 2020–21, but the substantial decrease in reimbursements and increased expenditures for paper goods to provide safer curbside and cafeteria meals are likely to result in a financial loss for school year 2020–21.

**FIGURE 1–6
ALDINE ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED
FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21**

MEAL	2019–20	2020–21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	5,049,088	1,734,264	(65.7%)
Breakfasts	3,127,366	1,277,078	(59.2%)
Snacks	25,032	1,510	(94.0%)
Total	8,201,486	3,012,852	(63.3%)

NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Aldine ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

**FIGURE 1–7
ALDINE ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY,
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21**



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Aldine ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

2. CARTHAGE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Carthage Independent School District (ISD) is located in Carthage, which is 40 miles southeast of Longview and approximately 25 miles west of the Louisiana state line. The district serves areas of Panola County. Carthage ISD's student enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 2,643 students. Carthage ISD has five campuses, Carthage Primary School, Libby Elementary School, Baker-Koonce Intermediate School, Carthage Junior High School, and Carthage High School. **Figure 2–1** shows Carthage ISD's student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 58.8 percent of Carthage ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, less than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 8.8 percent of students as English Learners, less than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 42.4 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was less than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Carthage ISD's wealth per student, as determined by the district's weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$891,159 during school year 2019–20. This amount is greater than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Carthage ISD was subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

For the past five years, Carthage ISD's Food Services Department has contracted with a food service management company (FSMC) that provides a director to manage the department. The district participates in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and operates five cafeterias and four kitchens. Meals served at Carthage Primary School are prepared at the Libby Elementary School kitchen.

Carthage ISD's Food Services Department has 19 staff, including the food services director and food services manager. The department also has four food services supervisors (one per kitchen), three food services leads, and 10 food services staff. The food services manager is the only district employee in the Food Services Department;

FIGURE 2–1
CARTHAGE ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	20.1%	12.6%
Hispanic	20.3%	52.8%
White	56.3%	27.0%
American Indian	0.1%	0.4%
Asian	0.5%	4.6%
Two or More Races	2.6%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	58.8%	60.3%
English Learners	8.8%	20.3%
At Risk	42.4%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 2–2
CARTHAGE ISD FOOD SERVICES
DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21



SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Carthage ISD, March 2021.

all other department staff are FSMC employees. **Figure 2–2** shows the organization of Carthage ISD's Food Services Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

The district began school year 2020–21 as scheduled August 12, 2020. Carthage ISD's student enrollment decreased by 2.0 percent from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

At the beginning of school year 2020–21, the district provided students an option to receive on-campus or remote instruction, and 17.0 percent of students chose to attend classes remotely. However, the district required all students to return to on-campus classes eight weeks after the beginning of the school year. At the time of the Legislative Budget Board’s School Performance Review Team’s review in March 2021, no students were receiving remote-only instruction. Only students who tested positive for COVID-19 could receive remote instruction during their 14-day quarantine. After the quarantine period, students were required to return to on-campus instruction.

Figure 2–3 shows the percentage of Carthage ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

Carthage ISD continued serving students through the NSLP and SBP programs during school year 2020–21, but the district opted in November 2020 to operate these federally reimbursed food programs through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). SSO is a federal meal program that authorizes districts participating in the NSLP or SBP to provide meals to children in low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) authorized districts to operate SSO during spring 2020 and school year 2020–21. Districts operating the SSO provide free meals to any child age 18 or younger regardless of whether the child is enrolled in the district. Staff said the district implemented SSO to continue providing free meals to all students.

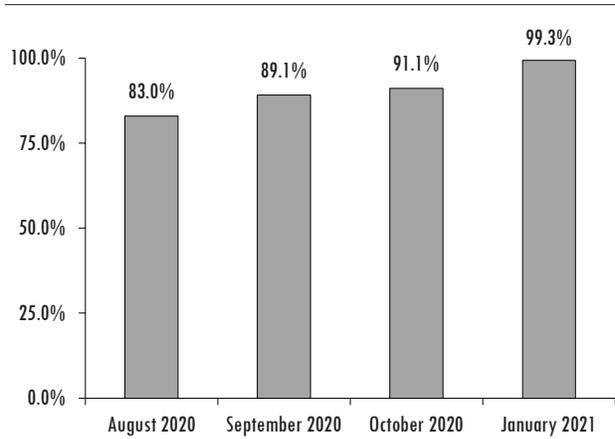
To help continue to operate its child nutrition programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the district also applied for and received the following USDA waivers for school year 2020–21 (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver; and
- Meal Pattern Waiver.

MEAL PREPARATION

Carthage ISD’s meal preparation process was not affected significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**FIGURE 2–3
PERCENTAGE OF CARTHAGE ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
AUGUST 2020 TO JANUARY 2021**



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

The district reported that it added several safety procedures during school year 2020–21. Food Services Department staff were required to wear masks when entering the food service area and preparing and serving food. Other sanitation precautions, such as disinfecting surfaces in the kitchen area, are conducted consistently throughout the day, and increased distances between staff work areas in the kitchen were implemented in response to the pandemic.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

Staff reported that staffing has been a significant challenge for Carthage ISD’s Food Services Department during school year 2020–21. Three department staff from school year 2019–20 did not return for school year 2020–21 due to concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, and the department did not refill these positions. The Food Services Department operated with a 13.6 percent reduction in staff for school year 2020–21. Additionally, many food services staff had been absent throughout the school year either because they experienced COVID-19 symptoms, or they had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. These occurrences required staff to quarantine for up to 14 days. No food services staff tested positive for COVID-19, but staff reported that, due to the unpredictability of staff absences, the department often had

difficulty determining how many staff would be available to work each day.

Before school year 2020–21, the Food Services Department maintained a group of substitutes for absent staff. However, the district was unable to retain these substitute staff during school year 2020–21 due to concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic. The department had to reallocate staff from other campuses to fill in for absent staff. According to department staff, this practice strained food services staff and required the department to operate with fewer staff who were required to perform more work than during previous school years.

At the beginning of school year 2020–21, the district provided a training session that discussed the COVID-19 pandemic and the precautions that the district would implement for the safety of students and staff. The training emphasized safety, sanitation, and the spacing of work areas. The district also provided face coverings and sanitation materials for food service staff. The district manages its own custodial service, and custodians sanitize the cafeterias between meal periods. The district added cafeteria monitors, such as principals and aides, who guide students in serving lines to maintain social distancing. Additionally, the district installed protective partitions at the cashiers' stations.

Upon entering the kitchen, each staff was required to wear a mask, and food service leads checked each staff's temperature. As of March 2021, no food service staff had reported to work with symptoms. The department provided staff with sanitizing materials and disinfecting solution to clean work areas. According to the food services director, the district nurse can test staff for COVID-19 to help limit the spread of the virus.

PURCHASING

Staff reported that the Food Services Department was limited in the items it could serve during school year 2020–21. The district, due to safety concerns, prepared more individually wrapped and prepackaged meals than during previous school years. The district also experienced a shortage of items supplied by vendors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including breakfast menu items and prepackaged sandwiches. These purchasing concerns resulted in Carthage ISD providing a limited menu of items during school year 2020–21. The district also made additional purchases of paper goods, such as carryout bags and disposable trays, to accommodate students participating

in curbside meal pickup and to promote the health of students eating in cafeterias. This modified practice resulted in an increase in expenditures.

MEAL DELIVERY

To accommodate students receiving remote and on-campus instruction, Carthage ISD's meal delivery process changed significantly during school year 2020–21. For the first eight weeks of the school year, Carthage ISD provided meals to remote-learning students through a curbside distribution process. Food services staff prepared the same meals for remote-learning students as those served in the cafeterias. Staff packaged meals prepared for remote learners in bags, and students or parents collected the bags curbside at Libby Elementary School. The number of meals the department prepared each day was based on estimates of the number of people who picked up meals the previous day. In October 2020, the district required all students to return to on-campus classes, and the Food Services Department discontinued offering curbside distribution.

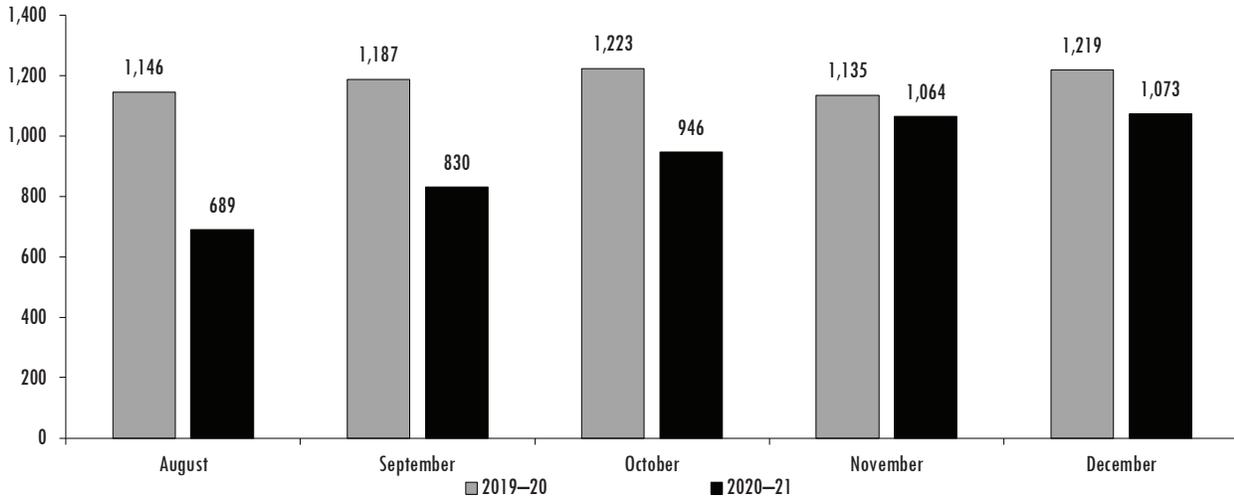
To protect the health of students and staff, Carthage ISD modified several aspects of cafeteria meal service for students attending class in person. Before school year 2020–21, the district served breakfast in the classroom only at Libby Elementary School. However, breakfast service in the classroom expanded to include Carthage Primary School and Baker-Koonce Intermediate School at the beginning of school year 2020–21. The district continued to operate the same number of cafeterias and kitchens.

All lunches were served in the cafeteria, and the district did not change meal serving times nor limit the number of students who could be in the cafeteria. The district maintained the same serving line structure from previous school years, but district staff guided students to maintain social distancing. The district also did not alter seating arrangements and placed no social distancing requirements for students eating in the cafeteria.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

The average daily participation (ADP) rate for the district's child nutrition programs decreased for school year 2020–21. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. Carthage ISD's lunch ADP decreased by 23.0 percent during the first five months of school year 2020–21 compared to the first five months of school year 2019–20. However, the district's breakfast ADP increased by

FIGURE 2-4
CARTHAGE ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO DECEMBER, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Carthage ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

12.2 percent during school year 2020-21 compared to school year 2019-20. On average, the district served 273 fewer lunches and 133 more breakfasts each day during school year 2020-21 than during school year 2019-20.

During school year 2020-21, Carthage ISD’s ADP rates for lunch and breakfast were lowest in August 2020 and increased as remote-learning students returned to campus. Lunch ADP increased every month, resulting in a 55.7 percent increase from August 2020 to December 2020. The increase in lunches served during that five-month period coincides with the increase in the number of students receiving on-campus instruction. However, total lunch ADP was lower for every month during school year 2020-21 compared to school year 2019-20. The largest decrease in lunch ADP occurred in August 2020 when the district served 457 fewer lunches than in August 2019, which represented a 39.9 percent decrease. Lunch ADP increased slightly as the district implemented SSO in November 2020 and as more students returned to campuses.

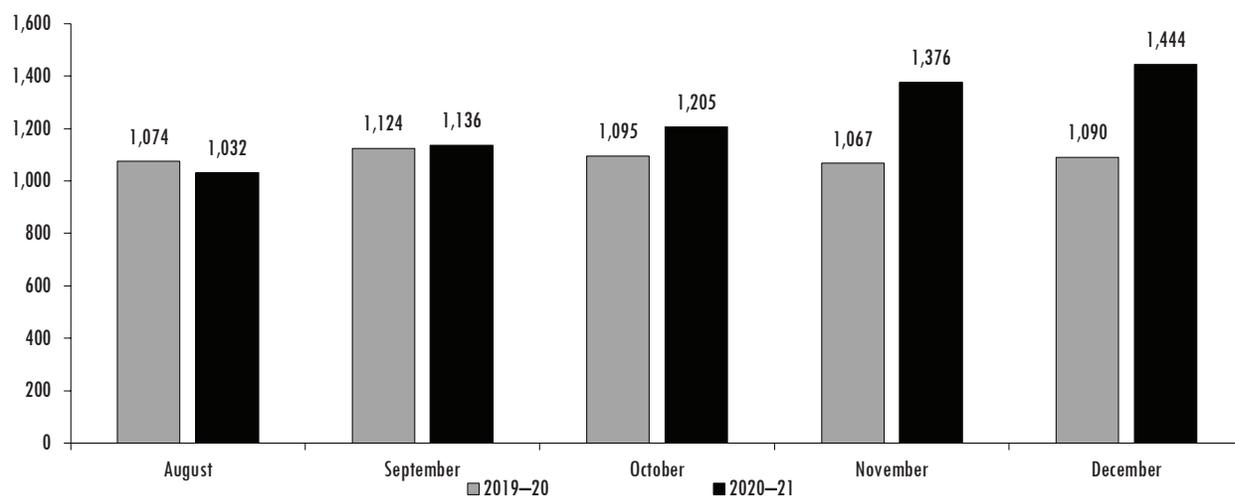
Figure 2-4 shows Carthage ISD’s lunch ADP by month for the first five months of school year 2020-21 compared to the same period during school year 2019-20.

Staff attributed the increase in breakfast ADP during school year 2020-21 to the district serving breakfast in the classroom at two additional campuses, Carthage Primary School and Baker-Koonce Intermediate School. Breakfast ADP increased each month of school year 2020-21 and overall by 39.9 percent from August 2020 to December 2020. This increase in breakfast ADP coincided with an increase in students returning to campus. The increase in breakfast ADP continued when the district implemented SSO in November 2020. With the exception of August, total breakfast ADP was greater for each month during school year 2020-21 compared to school year 2019-20.

Figure 2-5 shows Carthage ISD’s breakfast ADP by month for the five-month period from August to December for school year 2020-21 compared to the same period for school year 2019-20.

Despite the increase in breakfast participation, the total number of meals the district served decreased during school year 2020-21. From August 2020 to January 2021, the Carthage ISD Food Services Department served 179,134 meals, including 75,887 lunches, 101,746 breakfasts, and 1,501 snacks. This amount is a 4.6 percent decrease in total meals served from school year 2019-20.

FIGURE 2-5
CARTHAGE ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO DECEMBER, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Carthage ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

This decrease primarily was a result of a 21.1 percent decrease in total lunches served during school year 2020-21. Carthage ISD served 14.9 percent more breakfasts during the first five months of 2020-21 than during the same period of school year 2019-20. Although the district served fewer total meals during school year 2020-21, Carthage ISD's ADP for both breakfast and lunch increased after the district implemented SSO in November 2020. As a result, the district served more total meals during November and December of school year 2020-21 than during the same months of school year 2019-20. **Figure 2-6** shows the total number of meals served during school year 2020-21 compared to those served during school year 2019-20.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Increased operating costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted Carthage ISD's Food Services Department budget during school year 2020-21, even as the amount of meal reimbursements the district received increased. As of December 2020, the district reported receiving \$432,675 in meal reimbursements for school year 2020-21. This amount is \$7,309 more than the district received for the same period during school year 2019-20, representing a 1.7 percent increase. **Figure 2-7** shows Carthage ISD's meal reimbursements for school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

FIGURE 2-6
CARTHAGE ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED
FROM AUGUST TO DECEMBER
SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 TO 2020-21

MEAL	2019-20	2020-21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	96,153	75,887	(21.1%)
Breakfasts	88,519	101,746	14.9%
Snacks	3,137	1,501	(52.2%)
Total	187,809	179,134	(4.6%)

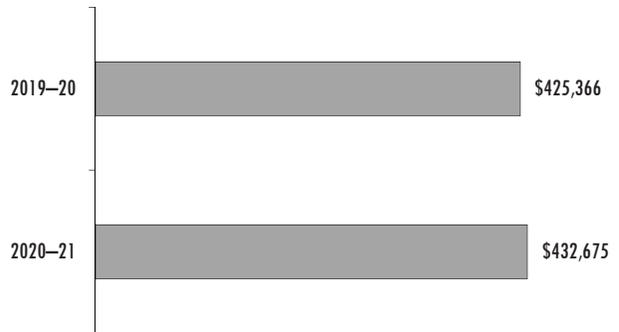
NOTE: December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Carthage ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

With the implementation of SSO service in November 2020, the district served more total meals during November and December of school year 2020-21 than during the same period of school year 2019-20. This service resulted in the district receiving \$42,292 more in reimbursements for November 2020 and December 2020 than for the same two months of 2019. Carthage ISD's meal reimbursements increased for school year 2020-21, while the total meals the district served decreased. This increase was due to higher reimbursement rates for meals during school year 2020-21 compared to school year 2019-20. See **Appendix A** for details on the increase in meal reimbursement rates.

However, even with the increase in reimbursements, Carthage ISD staff reported that the Food Services Department expects to record a financial loss for school year 2020–21. The district anticipates that the slight increase in school year 2020–21 revenue will be less than the additional expenditures for paper and disposable goods purchased to implement meal-service precautions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIGURE 2–7
CARTHAGE ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS FROM
AUGUST TO DECEMBER
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21



NOTE: December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Carthage ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

3. CHILTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Chilton Independent School District (ISD) is located in Falls County and serves the town of Chilton, approximately 20 miles south of Waco. Chilton ISD’s student enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 519 students. Chilton ISD has one campus. **Figure 3–1** shows Chilton ISD’s student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 81.9 percent of Chilton ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, more than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 21.4 percent of students as English Learners, greater than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 68.7 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was more than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Chilton ISD’s wealth per student, as determined by the district’s weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$83,521 during school year 2019–20. This amount is less than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Chilton ISD was not subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is not considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, Chilton ISD’s Food Service Department used a self-management model and operated without assistance from an outside entity. The district operates one kitchen and one cafeteria. It participates in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and provides breakfast in the classroom for students in prekindergarten to grade five. The district also participates in the federal Community Eligibility Provision, a meal service option that enables schools in low-income areas to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. In addition, Chilton ISD participates in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program, enabling the district to provide evening meals to at-risk students.

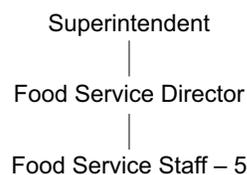
Chilton ISD’s Food Service Department has six staff, including the food service director and five food service staff. All food service positions are full time except for one part-

**FIGURE 3–1
CHILTON ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20**

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	17.5%	12.6%
Hispanic	62.6%	52.8%
White	15.8%	27.0%
American Indian	0.2%	0.4%
Asian	0.2%	4.6%
Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.2%
Two or More Races	3.5%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	81.9%	60.3%
English Learners	21.4%	20.3%
At Risk	68.7%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

**FIGURE 3–2
CHILTON ISD FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT
ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21**



SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Chilton ISD, March 2021.

time staff. **Figure 3–2** shows the organization of Chilton ISD’s Food Service Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Chilton ISD began school year 2020–21 as scheduled August 31, 2020. The district’s student enrollment decreased by 18 students, or 3.4 percent, from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

At the beginning of school year 2020–21, students were given the option to receive on-campus or remote instruction. As of the first week of school, 94.1 percent of students opted for on-campus instruction. This number decreased

slightly as the year progressed and, as of January 2021, 89.5 percent of students were attending on-campus classes. Chilton ISD changed to remote learning for all students from October 12 to 16, 2020, due to a COVID-19 outbreak within the district. **Figure 3–3** shows the percentage of Chilton ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

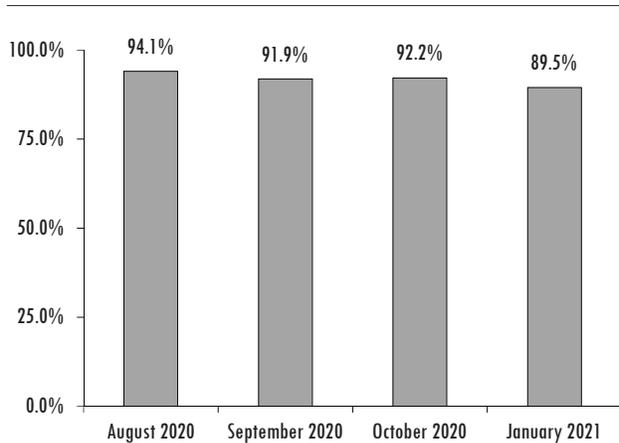
Chilton ISD began school year 2019–20 serving students through the NSLP and SBP programs. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district opted to operate these federally reimbursed food programs through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) in March 2020. SSO is a federal meal program that enables districts participating in the NSLP or SBP to provide meals to children in low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods. In response to the pandemic, USDA authorized districts to operate SSO during spring 2020 and school year 2020–21. Districts operating the SSO provide free meals to any child age 18 or younger regardless of whether the child is enrolled in the district. Staff reported that the district implemented SSO to continue providing free meals to all students.

Chilton ISD’s Food Service Department operated the SSO program from March 2020 to August 2020 and then resumed the standard operations of NSLP and SBP at the beginning of school year 2020–21. During previous school years, students in all grades ate breakfast in the cafeteria. During school year 2020–21, the district provided breakfast in the classroom for students in prekindergarten to grade five. Students in grades six to 12 carried disposable trays from the cafeteria to their classrooms for breakfast.

To operate its child nutrition programs during the COVID-19 pandemic effectively, the district applied for and received the following USDA waivers for school year 2020–21 (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

- Meal Pattern Waiver;
- Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools Waiver;
- Meal Times Waiver;
- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver; and
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-Up Waiver.

FIGURE 3–3
PERCENTAGE OF CHILTON ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
AUGUST 2020 TO JANUARY 2021



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

To promote safety, the department served most meal items individually wrapped during school year 2020–21. This change also resulted in the department providing fewer menu items than during previous school years.

The district’s decision to serve most food items individually wrapped also resulted in staff having less time to prepare meals. As a result, staff reported that the Food Service Department served more precooked items instead of preparing food from scratch as it had during previous school years.

An additional process the district implemented during school year 2020–21 was the requirement for Food Service Department staff to wear masks and change gloves throughout the day. For reasons unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district’s kitchen already had been configured so that staff were not working closely together; therefore, no changes were necessary to provide safe distancing among kitchen staff.

Staff said that one of the primary challenges for the Food Service Department during school year 2020–21 was managing staff time. Staff performed more tasks than during previous school years within the same amount of time. Some of the additional tasks included enhanced cleaning and sanitizing procedures and the time required to package food

items. One result of using additional paper and disposable products is that staff had to empty waste containers more often than during previous school years.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

Chilton ISD's Food Service Department employed the same number of staff during school years 2019–20 and 2020–21. The food service director trained staff regarding the implementation of new safety procedures based on information received from the Texas Department of Agriculture. Additional safety procedures implemented during school year 2020–21 included temperature checks for staff before beginning their work shifts.

The district purchased a sanitizing machine for disinfecting kitchen items and cafeteria surfaces, placed hand sanitizers for students in the cafeteria, and installed air purifiers in the cafeteria. A new safety precaution for school year 2020–21 required food service staff, teachers, and aides to disinfect all surfaces, including tables and chairs, after each group of students left the cafeteria. Previously, the department used diluted bleach for cleaning surfaces, but it used a different sanitizing solution during school year 2020–21 that works better to stop the spread of COVID-19.

The district also limited cafeteria capacity by having students in grades three to five pick up their lunches in the cafeteria and eat their meals in the classrooms. Additional safety procedures required students and staff in serving lines to wear masks and socially distance.

PURCHASING

Supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in shortages of some food and supplies for Chilton ISD. Throughout school year 2020–21, some of the district's supply vendors were unable to provide various items, which required the department to search for available items from other vendors. These food shortages continued into spring 2021. In response to the pandemic, the Food Service Department purchased additional items during school year 2020–21 that previously were not part of the department's expenditures. These items included disposable trays and paper products, extra gloves for staff use, and additional cleaning and disinfecting products. This additional purchasing increased expenses for the district.

MEAL DELIVERY

To accommodate on-campus students and students receiving remote instruction, Chilton ISD altered

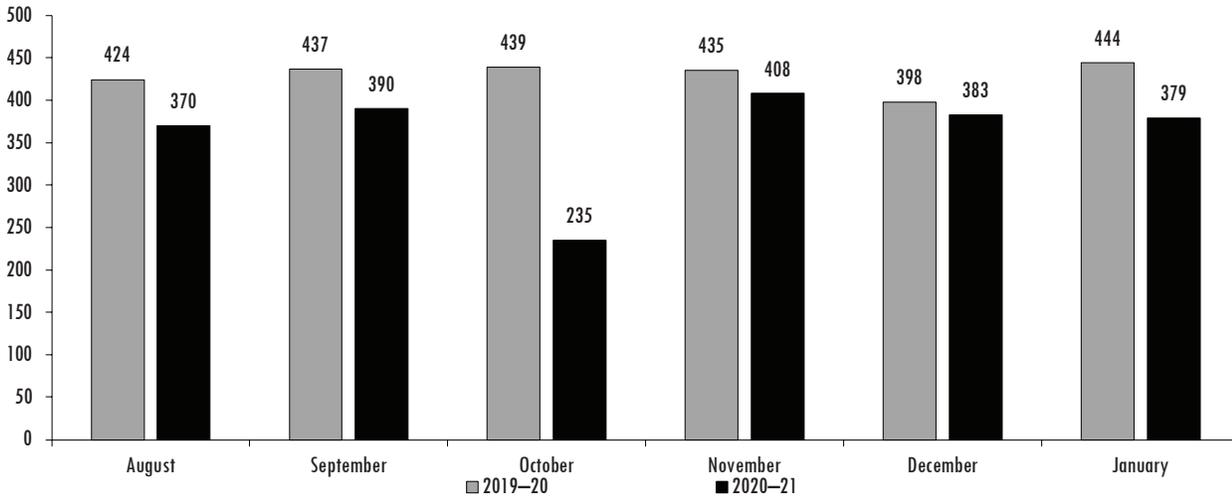
various aspects of meal service during school year 2020–21. The district offered different meal items each day but served a limited variety of foods. On-campus and remote-learning students received the same meal item options each day.

