**“It is not the answers that show us the way, but the questions.”**

If there were a working D 64 Sustainability Committee, the issue of hot lunch could have more individuals weighing in on the hot lunch proposal given in late January. Any such plan needs to consider the impact it could have on our school and our planet. Care for the planet is what our next generation of learner’s curriculum is striving for in social studies and science. If hot lunch comes to all the D 64 elementary schools, a solid plan in advance for better recycling – and even composting - is critical. If the hot lunch program comes **without** a solid plan for recycling and food waste then the board decision could erase every effort that schools and parents have tried thus far to get the students to “Think Before You Throw.” The Board and D 64 administrative staff should be fully aware that this has been a growing trend in area schools and that all of our own schools need to continue to put forth efforts to reduce our impact at lunch. Environmental literacy is a major component in the Next Generation Science Standards. The lunchroom can be a perfect place to put action behind some of these standards!

**Questions and Comments for the Board To Consider:**

1. Would there be an increase in the current cost of the waste contract? Surely this will generate more waste than without the formal program: disposable utensils, plates, bowls, etc will be added to the trash and will definitely increase our current district tonnage.
2. Is the district considering working with Arbor to further promote sustainability? There are companies that do use earth friendly serviceware and utensils, but these options are definitely more expensive and would surely impact the pricing and current setup with our middle school. Arbor promotes sustainability, but what is it that they/we would be doing that is sustainable in relation to disposal efforts? Maybe there is something that can be done to modify packaging or prepare food in a way that waste can be minimized. Maybe it would be helpful to get interested parents and teachers to sit down with the food service provider to discuss potential solutions.
3. If the district does move to a hot lunch program then finally the idea of streamlining and promoting composting could be explored. Composting is available to all the district schools per the waste contract with Lakeshore, but is not currently being utilized. This is confusing to me.
4. Does the board agree that this particular proposal is “desired by the community”? Was there a prior survey or meeting regarding this topic? If parents and the schools want a hot lunch program, the infrastructure needs to allow for it to happen effectively and at the appropriate time: working kitchens, effective recycling, safe and well managed composting.
5. Does the board feel that there is ample space at each school for the addition of food service staff plus the district lunch volunteers to work compatibly?
6. Does the board feel that the PTO representatives have all weighed in on and fully understand the process and financial needs of this proposal?

**A suggestion**: The Board and D 64 staff could observe lunch periods on several days in several schools to get a hold on how much food and product is already actually eaten, and wasted, on a daily basis. The trash cans don’t lie and we pay for this price. If all these measures and questions are considered in advance then perhaps a proper and sustainable hot lunch proposal can be better slated for success in our district.

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