

Frequently asked questions on the plans for the Cafeteria Project

Q1. Why is the district investing bond money in the school cafeteria?

A. The Sonora High School cafeteria was built in 1960 and includes a large dining room, commercial kitchen, restrooms, dry goods storage area, commercial freezer and refrigerator. The plumbing, electrical systems, heating and air conditioning, food storage and preparation areas are 50 years old. The building is not energy efficient and does not meet acceptable standards for the Americans with Disabilities Act. The kitchen is inadequate for the challenge of serving two meals a day to a high school of 1,000 students. In the community meetings held before the election, the Sonora High cafeteria was listed as one of the top projects for modernization and reconstruction.

Q2. Will the food be better with a new building?

A. Food nutrition guidelines for school food service programs have changed dramatically in the last five years. There is a national push for more nutritious and balanced food and beverages choices for students. New legislation has enforced this move to healthy eating at the state and federal level. A new food service facility, with a modern efficient kitchen and improved opportunities to prepare fresh food, will contribute to better food quality.

Q3. Have you looked at other school cafeterias to see what designs are better than others? Who is doing the planning?

A. The District formed a design team of 12 members representing the district staff and our community. Working with WLC Architects and specialty kitchen designers, the team has come up with a modern food service facility that fits within the perimeter of the current cafeteria while bringing innovative preparation and efficient service to students. The Food Service Director and other district staff have toured a number of new cafeterias in our region to gather ideas for the Sonora High School facility.

Q4. What are some of the proposed improvements to the kitchen being planned?

A. One of the top priorities for the new facility will be the safe storage of food. There is a significant cost saving for buying in bulk and utilizing the USDA commodity program to schools. The new cafeteria will have larger refrigerator and freezer storage areas and a dry goods pantry. A large automatic dishwasher system will improve sanitation. With a national trend toward healthier food choices, we will update and replace all of the appliances including stoves and ovens. All of the food preparation areas are being redesigned to improve work flow and production. The staff will have a new bath room and lockers.

Q5. Will the dining room be updated?

- A. Students will enjoy more efficient service with cooler and freezer storage at all points of sale. The main dining room will be equipped with new tables and chairs, flooring, and a salad bar station. The entire building will have new energy efficient doors and windows and an upgraded air conditioning and heating system. The main student restroom will be completely remodeled.

Q6. Can the cafeteria and new kitchen also be used by the community?

- A. The district has long supported community use of all district facilities and providing opportunities for other schools, non-profit organizations and civic groups to hold events on our campuses. It is expected that the new cafeteria will be a popular gathering place for school and community groups.