

## **Module 4: Nutrition Environment and Services**

### ***Discussion Questions***

#### **N.1 Breakfast and lunch programs**

Does your school offer school meals (breakfast and lunch) programs that are fully accessible to all students?

3 = Yes.

2 = Our school offers breakfast and lunch programs, but they are not fully accessible to all students.

1 = Our school offers only a lunch program that is fully accessible, but there are plans to add a breakfast program.

0 = Our school offers only a lunch program that is not fully accessible and there are no plans to add a breakfast program, or the school does not offer a breakfast or a lunch program.

#### **N.2 School breakfast**

Does your school use strategies to maximize participation in the school breakfast program?

3 = Our school offers universal free breakfast\* after the bell, such as breakfast in the classroom, grab and go to the classroom, or second chance breakfast models.

2 = Our school offers breakfast after the bell, such as breakfast in the classroom, grab and go to the classroom, or second chance breakfast models.

1 = Our school offers a traditional breakfast program served and consumed in the cafeteria.

0 = Our school does not offer a breakfast program.

\*Generally, universal free breakfast is ideal for schools with  $\geq 70\%$  of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but may still be feasible for schools with a lower percentage of eligible students depending on state and local policies and programs. Universal free breakfast refers to any program that offers breakfast to all students free of charge, regardless of their free, reduced or paid lunch status.

## **SCHOOL HEALTH INDEX – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

### **N.3 School lunch**

Does your school provide multiple alternative points of sale for reimbursable meals, such as outside lines, kiosks, grab and go options, reimbursable vending options, to maximize participation in the National School Lunch Program?

3 = Our school provides multiple alternative points of sale at lunch.

2 = Our school provides one alternative point of sale at lunch.

1 = Our school offers a traditional lunch program served and consumed in the cafeteria.

0 = Our school does not offer a lunch program.

### **N.4 Variety of offerings in school meals**

Do **school meals** include a variety of offerings that meet the following criteria?

#### **Lunch**

- ✓ Go beyond the National School Lunch Program requirements to offer one additional serving per week from any of the 3 vegetable subgroups (dark green, red and orange, dry beans and peas)
- ✓ Offer a different fruit every day of the week during lunch (100% fruit juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week)
- ✓ Offer fresh fruit at least 1 day per week
- ✓ Offer foods that address the cultural practices of the student population
- ✓ Offer an alternative entrée option at least one time per week that is legume-based, reduced-fat dairy or fish-based (including tuna)
- ✓ Offer at least 3 different types of whole grain-rich food items each week

#### **Breakfast**

- ✓ Offer at least 3 different fruits and vegetables each week (100% fruit juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week)
- ✓ Offer fresh fruit at least 1 day per week

NOTE: A school meal is a set of foods that meets school meal program regulations. This does not include **à la carte offerings**.

3 = Yes, meets **six to eight** of these criteria for variety.

2 = Meets **three to five** of these criteria for variety.

1 = Meets **one to two** of these criteria for variety.

0 = Meets **none** of these criteria for variety.

**N.5 Healthy food purchasing and preparation practices**

Does the school food service consistently follow practices that ensure healthier foods are purchased and prepared for service?

- ✓ Spoon solid fat from chilled meat and poultry broth before use
- ✓ Use specifications requiring lower sodium content in prepared foods such as hamburgers, cold cuts and cured meats, chicken nuggets, pizza, sandwiches, etc.; and canned products such as vegetables, soups etc.
- ✓ Use specifications requiring lower added sugar content in prepared foods such as whole grain cold cereals or cereal bars; breakfast items such as pancakes or waffles; and canned products such as fruit.
- ✓ Roast, bake or broil meat rather than fry it
- ✓ Use low-sodium or no-salt-added spices and seasonings, dressings, marinades, sauces (e.g., tomato or pasta sauces), and condiments (e.g., ketchup, barbeque sauce, ranch dressing, etc.).
- ✓ Prepare vegetables by steaming or baking
- ✓ Prepare vegetables using little or no fat
- ✓ Cook with nonstick spray or pan liners rather than with grease or oil
- ✓ Use frozen or canned vegetables with little or no added sodium (e.g., low sodium, fresh frozen foods) instead of regular canned vegetables
- ✓ Use products that are locally grown or produced such as milk, produce and/or meats, chicken or fish
- ✓ Follow standardized recipes that are low in saturated fat, sodium and added sugars
- ✓ Use other seasonings or spices, including fresh herbs, in place of salt. Herbs could be from school gardens or local markets.

