



Self Service: Empowering Student Choice

Austin ISD

Winter Meeting



Self Service: Empowering Student Choice

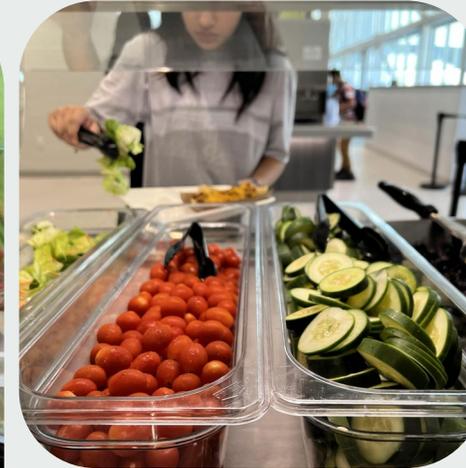
- Transitioning from pre-portioned fruits, vegetables, and condiments to a self-service model gives students choice and control over what and how much they select.
- Operationally, the self-service model streamlines service, reduces packaging and food waste, and allows staff to focus on higher-value kitchen tasks (i.e. scratch cooking) instead of individual portioning.
- This approach increases student engagement and satisfaction by building decision-making skills and lifelong healthy habits, while supporting district goals for sustainability and overall student wellbeing.





Planning & Implementation

Self Service: How did we get here?



Where We Started: Individual Portions

- Individually portioning fresh fruits, vegetables and condiments
- Labor was allocated specifically for these tasks
- Increased costs and waste
- Inconsistent presentation



Salad Bar Evolution: Self-Serve Timeline

2016



Introduced Made-to-Order Themed Salad Bars at all Elementary Schools

2018



Launched Self-Serve Fruits and Vegetables at Middle and High Schools
—
Piloted Self-Serve at 3 Elementary Schools

2020



Opened 2017 Bond Modernizations: First Version of Lines Built for Self-Service

2021



Moved from Made-to-Order/ Self-Serve Entrée Salads to Plated Meat-Based & Vegetarian Salads