At the beginning of school year 2020–21, the district reported approximately 31 students attending school remotely. Chilton ISD notified all parents that meals were available for collection on campus for remote-learning students. Meals for remote-learning students were prepared only when parents or students informed food service department staff that they would pick up meals. The district provided remote-learning students breakfasts and lunches. Staff reported that the department had served no more than 10 curbside meals a day since the beginning of the school year. When students or parents arrived at the campus, they called to inform staff, who carried out their meals. Breakfasts and lunches were available for pickup during the same periods that these meals were served to on-campus students.

Staff reported that the number of remote-learning students decreased throughout the school year. At the time of the Legislative Budget Board's School Performance Review Team's review in March 2021, approximately five or six students attended classes remotely. Remote-learning students were offered meals for collection at that time, but staff said that very few continued to request meals. For the week of October 12 to 16, 2020, the district operated a grab-and-go distribution system for all students to pick up items for breakfast and lunch due to a COVID-19 outbreak. The change resulted in an overall decrease in participation for both breakfast and lunch during October.

For students attending class on campus, the district changed from serving breakfast in the cafeteria to serving it in the classroom for students in prekindergarten to grade five. Students in grades six to 12 carried breakfast meals on disposable trays from the cafeteria to the classroom to eat. Lunch service times were extended during school year 2020–21, from 1.5 hours to 2.0 hours to promote social distancing among students. Lunch times started at 10:00 AM for elementary school grades, and junior high school and high school students began lunch at noon. Students in grades three to five were served lunch on disposable trays and carried their meals to their classrooms to help conserve time and limit the number of students in the cafeteria. The district also placed markers on the cafeteria floor to promote social distancing for students standing in serving lines.

FIGURE 3-4
CHILTON ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Chilton ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

The average daily participation (ADP) rate for the district’s child nutrition programs decreased during school year 2020-21. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. Chilton ISD’s lunch ADP during the first six months of school year 2020-21 decreased by 18.6 percent from the same period of school year 2019-20. Similarly, breakfast ADP decreased by 3.2 percent during school year 2020-21. On average, the district served 80 fewer lunches and seven fewer breakfasts each day during school year 2020-21 than during school year 2019-20.

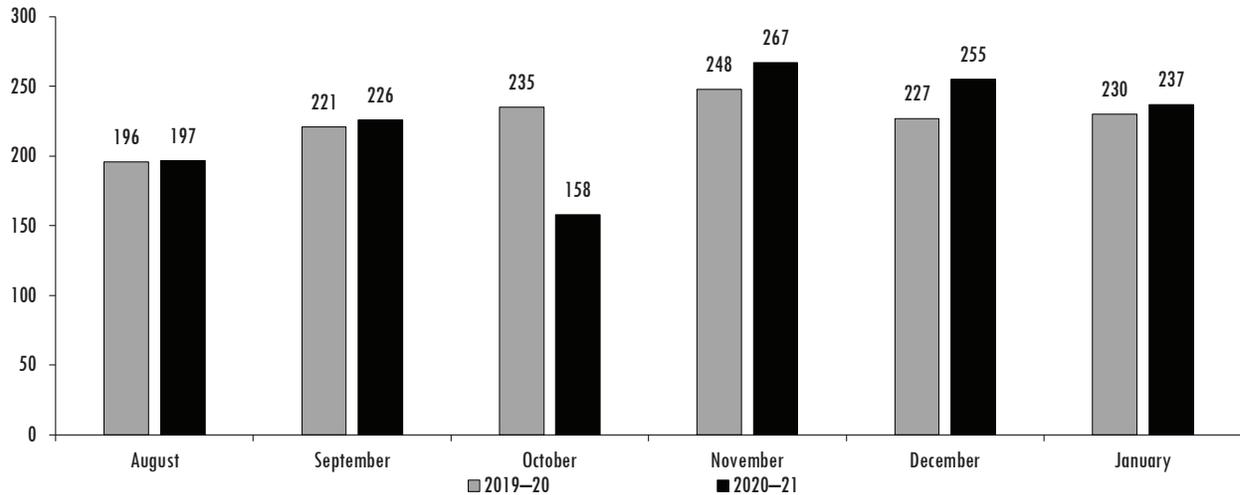
During school year 2020-21, Chilton ISD’s ADP for both lunch and breakfast was lowest in October 2020 when the district changed to remote-only instruction for one week. Otherwise, ADP increased as more students returned to on-campus instruction, although ADP decreased slightly in November 2020 and December 2020. This small decrease coincided with a slight increase in the number of remote-learning students during this period. However, Chilton ISD’s lunch ADP was lower for each of the first six months of school year 2020-21 compared to the same period during school year 2019-20. **Figure 3-4** shows Chilton ISD’s lunch ADP by month for the first six months of

school year 2020-21 compared to the same period during school year 2019-20.

With the exception of October 2020, when all students received remote instruction for one week, average monthly breakfast ADP during school year 2020-21 matched or exceeded that of school year 2019-20. During school year 2020-21, the district began serving breakfast in the classroom for all prekindergarten and elementary school students to grade five. Staff attributed the increase in breakfast ADP to the implementation of serving breakfast in the classroom. **Figure 3-5** shows Chilton ISD’s breakfast participation rates for the first six months of school year 2019-20 compared to the same period during school year 2020-21.

Additionally, the district served fewer total meals during school year 2020-21. From August 2020 to January 2021, the Chilton ISD Food Service Department served 51,699 meals, including 31,663 lunches and 20,036 breakfasts. This amount is a 21.5 percent decrease in total meals served compared to the same six-month period during school year 2019-20. **Figure 3-6** shows the total number of meals served during school year 2020-21 compared to school year 2019-20.

FIGURE 3-5
CHILTON ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Chilton ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

The decrease in total meals served from school years 2019-20 to 2020-21 is attributed primarily to the decrease in lunch participation and because of the district’s decision to not provide snacks during school year 2020-21. Staff also reported that, because the district packaged meals during school year 2020-21, many students said that they did not find the meal items appealing and chose not to participate. Additionally, due to the district providing remote-only instruction for one week in October 2020, the total number of meals served for both breakfast and lunch decreased significantly compared to the same period during the previous school year.

This significant decrease in meal production indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected the health and well-being of many Chilton ISD students and families negatively. Approximately 81.9 percent of students enrolled in Chilton ISD were eligible for free and reduced-price meals. The 21.5 percent decrease in meal production may mean that many low-income students who rely on school breakfast and lunch as their primary sources of nutrition did not receive these meals.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Decreased participation and increased operating costs have affected Chilton ISD’s Food Service Department budget negatively. The decrease in meals served resulted in a

FIGURE 3-6
CHILTON ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED
FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 TO 2020-21

MEAL	2019-20	2020-21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	41,466	31,663	(23.6%)
Breakfasts	22,078	20,036	(9.2%)
Snacks	2,304	0	(100.0%)
Total	65,848	51,699	(21.5%)

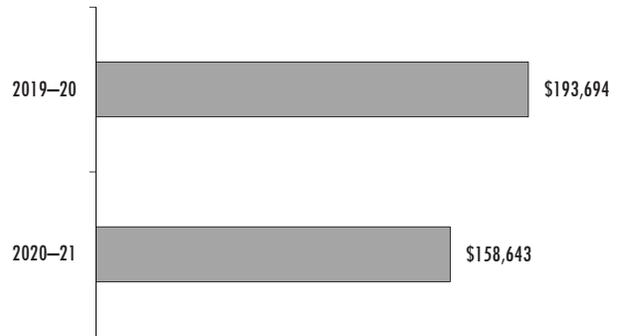
NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Chilton ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

corresponding decrease in the total reimbursement the district received. As of January 2021, the district reported receiving \$157,482 in meal reimbursements for school year 2020-21. This amount is \$36,212 less than the district received during the same period during school year 2019-20, an 18.7 percent decrease in reimbursement funds. **Figure 3-7** shows Chilton ISD’s total meal reimbursements for school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Despite conducting remote-only instruction for the last few months of school year 2019-20, Chilton ISD’s Food Service Department recorded a net operating profit for the

year. Staff reported that they could not determine whether the Food Service Department would record a financial loss for school year 2020–21. However, the district incurred increased expenses during school year 2020–21 related to purchasing additional paper goods for packaging items, and total reimbursements were less than for the previous school year.

FIGURE 3–7
CHILTON ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY,
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Chilton ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

4. DRISCOLL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Driscoll Independent School District (ISD) is located in Driscoll, approximately 30 miles west of Corpus Christi, and serves a portion of Nueces County. The district’s student enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 292 students. The district operates one campus that serves students in prekindergarten to grade eight. **Figure 4–1** shows Driscoll ISD’s student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 85.8 percent of Driscoll ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, greater than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 2.3 percent of students as English Learners, less than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 31.8 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was less than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Driscoll ISD’s wealth per student, as determined by the district’s weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$196,260 during school year 2019–20. This amount is less than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Driscoll ISD was not subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is not considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, Driscoll ISD used a self-management model and operated its Food Service Department without assistance from an outside entity. The district operates two cafeterias and one kitchen and participates in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Afterschool Snack Service.

Driscoll ISD serves free breakfast and lunch to all students in all grades through the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a meal service that enables campuses and districts in low-income areas to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications.

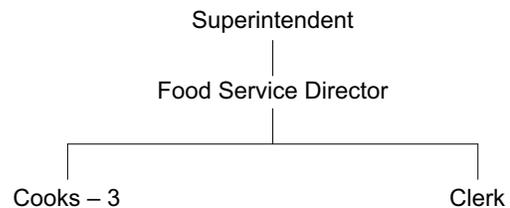
Driscoll ISD’s Food Service Department employs five full-time staff including the food service director, one clerk, and

FIGURE 4–1
DRISCOLL ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	0.7%	12.6%
Hispanic	89.7%	52.8%
White	8.6%	27.0%
Two or More Races	1.0%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	85.8%	60.3%
English Learners	2.3%	20.3%
At Risk	31.8%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 4–2
DRISCOLL ISD FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT
ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21



SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Driscoll ISD, March 2021.

three cooks. **Figure 4–2** shows the organization of Driscoll ISD’s Food Service Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Driscoll ISD began school year 2020–21 as scheduled July 29, 2020. In accordance with its designation by the Texas Education Agency as a district of innovation (see **Glossary**), Driscoll ISD has the discretion to start classes earlier than most Texas school districts. Driscoll ISD’s student enrollment decreased by 10 students, or 3.3 percent, from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

Driscoll ISD began school year 2020–21 with 100.0 percent of students receiving remote instruction. In September 2020, the district offered students the option of receiving instruction in person or remotely. By the end of

the month, 54.1 percent of students in the district attended on-campus classes. More students returned to campus as the school year progressed, and by the end of January 2021, 87.5 percent of students were attending on-campus classes. As of March 2021, Driscoll ISD reported 12 students and eight staff had tested positive for COVID-19 during school year 2020–21. **Figure 4–3** shows the percentage of Driscoll ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

During school year 2020–21, Driscoll ISD continued to serve students through the CEP and offer students the NSLP, SBP, Afterschool Snack Service, and the USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. During previous school years, Driscoll ISD operated one kitchen and one cafeteria. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district opened an additional cafeteria during school year 2020–21 to enable social distancing during meals. The district also received the following USDA waivers for school year 2020–21 to gain flexibility in adapting its operations (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

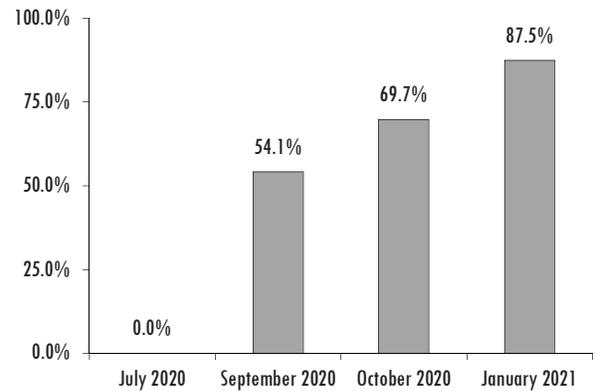
- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver; and
- Meal Times Waiver.

MEAL PREPARATION

Safety protocols in the kitchen and the decision to prepackage meals had significant effects on the department's meal preparation processes during school year 2020–21. The district established designated areas for staff to prepare food and maintain social distancing. Social distancing in the kitchen increased the time required to prepare meals because staff could not use equipment at the same time, as they had in previous school years.

During school year 2020–21, the Food Service Department stopped providing food on the serving line and instead packaged all meals in carryout boxes. The department also purchased as many prepackaged food items as possible from its vendors. Staff reported that the extra steps required to prepack meals caused meal preparation time to be slower and more cumbersome.

FIGURE 4–3
PERCENTAGE OF DRISCOLL ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
JULY 2020 TO JANUARY 2021



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

The time and labor required to adapt the district's meal preparation and serving processes significantly affected the staffing of the Food Service Department during school year 2020–21. The department continued to employ the same number of food service staff as it had during school year 2019–20, but preparing and distributing prepackaged meals, particularly during the first several weeks of school when all students attended remotely, required food service staff to work more hours than before, increasing the department's labor costs. Although no new staff were hired, the district assigned staff from other departments to help package and distribute meals and to clean the cafeteria. The Food Service Department did not experience significant staff absences. District staff credited the lack of absences to food service workers maintaining positive attitudes, following district protocols, and keeping themselves and others safe inside and outside of work throughout the pandemic.

The district formed an emergency operations committee in spring 2020. The committee included representatives from every district department, including Food Service. As a result, the Food Service director remained informed of all procedural changes and trained department staff in person. In addition, the superintendent informed district staff of changing conditions through weekly districtwide video messages.

One of the protocols the committee established for school year 2020–21 was the daily requirement for all district staff and students to submit information through a computer or mobile phone application regarding their health and potential COVID-19 exposure. Food Service Department staff entered these data into the application and had their temperatures checked before beginning their work shifts. In addition to gloves, which food service staff are required to wear in the kitchen, staff were required to wear masks on campus at all times during school year 2020–21.

PURCHASING

The Driscoll ISD Food Service Department did not experience significant shortages of food or supplies due to the COVID-19 pandemic and made minor changes to its purchasing practices during school year 2020–21. The primary change was to order more prepackaged food items from vendors to reduce the risk of spreading the virus through food preparation by district staff. The district also ordered greater quantities of food than in previous years because it provided one type of entrée for each meal instead of offering a selection.

MEAL DELIVERY

To accommodate both on-campus students and students receiving remote instruction, Driscoll ISD altered various aspects of its meal service. The district delivered all meals through curbside meal service during the first several weeks of school year 2020–21 because all students received instruction remotely. The Food Service Department set up a remote distribution site at the district's single campus and provided lunch and the next day's breakfast meals bundled together for students and parents to pick up at a designated time. During July 2020 and August 2020, 100.0 percent of Driscoll ISD students received remote instruction. During these months, the Food Service Department served approximately 150 curbside meals a day. Staff reported that serving curbside meals required extra staff, and the district assigned staff from other departments to assist with distributing meals. Another challenge posed by curbside meal distribution was estimating how many meals to prepare each day, especially at the beginning of the year.

When the district transitioned back to on-campus instruction, the number of curbside meals decreased, and as of March 2021, few students received curbside meals. To return to serving meals in the cafeteria, the district implemented several operational protocols in response to

the COVID-19 pandemic, including breakfast service in the classroom for the first time for all grades. District staff reported that serving breakfast in the classroom was very successful, and that they likely would continue to use this service model in subsequent school years.

To provide more space for students and follow social distancing guidelines at lunch, the district temporarily reopened an unused cafeteria to serve meals in addition to its regular-use cafeteria. The district installed plastic partitions on the tables and marked seats to indicate where students should sit. Between each meal service, the district cleaned the tables and chairs and rotated the available seats to reduce contact between the arriving students and the departing students. The district set up hand-sanitizing stations, which students were required to use upon entering and leaving the cafeterias. Instead of operating serving lines, staff handed meals to students on trays as they entered the cafeteria or served seated students by grade level at the tables.

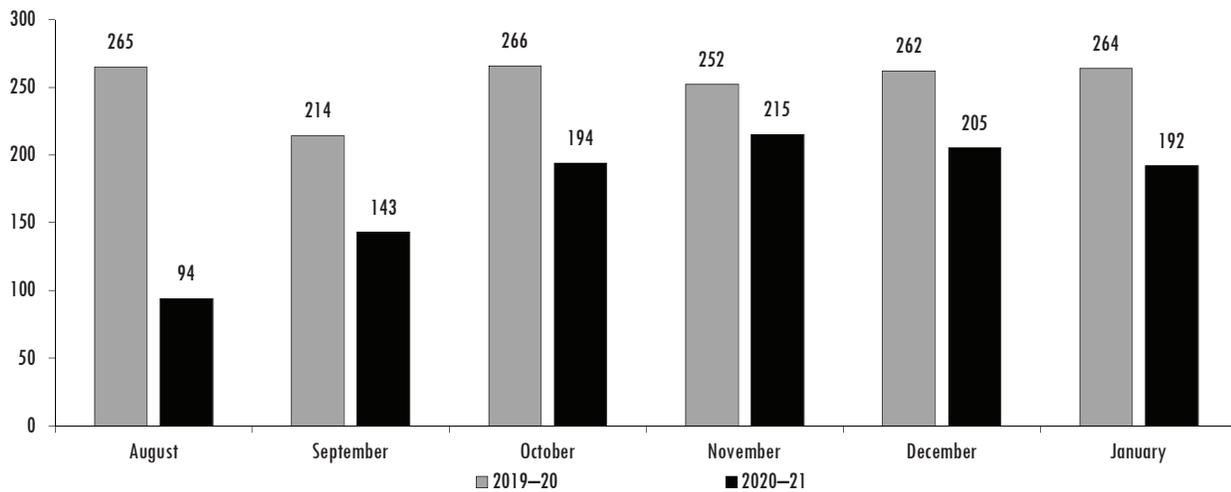
FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

The average daily participation (ADP) rate in the district's child nutrition programs decreased for school year 2020–21. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program.

A review of the district's ADP by month from school year 2019–20 indicated that nearly all students ate school lunch throughout the school year. However, during the first several weeks of school year 2020–21, lunch ADP decreased significantly compared to the same period during school year 2019–20. In August 2020, the district served an average of 94 lunches a day compared to the 265 lunches a day it served in August 2019. The district's breakfast ADP shows a similar steep decrease at the beginning of school year 2020–21, with an average of 95 schools breakfasts served daily in August 2020 compared to 170 breakfasts served daily in August 2019.

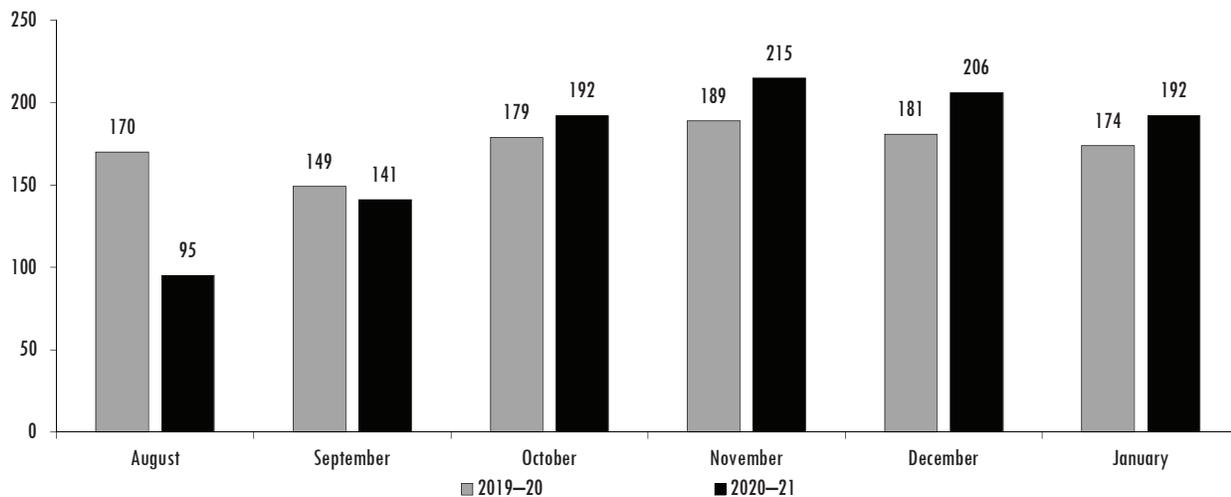
The district's decrease in breakfast and lunch ADP at the beginning of school year 2020–21 corresponds with the period in which the district provided 100.0 percent remote learning and provided meals via curbside pickup. A comparison of the lunch ADP by month shows that ADP increased as the district resumed on-campus instruction, totaling 192 students in January 2021. **Figure 4–4** shows Driscoll ISD's lunch ADP by month for the six-month period from August to January during school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

FIGURE 4-4
DRISCOLL ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Driscoll ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FIGURE 4-5
DRISCOLL ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Driscoll ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

Similarly, the district’s breakfast ADP increased from August 2020 to January 2021 after the district resumed on-campus instruction in September 2020. In addition, the implementation of breakfast in the classroom during school year 2020-21 appears to have increased breakfast ADP for

October, November, December, and January from the rates for these months during school year 2019-20. **Figure 4-5** shows Driscoll ISD’s breakfast ADP by month for the six-month period from August to January during school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Despite increasing ADP for most months in school year 2020–21, the decrease in ADP at the start of the year resulted in the district serving fewer total meals than it did during school year 2019–20. From August 2020 to January 2021, the Driscoll ISD Food Service Department served 34,465 meals, which includes 16,353 lunches, 16,294 breakfasts, and 1,818 snacks. This amount is a 36.0 percent decrease in total meals served compared to the same six-month period during school year 2019–20. **Figure 4–6** shows the total number of meals served during school year 2020–21 compared to those served during school year 2019–20.

Among students enrolled in Driscoll ISD, 85.8 percent are economically disadvantaged, and all students are eligible for free meals through the CEP. The 36.0 percent decrease in meal production may indicate that many low-income students who rely on school breakfast and lunch as their primary sources of nutrition did not receive these meals.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The decrease in meals served resulted in a corresponding decrease in the total federal reimbursement the district received. As of January 2021, the district reported receiving \$97,441 in meal reimbursements for school year 2020–21. This amount is \$44,524 less than it received during the same period during school year 2019–20, a 31.4 percent decrease in reimbursement funds. **Figure 4–7** shows Driscoll ISD’s total meal reimbursements for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

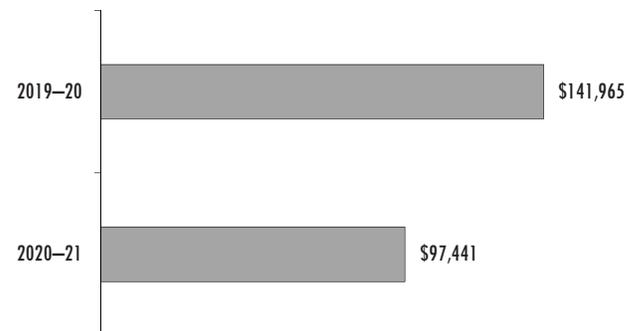
District staff reported that closing the campus for the last several months of school year 2019–20 caused Food Service Department expenditures to exceed revenues for the first time in several years. At the time of the Legislative Budget Board’s School Performance Review Team’s review, it is unknown whether the district’s expenditures will exceed revenue for school year 2020–21. However, district staff reported that the department likely will record a financial loss again for school year 2020–21 due to a substantial decrease in reimbursements, increased labor costs, and an increase in expenses for disposable supplies and trays used to serve prepackaged meals.

**FIGURE 4–6
DRISCOLL ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED
FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21**

MEAL	2019–20	2020–21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	26,747	16,353	(38.9%)
Breakfasts	18,183	16,294	(10.4%)
Snacks	8,881	1,818	(79.5%)
Total	53,811	34,465	(36.0%)

NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Driscoll ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

**FIGURE 4–7
DRISCOLL ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21**



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Driscoll ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

5. FANNINDEL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Fannindel Independent School District (ISD), located in northeast Texas, serves the communities of Pecan Gap and Ladonia. The district's student enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 158 students. The district operates two campuses, including one elementary school for kindergarten to grade five and one secondary school for grades six to 12. **Figure 5–1** shows Fannindel ISD's student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 84.6 percent of Fannindel ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, greater than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 4.9 percent of students as English Learners, less than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 54.5 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was greater than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Fannindel ISD's wealth per student, as determined by the district's weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$227,521 during school year 2019–20. This amount is less than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Fannindel ISD was not subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is not considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, Fannindel ISD's Food Services Department used a self-management model and operated its Food Services Department without assistance from an outside entity. The district operated a kitchen and a cafeteria at each of its campuses. Fannindel ISD participated in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The district's closed-campus policy prevents students from eating lunch off campus.

Fannindel ISD served free breakfast and lunch to all students at all campuses through the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP enables campuses and districts in low-income areas to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications.

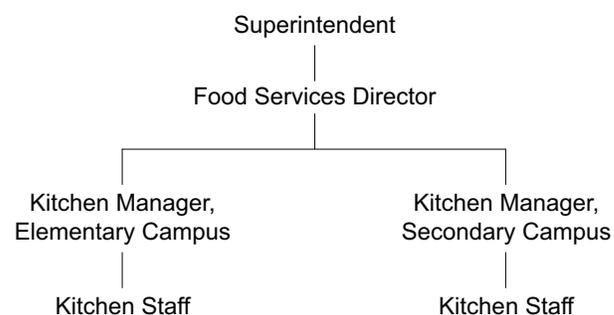
Fannindel ISD's Food Services Department consists of five staff, including a food services director who also serves as an office manager, two kitchen managers, and two kitchen staff. All staff are full-time positions, working 7.5 hours daily.

