

Roadmap to Healthy Schools Recommended Best and Promising Practices



Module 4: Nutrition Services Potential Barriers and Practical Solutions to SMART Objectives

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Recommended Strategy N.1: Breakfast and Lunch Programs

****Key players: Food Service Director, Principal, Teachers, Custodians, Transportation Department***

Barriers:

1. There is no breakfast program implemented in the school
2. Principal is opposed to changing times to accommodate breakfast/lunch
3. Bus schedules
4. Lunch program is not available to all—Kindergarten/Pre-School/High School
5. Belief that School Breakfast Program is for needy children only
6. Limited time for breakfast
7. The custodial staff does not support/have resources for breakfast clean-up
8. There is not a school kitchen; is there a budget for the kitchen?
9. There are budget concerns with operating the programs
10. Do not know how to satellite the food if a kitchen is not available on site

Suggestions:

- CDE-How to Get Started
- Breakfast in the Classroom
- Breakfast after 1st period
- Grab N' Go Breakfast
- Promotion/events to increase participation
- Collaboration with custodial staff to come to an agreement with the Food Service Dept.
- Letter to parents educating them on the benefits of breakfast
- Providing statistics to the superintendent/principals on benefits of breakfast
- CDE website for information on the National School Lunch Program
- CDE New Director's Orientation
- Food Safety Training

Outcome:

Increased performance for all students; studies show that students who consume breakfast perform better on standardized tests, have fewer trips to the health office, show improved concentration, and have fewer behavioral problems.

Updated Action Step Resources:

HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria and Application Packet:

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/HUSSC/>

Healthy School Meals Resource Systems:

http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=1

National Food Service Management Institute:

<http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi>

Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/WPNutritionstandardsiom.pdf>

School Breakfast Program:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/breakfast.htm>

Western Dairy Association, Breakfast Boosts Brain Power:

<http://www.westerndairyassociation.org/>
<http://www.westerndairyassociation.org/store/school-nutrition/breakfast-boosts-brain-power/>

Recommended Strategy N.2: Variety of Foods in School Meals

***Key players: Food Service Director, Superintendent, Kitchen Employees**

Barriers:

1. Cost of a variety of food items
2. Labor associated with preparing a variety of foods
3. Lack of space on serving lines
4. Lack of food resources and suppliers
5. Cost of whole grains is more expensive
6. Lack of storage space for large variety of foods
7. Training on how to store and prepare multiple types of food for one day

Suggestions:

- Assess Food Service operation to see where improvements can be made
- Training- food safety, cooking classes (techniques, new recipes)
- Hiring- additional staff, more experienced staff
- Budget reconfiguration
- Co-ops with surrounding school districts
- Implementation of First-In-First-Out, inventories
- Work with maintenance to design more storage areas in the kitchen
- Use of scratch cooking reduces the need to purchase convenience foods
- Batch cooking

Outcome:

The addition of a greater variety of foods to school meals can result in an increase in the quality of offerings, increased participation, and increased revenue.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Alliance for a Healthier Generation-Healthy Schools Program:

<http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx>

HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria and Application Packet:

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/HUSSC/>

USDA Team Nutrition Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals:

<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/menuplanner.html>

Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/WPNutritionstandardsiom.pdf>

Recommended Strategy N.3: Low-Fat and Skim Milk Available

****Key player: Food Service Director***

Barriers:

1. Cost
2. Acceptance of low-fat and fat-free milk
3. No advertising materials available
4. Decrease in participation
5. Storage of milk
6. Lack of ability to recycle milk cartons or jugs

Suggestions:

- Change from cardboard cartons to plastic milk jugs
- Posters/educational materials from the Western Dairy Association (WDA)
- Additional materials from the National Dairy Council
- Western Dairy Association can help in the purchase of milk coolers
- Advertising new milk containers/flavors can increase participation
- Mile High milk flavor- increased participation
- "Drink it then Sink it" recycling bins from the WDA

Outcome:

The consumption of milk adds calcium and Vitamin D to a student's diet. The sale of low-fat and skim milk only aids in limiting the overall calories and fat in school meals.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Nutritious School Vending:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/nutriSB04-103.htm>

Western Dairy Association, New Look of School Milk:

<http://www.westerndairyassociation.org/>

<http://www.westerndairyassociation.org/schools/new-look-of-school-milk/>

National Dairy Council:

<http://www.nationaldairyCouncil.org>

Recommended Strategy N.4: Meals Include Appealing, Low-Fat Items

****Key players: Students, Food Service Director, Kitchen Manager, Principal***

Barriers:

1. Meeting calorie requirements for the USDA School Meal Initiative
2. Acceptance of low fat items
3. Decreased participation
4. Lack of knowledge for menu creation
5. Lack of time to create a new menu
6. Do not know how to prepare appealing low-fat menu items

Suggestions:

- Student empowerment
- Taste testing
- USDA recipes
- Nutrition education
- Scratch cooking
- Enhanced flavors with salt free seasonings
- Advertise healthy eating in the cafeteria
- Borrow menus from other school districts
- Training- how to prepare healthier meals
- Integrating low-fat items

Outcome:

Providing appealing, low-fat meals to students can ultimately result in increased participation as well as expand the knowledge base of students.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/WPNutritionstandardsiom.pdf>

The Road to SMI success- A Guide for School Food Service Directors:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/roadtosuccess.html>

USDA Team Nutrition Fruits and Vegetables Galore:*

http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html

Healthy School Meals Resource System:

http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=1

*USDA Team Nutrition resources are available at no charge to schools and school districts.

Recommended Strategy N.5: Food Purchasing and Preparation Practices to Reduce Fat Content

****Key Players: Food Service Director, Kitchen Manager***

Barriers:

1. Meeting calorie requirements for USDA School Meal Initiative
2. Acceptance of reduced fat foods
3. Decreased participation
4. Cost of reduced fat items
5. Lack of time for scratch cooking or preparation of food (continued use of convenience food)
6. Education materials
7. Still have fryers in the kitchen
8. Knowledge base of key players

Suggestions:

- Training- cooking preparations, food safety
- Financial Management Training
- Altering staff schedules to accommodate scratch cooking
- Student empowerment-voting on menu items
- Nutrition education for students in classroom and cafeteria
- Nutrition education for food service staff
- Purchase of new kitchen equipment to simplify scratch cooking
- Taste testing
- Scratch cooking reduces the need to order convenience foods

Outcome:

Providing healthier, reduced fat meals may create more support for the cafeteria. This also helps to increase the nutrition knowledge of teachers, staff, and students.

Updated Action Step Resources:

HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria and Application Packet:

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/HUSSC/>

USDA Standardized Recipes for School Meals:

http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/usda_recipes.html

Recommended Strategy N.6: A la Carte Offerings Include Appealing, Low Fat Items

****Key players: Food Service Director, Food Service Staff***

Barrier:

1. Loss of revenue
2. Upset students, removal of common snack foods
3. Healthier offerings are more expensive to stock

Suggestions:

- Nutrition Education
- Slow phase-out
- Price healthy items cheaper
- Provide information on the nutritional content of foods offered
- Let students help select the new items offered
- Make the snacks readily/easily accessible

Outcome:

The perception of offerings in the cafeteria may be improved once healthy snack options are added and the overall acceptability of school food service will increase.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Alliance for a Healthier Generation-Healthy Schools Program:

<http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx>

HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria and Application Packet:

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/HUSSC/>

USDA Standardized Recipes for School Meals:

http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/usda_recipes.html

Recommended Strategy N.7: Sites Outside Cafeteria Offer Appealing, Low-Fat Items

***Key players: Principal, Superintendent, Food Service Director, Kitchen Staff, Student Organizations**

Barriers:

1. Loss of revenue—disgruntled students and parents
2. “Sports teams will lose money if you don’t serve *hot dogs and soda* at games/events”
3. Fundraisers for school clubs/organizations will not be willing to change sale items
4. Cost of hot/cold holding equipment; yogurt, string cheese, fresh fruit and vegetables require refrigeration or to be on ice
5. Getting other departments to support change

Suggestions:

- Educating food service staff
- Educate teachers on nutrition (snacks in the classroom)
- Educating Students/parent organizations
- Local partnerships
- Advertising healthy choices
- Solicit the support of parent organizations
- Collaborate with teachers, coaches, and administrators to educate and implement

Outcome:

Offering healthy low-fat items outside of the cafeteria will create a healthy perception of total school environment and help to educate staff, students and parents on healthy eating habits.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Alliance for a Healthier Generation-Healthy Schools Program:

<http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx>

American Cancer Society, Meeting Well Guide:

<http://www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/meetingwell.asp>

Eat Smart. Play Hard.™:

www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/

Let’s Party: Party Ideas for School and Home:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/WPLet'sPartyBookDescription.pdf>

Nutritious School Vending Brochure:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/VendingGuide.pdf>

Team Up at Home: Team Nutrition Activity Booklet:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/toolsforschools.html>

Recommended Strategy N.8: Promote Healthy Food and Beverage Choices

****Key players: Food Service Director, Kitchen Employees, Superintendent, Principal, Teachers, Custodian, Student Organizations***

Barriers:

1. Student acceptance and willingness to learn
2. Lack of educational materials
3. Teachers do not want to change their lesson plans to include nutrition education
4. Lack of personnel to educate and promote healthy choices
5. Beverages are served in a variety of locations and are hard to monitor (cafeteria, vending, sporting events)
6. Beverage contracts

Suggestions:

- Nutrition education in classrooms and cafeterias
- Educational materials can be found at low or no cost on-line
- Open dialog with principals for importance of nutrition education in classroom setting
- Beverage contracts can be re-negotiated to meet the Healthy Beverage Policy
- Nutrition services can teach nutrition education
- Gain support for healthy foods and beverages from parent organizations and staff
- Partner with local health agencies and vendors for support

Outcome:

Providing nutrition education and offering healthy food and beverage options are an integral part of a well rounded education and can improve learning capabilities and environment.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov>

Dash Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension):

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/>

Fruit and Veggies More Matters:

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>

MyPyramid:

www.myramid.gov

National Dairy Council, Tools for Schools:

<http://www.nationaldairyCouncil.org/nationaldairyCouncil/tools>

Team Nutrition:

www.fns.usda.gov/tn

Whole Grains Council:

<http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org/>

Wheat Foods Council:

<http://www.wheatfoods.org/>

Recommended Strategy N.9: Adequate Time to Eat School Meals

***Key players: Principals, Cafeteria Supervisors, Teachers, Food Service Director, Kitchen Employees**

Barriers:

1. Principal focusing more on instructional time
2. Bus schedules in the morning
3. Supervision of the cafeteria
4. Not enough serving lines
5. Inadequate number of cashiers; students are waiting
6. Not enough staff to operate serving lines

Suggestions:

- Recess before lunch
- Create multiple serving lines
- Open serving line on both sides
- Have multiple cashiers
- Use study to show the importance of providing a long enough meal period
- Have multiple meal periods/staggered start times
- Breakfast in the classroom/allow students to bring breakfast to the classroom

Outcome:

Providing more time for meals will create less plate waste, allowing kids to eat more, which will result in less hungry kids throughout the day.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Health, Mental Health and Safety Guidelines for School Meals:

<http://www.nationalguidelines.org/guideline.cfm?guidenum=5-07>

Recess Before Lunch:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/recessbeforelunchco.pdf>

Eating at School: A Summary of NFSMI Research on Time Required for Students to Eat Lunch:

<http://nfsmi-web01.nfsmi.olemiss.edu/DocumentSearch.aspx>

Recommended Strategy N.10: Collaboration Between Food Service Staff and Teachers

****Key players: Food Service Director, Principal, Staff, Teachers, Kitchen Employees***

Barriers:

1. Lack of time
2. Different work hours
3. Food Service not recognized as part of the school
4. Principal does not support collaboration
5. Teachers do not "have time" in their day/lesson plan
6. Lack of a leadership for collaborations
7. Each department has different priorities

Suggestions:

- Meet and greet for collaboration (Food Service Dept., teachers, administrators)
- Invite teachers to learn about the Food Service Department and their responsibilities
- Teachers can discuss the nutrition education they are currently providing/would like to provide
- Invite food service staff into the classrooms
- Develop menus/meals/themes that can correspond with a lesson
- Teachers and staff are invited to participate in breakfast and lunch
- Use studies to show the importance of nutritious eating
- Use education resources that combine nutrition with math, reading, and writing skills, etc.
- Designate a leader from each department to head meetings

Outcome:

Collaboration with the entire school environment will ensure that students are receiving a consistent message from school staff.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Eat Smart. Play Hard:

www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/

Nutrition Education Resources:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/nutrieducator.htm>

Nutrition Literary Tool Kit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/nltk/default.asp>

Team Nutrition Resources:*

<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>

My Pyramid for Kids:

<http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/kids-pyramid.html>

*Team Nutrition resources are available at no charge to schools and school districts.

Recommended Strategy N.11: Credential or Certification of Child Nutrition Manager

****Key players: Food Service Director, Superintendent, Kitchen Manager***

Barriers:

1. Cost of trainings and classes
2. Time consuming to attend trainings; staff might need time off from work
3. Motivation; food service manager may not want additional training (outside of regular work hours)
4. Ability; staff may not feel confident in learning skills
5. Language; English may not be their first language

Suggestions:

- District could help fund the training
- Extra support in the kitchen while attending classes
- Time off on the days when staff attend classes
- Provide incentives
- Provide translating services/use on-line programs or self studies that are available in different languages

Outcome:

Highly/well educated staff will be able to provide the most nutritious, safe, and cost effective meals possible.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Colorado Department of Education (refer to the "Training" section):

http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_nutrition.htm

Colorado School Nutrition Association:

<http://www.colosna.com/>

School Nutrition Association (Continuing Education; Online Training courses; Meetings and Events):

<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/>

*NetPro (cadre of trainers) courses adjacent to Colorado School Nutrition Association conferences and regional or district NetPro trainings requested by districts.

