

# Zero Waste Zone

## Lunch Court & Cafeteria Zone

### Zero Waste Program @ Middle & High Schools

## UTENSIL PACKET REPLACEMENT: Facts & Reasons

SDUSD's Food & Nutrition Services Department and Recycling Program have teamed up to provide alternatives to the plastic wrapped utensil packets provided for meal service at middle and high schools. These schools are provided with individual forks, spoons, and napkins for students to choose at each point of service during breakfast, lunch, and supper. While no plastic utensils can be recycled in the mixed material recycling program at schools, this project aims to reduce the amount of litter on campus, reduce plastic waste going to the landfill, and save money!

WHY did we switch from utensil packets to individual utensils?

- **2.1 million utensil packets were purchased for secondary schools per year**
  - Utensil packets cost over \$60,000 per year
  - Each utensil packet contains one:
    - plastic fork
    - plastic spoon
    - plastic straw
    - plastic wrapper
    - paper napkin
  - Students must take a utensil packet that contains every item, even if they only need one item in the packet
- **Utensil packets create litter and can impact our local environment**
  - Plastic wrappers from utensil packets are easily blown around campus creating excess litter and making additional work for custodial staff
  - Plastic utensils and wrappers can make their way into storm drains and eventually to our oceans and beaches, negatively impacting our marine environment
- **Individual utensils provide choices, reduce waste, and save money**
  - Providing individual utensils and napkins:
    - Allows students to choose the specific item(s) they need
    - Reduces plastic waste headed to the landfill by nearly 4.7 million pieces per year
    - Reduces litter on campus and saves time on clean up
    - Saves money – it's estimated that the District can save over \$43,000 per year by purchasing forks, spoons, and napkins individually



**Your feedback is important! Please provide feedback to the kitchen manager at your school or Janet Whited, Recycling Specialist at [jwhited@sandi.net](mailto:jwhited@sandi.net) or 858-637-6268.**