FIGURE 5–1
FANNINDEL ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	38.2%	12.6%
Hispanic	10.6%	52.8%
White	44.7%	27.0%
Asian	0.8%	4.6%
Two or More Races	5.7%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	84.6%	60.3%
English Learners	4.9%	20.3%
At Risk	54.5%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 5–2
FANNINDEL ISD FOOD SERVICES
DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21



SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Fannindel ISD, March 2021.

Figure 5–2 shows the organization of Fannindel ISD's Food Services Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Fannindel ISD began school year 2020–21 as scheduled August 26, 2020. The district's student enrollment increased for school year 2020–21 by 35 students, or 28.5 percent, from school year 2019–20.

Fannindel ISD provided students the option of receiving instruction on campus or remotely to begin school year 2020–21. **Figure 5–3** shows the percentage of Fannindel

ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

During school year 2020–21, Fannindel ISD continued to offer students the federal NSLP and SBP and continued to serve all students through the CEP. The district made no changes to the number of cafeterias or kitchens it operated. However, to continue operating its child nutrition programs effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic, the district received the following U.S. Department of Agriculture waivers for school year 2020–21 (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver;
- Meal Pattern Waiver; and
- Meal Times Waiver.

MEAL PREPARATION

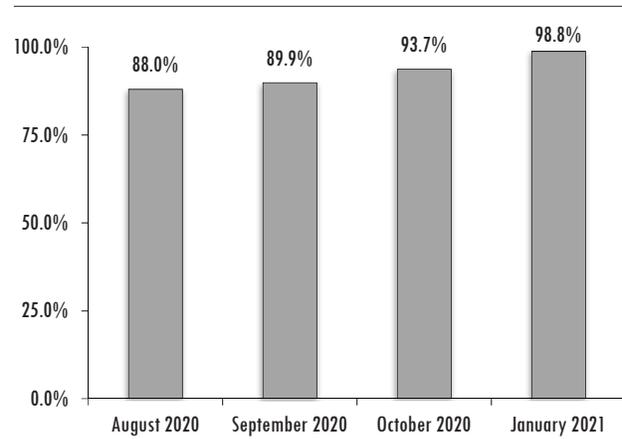
The only procedure added during school year 2020–21 was the requirement that Food Services Department staff wear masks when preparing and serving food. The department operated using previous sanitation procedures, including frequent hand washing, regular disinfecting of surfaces, and food safety temperature monitoring. District staff reported that the campus administration added sanitation stations in the campus hallways to increase student safety.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

Fannindel ISD's Food Services Department staffing numbers remained the same from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21. District staff did not report any issues staffing kitchens and said that the department experienced little disruption in staffing. One staff retired at the end of the 2019–20 school year, and the district reported that it did not have any difficulty hiring for the vacant staff position.

All district staff, including Food Services Department staff, were required to attend training administered by the district nurse to learn how to use personal protective equipment (PPE) properly. District staff stated that this was the only training required during school year 2020–21 that differed from the trainings all staff received during previous school

FIGURE 5–3
PERCENTAGE OF FANNINDEL ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
AUGUST 2020 TO JANUARY 2021



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

years. The Food Services Department also offered its staff the broader trainings on kitchen safety and sanitation that are required each year.

The Food Services Department established new protocols during school year 2020–21 to promote staff safety. Staff were required to perform a self-health assessment before arriving on campus for each work shift. The assessment included temperature checks and responses to several health-related questions to identify potential COVID-19 symptoms. Food services staff also were required to wear masks at all times while on campus.

PURCHASING

Fannindel ISD did not modify menu offerings during school year 2020–21. The district participated in the regional Education Service Center VIII (Region 8) food cooperative, which helped the district reduce food-purchasing costs. Staff reported that the district did not experience delays or issues with the purchase of food and supplies due to the pandemic. In addition to food items, staff reported that Region 8 assisted the Food Services Department to locate and procure PPE for school year 2020–21.

District staff reported that the district purchased more paper and disposable goods during school year 2020–21 than during previous years. These goods included items such as

disposable trays, plastic utensils, and prepackaged foods. These items were necessary to improve meal safety, reduce preparation time, and provide curbside meal pickup. These additional paper and disposable goods increased Food Services Department expenditures for school year 2020–21.

MEAL DELIVERY

To accommodate remote-learning students during school year 2020–21, the district distributed meals through curbside pickup. Fannindel ISD provided both breakfast and lunch to remote-learning students. These meals were the same as those prepared for on-campus students and were available during the same meal times.

Remote-learning students or their parents collected meals at the external door of the cafeteria for their respective campus during designated meal times. The Food Services Department provided these students a packaged version of the meal it served in the cafeteria that day. The department provided remote-learning students breakfasts and lunches separately at designated times each day. Staff said that few students opted to participate in remote learning and estimated that fewer than 10 students used the curbside option, even at the beginning of the school year when more students received remote instruction. Throughout school year 2020–21, many students returned to campus, and, at the time of the review, staff reported that no students were requesting curbside meals.

On-campus students received meals through cafeteria meal service. Students in grades three to five on the elementary campus received breakfast in the classroom as they had during previous years, but the Food Services Department served all other meals for students in cafeterias. Meal times changed during school year 2020–21 to enable grade levels to eat separately. Table sizes were restricted, and spacing was required in serving lines to enable social distancing. Parents were not permitted to eat on campus with students or bring them meals during the day, as they had been during previous school years. Students were required to wear masks in the cafeteria unless they were seated. Staff served meals on disposable trays and distributed prepackaged utensils, and they wore gloves to reduce the risk of exposure to infection.

During campus closures due to student or staff outbreaks of COVID-19, the Food Services Department responded in several ways. When one of the two campuses closed, the department did not provide meals through curbside delivery from the campus that closed. In January 2021, both campuses closed for a week due to outbreaks, and the Food Services

Department provided meals through a delivery option. The food services director is also a licensed bus driver who delivered some meals to students' homes, and other district staff such as teachers and coaches volunteered their time to deliver meals.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

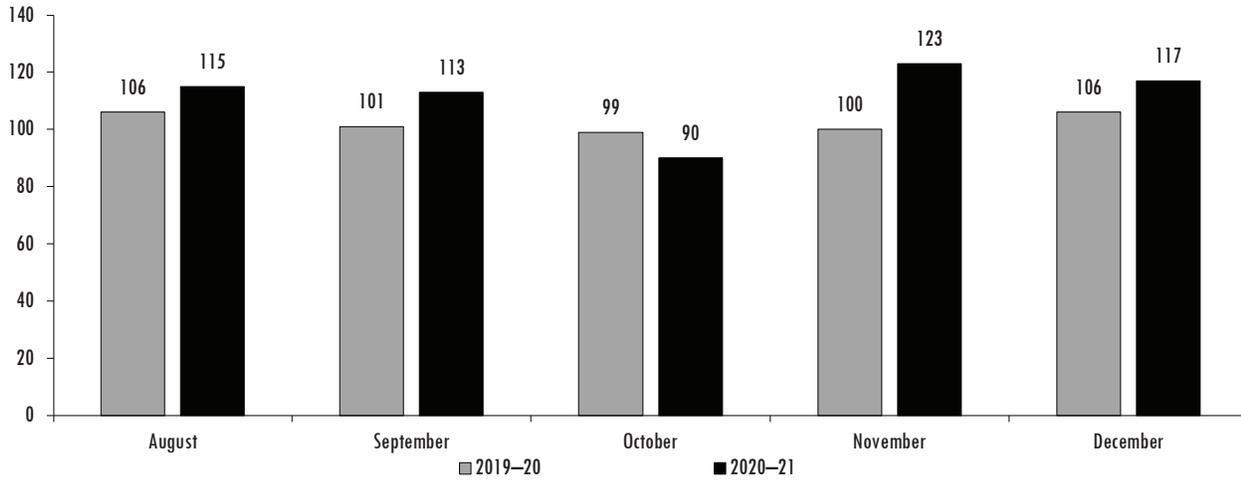
Fannindel ISD's Food Services Department reported changes in operational outcomes during school year 2020–21. The district's average daily participation (ADP) rates varied during the school year. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. From August 2020 to December 2020, the district's lunch ADP increased 7.7 percent compared to the first five months of school year 2019–20. However, the district's breakfast ADP decreased by 11.2 percent during school year 2020–21. The district's enrollment increased during school year 2020–21 from school year 2019–20 by 28.5 percent. However, the district's breakfast and lunch ADP rates did not increase correspondingly. Additionally, the district experienced a COVID-19 outbreak in October 2020 that resulted in the closure of the secondary campus. Staff said that they did not provide meals to students during this period, which could have contributed to the decreased breakfast ADP and less-than-expected increase in lunch ADP.

Lunch ADP for school year 2020–21 increased overall but did not increase as significantly as student enrollment increased. In October 2020, the lunch ADP decreased when the district temporarily delivered remote instruction to all students in response to an outbreak of COVID-19 cases. **Figure 5–4** shows the monthly lunch ADP for school year 2020–21 compared to school year 2019–20.

For each of the first five months of school year 2020–21, breakfast ADP was less than or equal to levels for school year 2019–20. A significant decrease in October 2020 was attributable partially to the district's remote-only instructional delivery. **Figure 5–5** shows the monthly breakfast ADP for school year 2020–21 compared to school year 2019–20.

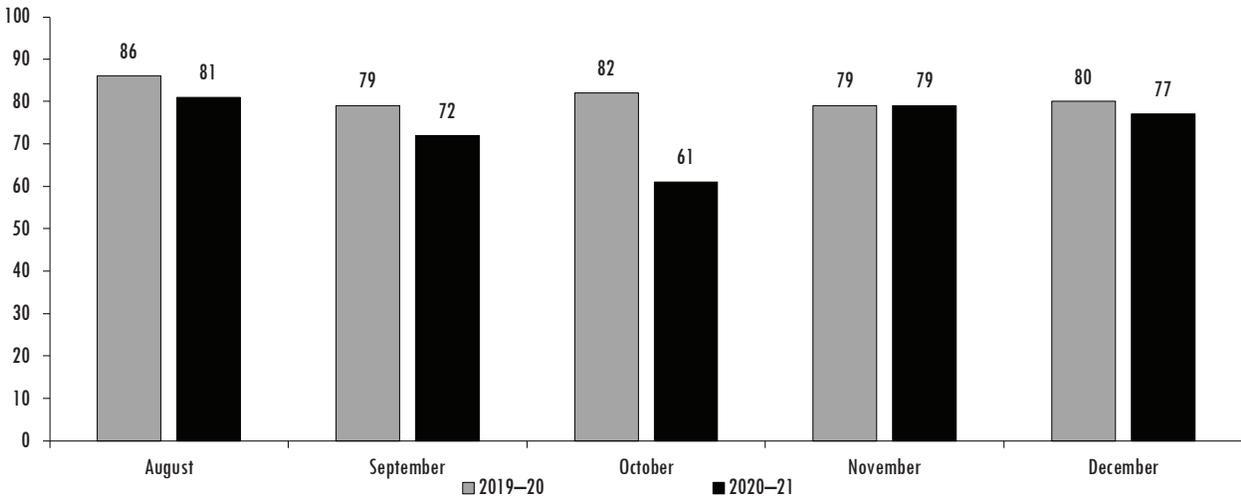
Staff reported the impression that meal participation had not changed significantly for lunch and that students skipping breakfast caused the decrease in breakfast participation. Staff had observed this decrease occurring primarily among high school students and did not have an explanation for the change. Because the district has a small enrollment, a few students changing their behavior can affect the total district rate of participation significantly.

FIGURE 5-4
FANNINDEL ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO DECEMBER, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCE: Texas Department of Agriculture; Fannindel ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FIGURE 5-5
FANNINDEL ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO DECEMBER, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture; Fannindel ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

Another reason offered by staff that may have contributed to low meal participation was the challenge of providing meals for remote-learning students. The district is located in a rural area, with large distances between many students’ homes and campuses.

From August 2020 to December 2020, the Fannindel ISD Food Services Department served 13,946 total meals, including 8,426 lunches and 5,520 breakfasts. The district recorded a 9.1 percent decrease in total meals served during school year 2020-21 from the same five-month period

during school year 2019–20. **Figure 5–6** shows the percentage change in meals served from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Fannindel ISD reported a negative impact on the available revenue for its Food Services Department during school year 2020–21. Despite a 28.5 percent increase in district enrollment for school year 2020–21, reimbursements decreased by \$2,039, or 4.5 percent. **Figure 5–7** shows the reimbursements for Fannindel ISD for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

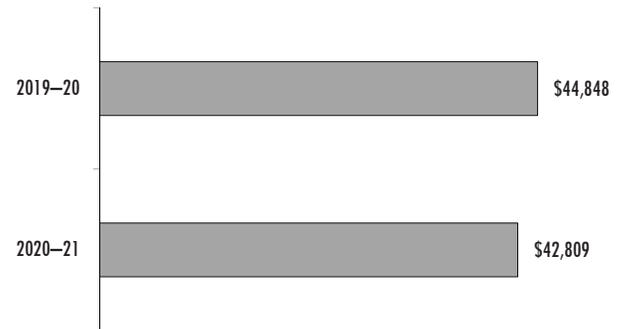
Staff reported that Food Services Department expenditures exceeded revenue by approximately \$40,000 during school year 2019–20 compared to the previous year, in which expenditures exceeded revenues by \$5,000. Staff could not confirm whether expenditures would exceed revenues for school year 2020–21. However, staff reported that expenses had increased due to the need for disposable and prepackaged materials, and that the department likely would record a financial loss again during school year 2020–21 because of greater expenses and decreased reimbursements.

**FIGURE 5–6
FANNINDEL ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED FROM AUGUST TO DECEMBER, SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21**

MEAL	2019–20	2020–21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	8,535	8,426	(1.3%)
Breakfasts	6,807	5,520	(18.9%)
Total	15,342	13,946	(9.1%)

NOTE: December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Fannindel ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

**FIGURE 5–7
FANNINDEL ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS FROM AUGUST TO DECEMBER SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21**



NOTE: December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Fannindel ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

6. FERRIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ferris Independent School District (ISD) is located in Ellis County, approximately 25 miles southeast of Dallas, and serves the cities of Ferris, Bristol, and Trumbull. The district's enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 2,558 students. The district operates five campuses including three elementary schools, one junior high school, and one high school. **Figure 6–1** shows Ferris ISD's student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 81.5 percent of Ferris ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, greater than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 32.6 percent of students as English Learners, greater than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 70.4 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was greater than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Ferris ISD's wealth per student, as determined by the district's weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$135,555 during school year 2019–20. This amount is less than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Ferris ISD was not subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is not considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, Ferris ISD used a self-management model and operated its Food Services Department without assistance from an outside entity. The district operated five cafeterias and five kitchens and participated in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and the Afterschool Snack Service.

Ferris ISD served free breakfast and lunch to all students at all campuses through the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a meal service option that enables campuses and districts in low-income areas to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household income applications.

Ferris ISD's Food Services Department employs 49 staff including the director of food services, an assistant food services director, five cafeteria managers, and 36 food

FIGURE 6–1
FERRIS ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	6.4%	12.6%
Hispanic	73.1%	52.8%
White	19.8%	27.0%
American Indian	0.4%	0.4%
Asian	0.5%	4.6%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.2%
Two or More Races	1.4%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	81.5%	60.3%
English Learners	32.6%	20.3%
At Risk	70.4%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

services specialists. The department also includes five Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) coordinators, one for each kitchen. HACCP is a management system that addresses food safety through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards. Coordinators ensure compliance with HACCP standards. The department also pays half the salary of a maintenance technician, who works part time performing maintenance for the kitchens and part time conducting maintenance work throughout the district. Four food services specialists are employed part time for 4.0 hours per day, and all other staff are employed full time. The district also employs three substitutes that fill absences for food services specialists as needed. **Figure 6–2** shows the organization of Ferris ISD's Food Services Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Ferris ISD began school year 2020–21 as scheduled August 12, 2020. Ferris ISD's student enrollment decreased by 117 students, or 4.4 percent, from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

As school year 2020–21 began, Ferris ISD offered students the option of receiving instruction on campus or remotely. After the first week of school in August, 14.0 percent of students in the district attended on-campus classes. However,

as the school year progressed, more students returned to campus, and 78.1 percent of students were attending on-campus classes by the end of January 2021.

Figure 6–3 shows the percentage of Ferris ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

Ferris ISD’s Food Services Department operated the same number of cafeterias and kitchens during school year 2020–21 and continued to serve all students the NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Service through the CEP. However, to help continue to operate its child nutrition programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the district received the following U.S. Department of Agriculture waivers for school year 2020–21 (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup Waiver;
- Meal Times Waiver;
- Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools Waiver; and
- Meal Pattern Waiver.

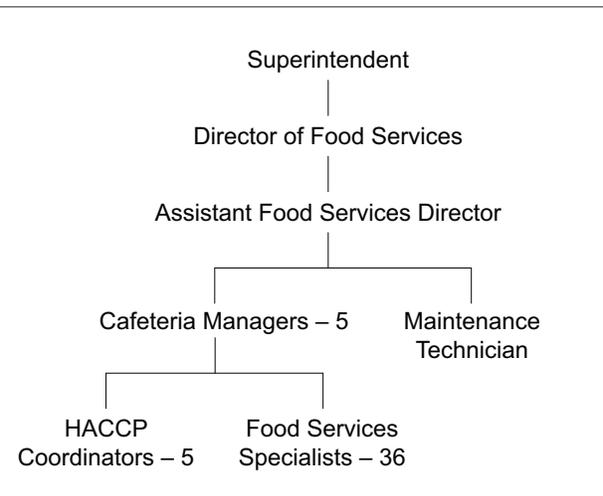
MEAL PREPARATION

The district’s meal preparation process was not affected significantly in school year 2020–21. The only district procedure added for school year 2020–21 was the requirement that Food Services Department staff wear masks when preparing and serving food. Other sanitation precautions such as disinfecting surfaces, washing hands regularly, and providing hand sanitizers in serving lines already were in place before the pandemic began.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

Staffing absences posed significant challenges to the operations of the Food Services Department during school year 2020–21. Although the department employed the same number of food services workers as it had the previous year, staff reported that the department struggled to keep kitchens and cafeterias adequately staffed due to inconsistent staff attendance. According to staff, these absences were due to

**FIGURE 6–2
FERRIS ISD FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21**

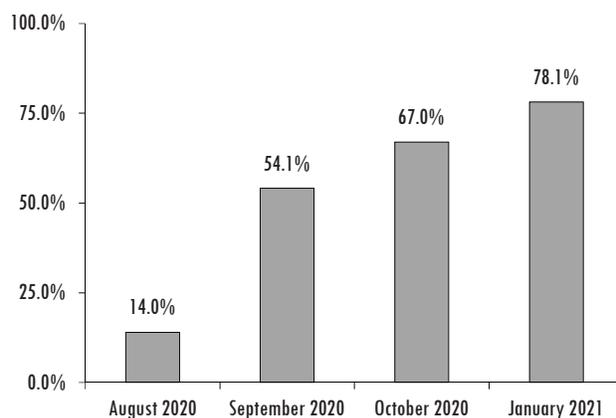


NOTES:

- (1) HACCP=Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point food safety management system.
- (2) The maintenance technician works part time for the Food Services Department and works part time for the Maintenance and Transportation Department in the district.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Ferris ISD, March 2021.

**FIGURE 6–3
PERCENTAGE OF FERRIS ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
AUGUST 2020 TO JANUARY 2021**



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

staff testing positive for COVID-19, being quarantined when they had contact with individuals who tested positive, and the district requiring staff to remain home if they experienced symptoms of COVID-19. The district addressed absences by reassigning staff temporarily from other kitchens to cover shortages. Due to the large number of absences, the district's three substitute food specialists often worked from 30.0 to 40.0 hours per week.

Although Food Services Department staff were not required to receive additional safety training for school year 2020–21, the department instituted several new protocols regarding staff safety. All Food Services Department staff were required to have their temperatures taken daily before beginning work shifts. Additionally, department staff were required to contact the director of food services if they experienced COVID-19 symptoms or if they had contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19.

PURCHASING

Ferris ISD did not report significant shortages of food and supplies during school year 2020–21. The district participated in the regional Education Service Center X Multi-Region Purchasing Cooperative. According to staff, the purchasing cooperative ensured timely delivery of food and supplies and provided comparable alternatives for products that were in short supply. As a result, Ferris ISD did not modify menu offerings significantly during the school year.

The district purchased additional paper goods during school year 2020–21, as staff wrapped more meals individually and served all meals in disposable trays. This purchasing resulted in an increase in expenditures to accommodate students participating in curbside meal distribution and to promote the safety of students eating in cafeterias.

MEAL DELIVERY

To accommodate both on-campus students and students receiving remote instruction, Ferris ISD altered various aspects of its meal service during school year 2020–21. The district offered different items for each meal, but it typically served the same items across all campuses. Additionally, on-campus and remote-learning students received the same meal items. During previous school years, the district provided high school students with several daily meal options; however, for school year 2020–21, one option was provided.

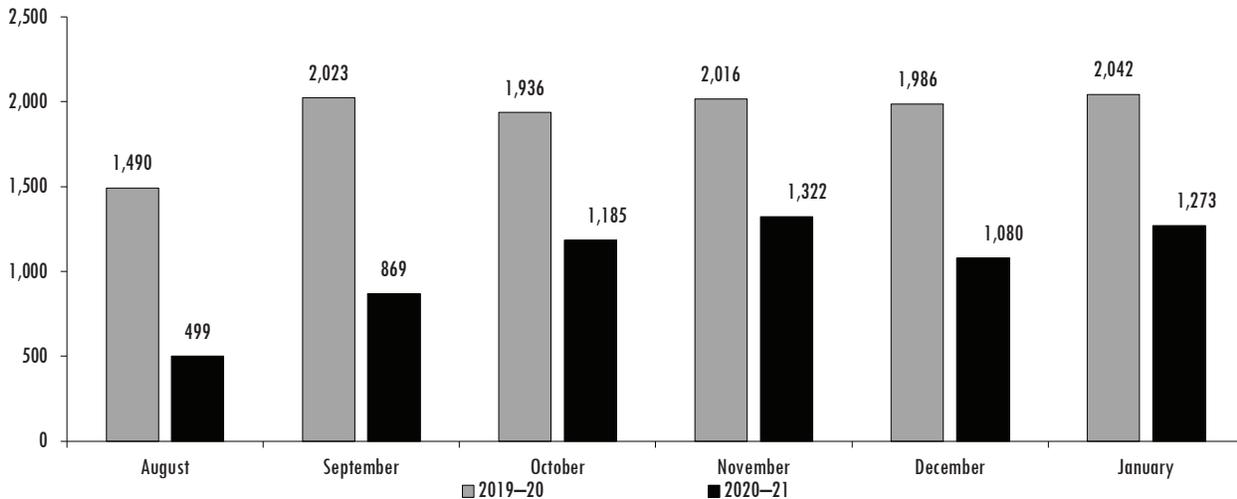
For students receiving remote instruction, the district established a curbside distribution process for breakfast and lunch. The district distributed meals at two separate times. Beginning in school year 2020–21, the district used a software application that enabled parents and district staff to communicate ordering information. This application enabled parents to inform the district if their children planned to receive remote instruction and wanted to receive meals. This communication was the primary way Food Services Department staff knew the number of meals to produce each day for remote-learning students. The Food Services Department assigned placards for each parent that requested curbside pickup meals to the appropriate campus. Ferris ISD used three kitchens to prepare curbside meals, and parents or students could pick up the meals in a drive-through process at these three campuses. As the number of remote-learning students decreased throughout the school year, the district decreased the number of kitchens that prepared curbside distribution to two.

For on-campus students, the department served all meals in the cafeterias during school year 2020–21, with the exception of breakfast served in the classroom for prekindergarten and kindergarten students. Prekindergarten and kindergarten students also rotated every other day between lunch service in the classroom and the cafeteria. All Ferris ISD campuses maintained the same staggered meal times as during previous school years, and no changes were made to the number of students who could be in the cafeterias at one time. Ferris ISD adjusted the placement of serving lines to encourage social distancing for students as they entered the cafeteria. However, the district had no additional social distancing requirements for students seated at dining tables.

FOODS SERVICES OUTCOMES

The average daily participation (ADP) rates for the district's child nutrition programs decreased substantially during school year 2020–21. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. During the first six months of school year 2020–21, Ferris ISD's lunch ADP decreased by 47.1 percent compared to the lunch ADP during the first six months of school year 2019–20. Likewise, the district's breakfast ADP decreased by 49.7 percent during that period. On average, the district served 922 fewer lunches and 594 fewer breakfasts each day during school year 2020–21 than during school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 6-4
FERRIS ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Ferris ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

A review of the district’s ADP by month shows that Ferris ISD’s ADP for both lunch and breakfast were lowest during August 2020, which corresponds to the month when the district recorded its highest percentage of remote-learning students. Lunch ADP during school year 2020-21 followed the trend of students returning to campuses. Lunch ADP increased by 137.5 percent from August 2020 to October 2020, and this trend coincides with an increase in the number of on-campus students from 14.0 percent to 67.0 percent during the period. However, lunch ADP peaked in November 2020 and decreased slightly during December 2020 and January 2021. This slight decrease occurred even as the number of students returning to campuses increased by approximately 16.6 percent from the beginning of November 2020 to the end of January 2021. When comparing the first six months of school years 2019-20 and 2020-21, the month with the greatest decrease in lunch ADP was September 2020, during which the district served 1,154 fewer lunches on average each day than were served in September 2019. At the time of the Legislative Budget Board’s School Performance Team’s review in March 2021, lunch ADP for each month during school year 2020-21 was significantly lower than during school year 2019-20.

