

Food and Nutrition Services

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Encouraging students to participate in the school lunch program and to partake of the healthy choices available to them improves their health.

Quick and inexpensive lunchroom makeover ideas that are easy, effective, low or no-cost are interventions that are proven to work as studied by the [Smarter Lunchrooms Movement](#) of the Cornell Food and Brand Lab, Cornell University.

Based on some **basic principles** that improve students' participation in school lunch, the Smarter Lunchroom ideas are strategies that food service managers should consider implementing into their cafeterias:

* **Convenience sells!** Think convenience when it comes to offering healthy food.

- Offer sliced or cut fresh fruit daily.
- Fruits and vegetables are available at all points of sale (deli line, snack windows, a la carte lines, grab 'n go line)
- Let students jump ahead in line to take grab-and-go reimbursable meals such as salads and subs (80% of students cited long lunch lines as a problem).

* Think **"visible"** when it comes to offering healthy options:

- Post menus **BEFORE** the

students are in line for the hot entrée.

- List fresh-made salads, sandwiches and yogurt parfaits before the hot entrees.



* Smarter Lunchrooms principle: **Market & Move the Fruit!**

- Place healthy options (fruits, veggies, salads and subs) at eye-level in coolers and shelves.
- Move the salad bar in highly visible and in a high traffic area as opposed to the wall and corner of cafeteria. (a change in location for one school resulted in 200% increase in sales).

* Enhance **taste expectations** by paying attention to marketing of the food items and the environment in your cafeterias:

- Spotlight fruits and veggies

with small lamps or inexpensive accent lighting.

- Dining and service areas are clear of any non-functioning equipment, tables or cleaning supplies.
- Obstacles and barriers to enter dining areas have been removed (i.e. garbage cans, mop buckets, cones, lost & found, etc.).
- Staff smiles and greets students continually throughout meal service.

* Train staff and cashiers to apply **suggestive marketing** because it works!

- "Would you like salad with your pizza?!"
- "Green beans or carrots?"
- "Fruit comes with a meal!"

In addition, **sing your own praises**. Let your customers know what you are doing to promote healthy eating. Inform parents, staff and students of the healthy options available in the lunchroom.



Moving the salad bar to a highly visible and high traffic area (as opposed to the wall and corner of cafeteria) resulted in a 200% increase in sales for schools.



Smarter Lunchrooms Educational Resources!

Interested in learning more about the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement! The program offers an entertaining yet very informative introductory course in a self-paced 2-hour webinar. The course is available at <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/training>.

If you are interested in continuing education hours, it also offers 2 continuing education credits from the School Nutrition Association.

Another option is to just get started and download a self-assessment form. The survey tool can help food managers evaluate the lunchroom with 100 potential ideas and strategies that could be implemented to improve participation and profits while decreasing waste.

The [Smarter Lunchrooms Self-assessment Scorecard](#) lists evidence-based, simple low and no-cost changes to lunchrooms that can be readily implemented.

Print the pdf form by clicking here: <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/resource/lunchroom-self-assessment-score-card>.



Smarter Lunchrooms' Success Story

We attended the "Smarter Lunchrooms Training" and wanted to give some feedback on what we were able to do here at Desert Sands Unified School District, Indio High School. After attending the workshop, we were inspired to take the Smarter Lunchrooms ideas and put it to the test!

With the constant negative comments about chocolate milk being offered, we wanted to see if we could make the white milk more accessible. Will a change in placement make a difference? Well the answer is YES!

My operator at Indio High and I thought about our customers, the students, and decided to place the white milk within reach (stacked up higher) and the chocolate milk not as accessible (down in the bottom of the speed line). Would the change determine which flavor the students would take? . . . And it did!

My operator started this process and was very diligent about continuing it throughout the month. By the end of the month, the white milk sales increased by at least 50%!! CRAZY HOW THIS WORKED!



Missouri School Meals Program Wins USDA Performance Award

The Department's Food and Nutrition Services Section has earned a Fiscal Year 2014 Direct Certification Performance Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for helping more Missouri children in need receive free meals.

The Department program was noted for its substantial improvement in directly certifying children for free school meals through use of data from the Missouri Student Information System (MOSIS). Missouri improved to a direct certification performance rate of 86 percent for the 2013-14 school year, a 13 percent improvement over a two-year period. Missouri is one of seven states to win the award.

"This was a team effort," said Food and Nutrition Services Coordinator, Karen Wooton. "We work with the Department's Data System Management team, the Department of Social Services, the Office of Administration's Information Technology Department and all school districts to provide free, nutritious meals for the children most in need."

Proper nutrition is vital for learning. Providing free school meals for eligible children is directly related to Missouri's Top 10 by 20 goal of ensuring that all children graduate ready for college and career. The Top 10 by 20 initiative is an ambitious effort to place Missouri among the top ten states in education by 2020.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 established performance awards to encourage state agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program to ensure that all children who are eligible under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program are directly certified. This is the third year the awards have been granted.

2014-2015 Administrative Reviews

Administrative Reviews (AR) of the school meal programs for the school year 2014-2015 have begun. Schools are now on a three year cycle as determined by USDA's Healthy and Hungry-free Kids Act. A list of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) who are to be audited is available at the Food and Nutrition Services web link: <http://dese.mo.gov/financial-admin-services/food-nutrition-services/administrative-reviews>.

LEAs are advised to check the list and plan accordingly. The AR now includes an off-site assessment review along with on-site review.

The off-site assessment tool is to be completed by the LEAs prior to the on-site visit by the Nutrition Project Specialist.

The AR web link provides LEAs with an overview, instructions and resources for a successful review. Required components that will be covered in both off-site and/or on-site are as follows:

- **Certification and Benefit Issuance**
A school list of students eligible for free or reduced price meals will be reviewed.

- **Meal Benefit Applications and Direct Certification**-Free, reduced price and denied applications will be checked along with direct certification downloads.
- **Verification procedures** will be checked.
- **Meal Counting and Claiming Procedures**-Participation Records will be observed.
- **Nutritional Quality and Meal Pattern** will be monitored using production records, menus, recipes and CN labels. Menu Certification Worksheets (formerly titled 6 Cent Worksheets) will be completed.
- **Resource Management** maintenance of nonprofit school food service account, paid lunch equity tool.
- **Civil Rights** will include posting of civil rights poster and required training.
- **Local Wellness Policy** will be reviewed and implementation procedures.

- **Competitive Food Services**-Breakfast and lunch periods will be observed.
- **Food Safety**-The written food safety plan for compliance with Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) will be reviewed. Temperature logs and food storage areas will be observed.
- **Afterschool Snack Program** (if applicable) accurate counting and claiming of snacks, meal pattern requirements and delivery and production records will be reviewed.
- **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program** (if applicable) will include an on-site observation to ensure compliance. An evaluation of the claims for reimbursement will be conducted.
- **Special Milk Program** (if applicable) will be evaluated.

A list of LEAs to be reviewed this school year, 2014-2015, is available on FNS's website. LEAs are advised to check the list and plan accordingly.



Food and Nutrition Services
P.O. Box 480, 205 Jefferson Street
Jefferson City, Mo 65102
Phone # 573-751-3526



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