

# Advances in Austintown food service department benefit students and cafeteria staff.

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Halfway through her first year as food service director, Alexis Weber already has much to celebrate. As participation in school lunch and breakfast are on the rise, she has found innovative ways to streamline business operations in and out of the kitchen. The Austintown Elementary and Intermediate Schools will be implementing a biometric finger scanning system in addition to the current keypad process. This new system will allow students to get through the lunch line faster and have more time to enjoy their meal and socialize with peers. The system is secure and accurate, which will prevent food items from being charged to the wrong account and help the younger students who have trouble remembering their lunch number. While serving hundreds of students each lunch period, the most important benefit the department plans to see is more time for students to eat their lunch.

It is important to note that the biometric scanner does not create a fingerprint for the student. A template of the unique points on the index finger is created and associated with that student's lunch ID number; a fingerprint is never stored in the system. The finger scanners will benefit all students kindergarten through fifth grade, but Food Services will pilot the system at the elementary building first. The long-term goal is to eventually take this system district wide.

Another benefit for Falcon families are the new interactive menus on the AF Food Service website. The food service office has spent a lot of time analyzing each recipe to compile nutrition and allergen information for each meal item on the menu. When viewing the online menus, simply hover over a menu item and the product information appears. This information has proved to be very helpful to the school nursing staff, whom the department works closely with to take care of students with allergens or other dietary needs. To sign up for the new monthly menus to be delivered to your inbox, visit [www.AFFoodServices.com](http://www.AFFoodServices.com) and look for the Going Green icon.

Breakfast and lunch participation have also reached all-time highs this school year, and with new processes in place the department hopes that number continues to climb. Breakfast participation has increased at every building in the district. Weber and her staff have seen a 26 percent increase in breakfast sales the first semester of this school year compared to last. That is an average of 3,250 more breakfast meals served each month. Lunch has also seen an increase, as the department is serving nearly 50 percent of the students each day this year compared to 44 percent last year.

The Food Service Department encourages anyone who may have questions to contact them at 330-797-3900 ext. 2032 or by email at [affoodservices@austintownschoools.org](mailto:affoodservices@austintownschoools.org).



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SOURCE: <http://www.towncrieronline.com/page/content.detail/id/515188/Advances-in-Austintown-Food-Service-Department-benefit-students-and-cafeteria-staff.html?nav=5021>