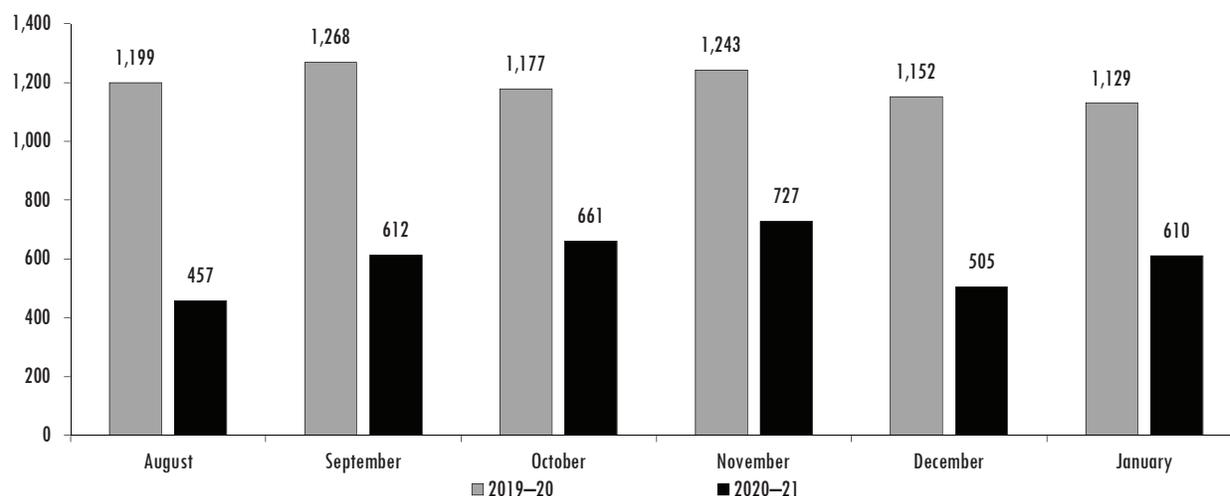
Figure 6-4 shows Ferris ISD’s lunch ADP by month for the first six months during school year 2020-21 compared to the same period during school year 2019-20.

Ferris ISD’s breakfast ADP during school year 2020-21 followed a similar trend as lunch ADP. Breakfast ADP increased as more students returned to campuses; however, the increase was less than the increase in lunch ADP. Breakfast ADP increased by 59.0 percent from August 2020 to November 2020. Breakfast ADP decreased in December 2020 and January 2021. This decrease coincided with a 16.6 percent increase in the district’s number of on-campus students. The largest decrease in breakfast ADP was in August 2020, when the district served 742 fewer breakfasts on average each day than were served in August 2019. As of March 2021, breakfast ADP was significantly lower for each month during school year 2020-21 than during the previous school year.

Figure 6-5 shows Ferris ISD’s breakfast ADP by month for the first six months of school year 2020-21 compared to the same period during school year 2019-20.

Ferris ISD staff reported that decreases in the district’s ADP were due to lower meal participation by remote-learning students. Ferris ISD serves several rural areas, and many

FIGURE 6–5
FERRIS ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Ferris ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

students live far away from campuses. Another factor that could have contributed to the district’s decrease in ADP during school year 2020–21 was the 4.4 percent decrease in total enrollment. Staff reported uncertainty as to why lunch and breakfast ADP decreased during December 2020 and January 2021 as more students returned to campus.

Additionally, the district served fewer meals during school year 2020–21. From August 2020 to January 2021, Ferris ISD’s Food Services Department served 162,612 meals, including 99,928 lunches, 57,829 breakfasts, and 5,485 snacks. **Figure 6–6** shows the total number of meals served during school year 2020–21 compared to those served during school year 2019–20.

Approximately 81.5 percent of students enrolled in Ferris ISD were eligible for free and reduced-price meals. The 47.6 percent decrease in meal production could indicate that many low-income students who rely on school breakfast and lunch as their primary sources of nutrition did not receive these meals.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The decrease in meals served resulted in a corresponding decrease in the total federal reimbursement the district received. As of January 2021, the district reported receiving \$472,000 in meal reimbursements for school year 2020–21. This amount is \$399,209 less than the district received

FIGURE 6–6
FERRIS ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED
FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21

MEAL	2019–20	2020–21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	185,853	99,298	(46.6%)
Breakfasts	113,595	57,829	(49.1%)
Snacks	11,005	5,485	(50.2%)
Total	310,453	162,612	(47.6%)

NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.

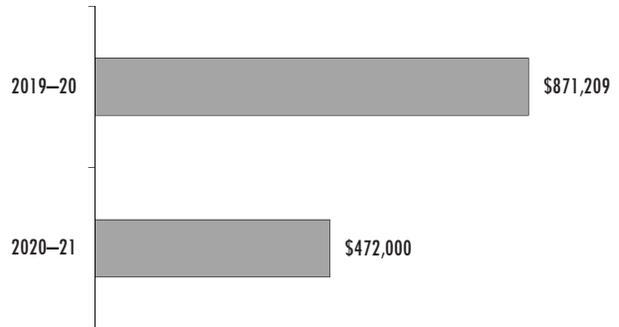
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Ferris ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

during the same period for school year 2019–20, a 45.8 percent decrease in reimbursement funds. **Figure 6–7** shows Ferris ISD’s total meal reimbursements from August to January for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

District staff reported that, as a result of the district’s change to remote instruction exclusively for the last several months of school year 2019–20, Ferris ISD’s Food Services Department expenditures exceeded revenues for the school year by approximately \$11,000. As of March 2021, staff reported uncertainty as to whether the district’s expenditures will exceed revenue for school year 2020–21.

However, district staff acknowledged that it was likely the department would record a financial loss again for school year 2020–21 due to a significant decrease in reimbursements and an increase in expenses for disposable supplies.

FIGURE 6–7
FERRIS ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Ferris ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

7. GEORGETOWN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Georgetown Independent School District (ISD) is located in Williamson County, approximately 30.0 miles north of Austin, and serves the cities of Georgetown and Weir and the communities of Serenada and Walburg. The district's enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 11,842 students. The district operates 19 campuses including 10 elementary schools, four middle schools, three high schools, and two alternative campuses. **Figure 7–1** shows Georgetown ISD's student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 41.3 percent of Georgetown ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, less than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 14.0 percent of students as English Learners, less than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 45.7 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was less than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Georgetown ISD's wealth per student, as determined by the district's weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$742,053 during school year 2019–20. This amount is greater than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Georgetown ISD was subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, Georgetown ISD used a contract-management model and contracted with a food service management company (FSMC) to operate its Nutrition Services Department. The district operated 16 cafeterias and 16 kitchens. Georgetown ISD participated in the federal Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

Georgetown ISD's Nutrition Services Department consists of 115 staff. Management staff in the Nutrition Services Office include the director of nutrition services, the assistant director, district chef, registered dietitian, food service manager, and federal program specialist. All management staff except for the food service manager and the federal program specialist are employees of the FSMC. All campus

FIGURE 7–1
GEORGETOWN ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	4.6%	12.6%
Hispanic	43.5%	52.8%
White	45.7%	27.0%
American Indian	0.3%	0.4%
Asian	1.7%	4.6%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.2%
Two or More Races	4.0%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	41.3%	60.3%
English Learners	14.0%	20.3%
At Risk	45.7%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

staff are district employees, including cafeteria managers, lead cashiers, and food service staff. The department employs all staff full time except for the lead cashiers at the elementary schools, who are employed part time. **Figure 7–2** shows the organization of Georgetown ISD's Nutrition Services Department.

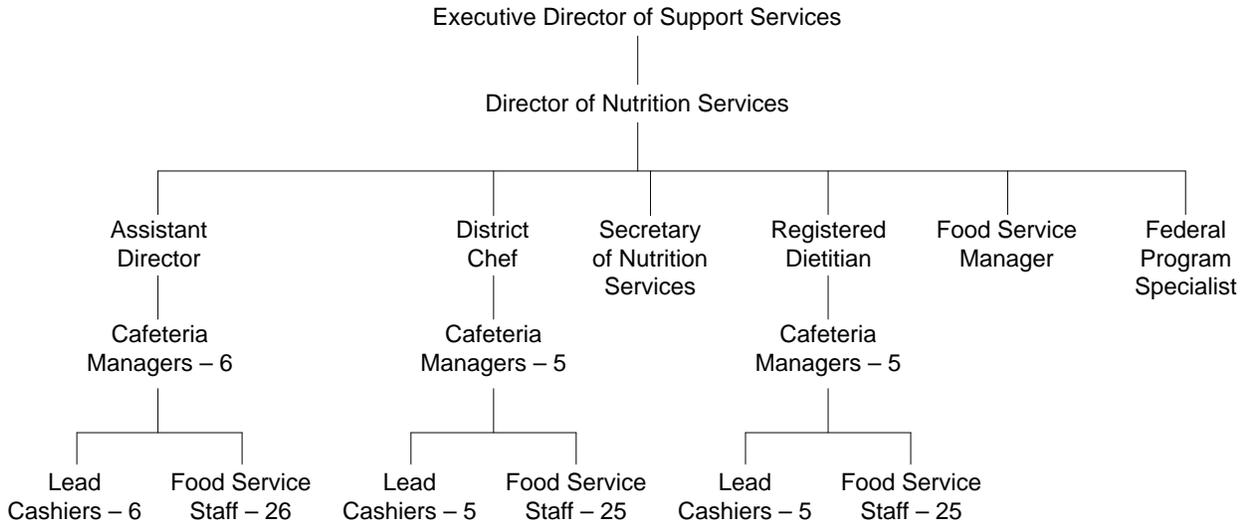
INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Georgetown ISD's school year began as scheduled August 20, 2020. The district's student enrollment decreased by 286 students, or 2.4 percent, from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

Georgetown ISD offered students remote instruction only for the first four weeks of school year 2020–21. Beginning in mid-September 2020, the district offered students the option of attending class on campus or continuing to receive remote instruction. By the end of September 2020, 55.7 percent of students attended classes on campus and 44.3 percent continued to receive remote instruction. As the school year progressed, the percentage of students returning to campus increased, and 66.0 percent of students attended classes on campus by the end of January 2021.

Figure 7–3 shows the percentage of Georgetown ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on

**FIGURE 7–2
GEORGETOWN ISD NUTRITION SERVICES DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21**



SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Georgetown ISD, March 2021.

data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

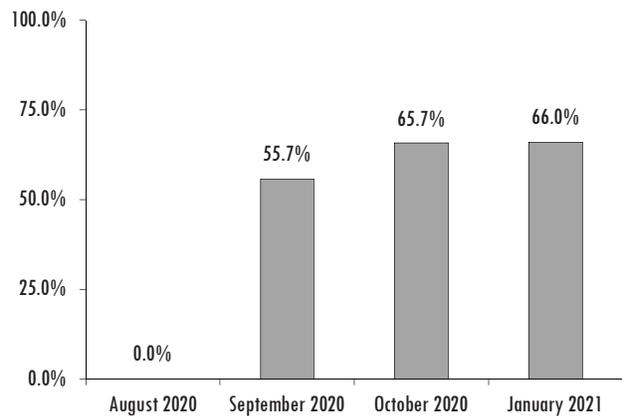
PROGRAMS

Georgetown ISD changed its meal programs for school year 2020–21 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To help continue to operate its child nutrition programs during the pandemic, the district received the following USDA waivers for school year 2020–21 (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver;
- Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools Waiver;
- Meal Pattern Waiver;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver; and
- Meal Times Waiver.

During school year 2020–21, the district continued to offer the NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Service. In October 2020, Georgetown ISD opted to operate these federally reimbursed food programs through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). SSO is a federal meal program that authorizes districts participating in the NSLP or SBP to provide meals to

**FIGURE 7–3
PERCENTAGE OF GEORGETOWN ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
AUGUST 2020 TO JANUARY 2021**



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

children in low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, USDA authorized districts to operate SSO during spring 2020 and school year 2020–21. Districts operating the SSO provide free meals to any child age 18 or younger regardless of whether

the child is enrolled in the district. According to staff, Georgetown ISD implemented SSO to enable students to obtain all meals for free during the pandemic.

MEAL PREPARATION

The Nutrition Services Department changed its meal preparation processes to promote the safety of staff and students, resulting in increased labor costs. The department prepares meals from scratch instead of heating and serving convenience foods. Food service staff were socially distanced during food preparation and incorporated additional steps to ensure that food was prepared in a manner that minimized the spread of the virus. Staff were required to sanitize and disinfect all food preparation areas and serving lines more often, and they were required to wear gloves and masks at all times. The department required staff to replace their gloves and masks on a specific schedule and required frequent hand washing. Staff packaged all food products in containers and bags before serving them to students. According to staff, these steps for cleaning, sanitizing, and packaging caused a substantial increase in the department's labor costs. Despite the increased costs, staff reported that the deep-cleaning processes implemented during school year 2020–21 were effective, and the district likely will continue these practices.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

Although the Nutrition Services Department maintained the same number of staff during school year 2020–21 as it had during school year 2019–20, district staff reported that absences due to the COVID-19 pandemic were challenging to manage. The Nutrition Services Department followed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) quarantine guidelines for staff exposed to COVID-19. Following a potential exposure, staff stayed home for 14 days. The department did not maintain a substitute group during school year 2020–21, and it managed staff absences by temporarily reassigning nutrition services staff among campuses. Staff reported that the department struggled at the beginning of school year 2020–21 to maintain an adequate number of food service staff in each kitchen and was not able to hire additional staff because it did not have any position applicants.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Nutrition Services Department established protocols requiring symptomatic individuals to stay home. The department required temperature checks for staff upon entry to campus facilities. It also provided ongoing group trainings at each campus for food service staff regarding mask wearing, how to change

gloves, proper sanitization, how to use disinfectants, and the CDC quarantine guidelines. According to district staff, the department prioritized training everyone to ensure that all staff received the same information.

PURCHASING

The COVID-19 pandemic affected Georgetown ISD's menu planning during school year 2020–21. Disruptions to supply networks caused some food products to become scarce. The Nutrition Services Department adjusted menus according to what manufacturers and distributors could produce. The department also had to ensure that menus complied with federal meal-pattern requirements, which required staff to remain vigilant about what products were available in advance to find comparable replacements. In addition, district staff reported that demand for disposable goods such as paper bags and single-use containers increased significantly, making these items challenging to find and increasing their cost.

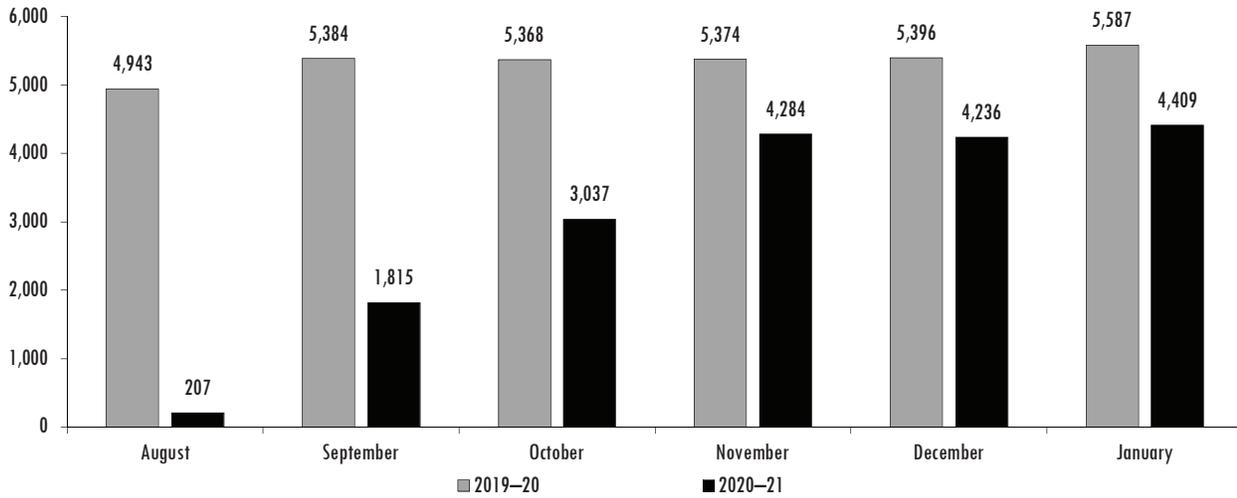
MEAL DELIVERY

Georgetown ISD made changes to meal delivery to accommodate remote-learning students and on-campus students during school year 2020–21. At the start of the school year when 100.0 percent of students were receiving remote-only instruction, the Nutrition Services Department provided meals to students and parents through curbside pickup at all campuses for breakfast and lunch at designated times. In the third week of September 2020, the district began to offer on-campus learning in addition to remote learning. As students began attending classes on campus, the Nutrition Services Department reduced the number of curbside pickup locations to one. When the district implemented SSO in October 2020, it opened a second curbside location for the community to pick up meals.

According to staff, the district faced several difficulties providing meals to remote-learning students. First, many students learning remotely did not have access to transportation to pick up meals at school, either because both parents were employed outside of the home, or because the student was not able to drive. In addition, staff reported that packaging all food and maintaining the correct temperature for hot and cold items for pickup meals was a new and challenging process.

For students attending class on campus, Georgetown ISD altered several aspects of cafeteria meal service to maintain safety requirements for students and staff during school year 2020–21.

FIGURE 7-4
GEORGETOWN ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHESES
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Georgetown ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

During previous school years, students proceeded through the serving line, selected meal items, and paid at the point of sale (POS) by entering their district identification numbers or scanning their identification badges. Students also were able to obtain certain items themselves, such as utensils. During school year 2020-21, the district took steps to minimize contact between students and staff. The district placed markers on the floor next to the serving line to indicate where students should stand to remain socially distanced. It also installed plastic partitions around the POS and stopped permitting students to enter their identification numbers on the keypad at the POS. Students were permitted only to scan their badges or provide their numbers to the cashier. Staff provided students with closed containers of food, and students were required to request such items as utensils, beverages, and condiments from staff behind the serving line instead of serving themselves.

To accommodate social distancing during meal service, the district marked seats to ensure that students sat six feet apart and installed plastic partitions on the dining tables. These seating adjustments reduced the number of students that could be in the cafeteria at once; therefore, the district also changed meal serving times to serve half of a single grade in the cafeteria at a time.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

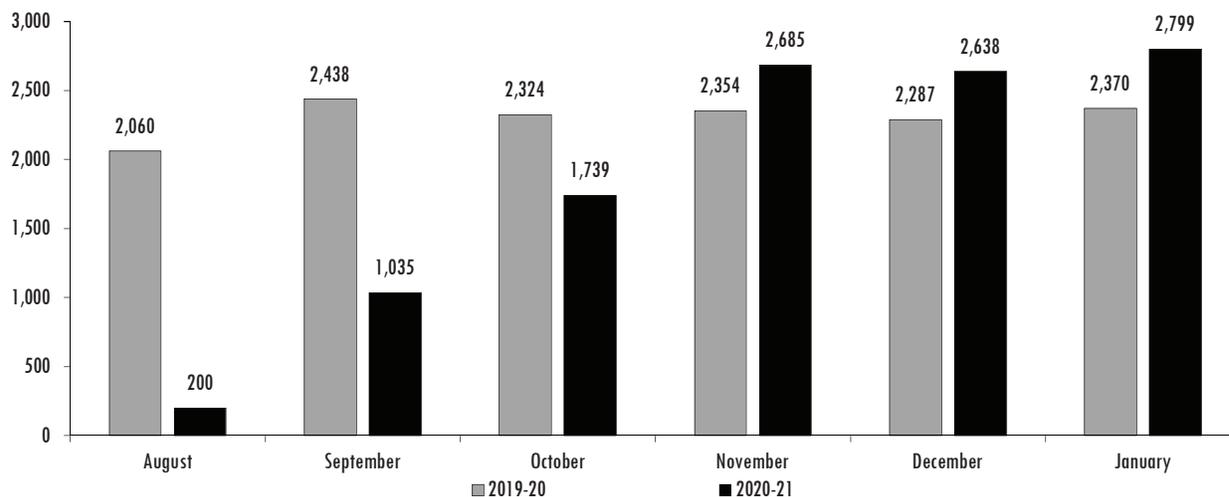
The district’s average daily participation (ADP) rates for both lunch and breakfast decreased during school year 2020-21.

ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. Georgetown ISD’s lunch ADP decreased by 41.3 percent during the first six months of school year 2020-21 compared to the first six months of school year 2019-20. Likewise, the district’s breakfast ADP decreased by 17.0 percent during school year 2020-21. On average, the district served 2,215 fewer lunches and 395 fewer breakfasts each day during school year 2020-21 than during school year 2019-20.

During the first several months of school year 2020-21, ADP in the district’s child nutrition programs decreased significantly from the same period during school year 2019-20. In August 2020, an average of 207 students ate school lunch daily, compared to the average of 4,934 students that typically ate school lunch daily in August 2019. Similarly, participation in the district’s SBP also decreased significantly, with only 200 students eating breakfast daily in August 2020, compared to the average of 2,060 students a day that received school breakfasts in August 2019.

However, a comparison of the meal participation by month shows that the district’s lunch ADP increased significantly from the beginning of the school year to January 2021. **Figure 7-4** shows Georgetown ISD’s lunch ADP by month for the six-month period from August to January for school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

FIGURE 7-5
GEORGETOWN ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Georgetown ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

Although Georgetown ISD’s lunch participation decreased overall from the previous school year, lunch ADP increased from 207 students in August 2020 to 4,409 students in January 2021.

The district’s breakfast ADP increased from the beginning of school year 2020-21 and surpassed ADP from school year 2019-20 during the months of November, December, and January. **Figure 7-5** shows Georgetown ISD’s monthly breakfast ADP for the six-month period from August to January for school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

According to district staff, the large number of remote-learning students at the beginning of school year 2020-21 resulted in very low participation in both breakfast and lunch. District staff reported that providing meals to remote-learning students was challenging because students did not always have access to transportation to pick up meals at school. As the school year progressed and more students transitioned to on-campus learning, ADP steadily increased. In addition, district staff credited the implementation of SSO with the increase in lunch participation from November 2020 to January 2021.

Despite increasing ADP rates during the course of school year 2020-21, the decrease in meal participation at the beginning of the school year resulted in the district serving fewer total meals than it did during school year 2019-20.

FIGURE 7-6
GEORGETOWN ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED
FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 TO 2020-21

MEAL	2019-20	2020-21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	541,821	292,924	(45.9%)
Breakfasts	234,485	179,194	(39.8%)
Snacks	11,732	1,544	(86.8%)
Total	788,038	473,662	(39.9%)

NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Georgetown ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

From August 2020 to January 2021, the Georgetown ISD Nutrition Services Department served 473,662 meals, including 292,924 lunches, 179,194 breakfasts, and 1,544 snacks. This amount is a 39.9 percent decrease in total meals served compared to the same six-month period during school year 2019-20. **Figure 7-6** shows the total number of meals served during school year 2020-21 compared to those served during school year 2019-20.

Approximately 41.3 percent of Georgetown ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged. This 39.9 percent decrease in meal production might indicate that

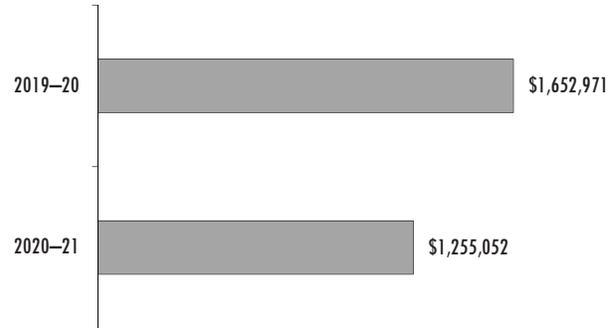
many low-income students who rely on school breakfast and lunch as their primary sources of nutrition did not receive these meals.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The decrease in meal service resulted in a corresponding decrease in the total federal reimbursements the district received. As of January 2021, the district reported receiving \$1,255,052 in meal reimbursements for school year 2020–21. This amount is \$397,918 less than the district received during the same period for school year 2019–20, a 24.1 percent decrease in reimbursement funds. **Figure 7–7** shows Georgetown ISD’s total meal reimbursements for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

In addition to decreased reimbursements, operating costs increased due to the additional labor hours required to prepackage all food items and the increased costs of disposable materials. During previous school years, the Nutrition Services Department did not lose money and typically maintained a fund balance of three months’ operating expenditures. However, since the onset of the district’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the department has depleted its fund balance. At the end of school year 2019–20, the department recorded a financial loss, and staff anticipated another loss at the end of school year 2020–21.

FIGURE 7–7
GEORGETOWN ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Georgetown ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

8. KOUNTZE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kountze Independent School District (ISD) serves Hardin County. The county seat, Kountze, is approximately 25 miles north of Beaumont. The district’s enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 1,078 students. The district operates four campuses, including one elementary school, one intermediate school, one junior high school, and one high school. **Figure 8–1** shows Kountze ISD’s student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 58.5 percent of Kountze ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, slightly less than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 3.1 percent of students as English Learners, less than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 38.2 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was less than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Kountze ISD’s wealth per student, as determined by the district’s weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$253,499 for school year 2019–20. This amount is less than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Kountze ISD was not subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is not considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, Kountze ISD used a self-management model and operated its Food Services Department without assistance from an outside entity. The district operated one cafeteria and one kitchen at each of its four campuses. Kountze ISD participated in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The district also offered a snack program for students that is administered by Be A Champion, a community service organization.

Kountze ISD’s Food Services Department consists of 19 staff including one director of food services, four kitchen managers, and 14 food services staff. **Figure 8–2** shows the organization of Kountze ISD’s Food Services Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Kountze ISD began school year 2020–21 as scheduled August 24, 2020. The district’s student enrollment decreased by 4.3 percent from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

FIGURE 8–1
KOUNTZE ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	12.4%	12.6%
Hispanic	7.3%	52.8%
White	75.9%	27.0%
American Indian	0.8%	0.4%
Asian	0.4%	4.6%
Two or More Races	3.2%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	58.5%	60.3%
English Learners	3.1%	20.3%
At Risk	38.2%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 8–2
KOUNTZE ISD FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT
ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21



SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Kountze ISD, March 2021.

