***Talking points (revised May 14, post-release):***

1. As always, ***our primary job in (Name of your department) is to make sure that our students have access to healthy, balanced meals so they can learn well in school and live healthy lives.***

2. *Fed Up*’s main point -- that added sugar in our diets is a health issue for Americans – is not really new or controversial, but the movie does a good job of putting a lot of information together in a slick and entertaining package typical of Hollywood “issue” documentaries.

3. Here on the front lines of teaching kids to eat better, we certainly AGREE that added sugar in our diets is a health issue for Americans. That’s why we devoted a good part of a recent menu to raising awareness about the dangers of added sugar, and an entire recent issue of our Wellness Newsletter was also on this topic. So this is not something that is new to us here in the trenches either – ***it’s part of our job to be informed about nutrition issues and research and to pass that information along to our families.*** That’s exactly what we’ve been doing on the added sugar issue for some time. [PROVIDE COPIES OF YOUR MAY MENU AND WELLNESS NEWSLETTER]

4. One part of the film that we do take issue with is the way the movie makers show pictures of school meals being served while giving statistics about the prevalence of commercial fast food and soda contracts in schools. This implies that fast food and soda are served as parts of school meals, but the truth is that all of the complete breakfasts and lunches we serve have to meet strict nutrition guidelines. We’re not allowed to serve soda at all, ever, on our serving lines, but ***we don’t always have control over foods sold at schools*** by other groups and for fund raisers from which our programs do not benefit. We’re happy to provide healthier alternatives in our facilities for kids while they’re at school.

5. The film also shows unidentified school cafeterias from other parts of the country which do not reflect our practices. ***We do not serve any commercial fast food and we source local foods and avoid processed foods when possible.*** The examples of school meals shown in the film are, as you might expect, chosen for maximum negative impact and don’t reflect the reality here at [DISTRICT].

6. School meals in (DISTRICT) have been in the forefront of encouraging our kids and families to make healthier food choices – both in what we serve and in the nutrition education we provide on our menus and in our monthly Wellness Newsletter. For example, ***we’ve spent the last two years implementing comprehensive new USDA rules for calorie maximums which have had the effect of reducing added sugar to meet the goals.*** It’s an on-going effort, and we’re committed to it.

7. We now **require students to take at least one fruit or vegetable serving with every lunch**, and we provide additional fruit and vegetable options and encourage them to choose more. As you know, fresh fruits and vegetables contain zero added sugar.

8. [IT WOULD BE GREAT IF YOU COULD POINT TO ANY SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF REDUCED ADDED SUGAR IN YOUR MENUS OR GIVE A SPECIFIC MENU WITH ADDED SUGAR TOTALS – ***PLEASE SHARE ANY SUCH EXAMPLES WITH US SO WE CAN SHARE THEM WITH OTHERS!]***

9. ***Healthy foods are more expensive.*** We do the best we can within the budget we have and the prices we’re allowed to charge for paying students, and we’re proud of the job we do. But we would certainly welcome more funding for healthy foods and/or a change in national policy to support healthier foods rather than production of sugar and other sweeteners.

10. ***We see ourselves as partners in the effort to teach our kids and families to eat healthier,*** and that includes educating people about the dangers of too much added sugar and reducing added sugar in our offerings. We’re not doing this as a reaction to a movie, but because there is sound science in favor of such a reduction ***so kids can be as healthy as possible and learn to the best of their abilities. That’s always our bottom line.***