

School Nutrition Outreach Toolkit

A Guide for Communicating:
Wisconsin School Meals Rock!





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About This Toolkit



Wisconsin school nutrition professionals have reported challenges about how to best communicate to students, families, and school staff about school nutrition programs. Although outreach to these groups often lands outside a school nutrition professional's comfort zone, these efforts are critical as they are well positioned to be the main

advocate for school nutrition programs in the community. Students and families may need to learn more about what they are missing in terms of nutrition, convenience, and variety offered by school nutrition programs.

This School Nutrition Outreach Toolkit provides resources and tools for school nutrition professionals to effectively promote their school nutrition programs and showcase why Wisconsin school meals rock. The toolkit consists of two sections: *Getting Started* and *Communication Tools*. *Getting Started* includes an introduction to communications with overviews of each tool presented in this toolkit and goal setting strategies. *Communication Tools* contains themed school nutrition chapters with applicable family promotional brochures, sample social media posts, and communication templates. The templates are meant to be edited to fit the unique needs of each school nutrition program.

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Wisconsin School Meals Rock! is a multimedia campaign to communicate with families and the broader school community. School nutrition programs help students be healthy and successful while offering food that is affordable and convenient for families.

The Wisconsin School Meals Rock! campaign is a way to promote positive school nutrition program practices and the healthfulness of school meals.



Getting Started

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INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATIONS

What does “communication” mean?

Communication is the process of giving and receiving information. Effective communication must be clear to allow a diverse group of people to understand the message you are conveying. It is important to identify a clear and concise message to effectively communicate with an audience.

It is crucial that the communication that promotes school nutrition programs always has a target audience: a group of people we most want to reach with that particular communication. Identifying your target audience will help you develop your key message and the best form of communication to use.

The target audiences identified in this toolkit include both internal and external audiences. The internal audiences are the school district staff, such as teachers, principals, administrators, and other school nutrition staff. External audiences refers to students, families, and community members. In some instances, working with additional internal audience groups may be needed to effectively promote the school nutrition programs, such as the district’s communication professional. This toolkit provides resources and tools for key messages, photography, videography, social media, letters and emails, news releases, and presentations.

TOOL OVERVIEW: COMMUNICATION METHODS

KEY MESSAGES

Key messages ensure that clear and consistent information is delivered to your audience. Key messages will vary based on whether your target audience is students, families, or school staff. Each chapter includes key messages for students, families, and school staff. These key messages can be used to describe the school nutrition programs and are meant to be used as a guide for your conversations. Key messages can be used for in-person and phone conversations. They should also be carried through your other forms of communication, such as emails, newsletters, and social media.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Photos are ideal for sharing visually appealing content that can promote your school nutrition programs. A digital camera can be used to capture high quality images. However, if not available, the ease of use and accessibility of a smartphone makes it a great choice for taking photos. Within each chapter, there are photography tips and ideas to get you started.

There are several elements that work together to create a great photo. The following are general tips that can help you compose an effective photo.

Subjects: While images with people are very powerful, it is necessary to gain their permission first. Check district policies to determine the protocol for obtaining permission. Be sure that all subjects in the images portray proper food safety practices. If taking pictures of food, make sure it is fresh and not wilting. One trick is to spray a small amount of cooking oil on the food to make it shine. If the subject is an inanimate object, move closer to eliminate distracting background objects.

Light: Natural light is not harsh and will make the images more appealing. If there is natural sunlight through windows or doors in the cafeteria, use that as the first choice lighting source. Avoid including windows or doors in the picture as they can make indoor subjects hard to see. If possible, avoid flash and overhead fluorescent lighting for photos.

Angle: Take the pictures horizontally. Hold the camera directly above the food and shoot down (as seen in the picture to the left). When photographing people, adjust the angle so the camera is at eye-level or slightly above the subject. Observe the background before taking the picture and be sure that there are not any unnecessary, distracting objects in the background.

Focus: Blurry photos should not be used. Many smartphones will automatically focus the image. Before taking each photo, wait a few seconds for the subject to come into focus. Be sure to hold the camera still. Setting the camera on something in the cafeteria that would act as a tripod may help, as long as it is at an appropriate height.

"Play with different lighting, angles, and compositions until you capture a compelling image! Natural lighting is your best friend, and when you're new to photography, take lots of photos to make sure you capture a great shot. It takes time and practice, but can be fun. "

– Alex Kiander,
Multimedia Specialist
Wisconsin Department of
Public Instruction

VIDEOGRAPHY

Videos are another way to promote the nutrition program. Once again, video cameras are not needed as a smartphone will work great. A video should convey a clear, identifiable message. Video ideas are provided within each topic chapter of the toolkit. The following are tips that can help you compose a compelling video.

