

The way to serve school lunch? Board buys \$154K food truck

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The Alachua County School Board will likely have the custom food truck built by late-April.

A food truck could be rolling to a school near you this spring.

At its meeting Tuesday, the Alachua County School Board approved a bid to buy a custom food truck, which is scheduled to be built by mid-to late-April, Food and Nutrition Services director Maria Eunice said.

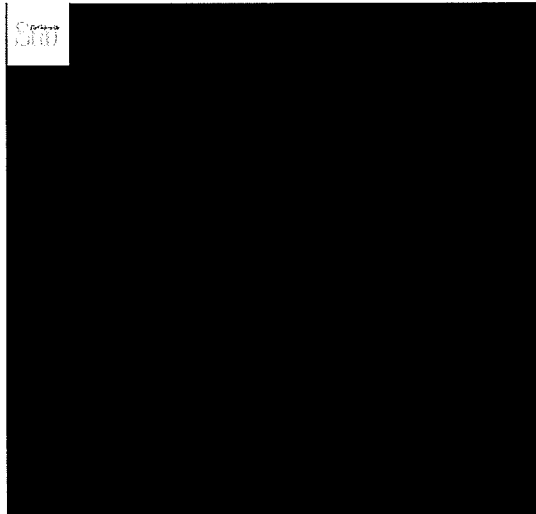
The bid, by Sizemore Ultimate Food Trucks, based in Bunnell, is worth \$154,865. That money will come out of the district's food service fund, which is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The board also approved hiring a full-time food truck driver, who will make \$18.46 an hour.

The idea behind the truck, Eunice said, is that it will help school system officials take advantage of a food trend and make buying a school lunch more appealing to students, some of whom stigmatize the cafeteria as a gloomy place with gross food.

"We know that there are some students that don't feel comfortable going into the cafeteria for lunch," she said. "We are friendly; we do offer healthy meals; we have very tasty food."

The food truck will sell free or reduced-priced lunches to eligible students, and its meals, like those in the cafeterias, will be reimbursed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



So far, the plan is to go to different high schools different days during lunch, although Eunice said the department is still looking at options, including taking the truck to middle schools or selling food after school.

“We’re open to looking at all kinds of different venues,” Eunice said.

The truck will also be used during the Summer Feeding program, when it will visit low-income neighborhoods with free breakfasts and lunches for children 18 years old and younger. In previous summers, the district sent a school bus to neighborhoods with food.

The truck will take about 45 days to build, and Eunice said her team will create its name and design.

“I truly believe it will take off and be a huge success,” said board member Leanetta McNealy.

Students will likely be able to pick their own meal components, like choosing a meat, grain and vegetable to combine, Eunice said.

McNealy is hoping for paninis.

“I can’t wait to be the first one in line,” she said.

Editor’s note: This story has been modified to note that the school system’s food service fund, supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will fund the purchase of a custom food truck.

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