As school year 2020–21 began, all Kountze ISD students received remote instruction. The district began transitioning students to on-campus learning by grade level in September 2020, although students could choose to continue receiving remote instruction. By the end of September 2020, 84.6 percent of students in the district were attending classes on campus. The district returned to remote instruction for all students for one week in November 2020 due to an outbreak of COVID-19 among staff. By the end of January 2021, 79.7 percent of students were attending classes on campus. **Figure 8–3** shows the percentage of Kountze ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

Kountze ISD continued to offer students the NSLP and SBP during school year 2020–21. The district also offered a snack program for students administered by Be A Champion, a community service organization. The number of food services staff, kitchens, and cafeterias remained the same in school year 2020–21 compared to the previous school year. However, to help continue operating its child nutrition programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the district received the following U.S. Department of Agriculture waivers for school year 2020–21 (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver;
- Meal Pattern Waiver; and
- Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools Waiver.

MEAL PREPARATION

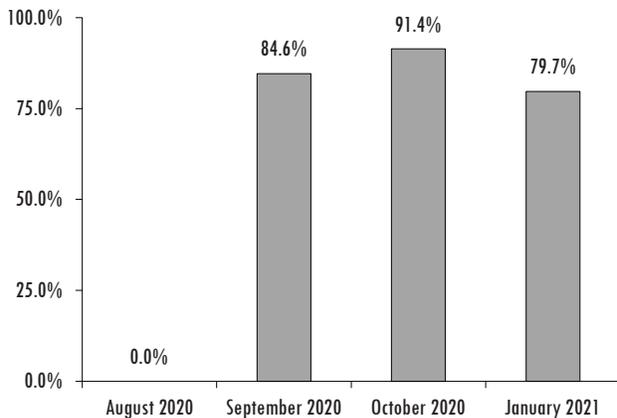
The Food Services Department staff already had many sanitation procedures in place before the pandemic, such as hand washing, sanitizing surfaces, and general cleaning. When the district implemented its response to the pandemic, food services staff began wearing masks, using two gloves for preparing and serving some items, and using hand sanitizer more often.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

Although the number of food services staff Kountze ISD employed did not change from school year 2019–20, staff absences during school year 2020–21 resulted in challenges to the department’s operations. Throughout the school year, food services staff were absent because they contracted COVID-19, exhibited symptoms, or had contact with others who tested positive for COVID-19. These staff then quarantined for up to 14 days or stayed at home until they received negative tests. This increase in staff absences during school year 2020–21 resulted in uncertainty within the department regarding how many staff would be available daily.

During previous school years, the Food Services Department maintained a group of substitutes; however, staff reported that many of the district’s regular substitutes were

FIGURE 8–3
PERCENTAGE OF KOUNTZE ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
AUGUST 2020 TO JANUARY 2021



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

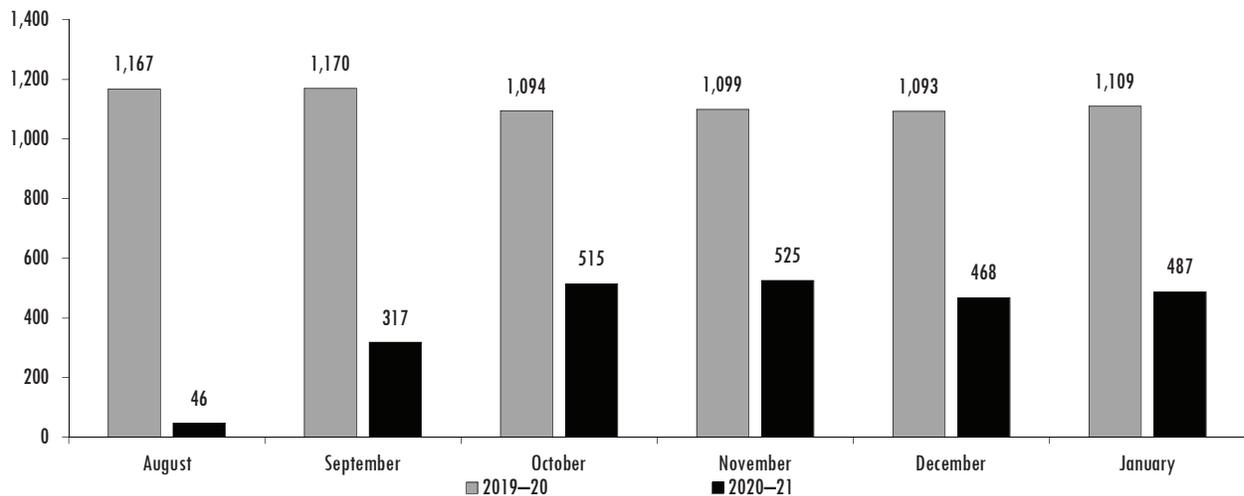
unavailable during school year 2020–21. The department temporarily reassigned staff from other campuses to fill absences. Staff reported that this uncertainty placed strain on food services staff and required available staff to expand their job duties.

The department instituted several new protocols to address staff safety during school year 2020–21. Meetings with cafeteria staff increased from monthly during school year 2019–20 to weekly during school year 2020–21. All Food Services Department staff were required to check their temperatures and complete health questionnaires daily before they began work shifts. Food Services Department staff also were required to contact the director of food services if they exhibited symptoms or had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, and subsequently to quarantine before returning to work.

PURCHASING

Kountze ISD participates in the regional Education Service Center V food cooperative to reduce food-purchasing costs. During school year 2020–21, the district experienced shortages of some food and supplies, such as paper goods and cleaning products, due to supply-chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to staff, the purchasing cooperative often had to collaborate with vendors to find substitutions for requested items that were not available,

FIGURE 8–4
KOUNTZE ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Kountze ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

which caused the Food Services Department to modify its menu offerings, often on short notice.

MEAL DELIVERY

To accommodate both on-campus students and students receiving remote instruction, Kountze ISD altered various aspects of its meal delivery process during school year 2020–21. At the beginning of the school year, the district provided breakfast and lunch for remote-learning students. The same meals were prepared in one kitchen for all students. Pickups were available Monday to Friday from one campus for the whole district. The curbside pickup process continued until October 2020, when most students had transitioned to on-campus learning and the process was discontinued.

For on-campus students, staff reported that food service delivery did not change significantly during school year 2020–21. All meals were served in the cafeterias; however, the number of lunch periods increased from three to four to accommodate a smaller number of students in the cafeteria at a time. The district also placed markers on tables to identify where students should sit to facilitate social distancing.

Students at all grade levels received the same prepackaged meals served in disposable containers. The district did not adjust cafeteria serving lines nor its point-of-sale (POS) system during school year 2020–21. As during previous school years, students walked through a standard serving line

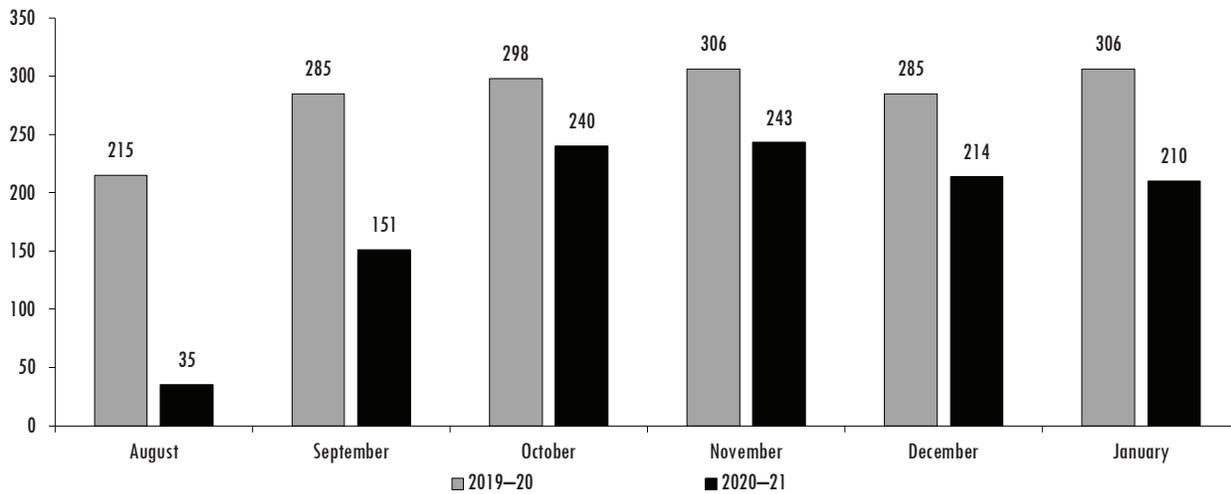
to receive their meals. All meals were recorded at the cashiers' POS as students or staff entered their district identification numbers into a key pad.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

The average daily participation (ADP) rate for the district's child nutrition programs decreased from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. Kountze ISD's lunch ADP decreased by 24.6 percent during the first six months of school year 2020–21 compared to the first six months of school year 2019–20. Likewise, the district's breakfast ADP decreased by 30.2 percent during school year 2020–21. On average, the district served 145 fewer lunches and 88 fewer breakfasts each day during school year 2020–21 than during school year 2019–20.

Kountze ISD's lunch ADP for school year 2020–21 followed the trends of students returning to on-campus learning. Participation increased significantly in September 2020 after the majority of students returned to campuses, but it decreased slightly in December 2020 when the district returned to remote-only instruction for one week due to a COVID-19 outbreak. **Figure 8–4** shows Kountze ISD's lunch ADP by month for the first six-months of school year 2020–21 compared to the same period during school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 8-5
KOUNTZE ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 20201; Texas Department of Agriculture, Kountze ISD District Profiles 2020 to 2021.

Kountze ISD’s breakfast ADP during school year 2020-21 followed a similar trend to its lunch ADP. Although breakfast participation increased in September 2020 as students returned to campuses, it did not increase at the rate of lunch participation. The largest month-to-month increase in breakfast ADP occurred in September 2020, when ADP increased by 331.4 percent from August 2020. **Figure 8-5** shows Kountze ISD’s breakfast participation rates by month for the six-month period from August to January for school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Kountze ISD staff reported that decreases in the district’s ADP were due to lower meal participation by remote-learning students. Staff also said that more on-campus students brought lunch from home rather than eating school lunches due to concerns about COVID-19.

Kountze ISD also served fewer total meals during the first six months of school year 2020-21 than during the first six months of school year 2019-20. From August 2020 to January 2021, the Kountze ISD Food Services Department served 55,371 total meals, including 38,198 lunches and 17,533 breakfasts. This amount is a 32.7 percent decrease in total meals served compared to the same six-month period during school year 2019-20. **Figure 8-6** shows the total number of meals served from August to January of school year 2020-21 compared to those served within the same period during school year 2019-20.

FIGURE 8-6
KOUNTZE ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED FROM
AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 TO 2020-21

MEAL	2019-20	2020-21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	55,357	38,198	(31.0%)
Breakfasts	27,472	17,533	(36.2%)
Total	82,829	55,731	(32.7%)

NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Kountze ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

The percentage of students enrolled in Kountze ISD who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals totals 58.5 percent. The 32.7 percent decrease in meal production might indicate that many low-income students who rely on school breakfast and lunch as their primary sources of nutrition did not receive these meals.

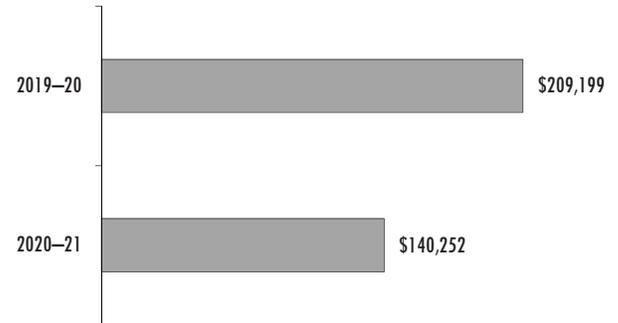
FINANCIAL IMPACT

The decrease in meals served resulted in a corresponding decrease in the total federal reimbursement the district received. As of January 2021, the district reported receiving \$140,251 in meal reimbursements for school year 2020-21. This amount is \$68,947 less than the amount

the district received during the same period during school year 2019–20, a 33.0 percent decrease in reimbursement funds. **Figure 8–7** shows Kountze ISD’s total meal reimbursements from August to January during school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

District staff reported that, as a result of the district’s change to remote learning for all students during the last several months of school year 2019–20, Kountze ISD’s Food Services Department expenditures exceeded revenues. As of March 2021, staff reported uncertainty as to whether the district’s expenditures will exceed revenue for school year 2020–21. However, with a decrease in reimbursements and an increase in expenditures for paper goods to provide safer curbside and cafeteria meal distribution, district staff acknowledged that it was likely the department will record a financial loss again during school year 2020–21.

FIGURE 8–7
KOUNTZE ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Kountze ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

9. NAZARETH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Nazareth Independent School District (ISD) serves students in Castro County, approximately 65 miles southwest of Amarillo. The district’s student enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 249 students. The district operates one campus for all grades from prekindergarten to grade 12. **Figure 9–1** shows Nazareth ISD’s student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 16.5 percent of Nazareth ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, less than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 0.8 percent of students as English Learners, less than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 11.3 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was less than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Nazareth ISD’s wealth per student, as determined by the district’s weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$184,845 during school year 2019–20. This amount is less than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Nazareth ISD was not subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is not considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, Nazareth ISD used a self-management model and operated its Food Services Department without assistance from an outside entity. The district operates one cafeteria and one kitchen. The district participates in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Nazareth ISD’s Food Services Department consists of two full-time staff including one food service director and one cook. The food service director also works as a cook. The department also has a part-time cook and pays half of the salary of a maintenance technician who works part time performing maintenance for the kitchens and part time conducting maintenance work throughout the entire district. **Figure 9–2** shows the organization of Nazareth ISD’s Food Services Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

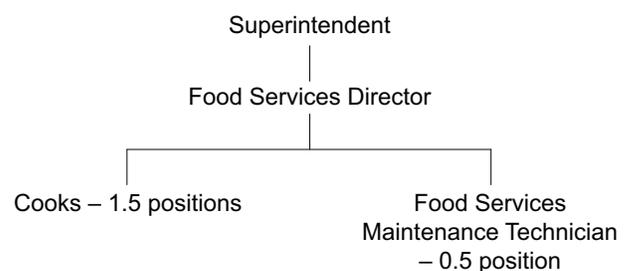
Nazareth ISD began school year 2020–21 as scheduled August 21, 2020. The district offered students the option of on-campus or remote instruction due to concerns surrounding

FIGURE 9–1
NAZARETH ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	0.4%	12.6%
Hispanic	10.5%	52.8%
White	87.9%	27.0%
American Indian	1.2%	0.4%
Economically Disadvantaged	16.5%	60.3%
English Learners	0.8%	20.3%
At Risk	11.3%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 9–2
NAZARETH ISD FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT
ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21



NOTE: The food services maintenance technician works part time for the Food Services Department and part time for the entire district.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Nazareth ISD, March 2021.

the COVID-19 pandemic. During the first week of school, 96.0 percent of students chose to return to classes on campus. The district required all students to attend classes on campus November 30, 2020, with few exceptions. In January 2021, 99.2 percent of students were attending classes on campus. **Figure 9–3** shows the percentage of Nazareth ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

Nazareth ISD’s student enrollment remained steady from the previous school year. The number of students increased from 248 during school year 2019–20 to 249 during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

Nazareth ISD’s Food Services Department continued to provide the NSLP and SBP during school year 2020–21. The number of cafeterias and kitchens the district operated remained unchanged since school year 2019–20. According to district staff, Nazareth ISD did not apply for any U.S. Department of Agriculture waivers regarding federal program service and distribution during school year 2020–21.

MEAL PREPARATION

Nazareth ISD’s meal preparation process did not change significantly during school year 2020–21. The only change to Food Services Department procedures was the requirement for staff to wear masks when preparing and serving meals. Staff continued to wash hands regularly, use hand sanitizer, and follow existing food preparation procedures.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

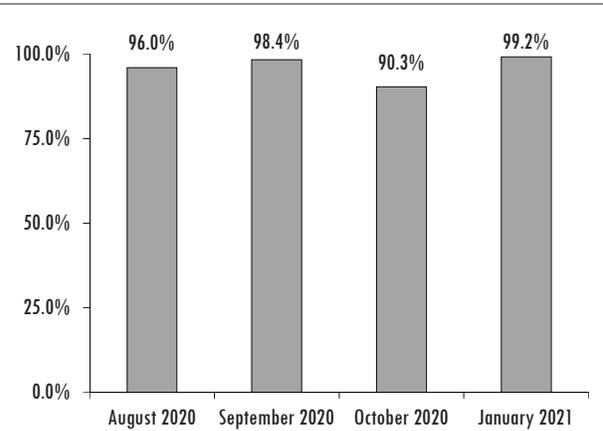
The department employed the same number of food services staff during school years 2019–20 and 2020–21. Interviews with staff indicated that the department was able to staff the district kitchen and cafeteria adequately and without interruption during school year 2020–21.

Food Services Department staff were not required to receive any additional COVID-19 pandemic-related safety training for school year 2020–21. At the beginning of school year 2020–21, the department checked staff temperatures before work shifts began, but the district discontinued the practice after several months.

PURCHASING

Nazareth ISD experienced shortages of some food and supplies due to supply-chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff said that these shortages were the most challenging part of food service operations during the pandemic. The district participates in the regional Education Service Center XVII food cooperative to reduce food-purchasing costs. According to staff, vendors reported shortages of food items and paper goods throughout school year 2020–21, and the purchasing cooperative collaborated with vendors to find replacement products. These shortages required the district to modify menu offerings on short notice and to communicate these changes to the Nazareth ISD community as effectively as possible. The food services director estimated that she shopped at the local grocery store

FIGURE 9–3
PERCENTAGE OF NAZARETH ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
AUGUST 2020 TO JANUARY 2021



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

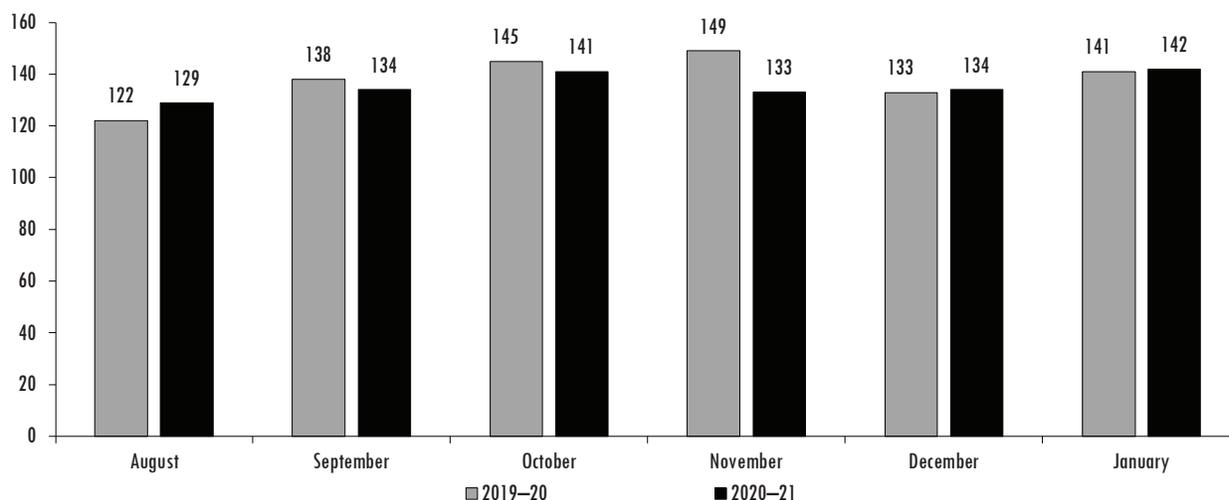
approximately 15 times during the first six months of school year 2020–21 to purchase food items that the cooperative could not provide. The Food Services Department also reported difficulty obtaining cleaning and maintenance products, such as gloves and trash can liners.

MEAL DELIVERY

Nazareth ISD altered meal service during school year 2020–21. Few students opted to receive remote instruction during school year 2020–21, and staff reported that a small number of remote-learning students chose to receive meals before the district required all students to return to on-campus classes in November 2020. Thus, the district decided not to provide meals for the few students receiving remote instruction during school year 2020–21.

Similarly to its practices during previous school years, the district offered the same meal items to all grades each day during school year 2020–21, and all meals were served in the cafeteria. Changes in the cafeteria food service for school year 2020–21 included an extra 15 minutes between lunch periods for additional cleaning and adding more dining tables so that students could eat while maintaining a six-foot social distancing requirement. Nazareth ISD did not adjust serving lines, and the point-of-sale system functioned the same way as during previous school years.

FIGURE 9-4
NAZARETH ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Nazareth ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

The average daily participation (ADP) rate for the district's child nutrition programs did not change significantly from school years 2019-20 to 2020-21. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. Nazareth ISD's lunch ADP decreased by 2.7 percent during the first six months of school year 2020-21 compared to the first six months of school year 2019-20. However, breakfast ADP increased by 39.0 percent during the first six months of school year 2020-21. On average, the district served four fewer lunches and six more breakfasts each day during school year 2020-21 than during school year 2019-20.

Nazareth ISD staff reported that ADP remained stable during school year 2020-21 because the few students receiving remote instruction did not cause significant changes to meal service operations.

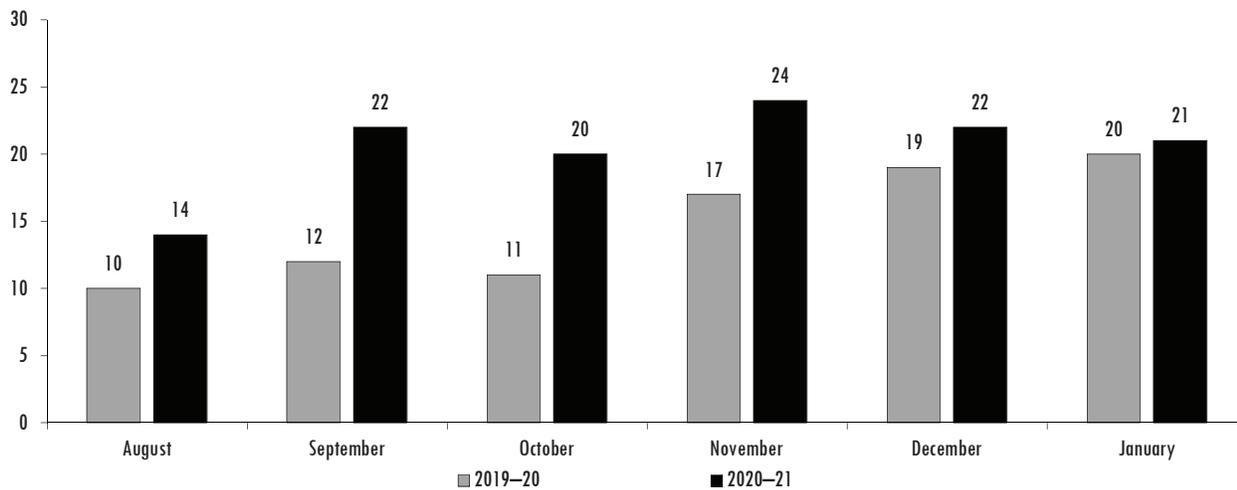
Nazareth ISD's lunch ADP for the first six months of school year 2020-21 remained consistent with the rates during school year 2019-20. Lunch ADP during school year 2020-21 exceeded lunch ADP during school year 2019-20 in August, December, and January. **Figure 9-4** shows Nazareth ISD's lunch ADP by month for the first six months of school year 2020-21 compared to the same period during school year 2019-20.

The district's breakfast ADP increased significantly during the six-month period from August 2020 to January 2021. Monthly breakfast ADP exceeded rates for school year 2019-20 for every month during the first six months of school year 2020-21. The largest increase from the previous school year occurred in October 2020, during which the district served on average nine more breakfast meals per day than it served in October 2019. **Figure 9-5** shows Nazareth ISD's breakfast ADP by month for the first six months of school year 2020-21 compared to the same period during school year 2019-20.

The total number of meals served by the district also was comparable from school years 2019-20 to 2020-21. From August 2020 to January 2021, the Nazareth ISD Food Services Department served 15,711 meals, including 13,615 lunches and 2,096 breakfasts. This amount is a 1.4 percent increase in total meals served compared to the same six-month period during school year 2019-20. The increase can be attributed to the 39.0 percent increase in breakfasts served. **Figure 9-6** shows the total number of meals served during school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Staff reported that the overall increase in total meals served for Nazareth ISD during the COVID-19 pandemic could be a result of better communication with the community about the availability of breakfast at school.

FIGURE 9-5
NAZARETH ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Nazareth ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FIGURE 9-6
NAZARETH ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED FROM AUGUST
TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 TO 2020-21

MEAL	2019-20	2020-21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	13,989	13,615	(2.7%)
Breakfasts	1,508	2,096	39.0%
Total	15,497	15,711	1.4%

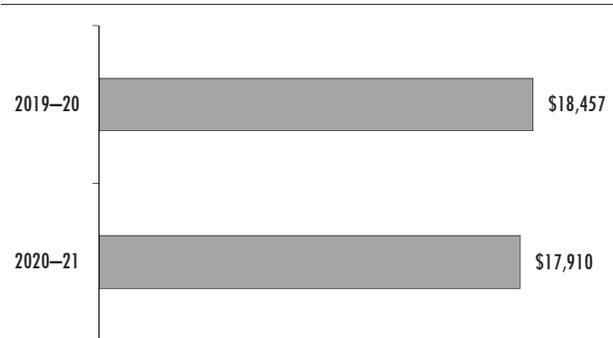
NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Nazareth ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Despite an increase in the number of breakfasts served, the total reimbursements the district received decreased slightly during school year 2020-21. As of January 2021, the district reported receiving \$17,910 in meal reimbursements for school year 2020-21. This amount is \$547 less than the district received during the same period during school year 2019-20, a 3.0 percent decrease in total reimbursements. **Figure 9-7** shows Nazareth ISD’s total meal reimbursements from August to January during school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Staff said that the Food Services Department records a financial loss almost every school year. Staff also reported that, as a result of the district’s change to remote-only

FIGURE 9-7
NAZARETH ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Nazareth ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

instruction for the last three months of school year 2019-20, department expenditures exceeded revenues by an even greater amount than during previous school years. As of March 2021, district staff acknowledged that it was likely the department’s expenditures will exceed revenues for school year 2020-21 due to the decrease in total reimbursements and the increase in expenditures for disposable goods.

