



...WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

Want Biometrics in your lunch line but don't have a POS from Food Service Solutions?



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BioWedge is very easy to set up and configure for existing point of sale software packages for a completely integrated biometric identification system.

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All New NSLP School Lunch Equipment Grants: Do You Qualify?

\$25 Million in Additional Funding Offers Schools in Need a Second Chance

Great news for all schools that missed out on the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) Equipment Grants of 2009. If you haven't heard by now, the USDA received an additional \$25 million to be awarded to schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for the purchase of school lunch equipment.

Although these NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants are not officially a repeat of the ARRA grants, they will be awarded in exactly the same method. In fact, if you completed a grant application last year and were not awarded a grant, you may not need to re-apply at all. Important points from the official NSLP grant announcement are included below:

- States will receive their portion of the funding based on each state's school meals administrative expense allocation.
- States must award grants based on a competitive grant process that is fair and equitable. States are highly encouraged to use the application process developed to distribute the ARRA funds.
- Schools that submitted an application and did not receive ARRA funds must be granted precedence.
- When awarding grants, states must give first priority to schools where at least 50% of their enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced meals. This does not mean that schools with less than a 50% eligibility rate will not be awarded grants. All schools with high numbers of eligible students are encouraged to apply.
- Additional factors that will determine dispersion of equipment grants include: contribution to the enhancement of the quality of meal service, availability of existing state and local funding for equipment purchases, expected increase in participation or number of sites in which school meals are served, school's current budget and

operating balance, and/or geographic location as it relates to frequency of food deliveries.

- Schools that received any (full or partial) grant monies from last years ARRA equipment grants are not eligible to receive NSLP awards.
- States must award grants within 6 months (180 days) after receiving their allocation.
- Schools that are awarded NSLP grants must complete their purchases within one year from the date they receive the award.
- Equipment requests may include new, replacement or renovation of existing equipment.
- The four categories for use of the grant funding are: equipment that will improve the quality of school meals, equipment that improves the safety of food served, equipment that improves overall school lunch related energy efficiency and equipment that supports expanded participation in the school meal program.

Now is the time to upgrade to an FSS POS!

The entire line of FSS POS related products and solutions provided qualify for use of NSLP grant funding. Whether it is a biometric, PIN pad or ID card system, FSS has a solution that will fit your exact needs. We are experts in helping schools determine their eligibility for and applying for grant awards.

If you have any questions about the NSLP grant application process or would like to learn more about FSS POS solutions, please contact a member of our highly rated sales and support team at 800-425-1425.

SPECIAL REPORT: Part 1

Revitalizing the School Lunch Line through Fingerprint Identification

Part one of a four part special report focusing on the benefits of biometrics in a K-12 atmosphere.

By now many principals, superintendents, administrators and K-12 food service operators have heard of school lunch biometrics, or the use of high tech devices such as fingerprint readers, to recognize students and allow for the automated payment and accounting of school lunch purchases.

Once the province of the FBI and criminal investigators, fingerprint technology is now regularly being harnessed at K-12 schools around the nation. Not for Orwellian motives such as surveillance, identification or tracking, but for school lunches and breakfasts.

Examples cited in this report include the Penn Cambria and Wilson School Districts in Pennsylvania; JSerra Catholic High School in San Juan Capistrano, California; Fairfield School District of Fairfield, Texas; and South Carolina's Orangeburg Consolidated School District 4. Yet this is only a small sampling of the hundreds of school districts across the United States that are currently implementing such systems.

So why is biometric technology so appealing?

Using fingerprint ID technology, foodservice operators are not only speeding lunch lines and simplifying payment, but also virtually eliminating lunch fraud, bullying, and reversing the trend of declining reimbursement for programs such as the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Moreover, because biometric systems automate the payment and accounting of school lunches, they eliminate tedious backend administrative chores such as cash, ticket, or paper-based handling, accounting, reconciling, and oversight.

So why isn't biometric technology in every school district?

At first blush, fingerprinting students as a means to improve the efficiency and speed of school lunch lines often carries the "baggage" of a host of misconceptions about the technology – not to mention the privacy implications. For school district personnel, these preconceptions and considerations may lead to an initial hesitation to investigate the benefits of such systems.

Therefore, this special report attempts to clear up the myths from the hype, and to provide an accurate picture of the tech-
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nology and its potential benefits.