Camera Positioning: Hold the camera still. If possible, mount the camera on a tripod or other stationary object. Record the video in the horizontal format. Position the phone so the camera lens is towards the top of the phone.

Subject: Move closer to the subject to avoid using the “zoom” function on the camera. When conducting an interview, make sure the person is speaking loud enough. Consider filming a short test video and decide if their volume needs to be adjusted. Just like photography, if people are in the videos, be sure to have their permission. Refer to the district policies as to what actions are needed to obtain their permission. Also, be sure all shots represent proper food safety practices.

Background: Observe the background before filming. If the background seems distracting, move the subject to a different area. If possible, find a background that adds value to the video. For example, have the lunch service line set up in the background if filming students explaining why they enjoy school lunch. If filming an interview against a wall or other solid backdrop, it is usually better to have several feet of space between the subject and the background.

Lighting: Be sure that the subject is well lit. If there is natural light, place the subject so the sun lights up their face. Do not place their back to the sun as it will cause the subject to appear very dark.



The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Team would love to see the images that school districts are taking to promote their school meals. Have a photo to share? Go to [Share a Photo](#).



Looking for some video inspiration? Check out [this short, compelling salad bar video](#) by Pulaski Community School District or the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's [Wisconsin School Meals Rock! videos](#).

Length: Keep the videos short. The length of the video will depend on the purpose of the video, but remember that people are more likely to view shorter videos. Aim for the videos to be less than two minutes in length. Keep in mind a 10 second video may be more effective than a two minute video.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful tool to engage with students, families, and community members. This toolkit focuses on three prominent social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. There are specific social media examples and templates within each chapter.

Accounts

It is generally not advisable (and in many schools, not allowed) to use your personal social media accounts for school purposes. Consider creating a Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter page for the school nutrition department, which allows for customization of all content to reflect the school nutrition programs. Another option that may be more realistic, and perhaps more effective, would be to use the school district's social media accounts. Talk to the district communications team to see how to use the district's accounts to post about the school nutrition programs for a broader reach with your target audience.

“ I believe social media is the best and most effective way to reach students directly as well as parents, staff, and families. Social media outreach with photos and videos gives us in Pulaski an opportunity to show hundreds to thousands of customers what it is exactly that we are doing in our Food Service Department. We work very hard to put out the most appealing and healthy food for the kids, and I want to show everyone what we are doing! ”

- Caitlin Harrison, School Nutrition Director, Pulaski Community School District

Across all social media platforms, be sure to have the same or very similar usernames. In the description of the account, include the nutrition program's website or a direct link to the lunch menu. This will make it easier for the followers to find the correct account. When using social media, spread the posts out throughout the day and across platforms.

Ingredients for a Social Media Post

Content: Write a creative message with a clear purpose. Content should be appropriate for the target audience.

Image: Include a compelling picture that is related to the content. If there is a food image, be sure to describe any important details that may not be obvious. For example, if a soup has a vegetable or a specific spice, go ahead and include that in the post.

Link: Include links in the posts when possible to encourage people to access more information.

Hashtag: #Hashtags make it easy for your audience to search for your post. Include #WISchoolMealsRock in your posts so the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Team can see all of the great posts from your school nutrition department.

Frequency: Strive to post on each platform three to five times per week.

Other Visual Options

Emojis: add a visual, creative element to social media posts.

GIFs: are very short video clips that have a humorous message.

Memes: are images with funny captions written on the image.



Stay Safe on Social Media

Be aware that not everything on social media is safe. Be cautious of viewing or sharing links or posts that seem unsafe. If it looks suspicious, do not click on it. Be wary of phishing which refers to unsafe messages that typically ask for your personal information. Never send personal information to companies or accounts online, and never open attachments sent from a sender you do not know. Connect with a district communication professional and follow district social media policies.

Facebook

Facebook is a platform that has the potential to reach students and families. Approximately 71% of teens use Facebook, making it a very valuable tool for reaching older students (Pew Research Center, 2015). Use Facebook to share information and updates about the school nutrition programs. Keep in mind that the audience is both students and families.

Facebook allows you to post multiple paragraphs if necessary. However, be sure the content is still clear and concise. It is recommended to limit your post to a few sentences. There is a scheduling feature as well, allowing posts to be written and scheduled in advance. Scheduling posts can be a time saver. To schedule a post, simply create your post and then select schedule instead of publish.