3 = Yes, follows **ten to eleven** of these practices.

2 = Follows **eight to nine** of these practices.

1 = Follows **five to six** of these practices.

0 = Follows **four or fewer** of these practices.

**N.6 Venues outside the cafeteria offer fruits and vegetables**

Do **venues outside the cafeteria** (e.g., vending machines, school stores, canteens, snack bars, or snack or food carts) where food is available offer fruits and non-fried vegetables?

3 = Yes, **most or all** venues outside the cafeteria do.

2 = **About half** of the venues do.

1 = **Fewer than half** of the venues do.

0 = **None** of the venues do.

**SCHOOL HEALTH INDEX – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**N.7 Promote healthy food and beverage choices and school meals using Smarter Lunchroom techniques**

- ✓ Are healthy food and beverage choices promoted through the following techniques?
- ✓ A variety of mixed whole fruits are displayed in nice bowls or baskets (instead of stainless steel pans)
- ✓ Fruit is offered in at least two locations on all service lines, one of which is right before each point of sale (POS)
- ✓ Vegetables are offered on all serving lines
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Place pre-packed salads or salad bar is available in a high traffic area
- ✓ Label pre-packaged salads or salad bar choices with creative, descriptive names and display next to each choice
- ✓ Self-serve salad bar tongs, scoops, and containers are larger for vegetables and smaller for croutons, dressing, and other non-produce items.
- ✓ White milk is displayed in front of other beverages in all coolers
- ✓ 1% or non-fat white milk is identified as the featured milk and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name
- ✓ Cafeteria staff politely prompt students who do not have a full reimbursable meal to select a fruit or vegetable
- ✓ Signs show students how to make a reimbursable meal on any service line
- ✓ Alternative entrée options (salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas
- ✓ Cafeteria staff smile and greet students upon entering the service line and continually throughout meal service
- ✓ Students, teachers, or administrators announce today's menu in daily announcements
- ✓ A monthly menu is posted in the main office
- ✓ Information about the benefits of school meals is provided to teachers and administration at least annually
- ✓ Brand, name, and decorate the lunchroom in a way that reflects the student body.
- ✓ Conduct a taste test of a new entrée at least once a year

3 = Yes, healthy food and beverage choices are promoted through **ten or more** of these techniques.

2 = Healthy food and beverage choices are promoted through **five to nine** of these techniques.

1 = Healthy food and beverage choices are promoted through **one to four** of these techniques.

0 = Healthy food and beverage choices are promoted through **none** of these techniques.

**SCHOOL HEALTH INDEX – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**N.8 Adequate time to eat school meals**

Do students have at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they are seated?

3 = Yes. (NOTE: If the school does not have a breakfast program, but does provide at least 20 minutes for lunch, you can select 3.)

2 = Have adequate time for breakfast or lunch, but not for both.

1 = No, but there are plans to increase the time.

0 = No.

NOTE: The time that students are allotted for breakfast and/or lunch should be uninterrupted (i.e., designated to eating and not to completing make-up work or other academic assignments).

**N.9 Collaboration between school nutrition services staff members and teachers**

Do school nutrition services staff members use three or more of the following methods to collaborate with teachers to reinforce nutrition education lessons taught in the classroom?

- ✓ Participate in design and implementation of nutrition education programs
- ✓ Display educational and informational materials that reinforce classroom lessons
- ✓ Provide food for use in classroom nutrition education lessons
- ✓ Provide ideas for classroom nutrition education lessons
- ✓ Teach lessons or give presentations to students
- ✓ Tasting party in collaboration with classroom teacher
- ✓ Presentation on nutrition and food services to PTA/PTSA/PTO
- ✓ Sports nutrition – collaboration with coaches
- ✓ Classroom tour of cafeteria or meet and greet with School Nutrition staff

3 = Yes, use **three or more** methods.

2 = Use **two** of these methods.

1 = Use **one** of these methods.

0 = Use **none** of these methods.

