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April 11, 2011

Dear LAUSD Students, Parents and Employees:

On April 12th, reality television host Jamie Oliver, will be launching his second season of "Food Revolution" program. In the past few days, the promotions have been airing on television showing myself and footage. I would like to take a moment to share my concerns regarding the show and clarify the District's decision to not have Mr. Oliver use our schools as a stage for this television reality show.

First, as Superintendent, it is my priority that students receive the best education possible with minimum disruption. I feel that having camera crews for long periods of time at undisclosed schools would cause much disruption and impact the instructional school day. Secondly, Mr. Oliver's show is still a reality television show filmed for entertainment. I did not want the excellent work we have done regarding our school meal program to be misconstrued by a "reality TV show." LAUSD recently experienced how reality television can easily takes liberty with the truth with the District's participation in the taping of "School Pride."

In good faith, I offered to work with Mr. Oliver and asked for him to respond to these options:

- Prepare a detailed written proposal of what they intend to do onsite
- Participate (without cameras) on our menu committee to give input on menu development
- Create recipes and a 3-week menu cycle based on a budget of 77 cents per meal, incorporating, all local, state and the new federal program and nutritional requirements for our 2011-12 menus.

As of today, there have been no written proposals or menus received regarding these appropriate requests.

Let me share some facts with you:

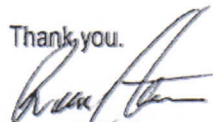
- LAUSD Food Services is recognized as a national leader for their efforts to promote healthy food and lifestyle choices to combat diabetes, obesity and other health issues. In fact, the USDA has recognized publicly that LAUSD menus for next year far exceed the government's own meal standards set by the Institute of Medicine.
- Within the last six years, the Board of Education saw the need for nutritional requirements for student meals above those mandated by the USDA and began implementing policies to meet or exceed those standards. This includes banning the sales of sodas and junk food and restricting the caloric and fat content of snacks.
- Additionally, we have banned added trans-fats, sulfites, artificial red dye #40, yellow dye #5, added animal fats, added peanut oil, and derivatives, sodium nitrate, tropical oils and no added MSG and palm oil in any of the foods served to students and reduced sodium to only 1100 milligrams per meal. All grain products are a minimum of 51% whole grain or whole wheat, and we have significantly increased the amount fresh fruits and vegetables offered daily to our students.

This year, more than 30,000 students are taste testing the entrées that have been proposed to serve for the 2011-12 school year. A few of the items on next year's menu include: Salvadorian Beef Stew, Chicken Tandoori, Asian Pad Thai, California Sushi Roll, and Teriyaki Beef and Broccoli with Brown Rice. Visit <http://cafe-la.lausd.net> to review the full menu for next year.

We are continuing to do amazing things at Food Services and will continue to make the program even better. I am proud of our school meal program and of our Food Services school cafeteria employees who collectively serve 122,000,000 student meals every year.

If you have any questions regarding the Food Services meal program, please contact the Food Services Division at (213) 241-3366.

Thank you.



Ramon Cortines