10. REAGAN COUNTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Reagan County Independent School District (ISD) is located in Big Lake, approximately 70.0 miles west-southwest of San Angelo. The district’s enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 856 students. The district operates three campuses including one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. **Figure 10–1** shows Reagan County ISD’s student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 60.6 percent of Reagan County ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, slightly greater than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 14.6 percent of students as English Learners, less than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 67.5 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was greater than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Reagan County ISD’s wealth per student, as determined by the district’s weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$3.5 million during school year 2019–20. This amount is significantly higher than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, Reagan County ISD was subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is considered a property-wealthy district. According to the Railroad Commission of Texas, in April 2021, Reagan County ranked eighth in crude oil production and ninth in total gas production among all Texas counties. The large amount of oil production in the region significantly increases the property wealth of the district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

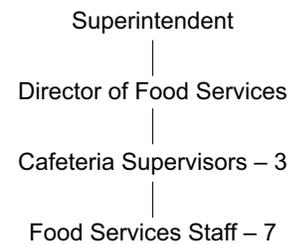
During school year 2020–21, Reagan County used a self-management model and operated its Food Services Department without assistance from an outside entity. The district operated three cafeterias, three kitchens, and a grab-and-go distribution site for prepackaged foods at the elementary school. The district participated in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). In November 2020, the district implemented the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) component of the federal programs. Reagan County ISD’s Food Services Department served breakfast in the classroom

FIGURE 10–1
REAGAN COUNTY ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	0.3%	12.6%
Hispanic	83.7%	52.8%
White	14.3%	27.0%
American Indian	0.1%	0.4%
Asian	0.8%	4.6%
Two or More Races	0.8%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	60.6%	60.3%
English Learners	14.6%	20.3%
At Risk	67.5%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

FIGURE 10–2
REAGAN COUNTY ISD FOOD SERVICES
DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21



SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Reagan County ISD, March 2021.

for elementary students, and it served breakfast in the cafeteria to middle school and high school students.

Reagan County ISD’s Food Services Department employed 11 full-time staff including the director of food services, three cafeteria supervisors, and seven food services staff. **Figure 10–2** shows the organization of Reagan County ISD’s Food Services Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

The district began school year 2020–21 as scheduled August 26, 2020. Reagan County ISD’s student enrollment decreased by 48 students, or 5.3 percent, from school year 2019–20.

At the beginning of school year 2020–21, students had the option of receiving on-campus or remote instruction, and 71.4 percent of students opted for on-campus instruction. As the school year progressed, more students returned to campus, with 95.5 percent of students receiving on-campus instruction as of February 2021. **Figure 10–3** shows the percentage of Reagan County ISD students receiving on-campus instruction, based on data from four enrollment reporting periods during school year 2020–21.

CHANGES IN FOODS SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

Reagan County ISD’s Food Services Department continued operating the NSLP and SBP during school year 2020–21. In November 2020, the district implemented the federal SSO meal program, which authorizes districts participating in the NSLP or SBP to provide meals to children in low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) authorized districts to operate SSO during spring 2020 and school year 2020–21. Districts operating the SSO provide free meals to any child age 18 or younger, regardless of whether the child is enrolled in the district.

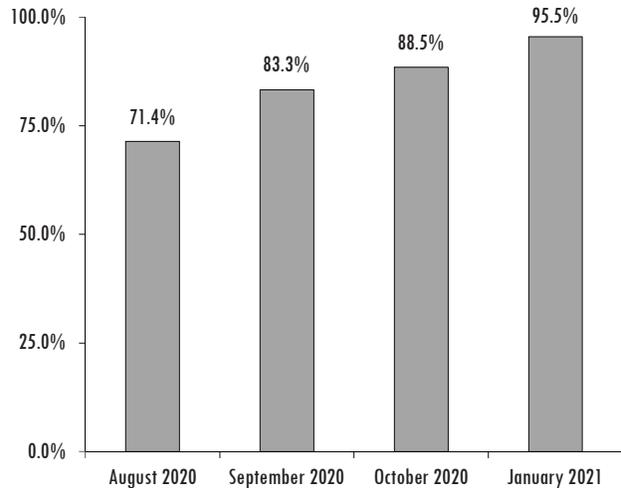
More than 60.0 percent of Reagan County ISD students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals through the NSLP. Staff said that the district’s change to SSO enabled it to serve free meals to all students and other children in the community. The district continued to operate the same number of cafeterias and kitchens during school year 2020–21 as the previous year. To operate its child nutrition programs during the COVID-19 pandemic effectively, the district also received the following USDA waivers for school year 2020–21 (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

- Meal Pattern Waiver;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver; and
- Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools Waiver.

MEAL PREPARATION

Staff reported that the Food Services Department implemented social distancing requirements in the kitchens and cafeterias for staff while preparing and serving meals. Additionally, staff were required to wear masks, and staff

**FIGURE 10–3
PERCENTAGE OF REAGAN COUNTY ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
AUGUST 2020 TO JANUARY 2021**



NOTE: The Texas Education Agency calculated enrollment data at four dates of school year 2020–21, which appear in weekly reports issued by the Department of State Health Services. See **Appendix A**. SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

increased cleaning of all kitchen surfaces with a disinfecting solution throughout the day. Staff also said that the department prepared more individually wrapped food items in response to the pandemic.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

Although the Food Services Department maintained the same number of staff during school year 2020–21, district staff report that absences posed a challenge. During previous school years, the department maintained a group of substitutes; however, during school year 2020–21, the district was not able to staff substitutes due to concerns about the pandemic. When staff were absent, other staff were assigned additional duties or worked temporarily in other cafeterias or kitchens to fill the absences.

The Food Services Department conducted training on increased cleaning procedures for all staff at the beginning of the school year. The department also conducted safety protocol training on professional development days. The district established a procedure during school year 2020–21 for staff to have their temperatures checked when they arrived for work shifts, and any staff who had fevers were dismissed for the day.

For school year 2020–21, the district instituted additional safety precautions for staff and students in the cafeterias, including the use of masks, increased cleaning and sanitizing, and social distancing requirements for students in serving lines and at dining tables. Students were required to wear masks in the serving line and when not eating in the cafeterias. Other sanitation precautions included disinfecting surfaces, serving carts, and tables between serving times. Food services staff used a sanitizing machine in the cafeterias at the end of each day.

PURCHASING

Reagan County ISD's Food Services Department staff reported they did not experience major disruptions in the district's food purchasing processes during school year 2020–21. Staff reported that vendors provided the district with comparable alternatives when requested food items were unavailable. The Food Services Department purchased additional items, such as disposable trays and paper products, to distribute meals curbside for remote-learning students and to wrap breakfasts served at the elementary school distribution site for prepackaged foods. These purchases increased expenses to the department relative to spending in previous school years.

MEAL DELIVERY

To accommodate students receiving instruction on campus and remotely, Reagan County ISD altered various aspects of its meal service during school year 2020–21. To provide meals for remote-learning students, the district established a curbside pickup process. The district distributed meals on disposable trays at a single drive-through location for all grades at the elementary school. On-campus and remote-learning students received the same meals. To determine how many meals to prepare, Food Services Department staff based estimates on meal participation for the elementary school from the previous school year. The department anticipated that most elementary parents would pick up meals for their students. However, according to staff, few remote-learning students participated in curbside meal distribution during school year 2020–21.

For on-campus students, Reagan County ISD's meal delivery process did not change significantly from previous school years. The primary change was the new practice of serving breakfast in the classroom during school year 2020–21 for all elementary school students. Students received individually wrapped breakfasts when they entered the building and carried them to the classrooms. Middle school and high school students were served breakfasts in the cafeterias with

an emphasis on increased social distancing. The district served lunches at all grade levels in the cafeteria and limited the number of students who were in the cafeteria at once. During previous school years, the district served all elementary school and middle school grades lunches at the same time in the cafeterias. However, during school year 2020–21, the district assigned different meal times for elementary school and middle school students by grades.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

The average daily participation (ADP) rate for the district's child nutrition programs varied during the school year. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. Reagan County ISD's lunch ADP decreased by 12.4 percent during the first six months of school year 2020–21 compared to the first six months of school year 2019–20. However, breakfast ADP increased by 43.7 percent during school year 2020–21 compared to school year 2019–20. On average, the district served 69 fewer lunches and 111 more breakfasts each day during school year 2020–21 than during school year 2019–20.

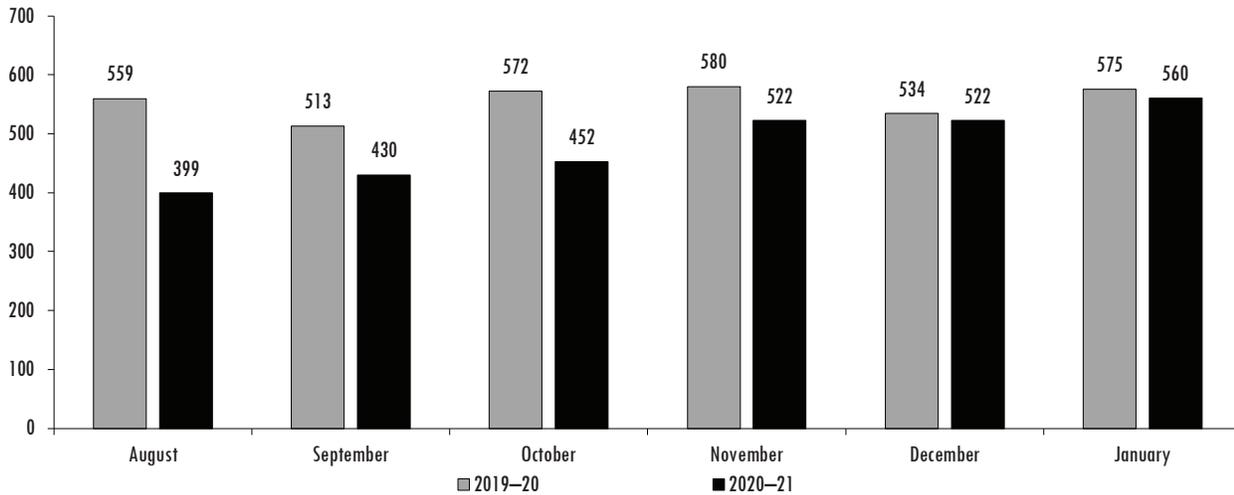
During school year 2020–21, Reagan County ISD's ADP for both lunch and breakfast were lowest in August 2020 and steadily increased as students returned to on-campus instruction. Lunch ADP increased by 40.4 percent from August 2020 to January 2021. The increase in lunches served during this six-month period corresponds to the increase in the number of students receiving on-campus instruction shown in **Figure 10–3**. However, total lunch ADP was lower for every month during school year 2020–21 compared to school year 2019–20. The largest decrease in lunch ADP occurred in August 2020 when the district served on average 160 fewer lunches per day than in August 2019, which represents a 28.6 percent decrease. Lunch ADP increased slightly as the district implemented SSO in November 2020. This slight upward trend continued through January 2021.

Figure 10–4 shows Reagan County ISD's lunch ADP by month for the first six months of school year 2020–21 compared to the same period during school year 2019–20.

Reagan County ISD staff reported that the decrease in the district's lunch ADP was due to lower meal participation by remote-learning students at the beginning of the school year. As the number of on-campus learners increased, lunch ADP also increased.

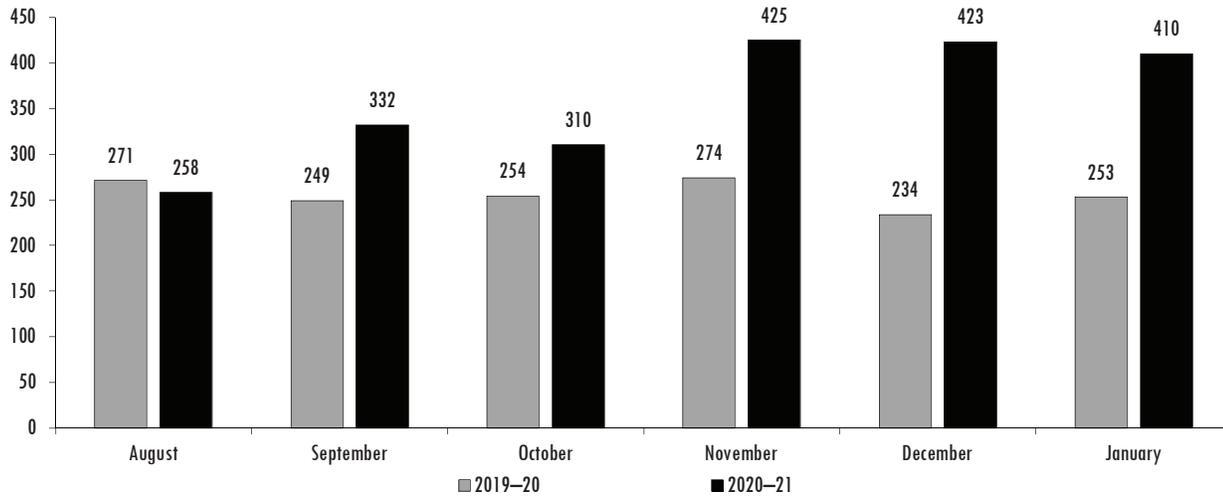
However, Reagan County ISD's overall breakfast ADP increased during school year 2020–21. With the exception of

FIGURE 10-4
REAGAN COUNTY ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Reagan County ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FIGURE 10-5
REAGAN COUNTY ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Reagan County ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

August 2020, the district’s breakfast ADP for school year 2020-21 was greater than each comparable month of school year 2019-20. **Figure 10-5** shows Reagan County ISD’s breakfast ADP for the first six months of school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Staff attributed the increase in breakfast participation during school year 2020-21 to the district’s serving breakfast in the classroom to all elementary school grades.

Despite the increase in the breakfast ADP, Reagan County ISD served fewer total meals during the first six months of

school year 2020–21 than during the same period during school year 2019–20. From August 2020 to January 2021, Reagan ISD’s Food Services Department served 77,478 meals, including 44,243 lunches and 33,235 breakfasts. This amount is a 4.2 percent decrease in total meals served compared to the same six-month period during school year 2019–20. **Figure 10–6** shows the total number of meals served during school year 2020–21 compared to those served during school year 2019–20.

The decrease in total meals served resulted from a 20.2 percent decrease in total lunches served from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21. However, breakfast participation increased from the previous year by 30.7 percent. One factor contributing to the decrease in overall meals served may be that Reagan County ISD’s total student enrollment decreased by 5.3 percent for school year 2020–21.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Increased operating costs affected Reagan County ISD’s Food Services Department budget negatively during school year 2020–21. However, as of January 2021, the district reported receiving \$210,351 in meal reimbursements for school year 2020–21. This amount is an increase of \$26,473, or 14.4 percent, from what the district received during the same period during school year 2019–20. **Figure 10–7** shows Reagan County ISD’s total meal reimbursements for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

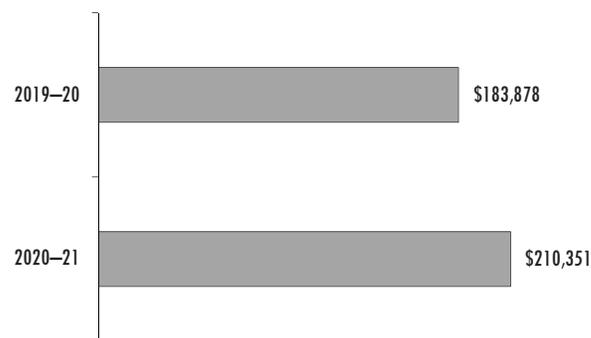
USDA annually establishes national average payments that represent the amount of funding the federal government reimburses for lunches, afterschool snacks, and breakfasts served to children participating in the NSLP and SBP. The USDA’s national average payments for breakfast and lunch increased from school year 2019–20 to school year 2020–21. Thus, although Reagan County ISD’s total meals served decreased slightly during school year 2020–21 compared to the previous school year, total meal reimbursement revenue increased as the per-meal reimbursement rates increased from the previous year. See **Appendix A** for more information regarding the increases to meal reimbursement rates in school year 2020–21. Additionally, when the district implemented SSO, total monthly reimbursements were significantly greater for November, December, and January of school year 2020–21

**FIGURE 10–6
REAGAN COUNTY ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED
FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21**

MEAL	2019–20	2020–21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	55,470	44,243	(20.2%)
Breakfasts	25,421	33,235	30.7%
Total	80,891	77,478	(4.2%)

NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Reagan County ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

**FIGURE 10–7
REAGAN COUNTY ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21**

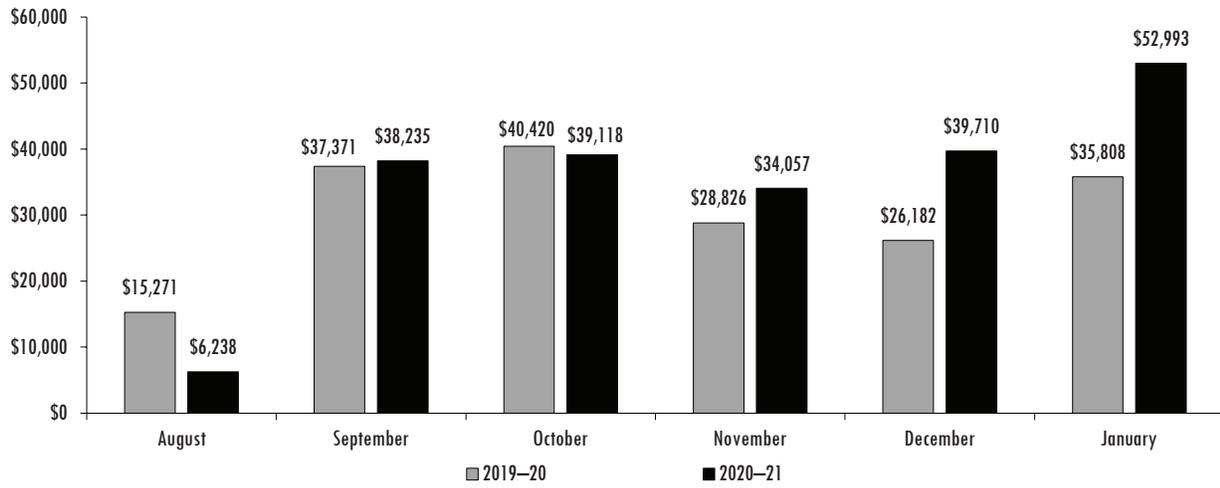


NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Reagan County ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

than they were for the same period during school year 2019–20. **Figure 10–8** shows Reagan County ISD’s total meal reimbursements by month for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

The Reagan County ISD Food Services Department operated at a net financial loss for school year 2019–20. Although the district’s reimbursements increased during school year 2020–21, this increase was offset by increased expenses. Staff attributed the department’s increased expenses to purchasing additional paper products to bag and wrap meals and serve items for pickup. Staff also said that the department did not serve a la carte items during school year 2020–21, which also decreased overall revenues. According to staff, the department expected to record a financial loss for school year 2020–21.

FIGURE 10-8
REAGAN COUNTY ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS BY MONTH
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Reagan County ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

11. ROSCOE COLLEGIATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Roscoe Collegiate Independent School District (ISD) serves the northwest portion of Nolan County, immediately west of Sweetwater. A collegiate ISD is an open-enrollment district that has collaborated with accredited colleges and universities to provide students access to early college programs. Roscoe Collegiate ISD's programs focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses related to agricultural workforce areas. Roscoe Collegiate ISD's enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 647 students. The district operates three schools including one early childhood center that serves prekindergarten and kindergarten students, one elementary school that serves grades one to five, and one secondary school that serves grades six to 12. The elementary school shares a facility with the secondary school.

Figure 11–1 shows Roscoe Collegiate ISD's student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 44.0 percent of Roscoe Collegiate ISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, less than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 9.0 percent of students as English Learners, less than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 38.7 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was less than the state average of 50.6 percent.

Roscoe Collegiate ISD's wealth per student, as determined by the district's weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$323,406 during school year 2019–20. This amount exceeds the state median of Texas school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049 but was not sufficient to subject Roscoe Collegiate ISD to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49. As a result, the district is not considered property wealthy for school year 2020–21.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, Roscoe Collegiate ISD contracted with a food service management company (FSMC) to operate its Food Service Department. The district operated one kitchen and one cafeteria for the elementary and secondary campus and a serving site at the early childhood center where food was delivered daily. Roscoe Collegiate ISD provided breakfast to all students through the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) and served breakfast in the classroom for all

FIGURE 11–1
ROSCOE COLLEGIATE ISD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	1.4%	12.6%
Hispanic	52.6%	52.8%
White	44.1%	27.0%
Two or More Races	1.9%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	44.0%	60.3%
English Learners	9.0%	20.3%
At Risk	38.7%	50.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

grades. The district provided lunch to all students through the federal National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

The district provided free breakfast and lunch to prekindergarten to grade five students through the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a meal service option that enables campuses and districts in low-income areas to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. The district also served universal free breakfast to secondary school students pursuant to the National School Lunch Act, Provision 2.

Roscoe Collegiate ISD's Food Service Department consisted of eight FSMC staff, including one food service director, one supervisor, one kitchen manager, one lead cook, and four food service staff. The food service director reported to the Roscoe Collegiate ISD superintendent and the district's business manager. **Figure 11–2** shows the organization of Roscoe Collegiate ISD's Food Service Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Roscoe Collegiate ISD began school year 2020–21 as scheduled August 10, 2020. The district's enrollment increased by six students, or 0.94 percent, from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

Roscoe Collegiate ISD offered students the option of receiving instruction on campus or remotely. The majority of students chose to attend classes on campus, and, by the end of September 2020, 96.4 percent of students in the district

attended class on campus, and 23 students attended remotely. As the school year progressed, more students returned to campus, and by the end of January 2021, 98.7 percent of students attended on-campus classes, and eight students opted for remote learning.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

The organization of the Food Service Department did not change during school year 2020–21; however, the district made several changes to its meal programs. First, the district offered free universal breakfast to secondary students. During the previous school year, free breakfast was limited to students at the early childhood center and the elementary campus. The district operated the same number of cafeterias or kitchens and continued to operate the NSLP and the SBP for all students and the CEP for students in prekindergarten to grade five. The district chose not to apply for any federal waivers to operate its child nutrition programs for school year 2020–21.

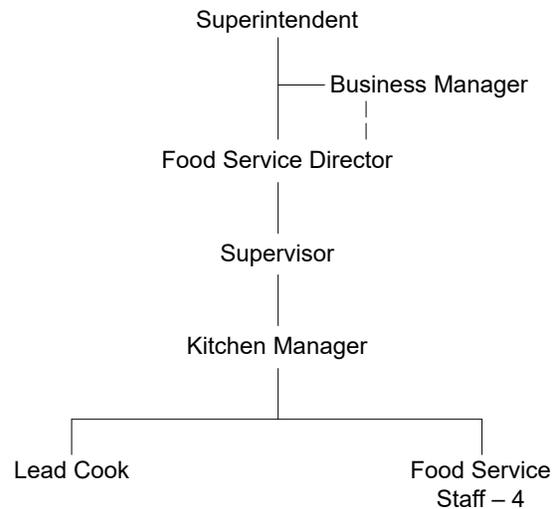
MEAL PREPARATION

Safety precautions implemented for school year 2020–21 increased the labor and time required for the district’s meal preparation processes. Food service staff performed several additional steps to prepare meals before serving, including slicing fruits and vegetables and packing them into cups with lids, prepackaging meals, and packing all breakfasts in bags. Prepackaging breakfasts required staff to obtain accurate meal counts for the expected number of students served to avoid wasting money and food. Before the pandemic, students eating breakfast in the classroom could place unwanted items on a table to make these items available for other students. In addition, districts could place unused items such as juice and fresh fruit back on the serving line. However, to minimize contact among students, Roscoe Collegiate ISD no longer permitted sharing food within classrooms, and students were required to dispose of any unconsumed food or beverage products.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

The Food Service Department instituted several safety precautions during school year 2020–21. All staff’s temperatures were checked at the start of their shifts before entering the kitchen, and staff were required to wear masks and wash their hands every 20 minutes. To support social distancing, the district installed an extra table in the kitchen

**FIGURE 11–2
ROSCOE COLLEGIATE ISD FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION, SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21**



SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; Roscoe Collegiate ISD, March 2021.

to enable staff to maintain a safe distance while preparing food. The department instructed staff to contact department management before coming to work if they exhibited any COVID-19 symptoms to determine whether staff should stay home. The district retained the same number of staff during school year 2020–21 from the past school year.

PURCHASING

Demand for certain types of food and supplies increased during school year 2020–21, resulting in shortages of some items. Roscoe Collegiate ISD experienced shortages of disposable materials for prepackaging meals, such as paper bags and trays. The Food Service Department used carryout boxes and paper plates at times because of shortages of other paper goods.

Similarly, shelf-stable products that are better suited for takeout meal service were in high demand and short supply. Staff reported that they ordered products well in advance of their intended use. This practice afforded them time to find alternative items and change menus if products became unavailable. Staff reported that the food shortages were a particular issue during the fall semester of school year 2020–21, but shortages largely were resolved as of March 2021. However, the district still had issues obtaining disposable serving trays at that time.

MEAL DELIVERY

Most of Roscoe Collegiate ISD's students attended class in person throughout school year 2020–21. Therefore, the primary effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on meal service was the need to develop protocols for serving students on campus.

The district served all lunches in the cafeteria and all breakfasts in the classrooms. The district served breakfast in the classroom from the beginning of school year 2020–21 to help reduce contact among students in the cafeteria. Breakfasts were prepared and bagged in the kitchen and delivered to the classrooms each day. For lunch service in the cafeteria, the district instituted several steps to protect students during meal time. Students were required to wear masks, and the district placed markers on the floor in the serving line to indicate where students should stand to maintain social distancing of six feet. The district also placed the chairs six feet apart at each table. Students were not permitted to enter the serving line all at once; instead, one table of students at a time entered the serving line while all other tables remained seated. The next table did not enter the serving line until the first table of students left the serving line and students were seated with their meals. The district adjusted meal serving times by several minutes because fewer students could sit in the cafeteria while socially distanced. The district also set the meal times to minimize interaction among groups of students entering and leaving the cafeteria. This strategy helped reduce the number of students in close contact with one another.