**SCHOOL HEALTH INDEX – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**N.10 Annual continuing education and training requirements for school nutrition services staff**

Do all school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff meet or exceed the annual continuing education/training hours required by the USDA's Professional Standards requirements?

Topics covered may include, but are not limited to, food safety and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), nutrition standards updates in school meals, food sensitivities and allergies, purchasing and procurement, meal counting and claiming, customer service or food production techniques.

NOTE: USDA's Professional Standards requirements establish minimum professional standards for school nutrition personnel who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. (See <https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/content/professional-standards-information>)

- 3= Yes, **all** food and nutrition services staff meet or exceed the annual continuing education/training hours required by the USDA's Professional Standards requirements.
- 2= **Most** food and nutrition services staff meet or exceed the annual continuing education/training hours required by the USDA's Professional Standards requirements.
- 1= **Some** food and nutrition services staff meet or exceed the annual continuing education/training hours required by the USDA's Professional Standards requirements.
- 0= No, **no** food and nutrition services staff meet or exceed the annual continuing education/training hours required by the USDA's Professional Standards requirements.

**SCHOOL HEALTH INDEX – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**N.11/S.1 Clean, safe, pleasant cafeteria**

Does the school provide students with a clean, safe, and pleasant cafeteria, according to the following criteria?

- ✓ Physical structure (e.g., walls, floor covering) does not need repairs
- ✓ Tables and chairs are not damaged and are of appropriate size for all students
- ✓ Seating is not overcrowded (i.e., never more than 100% of capacity)
- ✓ Rules for safe behavior (e.g., no running, no throwing food or utensils) are enforced
- ✓ Tables and floors are cleaned between lunch periods or shifts, and trash is removed between each lunch period if necessary
- ✓ The lunchroom is branded and decorated in a way that reflects the student body
- ✓ Appropriate practices are used to prevent excessive noise levels (e.g., no whistles)
- ✓ Smells are pleasant and not offensive
- ✓ Appropriate eating devices are available when needed for students with **special health care needs**

3 = Yes, cafeteria meets all **nine** of these criteria.

2 = Meets **five to eight** of these criteria.

1 = Meets **three or four** of these criteria.

0 = Meets **two or fewer** of these criteria.

**N.12/S.2 Food safety training**

Has your school established and provided training on food safety best practices (e.g., properly handling, preparing, and storing foods) for all food service staff?

- 3 = Yes, our school has established practices and provides **all** food service staff with training on food safety.
- 2 = Our school has established practices and provides **most** food service staff with training on food safety.
- 1 = Our school has established practices and provides **some** food service staff with training on food safety.
- 0 = No, our school has not established practices and/or **does not** provide food service staff with training on food safety.

## **SCHOOL HEALTH INDEX – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

### **N.13/S.3 Preparedness for food emergencies**

Are school nutrition service staff members and cafeteria monitors (e.g., teachers, aides) trained to respond quickly and effectively to the following types of food emergencies?

- ✓ Choking
- ✓ Natural disasters (e.g., electrical outages affecting refrigeration)
- ✓ Weather-related emergencies and school closures
- ✓ Medical emergencies (e.g., severe food allergy reactions, diabetic reactions)
- ✓ Attempts to introduce biological or other hazards into the food supply
- ✓ Situations that require students or others to shelter in the school

3 = Yes, all staff are trained for **five or six** types of emergencies.

2 = Some staff are trained for **three or four** types of emergencies.

1 = Some staff are trained for **one or two** types of emergencies.

0 = No, staff are trained for **none** of these types of emergencies.

### **N.14 Farm to School activities**

Is your school implementing any Farm to School activities?

- ✓ Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal programs
- ✓ Messages about agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment
- ✓ School hosts a school fruit or vegetable garden
- ✓ School hosts field trips to local farms
- ✓ School utilizes promotions or special events, such as tastings, that highlight the local/regional products
- ✓ School hosts a farmer's market (student and parent involvement)
- ✓ Menu states local product(s) being served
- ✓ Local farmers/producers participate in career day activities

3 = Yes, our school is implementing **four to five** of these activities.

2 = Our school is implementing **two to three** of these activities.

1 = Our school is implementing **one** of these activities.

0 = No, our school is **not implementing any** of these activities.