It is important to engage with both followers and other professional Facebook pages. If a follower or a page comments on a post, comment back or “like” their comment. To reach more people, ask other district pages to “share” the post. To add to the credibility of your page, follow other relevant pages and share their content that applies to your audience.

Facebook pages to follow include:

- Nearby districts
- [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin](#)

Instagram

Instagram is a picture-based platform. The primary audience on Instagram is teenagers and young adults, with about 75% of teenagers present on Instagram (Associated Press, 2017). Every Instagram post includes a compelling picture and a caption. Web links are not allowed in captions. Be sure to include relevant links in your bio. It

is important to know that an app on a smartphone or tablet is needed to upload photos onto an Instagram account. Instagram will not allow users to upload pictures from a computer.

Be sure to engage with your followers on Instagram. If someone comments on the post, go ahead and “like” or reply to the comment. Follow professional accounts such as Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction School Nutrition (@wisdpi_snt), School Nutrition Association (@schoolnutritionassoc), USDA (@usdagov), and other local districts or school nutrition departments.



Twitter

Twitter is a unique platform due to the short, concise posts. Posts must not exceed 280 characters. Followers will have the option to favorite (“like”) or retweet (“share”) the tweets. The audience on Twitter includes both high school students and families. However, at this time, Twitter is not as popular as Facebook or Instagram for teenagers (Associated Press, 2017).

Like other social media platforms, it is important to engage with followers on Twitter. If someone tweets a question at the school nutrition department’s account, make sure to respond in a prompt timeframe. If the answer is not appropriate to make public, directly message the user on Twitter instead. To be seen as credible, follow and engage with similar pages. Suggested pages include Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs (@WisDPI_SNP), USDA Team Nutrition (@TeamNutrition) and Choose MyPlate (@MyPlate). Consider retweeting content from similar pages that will resonate with the target audience.

Social media features are always evolving, and new social media platforms will become popular in the future. Talk to the students about new features that the school nutrition department should be incorporating into the social media posts.



LETTERS AND EMAILS

Letters and emails can be used to reach both families and internal staff members. Letters may look different for each school based on the current communication methods. Family letter and newsletter insert templates are found in all chapters and staff email templates are found in most chapters.

All audiences:

The letter should be short and easy-to-read. At the end, include information as to where families or staff can find more information, such as a website link or the school nutrition department's phone number.

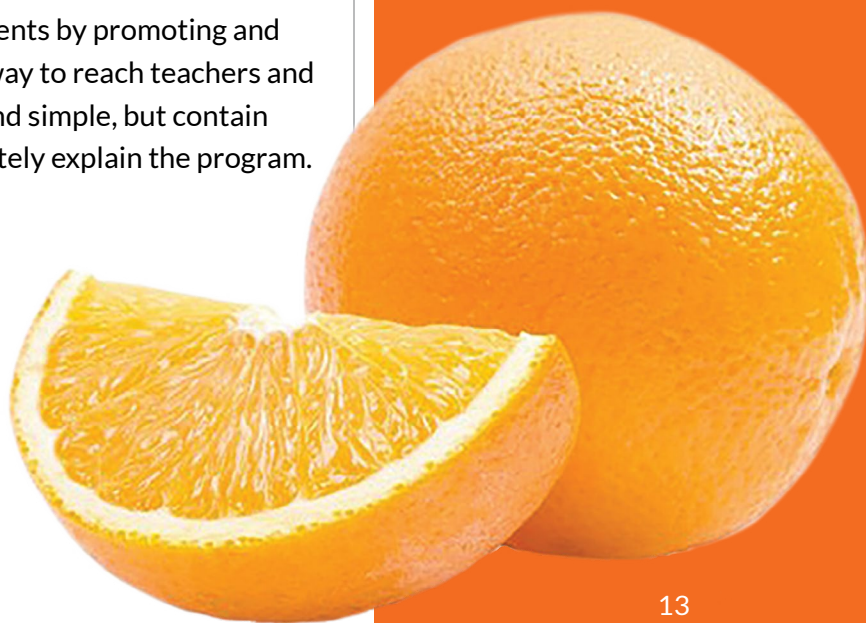
Families:

Districts often send written communications to families on a regular basis. This is a great opportunity to include a short paragraph about the school nutrition programs. Another option is to create a family letter to be sent directly from the school nutrition department. This can be shared with families either by email or by sending a hardcopy home with the students. It is recommended to use the terms "family" or families" instead of "parents" within these communications.