To promote student and staff safety, the district required staff to wear masks at all times while on campus. To minimize communication issues, district staff assembled a tray of each meal option for the day and showed it to students at the beginning of the serving line so that students could decide what they wanted before entering the line.

To accommodate remote-learning students of all grade levels, food service staff prepared bagged breakfast and lunch meals daily and made them available for pickup at the front office of each campus. However, few remote-learning students availed themselves of these meals, and staff reported very little participation by these students throughout the year. According to staff, the biggest challenge to feeding remote-learning students was travel to the district's distribution site. Many of the district's students reside up to 20.0 miles away from campus and chose not to travel to the campuses to pick up meals.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

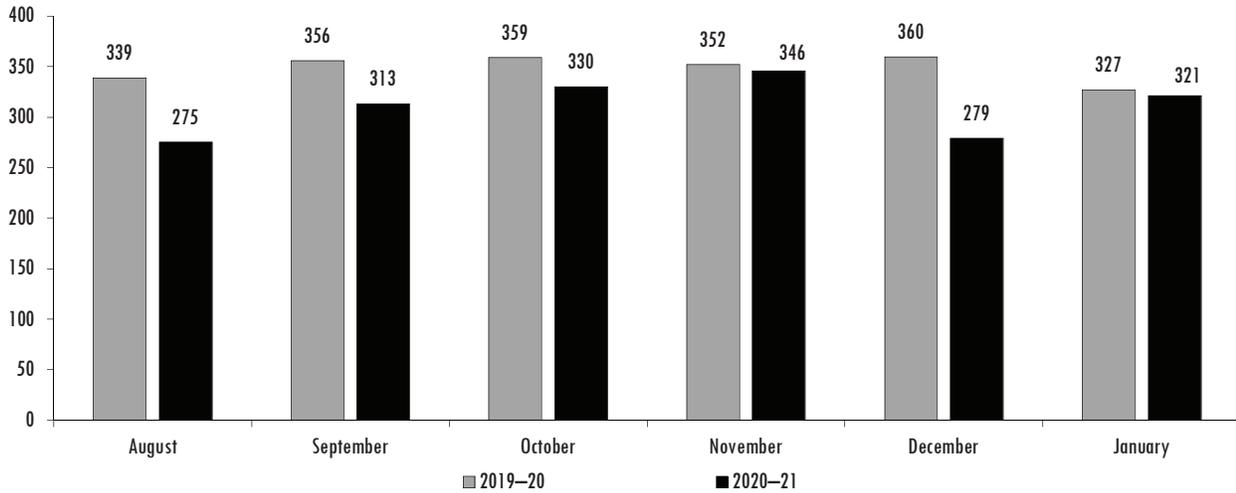
Average daily participation (ADP) rates in Roscoe Collegiate ISD's child nutrition programs changed in school year 2020–21. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program. Roscoe Collegiate ISD's ADP for school lunches from August 2020 to January 2021 was 311 compared to 349 during the first six months of school year 2019–20. This amount is an overall decrease of 10.9 percent, or 38 lunch meals served per day. In contrast, the district's ADP for school breakfast increased during school year 2020–21. From August 2020 to January 2021, Roscoe Collegiate ISD served 222 breakfasts a day compared to the 201 breakfasts per day the district served during school year 2019–20. This amount is an overall increase of 10.4 percent, or 21 breakfasts served per day.

A closer examination of the district's ADP for school meals by month shows that the district recorded the lowest ADP during the first month of school year 2020–21. However, as the school year progressed, lunch ADP increased to nearly the same rate recorded during January 2020. **Figure 11–3** shows Roscoe Collegiate ISD's lunch ADP by month for the six-month period from August to January for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21. During this period, daily lunch participation increased from 275 students in August 2020 to 321 students in January 2021.

Although the number of students eating lunch increased during the first six months of school year 2020–21, the overall lunch ADP was less than the rate recorded for the same period during school year 2019–20. Food Service Department staff reported that the decrease in the district's lunch participation was due to on-campus students choosing to bring lunch from home to avoid exposure to COVID-19. In addition, as an open-enrollment district, many of Roscoe Collegiate ISD's remote-learning students reside too far from campus for the pickup meal distribution service to be convenient.

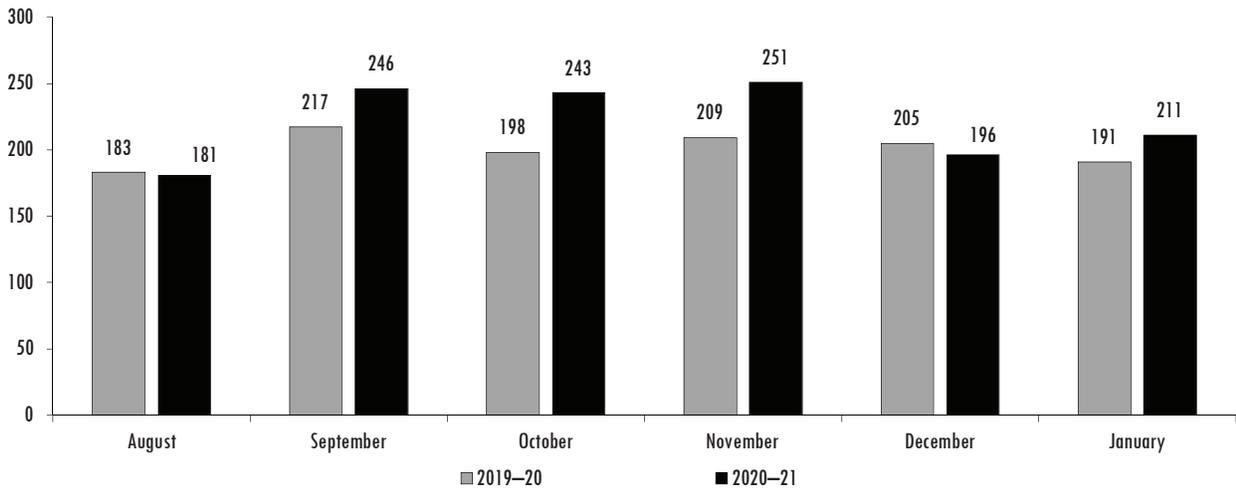
In contrast to lunch service, more students participated in school breakfast service during school year 2020–21 than during school year 2019–20. This increase likely was a result of the district's implementation of breakfast in the classroom and universal free breakfast. Breakfast ADP increased after the district resumed on-campus instruction, and the breakfast ADP in September, October, November, and January surpassed the rates for those months during school year 2019–20. **Figure 11–4** shows Roscoe Collegiate ISD's breakfast ADP by month for the six-month period from August to January for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

FIGURE 11-3
ROSCOE COLLEGIATE ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Roscoe Collegiate ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FIGURE 11-4
ROSCOE COLLEGIATE ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
 SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Roscoe Collegiate ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

During this period, breakfast ADP increased from 181 students in August 2020 to 211 students in January 2021.

Although breakfast ADP increased, the decrease in lunch ADP resulted in the district serving fewer total meals during school year 2020-21. From August 2020 to January 2021,

the Roscoe Collegiate ISD Food Service Department served 54,941 meals, including 32,047 lunches and 22,894 breakfasts. This amount is a 9.1 percent decrease in total meals served compared to the same six-month period during school year 2019-20. **Figure 11-5** shows the total number of meals served during school years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Roscoe Collegiate ISD's Food Service Department incurred more expenses during school year 2020–21 than during past school years. According to staff, the labor and materials required to prepare prepackaged meals increased costs for the department. However, unlike many districts, Roscoe Collegiate ISD's Food Service Department received slightly more reimbursement funding during school year 2020–21 than during previous years. As of January 2021, the district reported receiving \$144,984 in meal reimbursement for school year 2020–21. This amount is \$6,074 more than the district received for the same period during school year 2019–20, a 4.4 percent increase in reimbursement funds. **Figure 11–6** shows Roscoe Collegiate ISD's total meal reimbursements for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

A detailed examination of meal reimbursements at the campus level shows that the increase in reimbursement funds was due to increased breakfast reimbursements at the elementary school and the early childhood center. All campuses recorded a decrease in lunch reimbursement funds, with the largest decrease at the secondary school. **Figure 11–7** shows a comparison of meal reimbursements for breakfast and lunch at all campuses for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

As a result of the overall increase in reimbursements, the Food Service Department did not expect to record a financial loss at the end of school year 2020–21, despite its increased expenditures in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIGURE 11–5
ROSCOE COLLEGIATE ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED
FROM AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21

MEAL	2019–20	2020–21	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	38,399	32,047	(16.5%)
Breakfasts	22,055	22,894	3.8%
Total	60,454	54,941	(9.1%)

NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Roscoe Collegiate ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FIGURE 11–6
ROSCOE COLLEGIATE ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 AND 2020–21



NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Roscoe Collegiate ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FIGURE 11–7
ROSCOE COLLEGIATE ISD TOTAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS
AUGUST TO JANUARY, SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21

CAMPUS	LUNCH REIMBURSEMENTS		PERCENTAGE CHANGE
	2019–20	2020–21	
Roscoe Collegiate Secondary School	\$28,074	\$23,222	(17.3%)
Roscoe Collegiate Elementary School	\$45,802	\$45,529	(0.6%)
Roscoe Collegiate Early Childhood Center	\$30,402	\$29,384	(3.3%)
CAMPUS	BREAKFAST REIMBURSEMENTS		PERCENTAGE CHANGE
	2019–20	2020–21	
Roscoe Collegiate Secondary School	\$5,762	\$3,538	(38.6%)
Roscoe Collegiate Elementary School	\$14,932	\$19,058	27.6%
Roscoe Collegiate Early Childhood Center	\$13,938	\$24,254	74.0%

NOTE: January 2021 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, Roscoe Collegiate ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

12. SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

San Benito Consolidated Independent School District (CISD) serves San Benito, Los Indios, Rangerville, a small portion of Harlingen, and the communities of El Camino Angosto, Encantada-Ranchito El Calabox, La Paloma, and Lago. The district’s enrollment for school year 2020–21 was 9,719 students. It operates 11 elementary school campuses, three middle school campuses, two high school campuses, and five alternative school campuses. **Figure 12–1** shows San Benito CISD’s student demographics compared to state averages for school year 2019–20.

Approximately 87.0 percent of San Benito CISD students were categorized as economically disadvantaged, greater than the state average of 60.3 percent. The district identified 22.4 percent of students as English Learners, greater than the state average of 20.3 percent. The district also identified 57.2 percent of students as at risk of dropping out of school, which was greater than the state average of 50.6 percent.

San Benito CISD’s wealth per student, as determined by the district’s weighted average daily attendance (WADA), was \$91,802 during school year 2019–20. This amount is less than the state median of school district wealth per WADA of \$300,049. As a result, San Benito CISD was not subject to the recapture provisions in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 49, during school year 2020–21, and is not considered a property-wealthy district.

OVERVIEW OF FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

During school year 2020–21, the district contracted with a food service management company (FSMC) to operate its Child Nutrition Department. Before school year 2020–21, the Child Nutrition Department used a self-management model.

San Benito CISD provided breakfasts, lunches, and suppers to students during school year 2020–21 through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). SSO is a federal meal program that authorizes districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP) to provide meals in low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) authorized districts to operate SSO during spring 2020 and school year 2020–21. SSO enabled the district to provide

FIGURE 12–1
SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED ISD
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
SCHOOL YEAR 2019–20

STUDENTS	DISTRICT	STATE
African American	0.1%	12.6%
Hispanic	99.1%	52.8%
White	0.7%	27.0%
Two or More Races	0.1%	2.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	87.0%	60.3%
English Learners	22.4%	20.3%
At Risk	57.2%	50.6%

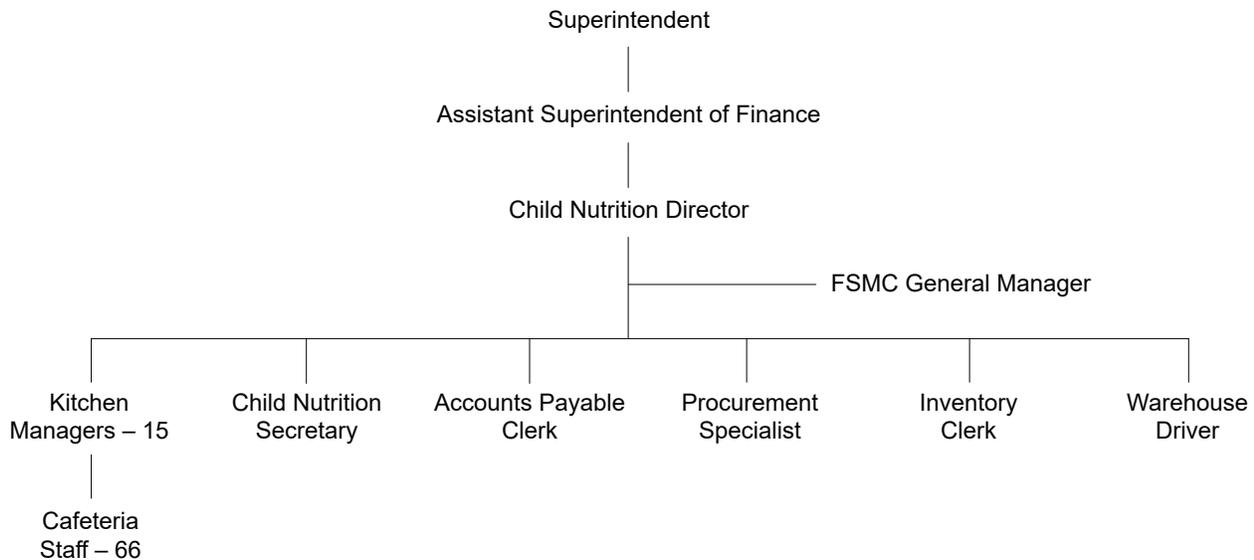
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, school year 2019–20.

meals to any child age 18 or younger, regardless of whether the child is enrolled in the district. San Benito CISD staff said that this provision was a significant reason why the district implemented SSO. The SSO program also authorizes the district to provide meals to students seven days a week; San Benito CISD provided this extended service through curbside and bus-delivery programs.

San Benito CISD serves free breakfasts, lunches, and suppers to all students at all campuses through the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP enables campuses and districts in low-income areas to serve breakfasts, lunches, and suppers at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household income applications.

San Benito CISD operated 16 of its 17 kitchens at the time of the Legislative Budget Board’s School Performance Review Team’s review in March 2021. The remaining kitchen was closed due to the changing needs of the alternative school campus at which it is located. Some of the district’s alternative school campuses do not have kitchens, and students are served food prepared at other campuses. All operating kitchens have corresponding cafeterias. San Benito CISD’s Child Nutrition Department consists of 87 staff including one child nutrition director, one child nutrition secretary, one accounts payable clerk, one procurement specialist, one inventory clerk, one warehouse driver, 15 kitchen managers, and 66 cafeteria staff. One kitchen had an open position for a manager at the time of the review because the former manager had

FIGURE 12-2
SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED ISD CHILD NUTRITION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21



NOTE: FSMC=food service management company.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team; San Benito Consolidated ISD, March 2021.

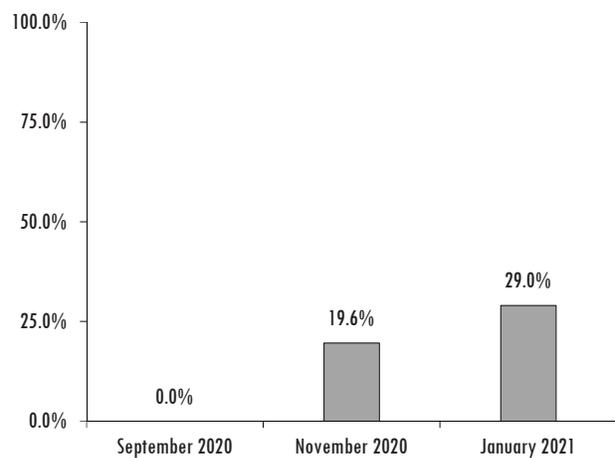
retired. All staff in the Child Nutrition Department are employed by the district full time for 8.0 hours a day. Additionally, the district employs a group of 10 substitutes that it deploys to cover staff absences. The FSMC includes a general manager, who is the liaison between the district’s child nutrition director and the FSMC. **Figure 12-2** shows the organization of San Benito CISD’s Child Nutrition Department.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

For school year 2020-21, San Benito CISD began classes September 8, 2020. This date is three weeks later than classes began in school year 2019-20. The district’s enrollment decreased from 10,244 during school year 2019-20, to 9,719 during school year 2020-21, a decrease of 525 students or 5.1 percent.

The district began school year 2020-21 with all students receiving remote-only instruction and opened campuses to on-campus learning beginning in November 2020. As of January 2021, 29.0 percent of San Benito CISD students received instruction in person. **Figure 12-3** shows the percentage of San Benito CISD students receiving on-campus instruction during certain enrollment reporting periods for school year 2020-21.

FIGURE 12-3
PERCENTAGE OF SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED ISD STUDENTS RECEIVING ON-CAMPUS INSTRUCTION
SEPTEMBER 2020 TO JANUARY 2021



NOTE: The data shown represents on-campus student data that the district provided. See **Appendix A** for a detailed explanation of the data provided by San Benito Consolidated ISD for November 2020 and January 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of State Health Services, School Reported COVID-19 Cases, February 2021.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

PROGRAMS

As during previous school years, the district participated in the federal NSLP, SBP, and Child and Adult Care Food Afterschool Program during school year 2020–21. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the district implemented the SSO in March 2020. The district operated SSO through the end of school year 2019–20, summer 2020, and during school year 2020–21. To continue to operate its child nutrition programs during the pandemic, the district also received the following USDA waivers for school year 2020–21 (see **Glossary** for waiver descriptions):

- Non-congregate Feeding Waiver;
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver;
- Meal Times Waiver; and
- Meal Pattern Waiver.

MEAL PREPARATION

San Benito CISD's Child Nutrition Department modified its meal preparation process during school year 2020–21. The department adjusted its menus to minimize staff's time preparing food and, therefore, reduce the risk of spreading the virus. For example, staff reported that they no longer used recipes that required raw chicken, because those recipes require too much preparation time.

Staff are required to wear masks and gloves while working. The child nutrition director followed advisories from the Texas Department of Agriculture and regional Education Service Center I for updates regarding required sanitation standards. San Benito CISD's Child Nutrition Department implemented additional requirements during school year 2020–21, which include increased hand washing before and after wearing disposable gloves and masks and after touching any objects that have been handled by others, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces as often as possible. These standards increased meal preparation and serving times. At the beginning of school year 2020–21, cafeteria managers met weekly with the child nutrition director to discuss updated procedures. Cafeteria managers then trained their staff regarding any changes.

STAFFING AND SAFETY

Total department staff decreased from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21. Staff reported that some department staff left

the district's employment in school year 2020–21 for various reasons, including health concerns or lack of childcare. Staff also said that concerns about COVID-19 exposure prevented the district from replacing child nutrition staff due to the mutual reluctance of district staff and candidates to meet for on-campus interviews. Additionally, staff absences increased due to quarantining after exposures or development of symptoms among staff or their families. During school year 2019–20, the Child Nutrition Department employed approximately 100 staff, but it operated with 87 staff as of March 2021.

San Benito CISD implemented several new safety procedures during school year 2020–2019. The district required staff to have their temperatures checked and to participate in a health survey to determine risk levels before beginning work shifts. Staff reported that outbreaks occurred among staff early in the pandemic, during which some kitchens were shut down temporarily to prevent the spread of the virus. Other kitchens provided meals for campuses with closed kitchens during this period.

Staff said that adequate staffing has been the most challenging aspect of providing food services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The San Benito CISD Transportation and Maintenance departments provided assistance in packaging and delivering meals to students. Additionally, due to the increase in staff absences, the Child Nutrition Department increased reliance on substitutes and made them all permanent floating positions, meaning that they reported each day with the expectation that they would have assignments.

PURCHASING

The district also incurred additional purchasing expenses during school year 2020–21. Staff reported that the district purchased additional items, such as paper goods for packaging foods and disposable serving trays, to reduce preparation, serving, and cleaning times, which increased the department's expenditures. These items enabled staff to produce more prepackaged foods, such as wrapped sandwiches, that could be prepared and served quickly. The district did not report significant delays or difficulties receiving commodities during the pandemic.

MEAL DELIVERY

San Benito CISD changed its meal delivery processes during school year 2020–21 to accommodate students receiving on-campus and remote instruction.

To accommodate remote-learning students, meals were provided via curbside and bus-delivery systems during school year 2020–21. Three campus kitchens prepared breakfast, lunch, and supper meals for bus distribution routes and for the students that were attending in person at those campuses. These meals contained prepacked, individually wrapped, or frozen items, including instructions for preparation at home. Each weekly delivery included seven bundles of three meals for each day of the week, including weekends. Staff said that these bundled meals were served to San Benito CISD students and children who were not enrolled in the district. The ability to provide meals to all children in the community was one of the primary reasons the district chose to operate SSO during school year 2020–21.

The district determined the daily number of meals to prepare for bus delivery based on the number of meals picked up during the previous week and adjusted meal counts for increased demand, using tracking sheets to record the meals provided. These meals were delivered to centralized drop-off locations throughout the district. Families were alerted to this option through communications from campus staff and district social media campaigns. Food was provided to students and eligible community children on a first-come, first-served basis. If a delivery route ran out of meals during any week, staff acquired more meals from a nearby route or returned to the campus for more. Because the Child Nutrition Department operated with a reduced number of staff, transportation and maintenance staff assisted to package and deliver these meals.

Additionally, nine campuses operated a curbside program for remote-learning students during school year 2020–21. The curbside program operated on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, providing three meals for the day of operation, three additional meals for the next weekday, and six additional meals for the weekend on Fridays. Each package included one hot meal for the day of pickup and other meals served cold, such as sandwiches, wraps, and salads.

To accommodate on-campus students, staff distributed all meals to classrooms, and teachers documented student meal service. As of March 2021, San Benito CISD had not served meals at its cafeterias during school year 2020–21. Child Nutrition Department staff delivered meals and collected materials one hour later. The district used this system for breakfast and lunch. On-campus students did not receive supper.

Meal service times also changed during school year 2020–21 to enable the district to operate these alternative meal service

options. However, meals for on-campus students were served at the same scheduled meal times as during previous school years. Buses for meal distribution departed campus for deliveries at 10:15 AM once weekly, and the curbside meals were served from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM three times a week.

FOOD SERVICES OUTCOMES

San Benito CISD's Child Nutrition Department's operational outcomes changed during school year 2020–21. These outcomes affected average daily participation (ADP) rates, total meals served, and department finances. ADP is the average number of reimbursable student meals served daily in a child nutrition program.

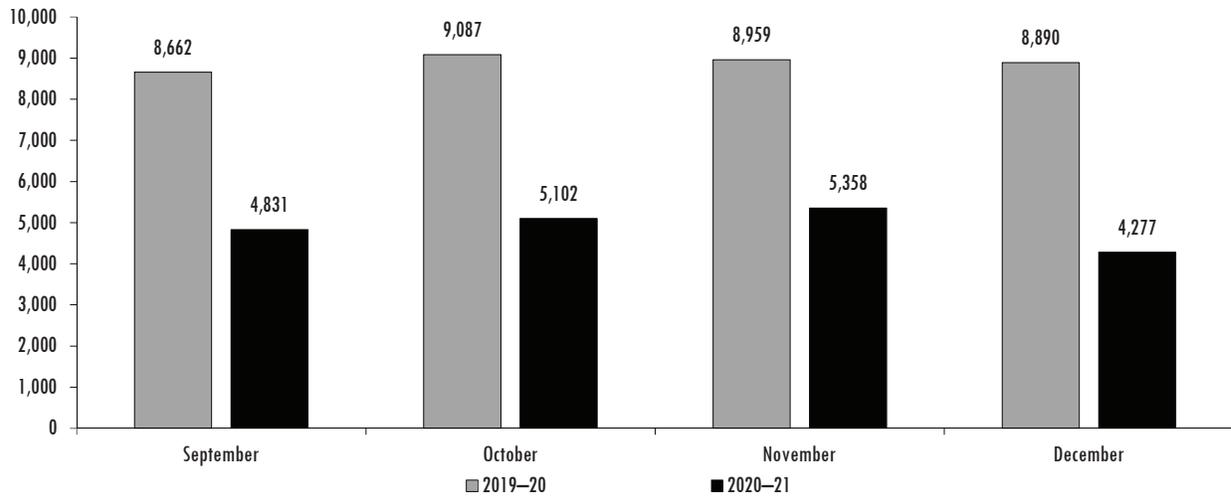
The district's lunch ADP from September 2020 to December 2020 decreased by 45.0 percent compared to the same four-month period during school year 2019–20. **Figure 12–4** shows a comparison by month of lunch ADP for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

Lunch ADP in San Benito CISD was significantly lower during the first four months of school year 2020–21 compared to the same months during school year 2019–20. Lunch ADP had a small, but steady increase throughout the first three months of school year 2020. However, lunch ADP did not continue to increase as the district opened campuses in November 2020. Lunch ADP decreased abruptly in December 2020, despite 19.6 percent of students returning to on-campus learning on campus in November 2020.

Staff reported that the overall decrease in lunch participation rates during school year 2020–21 was a result of providing meals to remote-learning students. Staff said that it was more difficult for the Child Nutrition Department to reach those students, requiring extensive nontraditional meal service such as curbside and bus-delivery programs. For curbside pickup, parents and caregivers might not have been able to leave work to pick up meals, might not have had transportation to the designated pickup site, or might not have been comfortable picking up the district's food during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even when the district used a bus-delivery system for meals, trying to reach almost 10,000 students in the district outside of a cafeteria setting proved to be extremely challenging.

Breakfast ADP during school year 2020–21 had a smaller decrease from school year 2019–20 than lunch ADP. During school year 2020–21, breakfast ADP decreased by 10.7 percent from the previous school year. **Figure 12–5** shows a comparison by month of breakfast ADP for school years 2019–20 and 2020–21.