Recommended Strategy N.12: Professional Development for Child Nutrition Managers

****Key players: Food Service Director, Superintendent, Kitchen Manager***

Barriers:

1. Cost; expensive to attend trainings/classes
2. Lack of enthusiasm from cafeteria staff (not interested, fearful, etc.)
3. Time consuming; staff need time off outside of normal work hours
4. Language; English may not be their first language
5. Learning ability

Suggestions:

- Provide more in-service education
- Provide translating services when possible
- Districts can pay for trainings
- Districts can provide time off or adapt to the employee's schedule
- Attend CDE Workshop, CDE Directors' Conference
- CDE New Manager Training
- CDE Financial Management Training
- Partner with other districts to cut down on the cost of trainings
- On-line trainings/resources (free or at low cost)
- Provide incentives
- Attend food shows, learn about current trends
- CDE trainings and technical assistance

Outcome:

An educated child nutrition manager will be able to serve more nutritious meals in a safer and more cost effective manner, as well as provide leadership and guidance for all food service staff.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Colorado Department of Education (refer to the "Training" section):

http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_nutrition.htm

Colorado School Nutrition Association:

<http://www.colosna.com/>

Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills of Effective School Food Service Managers:

<http://www.nfsmi.org/Default.aspx>

Recommended Strategy N.13: Clean, Safe, Pleasant Cafeteria

****Key players: Principal, Art Teacher, Kitchen Manager, Custodian, Cafeteria Staff***

Barriers:

1. Cost to renovate
2. Lack of decorations/educational materials to post
3. Custodial staff not on board
4. Cafeteria is used for other classes
5. Old building/facility
6. Students' behavior can contribute to an unsafe/unpleasant cafeteria
7. Lack of supervision in the cafeteria during meals

Suggestions:

- Bring everyone to the table and discuss how it could be improved and what the priorities are (safety comes first)
- Recess before lunch to cut down on behavioral problems
- Paint murals on the walls (as an incentive or school spirit)
- Provide managers with decorations for holidays and special occasions
- Student empowerment (involve students in clean up of cafeteria)
- Have older students help supervise the younger students (sense of responsibility)
- Provide anti-bacterial gel, napkins, and hand washing facilities
- Trash cans on wheels for easy clean up and moving
- Post educational materials on the walls
- Partner with agencies for education materials and decorations
- Advertise meals on boards with creative/enticing meal descriptions
- Free meals for adults who help to supervise meal times

Outcome:

Meal participation will increase with the improved ambiance of the cafeteria, and a safer environment will improve the overall respect for the cafeteria and food service department.

Recommended Action Step Resources:

MyPyramid:

<http://mypyramid.gov>

Western Dairy Association:

<http://www.westerndairyassociation.org>

Healthy School Meals Resource Systems:

http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=1&ax_subject=526

Recommended Strategy N.14: Preparedness for Food Emergencies

***Key players: Principals, Food Service Director, Superintendent, School Nurse, Custodians**

Barriers:

1. Limited storage space
2. No budget upfront for the food/items
3. Lack of information from child's allergies
4. Lack of cooperation from all parts of the school
5. Lack of knowledge about food borne illness/food safety
6. No plan in place

Suggestions:

- Come up with an emergency preparedness plan and train for all types of situations
- Make all school staff aware of the emergency preparedness plan
- 'How to' posters (choking, CPR) in the cafeteria and kitchen
- Keeping food label records
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan
- Design an emergency menu plan based on store room staples
- Create a plan on how to operate a kitchen without power, during an emergency
- Charlie plates (sample plates for food borne illness)
- Keeping an up to date inventory

Outcome:

Being prepared for any disaster/emergency will ensure that all staff will be able to act swiftly, calmly, and accordingly to help manage the situation and keep everyone safe.

Updated Action Step Resources:

Emergency Readiness Plan: A Guide to Forms for School Foodservice Operations:

<http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/e-readiness.html>

Biosecurity Checklist:

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/biosecurity.pdf>

Biosecurity Video for Schools:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/food_safety.htm

Food Safe Schools Action Guide:

<http://www.foodsafeschools.org/>

Responding to a Food Recall:

<http://foodbiosecurity.nfsmi.org/Resources.php>

Food Defense: Security in a Foodservice Operation (DVD):

<http://media.sdstate.edu/mma/FoodProtectDVD.wmv>

Colorado Department of Education (refer to "Training" section):

http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_nutrition.htm