It is important to be aware of the different communication practices that are currently in place at the district. For example, some teachers have a texting system where they text families class updates. If your district uses a specific communication technology, ask about including information about the school nutrition programs in an upcoming family communication.

Staff:

Teachers have the ability to influence their students by promoting and discussing the school nutrition programs. One way to reach teachers and staff is by email. These emails should be short and simple, but contain detailed information so the teachers can accurately explain the program.





NEWS RELEASE

If there is something important that should reach the entire community, consider working with your district to write a news release and send it to the local news outlets. The media can promote various school nutrition programs and events. This toolkit provides customizable news release templates for Farm to School, Special Events in the Cafeteria, and Alternative Food Programs.

Before writing a news release (also known as a “press release” or “media release”), be sure to review district policies and procedures. Check with the district personnel who is responsible for communication, both for permission and to see if they would be willing to assist with writing the release. District communication staff can provide valuable guidance and may already have connections with local news outlets.

There are several important components of writing an effective news release. The news release should be typed on the school district’s letterhead, with the date, contact information, title, and location at the beginning of the page. Releases should be 400 to 500 words maximum. News releases are meant to be announcements and informative, so focus on writing the facts.

The first paragraph should clearly state who, what, when, where, why, and how. Why should the reader and community care about the news story? This statement needs to be concise and informative. Be sure to include the district’s name in this paragraph. The reader should understand the story from the first paragraph. The following sentences should provide additional detail and facts related to the news story to further inform the reader on the story.

Incorporate one or two quotes to support the information presented in the news release. Quotes are usually in the last half of the press release, leaving the first half to the facts. These quotes can be from the district administrator, community leaders, or other credible individuals who can contribute to the story. These quotes should highlight important aspects of the



story. Include the titles of the individuals whose quotes are featured. School and district administrators may want to write their own quotations, or they might be happy to look at your suggestions and simply approve or edit them. Be sure to always obtain permission to use a quote. End the news release with a call to action. For example, go to the school nutrition department's website for more information or attend the family school breakfast event.

Consider the timing of the news release. When there is a special event, send the release around five days before the event. Avoid sending the release on the weekend. Look at the website for the news outlet and find instructions on how to properly submit the press release. Once the release is submitted, follow up with the outlet the next day to confirm they received the news release.



PRESENTATIONS

Presentations are a great way to provide an overview of the school nutrition programs. There are several settings in which presentations are appropriate such as Parent Teacher Association/Organization meetings, school board meetings, orientations, and family nights. Slideshows are typically used for presentations. It is necessary to have access to a presentation software such as Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Keynote. This toolkit provides customizable presentation slides for Benefits of School Lunch, Benefits of School Breakfast, New Menu Items and Tasting Activities, and Farm to School.

Ten Slide Breakdown:

Slide one: The title slide needs to include a clear and informative title, the date of the presentation, and the presenter's and district's name.

Slide two: This slide should outline the topics that will be covered in the presentation.

Slide three: This slide should include the purpose of your presentation and any relevant background information.

Slides four through eight: These are your body slides that contain the bulk of your information.

Slide nine: This slide provides a brief summary of the presentation with next steps for the audience.

Slide ten: This slide thanks your audience and asks for any questions. Include your contact information on this slide as well.

Be sure to...

- Limit the words on the slides
- Only include key phrases
- Use bullet points and pictures
- Choose a simple slide template and a simple font
- Use minimal animations
- Do not read the slides, talk directly to the audience
- Practice
- Aim for one slide per minute

GOAL SETTING

It is necessary to deliver the right message, in the right place, at the right time, to the intended target audience. In promoting school nutrition programs, there are many different communication platforms and tools, such as newsletters, presentations, social media, and even word of mouth. With all of these different ways to communicate, **developing a goal or plan for the school nutrition department's communication efforts is recommended.**

Developing a plan can help you manage your program promotion and make your communications more effective.



To create the communication plan, think about the following questions:

1. What is the goal?
2. Who is the audience?
3. What is the message?
4. What communication channels are appropriate?
5. Is it necessary to contact anyone in order to use these channels?

It is important that the goals are **SMART** goals, which means they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic (relevant), and timely.

Specific – answers the five w’s (what, where, who, why, which)

Measurable – includes a number, rate, observable skill or behavior

Attainable – a challenge but still possible to achieve

Realistic – willing and able to work toward; within your reach

Timely – a deadline, start date/target date

Once SMART goals are created and above questions are answered, it is time to create a communications plan.

