

Emily Fonnesbeck RD

NUTRITION THERAPIST

To Whom It May Concern,

I've reviewed the menu for Diamond Ranch Academy. I find it adequate for calories, fiber (especially with recent changes adding more whole grains), macronutrient distribution, fruit and vegetable intake and sodium.

Calories: I would estimate calorie needs for active young women and young men to be 2,200-3,000 calories (females being on the lower end of the range and males being on the upper end). I estimate DRA's menu to average 2,700-3,700 calories per day making it about 500 calories in excess of need. Calorie needs to vary from person to person, however there could be room to scale down on serving sizes or use more fruit and vegetable sides in place of starchy side dishes at each meal.

Quite honestly, I think there is an opportunity here to teach life skills to these students without changing the menu. Part of being a competent eater is to honor signals of hunger and fullness. Instead of micromanaging their food intake, students could be taught and encouraged to listen to fullness levels to know when they are done eating. Essentially, more responsibility could be put on the students for their food intake.

Fiber: With the recent switch to more whole grain products, I find the menu adequate for fiber intake.

Sodium: I would estimate sodium levels to be perhaps a bit high, which I'm not overly concerned about. Potassium found in fruits and vegetables help to keep blood levels of sodium in check and the number of fruits and vegetables served per day looks adequate. I would limit salt shakers on tables so no salt is added to the food.

Macronutrients: Overall I see a balance between protein, carb and fats. It's great to see fruit being served for snacks and as side dishes. I'm sure it's difficult to motivate these kids to eat fruits and vegetables and I think the menu does a great job of including them in creative ways.

The menu as a whole looks nutritionally adequate in meeting the needs of growing and developing teenage males and females.

Sincerely,

Emily Fonnesbeck RD, CD