This special report provides information and answers to the following questions:

- *A layman's explanation of biometric technology and privacy issues*
- *How parents can use such systems to monitor and control where their child's lunch money is being spent*

SECTION I: Biometric Technology and Privacy Issues

To understand the necessity for a biometric solution, it is important to first understand the traditional (cash, lunch tickets) or more high tech alternatives used to access personal accounts into which parents have deposited money for lunches (PIN numbers, magnetic swipe cards). Although these options are acceptable and in widespread use today, there is one significant drawback common to all not found in biometric solutions: namely, with a fingerprint system you can't lose your identification (finger), but kids being kids – they can and will lose or forget just about anything else.

PIN Numbers

The problem PIN numbers is that they can be easily forgotten, particularly with younger children, forcing school lunchroom staffers to look them up while the lunch line comes to a halt. Children have also been known to give the number to a friend, which in the end causes parents to be billed for extra food they know their children didn't purchase. This can stimulate angry calls from parents insistent on getting billings corrected.

"Cards with easily-forgotten personal identification numbers (PINs) also pose problems and are prone to fraud when the PIN codes are overheard and misused by other students," explains Joe Geisweidt, Food Service Director of Penn Cambria School District.

Magnetic Swipe Cards

Although convenient, magnetic-stripped cards are frequently lost, stolen, destroyed, or misused in alarming numbers. In fact, over 70% of students will typically need to have their swipe cards replaced each year, on average, at considerable expense. Magnetic swipe cards can also be slipped to friends so they can buy lunch or stolen by bullies.

Biometric Systems and Privacy Issues

In most school lunch biometric systems, students place a forefinger on a small fingerprint reader by the register. In seconds, the system translates the electronic print into a mathematical pattern, discards the fingerprint image, and matches the pattern to the student's meal account information. Food Service Solutions (FSS) biometric software, for example, plots 27 points on a grid that correspond with the fingerprint's ridges to achieve positive identification, but saves no actual fingerprint image.

Both parents and students can rest assured that the fingerprint images cannot be used by law enforcement for identification purposes. When school lunch biometric systems are numerically-based and discard the actual fingerprint image, they cannot be used for any purpose other than recognizing a student within a registered group of students. Since there's no stored fingerprint image, the data is useless to law enforcement, which requires actual fingerprint images. As there's no way for any fingerprint or computer expert to extract a record and reconstruct a person's fingerprint image from purely numerical data, privacy is protected.

“The kids don't have to take money to school, and parents can simply know their children will be buying lunch every day.”

Fingerprinting is voluntary and typically done when the student enters the school system along with enrollment paperwork. Kids are fingerprinted just once, and the mathematical algorithm produced stays with them until they graduate. Those declining fingerprint IDs can continue to use cash or other methods.

SECTION II: Controlling Where the Money is Spent

For parents everywhere, it's been a persistent and nagging problem: A child,

provided with lunch money, bypasses the lunch line entirely and spends that money at the corner store on candy and soda. Or, worse, has that money stolen by a bully and is forced to go hungry. A parent providing hard cash to a child can do nothing but hope and worry, having no control over what their child does with that money or what happens to it before it is properly spent on a nutritional lunch.

Because parents can set up a lunch account linked to a biometric system for their child's use, they can not only be sure their child has enough money for lunch each day, but also can monitor what their kids are buying.

"Whether standard school lunch or a la carte, parents can easily keep track of their children's lunch purchases in the monthly billing statements mailed to them," says Penn Cambria's Food Service Director Joe Geisweidt. "That ensures that lunch money is spent for its intended use, and also puts an end to any predatory lunch money bullying."

"The parents have said that it's really great to simply deposit the money and know it's

there," says Mike Tubbs, IT Manager at JSerra Catholic High School in San Juan Capistrano, California. "The kids don't have to take money to school, and parents can simply know their children will be buying lunch every day." The school utilizes a biometric system developed especially for schools by Food Service Solutions (FSS), and has two point-of-sale readers set up in the school's cafeteria.

JSerra's previous purchasing system, based on a child's student number, created many problems. For example, a student would provide their number to a friend who would pay the student for the food purchased, and the student would simply pocket the money. Or, other students would purchase with another student's number.

Because of its loopholes, the old system made it very difficult for the school to provide accurate accounting to parents, and parents, seeing the odd or additional purchases made on their children's accounts, would be making daily complaints. "Any complaints now are few and far between," Tubbs says. Another successful implementation of biometrics is in three

schools in the Fairfield School District of Fairfield, Texas. "The majority of parents think it's great," says Crystal Thill, Food Service Director for the district. "They know that their money is going for their child, instead of somebody else using their account."