TOOL EXAMPLES AND TEMPLATES

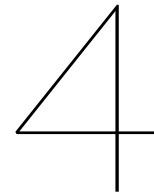
[Tool: Developing a Communications Plan](#)

An example of a SMART goal is to increase elementary student salad bar usage by 10% by the end of second quarter.





Communication Tools



SCHOOL LUNCH

When students eat nutritious meals, students are better prepared for learning with more focus and energy. School lunches help students be healthy and successful. Additionally, school lunches are affordable and convenient for families. As a champion of healthy school lunches, you have the ability to promote these meals to students, families, and school staff.

This chapter provides tools to assist with promoting the benefits of the school lunch program. For overviews of each tool, visit the Tool Overview section of the toolkit.

Key Messages

Families

- School lunches are nutritious. They offer a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- School lunches provide students the right portions for their age and provide them with the energy they need to get through the school day.
- School lunch can be a time saver for families by eliminating the time needed to pack a lunch each day.

Students

- School lunches are full of fruits and vegetables that will help students do their best in school and sports.
- School lunches offer students the chance to refuel their bodies and minds.
- School lunches provide a wide variety of foods featuring student favorites.



School Staff

- When students eat healthy lunches, like those served in school, they perform better academically.
- School lunch gives students the fuel they need to keep learning throughout the school day.
- School lunches provide students with a well-balanced meal. Well-nourished students have improved classroom engagement and behavior.

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Photo ideas:

- Colorful fruit and vegetables found in the salad bar
- A lunch tray highlighting the different lunch items, such as protein, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and milk
- Students smiling, holding their lunch tray or picking out their lunch items
- School nutrition professionals serving lunch items to students



Video ideas:

- Short clips highlighting:
 - A student explaining why they enjoy their school lunches
 - Students filling their trays with nutritious options from the salad bar
 - School nutrition professionals preparing lunch
 - Teachers or families explaining why they value school lunch
- Need some inspiration?
 - [Pulaski Community School District - Salad Bar](#)
 - [Hartford Union - School Meals Rock!](#)

TOOL EXAMPLES AND TEMPLATES:

[Tool: Social Media Post Examples](#)

[Tool: Social Media Post Templates](#)

[Tool: Family Letter Template](#)

[Tool: Newsletter Insert Templates](#)

[Tool: Staff Email Template](#)

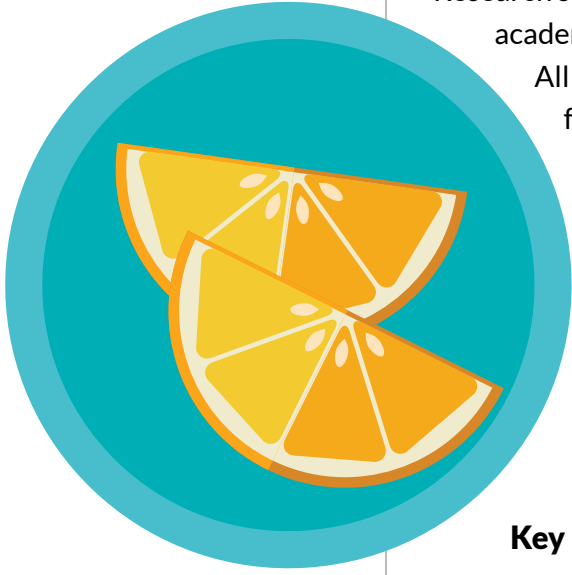
[Tool: Presentation Slides Template](#)

[Tool: Let's Do Lunch! Brochure](#)



“ It can be fun to take some time playing around to see what makes the clearest, most compelling video. Try different backgrounds, angles, lighting, etc. Also, don't feel you have to 'pad out' your video by making extra content. Just feature whatever it is you're excited for people to see or hear – maybe students enjoying a nutritious meal or sharing their reaction to a new vegetable they like, some food in close-up that looks great, whatever. Make a mental note about resources and people who can help you. You might even try partnering with a photography class or holding a student video contest. ”

– Benson Gardner, Communications Officer and Multimedia Producer
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



SCHOOL BREAKFAST

Research shows that when students eat a healthy school breakfast, academic performance, attendance, and behavior all improves.

All students deserve the chance to start their day with the fuel they need to do well in school. However, many children and adolescents in Wisconsin do not start their day with a healthy breakfast. School nutrition professionals have the opportunity to promote their school's breakfast program and contribute to healthy, ready-to-learn students.

