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FDNS 6620- Procurement

National School Lunch

Since the mid-1900s, the National School Lunch Act has been establishing requirements for school lunches provided for students (Ralston, 2008). These requirements have continually grown in specificity and breadth. Currently, the NSLP has set requirements on servings daily and weekly of the five major USDA food groups, sodium levels, calorie levels, and sugar levels (Ralston, 2008). The goal of the NSLP is to provide healthy, cost-efficient meals that support the health and growth of the nation's children (Ralston, 2008). Although this is an important issue for parents, administration, and government programs, there can be issues in gaining acceptance and following the requirements set by the NSLP.

One major issue faced by schools regarding acceptance and adherence to school lunches is the presence of competitive foods within schools (Bhatia, 2011). Competitive foods are foods that are not part of the NSLP and are therefore are not held to as rigorous standards (Bhatia, 2011). These competitive foods are usually only available to children with money, and exclude children on free or reduced lunch. This can lead to school lunches being seen as primarily for poor children rather than for all children (Bhatia, 2011). Not only can these competitive foods create a stigma for school lunches, they can replace these meals as well and lead to low participation and low acceptance of the healthier and more rigorously checked school lunches (Bhatia, 2011). Competitive foods also pose an issue with food waste and budgeting. If there is low acceptance of the school lunches, there may be an increase in food waste associated with children receiving lunches and not eating them or not choosing

options in the lunch line (Bhatia, 2011). Food waste is a very serious concern when it comes to budgeting and sustainability of the menu (Eustachio, 2020).

Increasing the acceptance of the more healthful school lunch can pose issues for school administration. Intervention based research has found that salad bars, meal appearance, cultural sensitivity, and classroom activities focused on fruit, vegetables, and low-fat milk helps to increase the acceptance and consumption of these foods by students (Ralston, 2008). Budget remains a main concern for improving acceptance because each of these interventions requires additional money (Ralston, 2008). With meal costs rising faster than revenues earned by school lunches, finding room in the budget to improve quality, change menu items, and ensure each meal meets USDA guidelines continues to be a major issue (Ralston, 2008). Additionally, improvements in acceptance or adequately following the guidelines is limited by administration at the local level (Ralston, 2008). Maintaining integrity of the program requires acceptance and dedication from the school administration and can be limited by budget (Eustachio, 2020).

Access to a healthy and adequate school lunches is important for the overall health, well-being, and academic success of students (Eustachio, 2020). Acceptance is dependent on quality of meals, stigma, and presence of competitive foods. In order to ensure participation in school lunches and the acceptance of the menus, budget and administrative concerns must be addressed in order to remain within the requirements set by the USDA for each meal. Meeting meal patterns is a difficult task that must be considered with attention to cultural significance, access to alternative foods, and reducing stigma for school lunches.

References

- Bhatia, R., Jones, P., & Reicker, Z. (2011). Competitive foods, discrimination, and participation in the National School Lunch Program. *American journal of public health, 101*(8), 1380–1386. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2011.300134>
- Eustachio Colombo, P., Patterson, E., Lindroos, A. K., Parlesak, A., & Elinder, L. S. (2020). Sustainable and acceptable school meals through optimization analysis: an intervention study. *Nutrition journal, 19*(1), 61. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12937-020-00579-z>
- Ralston, K., Newnan, C., Clauson, A., Guthrie, K., & Buzby, JC (2008). The National School Lunch Program background, trends, and issues. *Economic Research Report, ERR-61*, 1-56.

Paper sources:

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- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32580743/>
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Age group: Kindergarten

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Fruit (½ c daily)	½ c pineapple tidbits	½ c Apple slices	½ c peaches	½ c Kiwi	½ c Banana slices
vegetable (¾ c daily)	¾ c Tomato sauce	½ c Mixed green salad (with low-fat Ranch) ¼ c mashed sweet potato	½ c baked beans ½ c Baked potato wedges	½ c peas ¼ c cubed carrots	¼ c tomato sauce ½ c sliced cucumber
Protein (8 oz)	2 oz Turkey meatballs	1.5 oz Lean meat hamburger	1.5 oz chicken strips (as chicken wrap)	1.5 oz chicken nuggets	1.5 oz pepperoni or lean sausage
Grain (8 oz)	2 oz Whole grain spaghetti	1 Whole wheat bun (2 oz)	2 whole wheat tortillas (small, 2 oz)	1.5 oz Brown rice	1.5 Whole wheat crust (cheese pizza)
Dairy (8 oz daily)	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz) 1 oz swiss cheese	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz) 1 oz mozzarella cheese

Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Fruit (½ c daily)	½ c seedless red grapes	½ c apple sauce	½ c Orange slices	½ c banana slices	½ c diced pears
vegetable (¾ c daily)	½ c green beans ½ c spinach salad (with Ranch, cherry	½ c cooked corn ½ c broccoli/cauliflower	3 tbsp salsa ½ c avocado/guacamole ¼ c cherry tomato	¾ c side salad (spinach, lettuce, tomato, cucumber	¾ c tomato sauce ½ c Peas

	tomatoes)		½ c potato wedges	with Ranch)	
Protein (8 oz)	2 oz teriyaki chicken	2 oz Sloppy Joe	1.5 oz ground beef	1.5 oz Chicken patty	1.5 oz oven-baked fish
Grain (8 oz)	1.5 oz Brown rice	1 whole-wheat bun (2 oz)	2/3 c Whole grain tortilla chips (2 oz)	1 Whole wheat bun (2 oz)	1.5 oz Whole wheat pasta
Dairy (8 oz daily)	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz) 1.5 oz shredded cheddar cheese	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz)

Week 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Fruit (½ c daily)	½ c Apple slices	½ c fruit cocktail	½ c plum slices	½ c watermelon	½ c cherries
vegetable (¾ c daily)	¼ c lettuce ¼ c Tomato slices ¼ c baby carrots	½ c salad greens (spinach) ¼ c cucumbers ¼ c tomato sauce	¼ c Green peas ½ c Mashed potato	½ c Sweet potato hash ¼ c steamed spinach	¼ c bell pepper slices ¼ c mushrooms ¼ c onion (in quesadilla)
Protein (8 oz)	2 oz tuna salad (LF	2 oz chicken strips	1.5 oz Turkey slices	2 Scrambled	1.5 oz ground

	mayo)			eggs	beef
Grain (8 oz)	2 slices Whole wheat bread	2 oz Whole wheat pasta	2 rolls (2 oz)	2 pancakes (2 oz)	1 Whole wheat tortilla (1 oz)
Dairy (8 oz daily)	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz)	1% milk carton (8 oz) 1.5 oz shredded cheese