"Before we got this system, there were quite a bit of parents calling in saying, 'my child didn't purchase that,'" Thill continues. "Of course, we had no way of telling whether their child purchased it or not, and we would have to delete the charge. Now it's of course a given that their child did purchase items." According to Thill, the system has also made a great difference with the younger students at the Fairfield District's elementary school—they're not now having to remember a number. "With the PIN numbers, we would have to manually pull them up, which is a lot more time consuming."

Part 2 of this article will be available in next months issue of "...What's for Lunch".

Senate Agriculture Committee Holds Meeting on Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill

The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry held a meeting yesterday to mark-up the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the child nutrition reauthorization bill introduced by Committee Chairman Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.) last week. The Committee unanimously approved the legislation, moving it onto consideration by the full Senate.

Several amendments were offered during the mark-up hearing, including a Manager's Amendment that included several technical changes to the bill. Other amendments that were passed include:

Senator Sherrod Brown's (D-Ohio) amendment would fund competitive grants to state agencies to provide technical assistance for the Summer Food Service Program.

- Senator Brown's second amendment would establish an organic food pilot program for the National School Lunch Program, including competitive grants that would be awarded to school food authorities to help them increase the quantity of organic foods available in schools.

- Senator Michael Bennet's (D-Colo.) amendment would provide technical

assistance to states working to improve direct certification.

Senator Brown's second amendment would establish an organic food pilot program for the National School Lunch Program, Including competitive grants that would be awarded to school food authorities to help them increase the quality of organic foods available in schools.

- Senator Debbie Stabenow's (D-Mich.) amendment would require USDA to conduct a study of states participating in the afterschool supper program to determine best practices and barriers.

- Senator John Thune's (R-S.D.) amendment would fund research relating to the

prevalence of child hunger, obesity, and type 2 diabetes on Indian reservations.

The School Nutrition Association appreciates the efforts of Chairman Lincoln and the Senate Agriculture Committee to advance legislation that promotes good nutrition and expands access to these crucial programs for children in need. This reauthorization bill offers a strong first step towards strengthening these programs and acknowledges the need for increased funding.

While the legislation would boost funding for the federal child nutrition programs by \$450 million per year, including a performance-based 6 cent increase in the federal reimbursement rate for school lunches, additional efforts are needed to reach the \$1 billion per year increase requested by President Barack Obama.

Article provided by:



www.schoolnutrition.org

How Can Your School Benefit from a POS System?

Are you one of the few schools still using a ticket-based school lunch system? Does your lunch staff keep track of student purchases by hand—manually entering payments into an Excel spreadsheet? If this is the case, I'd like to share some of the key reasons you should consider making the upgrade to a computerized POS system.



1. Save both Time & Money by Going Cashless

One of the biggest reasons for updating to a POS system is because it can be used to eliminate the need for cash on a daily basis, thereby speeding up meal service.

No cash = fewer hold-ups = faster lunch lines = savings in both time & money.

2. Simplify Accounting

Schools that manually update student meal account balances can spend over 10 hours a week carrying out the task. Modern POS systems can synchronize with online meal account services to automatically update and accurately make adjustments to student meal accounts. The time and money saved in a few months time can often times validate the purchase price of the POS system.

Schools that manually update student meal account balances can spend over 10 hours a week carrying out the task.

3. Increase Free or Reduced Meal Student Enrollment

Students, particularly those at the middle-to-high school levels, are terrified of being

labeled as "poor". Many of these students would rather skip lunch than be known as a student on the Free or Reduced Meal Program. By eliminating free or reduced student tickets, you eliminate the fear of being in the program. With POS systems, not even the cashier will know which students receive free or reduced meals.

History has proven that the anonymity POS systems provide leads to an increase in student enrollment in the Free or Reduced Meal Program. What some schools don't realize is that the number of qualified and enrolled students in the program will also have a direct effect on the amount of E-rate funding their school will receive.

There are several other benefits to moving to a POS system. From decreasing the amount of manpower to making a lunch line more efficient, POS systems provide schools power and flexibility in the lunchroom. If you are serious about improving the service you provide parents and students in your school district, you should definitely consider upgrading to a computerized POS system.

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