The Newark School District has created a network of afterschool meal programs, going beyond district schools to nourish Newark children.

“It’s been really inspiring to see the work in Newark,” said Lee Dermott-Schaffer of NJSACC: The Statewide Network for New Jersey’s Afterschool Communities. “They are serving thousands of meals every day to both school and community-based sites. This is a really great success story that should be replicated in other communities.”

The district serves about 8,700 suppers a day and 3,100 snacks to 70 sites across the city, according to Kendra Burton, manager of nutrition/enrichment with the district’s Office of Expanded Learning Time. The district acts as a sponsor for Newark schools, recreational centers, charter and private schools and other community organizations.

“The students love the afterschool meals,” Burton said. “A lot of parents rely on those meals.”

A mix of hot and cold meals are provided by a vendor, who delivers the fresh meals each day to the various sites.

“Our food vendor cooks everything fresh and delivers daily so there is no pre-packaged food. You know the students are receiving healthy, nutritious meals. Overall, it’s a great program.”

— Kendra Burton, Manager of Nutrition/Enrichment, Newark School District

“The food is great, the kids love it,” Burton said. “Our vendor cooks everything fresh and delivers daily so there is no pre-packaged food. You know the students are receiving healthy, nutritious meals. Overall, it’s a great program. We’ve expanded every year and will continue to do so.”

— Kendra Burton, Manager of Nutrition/Enrichment, Newark School District