



To: Lansing School District Board of Education

From: Kristina Sleight, Chief Operating Officer

Date: April 2026

Subject: Food Service Management Contract Recommendation (RFP SO-1085)

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to present the Lansing School District Food Service Request for Proposals (RFP SO-1085) process, outline the evaluation methodology, and provide a recommendation for award of contract.

The 2026 Lansing School District Food Service RFP process was conducted in full compliance with MDE requirements, ensuring:

- Transparency through public notice and standardized Q&A
- Fairness with equal access to information for all vendors
- Thorough evaluation using a structured scoring process
- State oversight prior to final Board approval

Food Service RFP (SO-1085) - Timeline

- February 20, 2026

Formal notification provided to Sodexo that the district would issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for food service operations.

- February 27, 2026

RFP submitted to the Michigan Department of Education for review.

- March 4, 2026

MDE approved the legal notice and vendor notification list.

- March 8, 2026

Legal notice published in the Lansing State Journal.

- March 13, 2026

District food service team met with MDE representative to review the RFP in its entirety.

- March 23, 2026

Final approval received from MDE.

- March 23, 2026

Approved RFP released to Food Service Management Companies (FSMCs).

- March 26, 2026 – Mandatory Pre-Bid Walkthrough

24 representatives from 7 companies attended:

The Nutrition Group

Sodexo

Southwest Food

Chartwells

Aramark

Ordo

Taher

Site visits included Lansing Tech, Gardner, Cavanaugh, and Everett.

All questions were required to be submitted by March 31 to ensure a fair and consistent process.

- April 2, 2026

Responses to all submitted questions were distributed to participating vendors.

- April 13, 2026 – Proposal Deadline

Proposals received from:

The Nutrition Group

Southwest Food

Chartwells

Sodexo

Taher

All proposals were received on time and included required documentation.

Initial review began by the Food Service and Operations Administrative Team.

- April 15, 2026

Review team met to evaluate all proposals and complete bid calculation and scoring documents.

- April 15, 2026

Required documentation submitted to the Michigan Department of Education for approval prior to Board action.

RFP Evaluation Focus Areas

Proposals were evaluated using criteria aligned with Michigan Department of Education requirements, with emphasis on the following:

- Proposal Size & Overall Value

Evaluation of total cost in relation to scope and services provided.

- Management Candidate

Experience, qualifications, and leadership of the proposed on-site manager.

- FSMC Support & Backup

Depth of organizational support, including regional and corporate resources.

- Marketing & Merchandising Plan

Strategies to increase participation and enhance the student dining experience.

- Nutrition Education

Integration of nutrition education and alignment with district wellness goals.

- Employee Training & Development

Staff onboarding, training programs, and retention strategies.

- Integrity of Projected Operating Budget / Forecast

Accuracy, transparency, and sustainability of financial projections.

The RFP process was conducted in full compliance with Michigan Department of Education guidelines, ensuring a transparent, competitive, and objective evaluation process prior to final Board approval.

Recommendation for Award of Contract

Following a comprehensive evaluation of all proposals received in response to RFP (SO-1085), the review committee recommends awarding the Food Service Management Contract to:

Chartwells

Proposals were evaluated using criteria aligned with Michigan Department of Education

requirements, with consideration given to overall value, program quality, staffing, operational approach, and financial sustainability.

Summary of Recommendation

The recommended vendor was determined to provide the best overall value to the district based on:

- A competitive and sustainable financial proposal
- A highly qualified management candidate with relevant PreK-12 experience
- Strong organizational support and operational backup
- A comprehensive marketing and merchandising plan designed to increase student participation
- Meaningful integration of nutrition education aligned to district goals
- Robust employee training and development programs
- A realistic and transparent operating budget and financial forecast

Contract Term

The district intends to enter into a contract for an initial term of one (1) year, with the option to renew annually for up to four (4) additional one-year terms, contingent upon:

- Satisfactory performance
- Continued compliance with program requirements
- Approval by the District and the Michigan Department of Education

Financial Impact

The proposed contract is structured as a Cost Reimbursable agreement with:

- A management fee of \$280,000
- Bid Price Per Meal of \$3.681
- \$940,929 in projected annual rebates are already included in food cost calculation
- Food cost is 35% of total revenue from the RFP, a 23% reduction from the district's current cost structure. This is driven by Chartwells rebates and competitive purchasing power.
- 3% wage increase for all hourly associates
- Chartwells staffing models include all current non-administrative employees with no change to hours/wage/location.

SUMMARY OF CONTRACT TERMS
School Year 2026-2027

MDE has reviewed and approved the Food Service Management Company contract for School Year 2026-2027. The sponsor may proceed with this item at the next Board meeting for approval. If the Board makes any changes to the contract, MDE must give approval before the sponsor may sign the contract with any revisions.

Once the contract is fully executed, it is the sponsor's responsibility to send a copy of the final, fully executed contract to MDE and the awarded company for the record.

Date Contract Approved: **4/16/26**

MDE Reviewer: *Tammy Saal*

NOTE: During the life of the contract, all revisions or additions to the original contract terms requires an approved amendment or addendum. Submit these to MDE-FSMC-Vended@Michigan.gov for review/approval prior to execution.

Sponsor Name			Agreement Number				
Lansing Public School District			33020				
Company Chosen for Award			Total Estimated Cost per Bid Sheet				
Chartwells			\$ 6,870,849.88				
Contract Type			Bid Bond	Renewal Increase			
FSMC Cost Reimbursable		FSMC Fixed Price	Required (yes/no)	Percentage Rate per Contract			
X			Yes	5%			
Programs Sponsor Participates		If not, future? (yes/no)	Plan Awarded				
CACFP	X	-	n/a				
SFSP	X	-					
FFVP	X	-					
Vended Contracts/Agreements (list of programs/sites that receive vended meals)							
Alternate agreement with Beekman Center. No vended contracts.							
Guaranteed Return			Advance Payment				
Yes or No	No	Amount \$	-	With or Without	With	Amount \$	450,000.00
FEES		Cost Per Year	Cost per Month		Cost per Meal/ Meal Equivalent		
			for 10 Months	for 12 Months			
FSMC Administrative Fee		\$ 280,000.00	\$ 28,000.00				
FSMC Management Fee		\$ 93,316.77			\$ 0.05		
Notes:							