FIGURE 12-4
SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LUNCHES
SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21

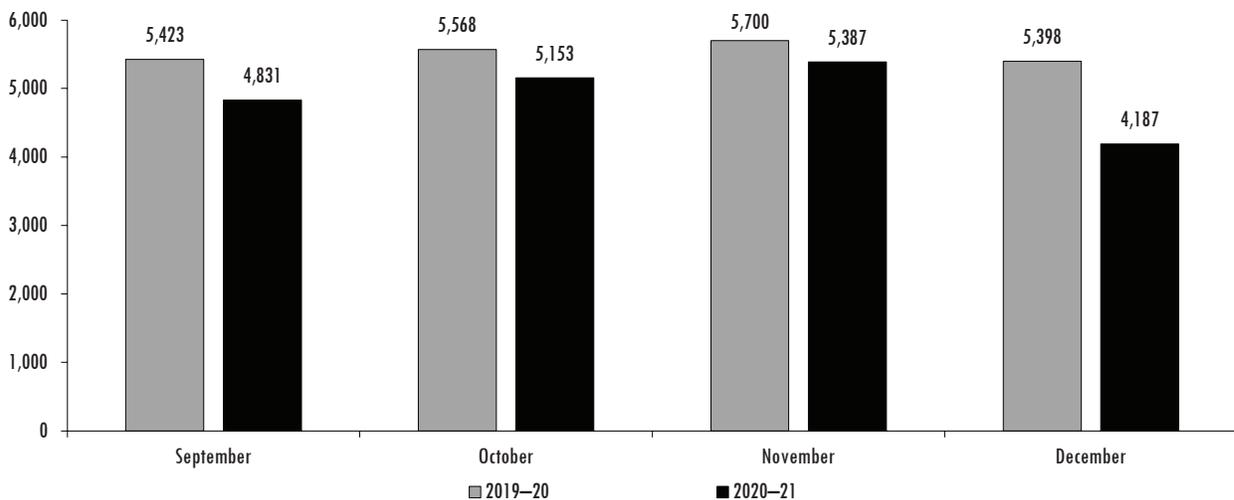


NOTES:

- (1) December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
- (2) The district operated the federal Seamless Summer Option (SSO) for school year 2020-21. Meal participation is not calculated separately for breakfast and lunch in accordance with SSO.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, San Benito Consolidated ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

FIGURE 12-5
SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED ISD AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL BREAKFASTS
SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER, SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 AND 2020-21



NOTES:

- (1) December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020-21 as of March 2021.
- (2) The district operated the federal Seamless Summer Option (SSO) for school year 2020-21. Meal participation is not calculated separately for breakfast and lunch in accordance with SSO.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, San Benito Consolidated ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

According to staff, breakfast ADP likely remained at relatively higher levels than lunch ADP during school year 2020–21 due to the large number of students who were learning remotely and participating in the bundled meals through the curbside and bus-delivery programs. Students participating in bundled-meal programs receive all meals at once, which equalizes participation in both breakfast and lunch programs. Most districts that do not use bundling record greater participation rates in lunch programs than breakfast programs.

San Benito CISD also reported a less significant decrease in total meals served during school year 2020–21 than in lunch ADP. From September 2020 to December 2020, the San Benito CISD Child Nutrition Department served 1,005,711 meals compared to 1,052,401 meals served during the same four-month period during school year 2019–20. This amount is a 4.4 percent decrease in total meals served. **Figure 12–6** shows the total number of meals served during school year 2020–21 compared to those served during school year 2019–20.

The decrease in total meals served by the district was less significant than the decreases in ADP for lunch and breakfast. The district’s weekend distribution of meals through SSO during school year 2020–21 might have contributed to this smaller decrease. The district did not provide weekend meals during previous school years. These bundled meals also offset the decrease in enrollment that typically would result in fewer total meals served. Although the district provided additional meals for participating students each week, the meal totals decreased from the previous school year.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Decreased participation and increased operating costs impacted San Benito CISD’s Child Nutrition Department budget negatively during school year 2020–21. The decrease in meals served led to a corresponding decrease in the total reimbursement the district received. Reimbursements decreased by approximately 6.7 percent, or \$213,041, from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21. **Figure 12–7** shows San Benito CISD’s reimbursements from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21.

The percentage decrease in reimbursements does not match the percentage decrease in total meals served for various reasons, including that reimbursement rates for meals are calculated differently. Lunch is reimbursed at a higher rate than breakfast, and the district increased breakfasts served while recording a significant decrease in lunches served.

**FIGURE 12–6
SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED ISD TOTAL MEALS SERVED
FROM SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER (1)
SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20 TO 2020–21**

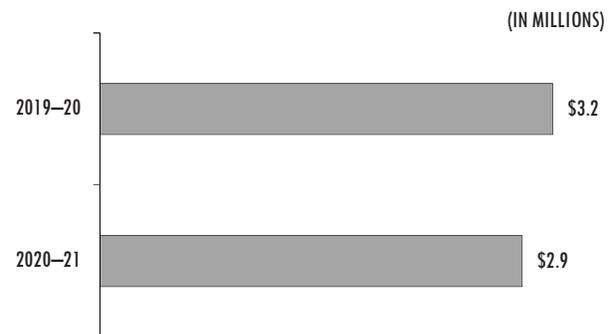
MEAL	2019–20	2020–21 (2)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Lunches	649,424	502,676	(22.6%)
Breakfasts	402,977	503,035	24.8%
Total	1,052,401	1,005,711	(4.4%)

NOTES:

- (1) December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.
- (2) The district operated the federal Seamless Summer Option (SSO) for school year 2020–21. Meal participation is not calculated separately for breakfast and lunch in accordance with SSO.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, San Benito Consolidated ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

**FIGURE 12–7
SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED ISD TOTAL MEAL
REIMBURSEMENTS
SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER, SCHOOL YEARS 2019–20
TO 2020–21**



NOTE: December 2020 was the most recent month data was available for school year 2020–21 as of March 2021.

SOURCES: Legislative Budget Board School Performance Review Team, March 2021; Texas Department of Agriculture, San Benito Consolidated ISD District Profiles 2020 and 2021.

Additionally, USDA annually establishes national average payments that represent the amount of funding the federal government reimburses for lunches, afterschool snacks, and breakfasts served to children participating in the NSLP and SBP. The USDA’s national average payments for breakfast and lunch increased from school years 2019–20 to 2020–21. Therefore, San Benito CISD was reimbursed at a higher rate per lunch and breakfast served during school year 2020–21 compared to the previous school year. This rate change contributed to the district’s resulting decrease in total reimbursements being less than the decrease in total

meals served. See **Appendix A** for more information regarding the increases to meal reimbursement rates for school year 2020–21.

The Child Nutrition Department’s revenues exceeded expenditures during school year 2019–20. However, district staff reported that the department expected expenses to exceed revenue during school year 2020–21, due to decreased reimbursements and increased operating costs. The district incurred additional expenses during school year 2020–21 due to purchasing prepackaged and low-preparation commodities necessary to increase production, reduce exposure in kitchens, and enable staff to serve multiple meals simultaneously via curbside pickup and bus delivery.

GLOSSARY

Afterschool Activity Waiver – To minimize the potential exposure of COVID-19, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) granted a nationwide waiver providing states the discretion to serve afterschool snacks and meals outside of a structured environment and without an educational or enrichment purpose. This waiver authorizes districts to serve snacks and meals outside of the standard afterschool setting for the following child nutrition programs: National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program.

Afterschool Snack Service – A component of the National School Lunch Program that provides afternoon nutrition for students enrolled in afterschool activities. Participating school food authorities receive cash subsidies from USDA for each reimbursable snack served that meets federal requirements.

A la Carte – Any food or beverage sold by a school food services department that is not part of a reimbursable meal.

At-risk Students – Students categorized as at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by the Texas Education Code, Section 29.081.

Average Daily Participation – The average number of students, by eligibility category, participating in the federal Child Nutrition Programs each day. This rate is calculated by dividing the total number of meals claimed in each category during a reporting period by the number of operating days in the period.

Breakfast in the Classroom – An alternative meal-service model intended to improve access and participation in the federal School Breakfast Program by providing breakfast to students at the beginning of a morning class.

Bus Routes Distribution – A meal-delivery method used during the COVID-19 pandemic in which school districts employed school buses to deliver food to children off campus. Meals were delivered to specific locations, usually along typical bus routes, and distributed by food services staff to parents or children. This strategy provides convenience for families who do not reside near school campuses.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – The federal CACFP reimburses providers for meals and snacks

provided to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child-care centers, day-care homes, and adult day-care centers. CACFP also reimburses providers for meals served to children and youth participating in afterschool care programs, children residing in emergency shelters, and adults age 61 or older or living with a disability and enrolled in day-care facilities.

Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) – Federally funded programs to provide children access to nutritious meals and snacks in schools, summer programs, and afterschool programs. CNPs, including the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program, are administered at the federal level by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. In Texas, CNPs are administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and operated through agreements with school districts.

Community Eligibility Provision – A federal option that authorizes schools in low-income areas to provide free meals, including breakfasts and lunches, to all students without collecting household income applications for school meals.

Contract Management Model – The method of operating and administering a school district's food service program by contracting with an external food service management company.

Curbside Pickup Distribution – A meal-delivery method through which food services staff distribute prepackaged meals to students and parents in their vehicles.

Disposable Goods – Products intended for single use, such as paper plates or plastic utensils, after which they are discarded or recycled.

District of Innovation – Designation that districts can apply for if they meet certain performance requirements and the district follows certain procedures for adoption as specified in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 12. The designation exempts the district from certain sections of the Texas Education Code and provides traditional public schools many of the discretionary abilities available to open-enrollment Texas charter schools. The most popular exemptions that are used involve the school calendar, class-size ratios, disciplinary provisions, student attendance, teacher planning periods, and teacher appraisals.

Economically Disadvantaged Student – A category designated by federal and state agencies to provide eligible school districts with federal funding based on the economic need of enrolled students. Students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals in accordance with the National School Lunch Program are categorized as economically disadvantaged.

English Learner – A student who is in the process of acquiring English and is proficient in another language. These students also are referred to as Limited English Proficient.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA serves two primary purposes. It provides parents or eligible students more control over their educational records, and it prohibits educational institutions from disclosing “personally identifiable information in education records” without the written consent of an eligible student, or a minor’s parents. In this report, some school districts did not make public the number of students in their district that tested positive for COVID-19 due to concerns that this information could be used to identify individual students.

Federal Poverty Level (FPL) – Guidelines used to determine eligibility and reimbursement through certain federal assistance programs based on the minimum annual income an individual or family requires to pay for essential needs. For example, the amount of federal reimbursement received by school districts serving meals through the National School Lunch Program is related to the household income of participating students at various percentages of the FPL.

Food Component – One of five food groups that constitute a reimbursable meal planned in accordance with a food-based menu-planning approach. The five food components are meat/meat alternate, grains/breads, fruits, vegetables, and fluid milk. This standard is set by the USDA.

Food Insecurity – The lack of reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

Food Insufficiency – The condition of not getting enough to eat, which represents a more severe phenomenon than food insecurity.

Food Service Management Company – An organization that is contracted by a school district to manage any aspect

of its food service operations and to meet all federal and state regulations.

Grab-and-Go Model – This distribution method enables parents or students to pick up meals prepared by food services staff at portable meal carts in a central location in the district or designated areas of a cafeteria.

Meal Pattern Waiver – Pursuant to the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, Subtitle B, child nutrition program meals and snacks must meet meal pattern requirements. These are nutritional requirements that a meal or snack must meet before it is eligible to be reimbursed. The Meal Pattern Waiver provides districts the discretion to serve meals and snacks that do not meet these meal pattern requirements. This waiver includes an exemption to fluid milk requirements and certain procurement regulations.

Meal Time – The times at which a school district can serve food to students as established in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, Subtitle B.

Meal Times Waiver – This USDA waiver authorizes schools to serve meals to students outside meal service time requirements established in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations to maximize discretion for meal pickup.

Menu Item – Any single food or combination of foods, except condiments, served in a meal reimbursable through one of the Child Nutrition Programs.

National School Lunch Act, Provision 2 – This federal law, enacted in 1946, established the National School Lunch Program to provide low-cost or free lunches to eligible students through reimbursements to school districts. Eligibility is determined based on students’ applications for free or reduced-price meals that include information regarding household income. Provision 2 authorizes districts to collect applications once every four years, instead of annually, and schools’ reimbursements are based on claiming percentages instead of per meal or item.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) – The federal program through which participating schools operate a nonprofit lunch program that serves lunches to students. Lunches must comply with federal nutrition guidelines and are reimbursable to school districts based on the number of meals served within the benefit categories of free, reduced-price, and paid.

Non-congregate Feeding Waiver – Pursuant to the National School Lunch Act and the U.S. Code of

Federal Regulations, Title 7, Subtitle B, child nutrition program meals must be served in a congregate setting and must be consumed by participants onsite. The waiver authorizes districts to waive the congregate meal requirements and serve meals in nongroup settings to support social distancing.

Nonreimbursable Meals – Meals served that cannot be claimed for reimbursement through the NSLP or SBP, such as adult meals, a la carte meals, incomplete meals, and second meals served to students.

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Flexibility for Senior High Schools Waiver – Pursuant to the National School Lunch Act and the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, Subtitle B, program operators at senior high schools as defined by the Texas Education Agency must participate in offer versus serve. OVS is a provision in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program that requires schools to offer a certain number of food components (e.g., meats or other proteins, vegetables, grains) that students choose from for a meal to qualify as reimbursable. It is intended to reduce food waste while enabling students to choose certain foods they prefer. Approval of this waiver suspends the OVS requirement for high schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, authorizing districts to serve plated meals for delivery or pickup.

On-campus Student – A student who is physically present for class at a school campus.

Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up Waiver – Authorizes parents or guardians to collect distributed meals and bring them home to children who are not present on campus.

Personal Protective Equipment – Clothing and equipment worn or used to provide protection against hazardous substances or environments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these items include masks, face shields, and gloves worn by food services staff.

Point of Sale (POS) – The stage in the food service operation, usually at the end of the serving line, at which a determination can be made accurately that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal has been served to an eligible child.

Prepackaged Meal – A ready-made meal that requires little or no preparation besides heating.

Purchasing Cooperative – A group of school districts that purchase products and services collectively to reduce costs and increase quality for all participants.

Reimbursable Meal – A school meal that meets USDA meal requirements and nutrition standards, is served to an eligible student, and is priced as an entire meal rather than based on individual items. Such meals qualify for federal reimbursement.

Reimbursement – Funding received by a school food authority for each meal served that meets the federal meal requirements. Amounts are based on the type of meal served and the eligibility category.

Remote-learning Student – A student who receives online instruction off campus.

School Breakfast Program (SBP) – The program through which participating campuses receive cash assistance for breakfasts served that comply with program requirements. Districts receive various amounts of reimbursement based on the number of breakfasts served in each of three benefit categories: free, reduced-price, and paid. The Texas Education Code, Section 33.901, requires a school district to participate in the breakfast program if at least 10.0 percent of its students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals.

School Food Authority – The governing body that is responsible for the administration of a child nutrition program, eligible to receive federal meal reimbursements, and responsible for meeting all program requirements. This administering body may be a school district, several school districts, or individual schools.

Seamless Summer Option (SSO) – SSO is an option for school districts that participate in the federal NSLP to continue feeding children in low-income areas during the summer months by continuing meal services and claiming procedures, which minimizes additional administrative requirements for operating different programs. USDA established a waiver to authorize districts to operate SSO to operate during school years 2020–21 and 2021–22, through June 30, 2022. This waiver supports access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to COVID–19.

Self-management Model – The method of operating and administering a school district's food service program by the district and its staff.

Special Milk Program – This program reimburses schools and child-care institutions that do not participate in other federal meal service programs for the milk they serve. Schools participating in the federal NSLP or SBP also may participate

in the Special Milk Program to serve milk to children in half-day prekindergarten and kindergarten programs without access to the school meal programs.

Special Milk Program Non-congregate Waiver – Authorizes districts that operate the Special Milk Program to be reimbursed for milk served in nongroup settings.

Summer Feeding Waiver – Authorizes schools to operate the Summer Food Service Program and the Seamless Summer Option through June 30, 2021.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) – A state-administered program that reimburses providers that serve free healthy meals to children in low-income areas during the summer months when school is not in session. Organizations that offer SFSP do not have to participate in the NSLP. Schools, local government agencies, camps, and religious and other nonprofit community organizations that can manage a food service program may operate an SFSP. SFSP sites are locations in a community where children receive meals in a safe and supervised environment. Sites may be located in various settings, including schools, parks, community centers, health clinics, hospitals, apartment complexes, churches, and migrant centers.

Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) – The state agency that, among other duties, administers the Child Nutrition Programs in Texas.

Total Meals Served – A calculation of the daily meal counts of the number of meals by type served to students as the basis for receiving federal reimbursement.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – The federal agency that, among other duties, administers the Child Nutrition Programs.

Universal Free School Meals – School policies offering meals at no cost to students. School districts that offer universal free meals typically fund this policy through federal regulations such as the Community Eligibility Provision and the National School Lunch Act, Provision 2. In addition, grant support and funding from other sources may be available in some communities.

Wealth Per Weighted Average Daily Attendance – The taxable value of property within a school district, as determined by the Comptroller of Public Accounts, divided by the number of students in weighted average daily attendance.

Weighted Average Daily Attendance (WADA) – An adjusted count of the number of students at a district or campus in average daily attendance that gives greater weight to students in certain categories that cost more to educate, such as English learners, students served by special education, and students enrolled in a gifted and talented program. The Texas Education Code, Section 48.202, explains the calculation of WADA.

APPENDIX A – DATA SOURCES

Appendix A contains descriptions and explanations of the data and data sources used in this report.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES DATA

Much of the data in this review are provided in weekly reports produced by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Beginning in September 2020, DSHS began submitting weekly reports that included the following data gathered from public school districts and the Texas Education Agency (TEA):

- total student enrollment; and
- the approximate number of students receiving instruction on campus.

The weekly DSHS reports can be found online at <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/schools/texas-education-agency/>.

The following descriptions provide more details regarding the DSHS data that appear in this report.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

The DSHS reports contain student enrollment numbers for school year 2020–21, provided by TEA. The DSHS reports are produced weekly, but the enrollment data were produced at four dates of the school year for the period, which concluded in March 2021: after the first week of school, which varies by district; as of September 29, 2020; as of October 30, 2020; and as of January 29, 2021. The enrollment data were not updated each week in the same manner as other data that appear in the DSHS reports.

NUMBER OF ON-CAMPUS AND REMOTE-LEARNING STUDENTS

The number of on-campus and remote-learning students documented in this report also are reported primarily from the data provided by TEA in the weekly DSHS reports. As with the total enrollment data, the number of on-campus and remote-learning students were not provided weekly but were reported at specific times during school year 2020–21, as described previously.

DATA PROVIDED BY DISTRICTS

School district data reported for these periods may not represent the number of on-campus and remote-learning students in each district accurately. Many districts experienced COVID-19 outbreaks that resulted in temporary school or campus closures during school year 2020–21. If a closure overlapped with one of the enrollment reporting dates, the number of remote-learning students represented in the district's data for that period may be inflated artificially.

The Legislative Budget Board's School Performance Review Team contacted all reviewed districts to inquire about any perceived data irregularities regarding the number of on-campus and remote-learning students. When the data anomaly resulted from temporary closures caused by a COVID-19 outbreak, the review team replaced the data from the DSHS reports with data provided by the district for the week immediately preceding the district or campus closures.

SAN BENITO CONSOLIDATED ISD INSTRUCTION DATA

San Benito Consolidated ISD (CISD), unlike the other districts in this report, began the school year September 8, 2020; therefore, **Figure 12–3** does not include data for August 2020. Additionally, San Benito CISD reported zero on-campus students in the DSHS report for the enrollment periods of October 2020 and January 2021. This monthly data is based on the number of students on campus during the final week of each month, but the district transitioned to remote-only learning during the reporting weeks in both of these periods following outbreaks of COVID-19. Therefore, the zero on-campus students reported to DSHS was not an accurate representation of the actual number of students on campus for these months.

To show a more accurate number of on-campus students in the district for these periods, the review team obtained data from San Benito CISD for the first week in November when the district reopened after the closure in October. This period was selected because the district was unable to provide on-campus student data for other weeks in October. Therefore, **Figure 12–3** shows San Benito CISD's number of on-campus students for November instead of October. Similarly, to report the number of on-campus students for January 2021 more accurately, the review team obtained district data for the week before the closure in January.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE DATA

The data source for the operational outcomes of food services departments during school year 2020–21 was the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), including data for average daily participation (ADP), total meals served, and total reimbursements received. Much of these data are available online on the Agriculture section of the Texas Open Data Portal website (<https://data.texas.gov/>).

The following sections provide more information regarding data from TDA.

SEAMLESS SUMMER OPTION

The Seamless Summer Option (SSO) is a federal meal program that authorizes districts participating in the federal National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP) to provide meals to children in low-income areas during the traditional summer vacation periods. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) authorized districts to operate SSO during spring 2020 and school year 2020–21. This report includes data for several reviewed districts that implemented SSO during part or all of school year 2020–21. It is important to note that any data for ADP, total meals served, and total reimbursements presented for reviewed districts that opted for SSO during school year 2020–21 may include totals for children outside of the school district, because districts operating the SSO can provide free meals to any child age 18 or younger regardless of their enrollment status. When districts operating SSO collect meal data, they do not report separate totals for enrolled students and for others who received meals. Meal data from previous school years reported in the review for comparison purposes include data only from enrolled students.

MEAL REIMBURSEMENT RATES

USDA annually establishes national average payments that represent the amount of money the federal government provides for state lunches, afterschool snacks, and breakfasts served to children participating in the federal NSLP and SBP. The annual payments and rate adjustments for the NSLP and SBP are determined each July 1 and represent changes in the Food Away from Home series of the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

USDA provides two reimbursement levels for lunches served in accordance with the NSLP. The low lunch payment level applies to lunches served by school food authorities in which fewer than 60.0 percent of the lunches served in the school

lunch program during the second preceding school year were served free or at a reduced price. The high lunch payment level applies to lunches served by school food authorities in which 60.0 percent or more of the lunches served during the second preceding school year were served free or at a reduced price. For school year 2020–21, the second preceding year would refer to lunches served during school year 2018–19.

USDA also provides two reimbursement levels for breakfasts served in accordance with the SBP. Breakfast payments differ depending on whether the district is categorized as severe need or non-severe need. Districts qualify for the severe need category if 40.0 percent or more of the lunches served to students at that school during the second preceding school year were served free or at a reduced price.

USDA can certify school food authorities that meet updated meal pattern requirements to receive performance-based reimbursements. For school year 2020–21, the performance-based reimbursement was \$0.07 per lunch meal.

The amount districts were reimbursed for school breakfasts and school lunches served during school year 2020–21 increased from school year 2019–20. **Figure A–1** shows the school meal reimbursement rates for school year 2020–21 compared to school year 2019–20.

FIGURE A-1
SCHOOL MEAL REIMBURSEMENT LEVELS
SCHOOL YEARS 2019-20 TO 2020-21

MEAL CATEGORY	LUNCH 2019-20		LUNCH 2020-21	
	60.0% OR MORE (HIGH LUNCH)	LESS THAN 60.0% (LOW LUNCH)	60.0% OR MORE (HIGH LUNCH)	LESS THAN 60.0% (LOW LUNCH)
Paid	\$0.34	\$0.32	\$0.35	\$0.33
Reduced Price	\$3.03	\$3.01	\$3.13	\$3.11
Free	\$3.43	\$3.43	\$3.53	\$3.51

MEAL CATEGORY	BREAKFAST 2019-20		BREAKFAST 2020-21	
	SEVERE NEED	NON-SEVERE NEED	SEVERE NEED	NON-SEVERE NEED
Paid	\$0.31	\$0.31	\$0.32	\$0.32
Reduced Price	\$1.90	\$1.54	\$1.96	\$1.59
Free	\$2.20	\$1.84	\$2.26	\$1.89

NOTE: Low lunch refers to lunches served by school food authorities in which fewer than 60.0 percent of the lunches served in the school lunch program during the second preceding school year were served free or at a reduced price. High lunch refers to lunches served by school food authorities in which 60.0 percent or more of the lunches served during the second preceding school year were served free or at a reduced price. For school year 2020-21, the second preceding year refers to lunches served during school year 2018-19.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National School Lunch, Special Milk, and School Breakfast programs, National Average Payments/Maximum Reimbursement Rates – July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021.

APPENDIX B – BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is a bibliography of research on child nutrition referenced in the introduction of this report:

- Au, Lauren E. et al. “Eating School Meals Daily Is Associated with Healthier Dietary Intakes: The Healthy Communities Study,” *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 2018, Volume 118, Issue 8.
- Bartfeld, J.; Kim, M.; Ryu, J.H.; and Ahn, H.-M. *The School Breakfast Program: Participation and Impacts*. University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2009.
- Borkowski, A., et al. *COVID-19: Missing More Than a Classroom. The Impact of School Closures on Children’s Nutrition*. UNICEF Office of Research, Innocenti Working Papers No. 2021-01, 2021.
- Cullen, K. W., and Chen, T.-A. “The Contribution of the USDA School Breakfast and Lunch Program Meals to Student Daily Dietary Intake,” *Preventive Medicine Reports*, November 2016. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5149064/>
- Food Research and Action Center. *School Meals are Essential for Student Health and Learning*, August 2019. https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/School-Meals-are-Essential-Health-and-Learning_FNL.pdf
- Gundersen, C.; Kreider, B.; and Pepper, J. “The Impact of the National School Lunch Program on Child Health: A Nonparametric Bounds Analysis,” *Journal of Econometrics*, 2012, Volume 166, Issue 1.
- Huang, J., and Barnidge, E. “Low-income Children’s Participation in the National School Lunch Program and Household Food Insufficiency,” *Social Science & Medicine*, February 2016, Volume 150. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S027795361530280X?via%3Dihub>
- Kinsey, E.W., et al. “Planning for Food Access During Emergencies: Missed Meals in Philadelphia,” *American Journal of Public Health*, 2019, Volume 109, No. 5.