2022



Encouraged Self-Serve Fruits and Vegetables on Existing Elementary Lines

2024



2022 Bond Modernizations: Elevated Version of Lines Built for Self-Service



Modernized Serving Lines

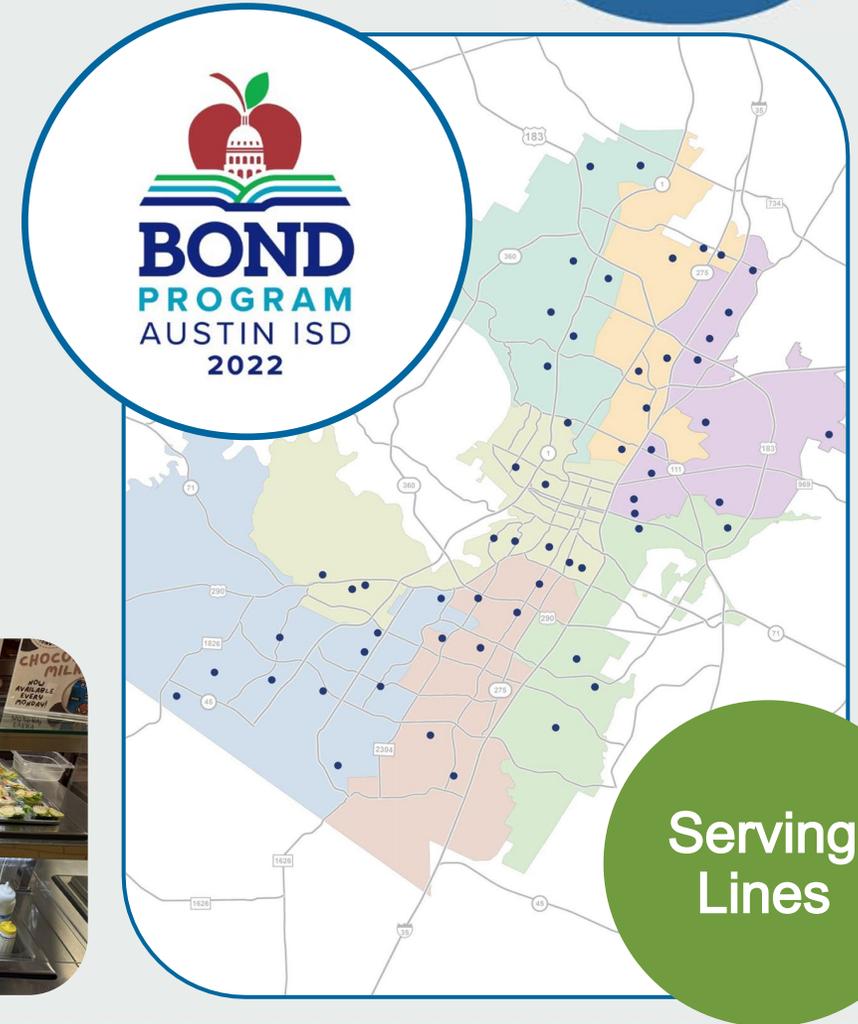
Presentation and Compliance

- 2oz spoodles are for self-serve bulk fruits and vegetables to prevent over-portioning.
- A compliant tray includes a ½ cup serving of any combination of fruits and vegetables.
- Condiments are served in squeeze bottles with rubber band labels.



Bond Program Support

- Reallocated Food Service bond funding to impact more schools across the district.
- 58 new serving lines purchased through 2022 Bond funding
 - 31 installed in SY25
 - 27 planned for SY26



Budget

Item	Cost
New Serving Line (Elementary)	\$140,000
Clear Shotgun Pans (Qty. 4)	\$50.00
Clear 4" Full Pans (Qty. 4)	\$65.00
2oz. Spoodle (Qty. 3)	\$7.00
2oz. Perforated Spoodle (Qty. 3)	\$7.00
9" Tongs (Qty. 4)	\$13.00
Squeeze Bottles (Qty. 6)	\$13.00
Rubber Band Squeeze Bottle Labels (Qty. 15)	\$6.00

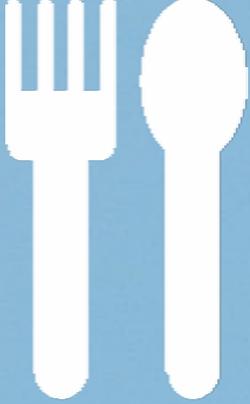
TOTAL

...or use what
you have to
get started!

Making it Work...Anywhere!

- Use equipment you have - pans, spoodles, tongs
- Adjust sneeze guards
- Start small, i.e. apples, oranges





Outcomes & Impact

Benefits of Self-Serve: Operations



- Allows labor to be allocated to more meaningful kitchen tasks vs. individually portioning fruits, vegetables or condiments
- Waste reduction
- Streamlined service
- Bulk produce doesn't take up as much space as sheet pans filled with containers
- Elevated presentation, more retail less institutional
- Highlights local produce when available



Benefits of Self-Serve: Students



- Choice and autonomy
- Teaches valuable life skills
 - Using utensils
 - Developing fine motor skills
 - Decision making
 - Taking portions based on hunger cues
- Encourages students to try new foods
- Supports healthy habits
- Excitement surrounding more retail-style meal service



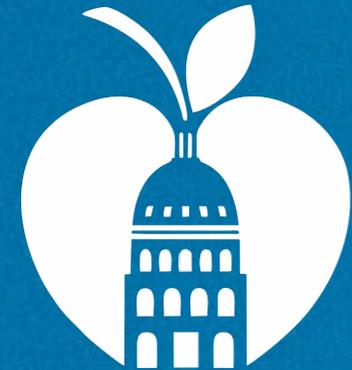
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Food Service & Central Warehouse