

HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS ENVIRONMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

School Name: _____

Staff Completing Name: _____ Date: _____

Meal Service: ☐ Breakfast ☐ Lunch

This **Healthy School Meals Environment Self-Assessment** is a list of areas of the cafeteria/dining area/service lines to help programs set minimum expectations and provides opportunities for site staff to document areas for improvement. It is recommended to completed at least monthly with many of the ideas being addressed daily in "management by walking around" activities. Keeping program meal service and dining areas pleasant and inviting begins with first impressions and includes clean areas, variety of well marketed program foods, and friendly and helpful staff. Too much time and effort go into preparing meals to be tainted by easily fixable items that help increase or maintain participation levels, reduce food waste, and increase selection and consumption of healthy foods in a healthy environment.

Instructions

1. Become familiar with the self-assessment by reading through before beginning.
2. Observe a breakfast and/or lunch period, marking off statements that reflect the lunchroom/dining area, service lines, customer service, etc.
3. Discuss the results with teammates and consider unchecked strategies to implement. Complete the score chart to monitor progress.



_____/6



_____/9



_____/9

_____/10



_____/4



_____/5



_____/5



_____/9

FOCUS ON FRUIT

- At least two kinds of fruit are offered.
- Sliced or cut fruit is offered.
- A variety of mixed whole fruits are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets vs. stainless steel pans.
- Fruit is offered in at least two locations on all service lines, one of which is right at the POS.
- At least one fruit is identified as the featured fruit-of-the-day and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name on menu plans and/or at the point of selection.
- A new featured fruit taste test is offered at least once a year as part of a meal service. *

- At least one vegetable is identified as the featured vegetable of-the-day and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name at the point of selection.
- A featured vegetable taste test is offered at least once a year as part of a meal service. *

MOOOOOVE MORE MILK

- Milk coolers are clean and well maintained and have little or no off odor.
- Milk beverage coolers are monitored and replenished throughout meal service.
- A choice of two or more milks with one being white milk is offered in all beverage cooler locations.
- Milk service temperature is 35-37 degrees (Strive for 35) to help provide best flavor and refreshment.

VARY THE VEGETABLES AT LUNCH

- Two or more different kinds of vegetables are offered at lunch.
- Vegetables are offered on all service lines.
- Both hot and cold vegetables are offered.
- Menu plans include stir-frying or roasting cooking techniques for vegetables at least once a week.
- When cut, raw vegetables are offered/paired with a low-fat dip such as ranch, hummus, salsa, etc. *
- A serving of vegetables is incorporated into an entrée item at least once a month (e.g., beef and broccoli bowl, spaghetti and marinara, bean burrito). *
- Flavor station(s) are made available for self-service to students to add spices and seasonings to vegetables.

CELEBRATE THE SALAD

- Pre-packaged salads or a salad bar is available to all students.
- Pre-packaged salads or a salad bar is in an easily accessible, high traffic area.
- Self-serve salad bar tongs, scoops, and containers are larger for vegetables and smaller for croutons, dressing, and other non-produce items.
- Portion control is in place and evident with individual dressing packets, small souffle cups, and/or signage indicating a la carte charges for over portioning condiments and dressings.
- Pre-packaged salads are displayed and labeled with creative, descriptive names.

BOOST REIMBURSABLE MEALS

- Cafeteria staff are customer-friendly, focused and able to assist with correct answers.
- The school program implements the Offer Versus Serve Provision.
- Cafeteria staff politely and correctly prompt students who do not have a reimbursable meal to select the needed/additional menu item(s) (i.e., a fruit or vegetable, or third component).
- One entrée is identified as the featured entrée-of-the-day, is labeled with a creative name next to the point of selection.
- Creative, descriptive names are used on the menu.
- At least one meal is reimbursable and marketed as "The combo meal of the day" or featured grab-n-go and includes three meal components in minimum portion requirements.
- Special entrée items are displayed on a sample tray and/or photographs.
- Signs and posted instructions show students how to make reimbursable meals at any service line based on the menu planners plan (e.g., a sign promoting "Power Pizza Meal Deal: "Add a milk, fruit and carrots to your pizza."
- Students are offered a taste test of a new entrée at least once a year as part of a meal service.*

LUNCHROOM ATMOSPHERE

- Cafeteria staff smile and positively greet students upon entering the service line or at interaction points throughout serving line and dining areas.
- Attractive, healthful and current food and/or health or wellness themed posters are displayed in dining and service areas.
- A menu board (electronic, white board, sandwich) with "Today's featured meal" options with creative names is readable from 5 feet away when approaching the service area.
- A menu board with tomorrow's featured meal with creative names is readable from 5 feet away in the service or dining area.
- The dining/service areas are branded/decorated in a way that reflects the school/student body.
- Cleaning supplies and broken/unused equipment are not visible during meal service.
- Appropriate lighting is on in the dining and meal service areas.

- There is a clear "traffic" pattern with clear signs, floor decals, or rope lines.
- Composting, recycling and trash are "out of the way" but accessible to dining students.
- Trash is discretely hidden away/removed when full.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

- Students, teachers, or administrators announce today's menu in daily announcements.*
- Students are involved in the development of creative and descriptive names for menu items.*
- Students provide feedback (informal – "raise your hand if you like..." or formal - focus groups, surveys) to inform menu development.*
- Student artwork is displayed in the service area or dining space.
- Students and/or school departments (art, language/English, culinary, media, PE, etc.) are involved in the creation of artwork or marketing materials to promote program meal opportunities and menu items.*

SCHOOL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Information about the benefits of school meals is provided to teachers and administration at least annually.*
- A monthly menu is provided to students, families, teachers, and administrators.*
- In addition to the serving line, monthly menu plans are posted in the main office for view by faculty, students, and parents.
- A menu board with creative, descriptive names for today's featured meal options is in the main office or high traffic area(s).
- Nutrition education is incorporated into the school day.*
- Students are engaged in activities related to growing food (i.e., school or community garden, planting seeds, farm tours).*
- Elementary schools provide recess before lunch.*
- The school has a partnership with Farm to School, local business(es), or a farmer's market.*
- The cafeteria and service areas supports/follows the Local School Wellness Policy.*

DEFINITIONS:

Point of Service (POS): Anywhere students leave the line with food and are charged or counted, such as at a register, check-out, or PIN pad

Point of Selection: Anywhere students select food or drink

Service Line: A designated line for meal selection—deli bar, salad bar, hot lunch line, snack window, etc.

Grab-and-Go: A pre-packaged reimbursable meal

Reimbursable Meal/Combo Meal: Any meal that meets all the USDA meal requirements and is priced as a unit

Featured Items: A fruit, vegetable, milk, or entrée that has been identified for promotion

**The asterisk indicates items that may need input from other school nutrition staff, teachers, or administration.*



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