



PRESS RELEASE

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Somers Public Schools Awards Food Service Contract to Whitsons Culinary Group

Somers, CT, August 8, 2022 – Somers Public Schools will be partnering with Whitsons Culinary Group to manage their school food services and provide nutritious and delicious meals for the students in the districts' K-12 schools beginning in the 2022-23 school year.

Whitsons is deeply rooted in food and family and understands the importance of working hand-in-hand with the Somers community in order to develop a strong nutrition program that will benefit both the school children and the entire community. Whitsons was founded in 1979 by Elmer and Gina Whitcomb who set out to start a family business they could leave as a legacy to their nine children. Today, the Whitcomb family remains actively involved in the company's management and has been joined by an extended family of team members who share their vision and commitment to bringing the best in dining services to the schools they serve.

"Our goal is to provide students with school meals they enjoy while helping them make healthy eating choices. We will work closely with the Somers Public Schools community to develop a program that focuses on nutritious meals that students can be excited about," says John Gersbeck, Whitsons Senior Vice President of School Nutrition.

While the food will be noticeably new to students and staff, the current Director of Food Service and team of cafeteria workers who are such an important part of the school community, will remain the same. A Whitsons Chef Manager will join the existing staff in leading daily execution of a new school nutrition program for students.

The new school nutrition program provides students with options that include meals from innovative recipes using wholesome ingredients prepared from scratch, with focus on whole grains, lean meats and healthy snacks. Whitsons prides itself on using ingredients that are locally sourced, all-natural, organic or non-GMO, and minimally processed whenever possible and that support local farms, businesses and the overall Somers, CT community.

Whitsons also commits to providing special culinary experiences that will excite students and promote participation in the school nutrition program. These special culinary experiences focus on options in the latest food trends, industry promotions, and traditional holidays and "food holidays" throughout the year. Guest chef visits and Whitsons' line-up of Simply Rooted® Promotions, Pop-Up Shops, Veggabóls, and "Anytime" promotions all are included in the frequent culinary experiences the Somers Public Schools district community can expect.

Whitson's partnership for Somers Public Schools also provides support for the educational mission of the district, including nutrition education programs, National School Breakfast Week, district wellness committees, and school culinary programs. Catering services for special district community events, such as retirement parties, awards and scholarship nights, promotions/graduations, etc. will also be available.

At Somers K-8 schools, Whitsons will offer a hot entree, a healthier choice salad entrée and a cold lunch alternate every day. At the K-4 level, the award-winning Nutrition Safari® program will introduce the children to a group of fun safari characters that promote nutritious eating and making healthy food choices.

The high school café will be attractively merchandised along with engaging professional signage, giving the students a food court experience. The menus are created with students' taste preferences in mind, and designed to offer something for everyone, from a salad entrée to a full hot meal, including specialty concepts such as made-to-order grilled items, and home-style entrees.

Leading the Somers team is John Prunier, District Manager of Whitsons School Nutrition, who oversees public school accounts throughout Connecticut. John has over 30 years of experience in the school food service industry. He has been instrumental in developing effective client relationships within the school communities and has guided and inspired food service teams to continuously improve the programs, resulting in high quality customer experiences and increased participation. John will be supported by the on-site Chef Manager, Joseph Stango.

About Whitsons Culinary Group

Whitsons Culinary Group provides a wide range of highly customized dining services to public schools, healthcare dining and emergency services throughout the Northeast, with a strong focus on nutritious, high quality meals made from wholesome, fresh ingredients. Our Simply Rooted® philosophy of wholesome food and family values represents our commitment to helping people to live healthier lives by moving food in a more nourishing and natural direction. We are committed to supporting diversity, equity, inclusion and safety among our team members and customers. Whitsons has a long and proud history of excellence and growth since 1979 and is setting new standards for the foodservice industry with wholesome foods and family values. Whitsons is among the top 15 Food Management Companies and the top 9 largest K-12 providers in the U.S. For more information, visit www.whitsons.com or [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).