

From Walter:

Participation problems: why aren't they coming?

I am far from the expert on why your students do not become your customers. I will make a stab at it from comments and observations. I have had comments from students, parents, teachers, administration and food service staff. I have gathered my thoughts. I will share them with you and maybe something will catch your eye as possibilities.

Schools address the issue by offering more choices, and then a few more and now you have 15 sandwiches, 25 chips and no time to do anything else. I think choices are great but at some point you have to say no. I am not even addressing labor or financial issues in this article. Think of this statement. Do you do a few things great or fair and a lot poorly? Think about this scale. Where are you?

Parents are being thrifty and watching pennies in today's economy. They want the best deal. When they ask their child about lunch, they respond with the items they eat generally. They often neglect to mention the salad bar, fruit, and vegetable choices. When a parent calls me and complains they just paid \$2.50 for milk, cheese and crackers how do you justify that?

Employees, do they enjoy their job and are they friendly to the students. Not speaking or treating customers poorly will result in loss sales. Younger kids could be scared of the lunch lady. Do they talk pleasantly to the students or ignore them?

Do teachers support the program or put down your program? I had a conversation with a teacher and she referred to your programs as the "poor student" program. These are educated people.

Being creative with food is great but if students do not know what it is or parents do not understand the menu they will not come. Food is comforting during the day. It is a safe zone

The café should be warm and comfortable for the students. Try to eliminate any clutter. When was the last time any posters were changed? Do they look tired and faded, having no excitement? Think about going out to eat and you stand by the sign "Please wait to be seated" and several staff people walk by and never even speak to you.

Please do two things for your students:

1. Sit in the café and do nothing, just sit for 5 minutes and look around, what do see? No talking or wandering. Use the 4 senses= listen, smell, touch, see what customers do every day.

1. Think about the alphabet.

A Attitude, is it friendly

B Best bang for the buck

C Convenience - to get what is needed napkins, flatware, meal etc.

D Difficult - ease of going though the line

E Environment, what is the atmosphere and surroundings

F Fast - quick

G Garnished, so it is appealing

H Hot food served hot - cold served cold

I Identifiable and familiar to the customer

J Joyous - happy to serve you

K Kind, how are customers treated

L Looks appealing and appetizing

M Motivation to eat

N Nose appeal - smell -does the café smell like bleach or sour milk

O Open minded opinion kept to servers self

P Pleasant, accommodating - glad to see you, polite, courteous

Q Quality - yes this food is great

R Recognizable - comfort food

S Simplicity to obtain meal

T Tone of staff and cafeteria - spoken and unspoken

U Uncontaminated, appears clean and safe

V Value best price worth the money

W Welcoming - does the café say welcome come in and sit down.

X

Y Yeah, lets go eat in the cafe
Z Zone of comfort

From Gail Lombardi:

Reminder, for those districts on Nutrient Analysis. You just evaluate weekly menus based on weighted values. Don't know what that means? Then you may not be doing the analysis properly. All entries and side dishes must have the estimated number of students that will select the specific choice based on history (if available). The computer will then analyze based on weighted values when you select the weighted values option. School nurses will still want to see the analysis based on portion sizes for their diabetic students.

Also, If you are too low on key nutrients or too high in fat or saturated fat, you must make adjustments to the menu PRIOR to serving it.

Spring Informational Meeting

Thursday, May 19, 2011. This will be in the Lewiston-Auburn area or Augusta area.

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USDA FOODS

From Terri:

There will be two shipments of the Beef Crumbles on the December offering letter. These two shipments will be delivered to the schools in January. On the December Monthly letter one of the truck loads will be allocated and the second truck load will be offered. Allocated means you only have a certain number you can take. Offered means you can take what ever is available and you have PAL for.

The following companies will be doing business with Maine Child Nutrition Service for School Year 2010-2011.

They will each have a further processing fee from the company. The items offered and cost will be posted at a later date.

ES Foods, Formally East Side Entrees. This will be billed by the Processor.

Tasty Brands. This will be billed by the Processor.

JTM Foods. Cheese and Pork. This will be billed by Dennis Paper, and will include an Admin Fee.

PROCESSED ITEMS NOT PART OF NOI

Tasty Brands

cheese -billed by Tasty Brands

Turkey Lasagna - \$50.40 per case, 120 servings-turkey is Bonus

Stuffed Shells, \$45.92 per case, 112 servings

Mini Egg/Cheese Bagels \$62.48 per case, 146 servings.

Cheese Stix, 1 oz, \$57.50 per case, 360 servings -NFDM is Bonus

ES Foods - (formally East Side Entrees) - cheese

JTM Foods

pork and cheese -Billed by Dennis Paper.

Pork Sausage Patty, \$29.00 per case, 360 servings - Pork is Bonus

Cheddar Cheese Sauce, 2 oz cups, \$55.20 per case, 240 servings

Queso Blanco Cheese Sauce\$30.00 per case, 213 servings

(This is a white cheese with salsa)

December offering: diced pears, salsa, tuna, mozzarella cheese, cheddar cheese, sliced strawberries, corn, beef crumbles, chicken fajitas, peaches, applesauce, sliced white cheese, whole frozen eggs, diced ham, mixed fruit, spaghetti sauce, deli turkey breast, turkey ham, whole wheat pancakes, vegetable oil, beef crumbles.

Bonus - frozen blueberries

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables - Baby Peeled Carrots and Pears.

January offering: applesauce, spaghetti sauce, strawberry cups, pork roast, beef crumbles, ham sliced, turkey taco filling, peaches

February offering: diced pears, strawberry cups, beef crumbles, beef patties, turkey deli breast, corn, turkey roast, diced chicken, mozz cheese, yellow sliced cheese, raisins, corn.

Maine Child Nutrition now offers 3 list serve options!!!

All Food Service Directors and managers **must** be on the Child Nutrition List Serve to remain current. This is the method that all announcements of regulation changes, meetings, late checks and other current topics are shared with all. The list serve is for Maine Food Service staff. The list is not given out to anyone and vendors are not members. DOE staff does control the membership and the posting. This should be a resource to all. If you should change your address you will need to register with the

list serve again. maintaining the current email status is the responsibility of the members. [Join Child Nutrition list serve NOW](#)

There also is a farm to School list serve. it has members that include producers, school food service staff school health coordinators, interested public members, nurses and many more. join today at no cost to stay current and share with others. Sharing keeps all members current!

[Farm to school list serve join NOW](#)

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program has a list serve to keep all informed. this is required for schools that have accepted the grant. at least one active person must be a member of the list serve. this is the most effective way to hear the news in a timely fashion. [Join FFVP list serve NOW](#)

The list serve you join on your own and unsubscribe on your own. If your address changes unsubscribe the old address and subscribe with the new address. the list serve are monitored for exchange of information and not used for sales or membership lists.