This chapter provides tools to assist with promoting the benefits of the School Breakfast Program. For overviews of each tool, visit the Tool Overview section.

Key Messages

Families

- School breakfast provides a healthy start to the day for everybody.
- School breakfast provides students with a healthy meal of fruits, whole grains, and dairy.
- School breakfast can be a time saver for families and make mornings feel less rushed.

Students

- School breakfast is offered later in the morning and allows students the chance to eat when they are hungry.

“ School meals can provide students with a number of benefits by making sure they are well fed and ready to learn, while keeping the cost low to families. We are constantly working to make our meals healthier and more appetizing to kids of all ages but the only way students and families will know about these improvements and how they can benefit from them is through strong program promotion and communication. ”

– Lizzie Severson, School Nutrition Director, Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools

- School breakfast offers students the chance to fuel their body and brain so they are ready to learn in their morning classes.
- School breakfast is a convenient choice, saving students time in the morning.

School Staff

- Students who eat breakfast closer to instructional time perform better academically.
- Students who eat school breakfast have improved attendance and decreased tardiness.
- Participation in school breakfast reduces hunger and improves student behavior.

Photos and Videos

Photo ideas:

- Students choosing from a selection of breakfast items to start their day
- A breakfast cart or serving line showcasing colorful breakfast options, such as strawberries, oranges, and eggs
- A school tray highlighting the different options offered for breakfast
- Students smiling and holding an orange or other breakfast item

Video ideas:

- Short clips highlighting:
 - Walking down the serving line, showcasing the different breakfast options offered
 - Students grabbing colorful breakfast options
 - Teachers describing why they encourage school breakfast
 - Students explaining why they eat school breakfast



- Looking for more ideas? Check out the following videos:
 - [University of Wisconsin Extension - Seize the Morning](#)
 - [Wisconsin Team Nutrition - Smarter School Breakfast](#)

TOOL EXAMPLES AND TEMPLATES:

[Tool: Social Media Post Examples](#)

[Tool: Social Media Post Templates](#)

[Tool: Family Letter Template](#)

[Tool: Newsletter Insert Templates](#)

[Tool: Staff Email Template](#)

[Tool: Presentation Slides Template](#)

[Tool: Get School Breakfast Brochure](#)



NEW MENU ITEMS AND TASTE TESTING ACTIVITIES

The cafeteria is a learning lab, where students learn about new foods and healthy eating. Students may be hesitant to try new foods and often need to try something multiple times before they begin choosing the item on their own. When students participate in taste testing activities and try new menu items, they are introduced to nutritious foods they may not have tried otherwise.

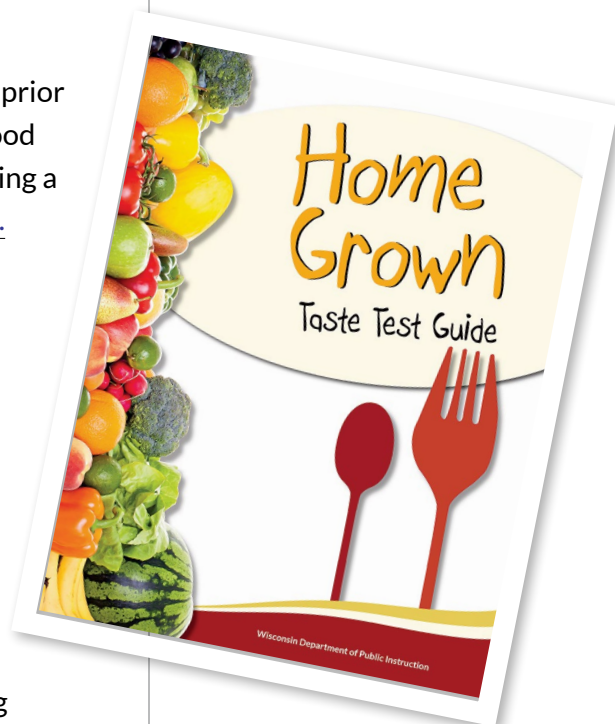
Wisconsin Team Nutrition recommends taste testing new foods prior to adding them to a menu as a way to increase selection of the food and decrease food waste. Looking for specific tips on implementing a taste test activity? Check out the [Home Grown Taste Test Guide](#).

This chapter provides tools to assist with promoting new menu items and taste testing activities. For an overview of each tool, visit the Tool Overview section.

Key Messages

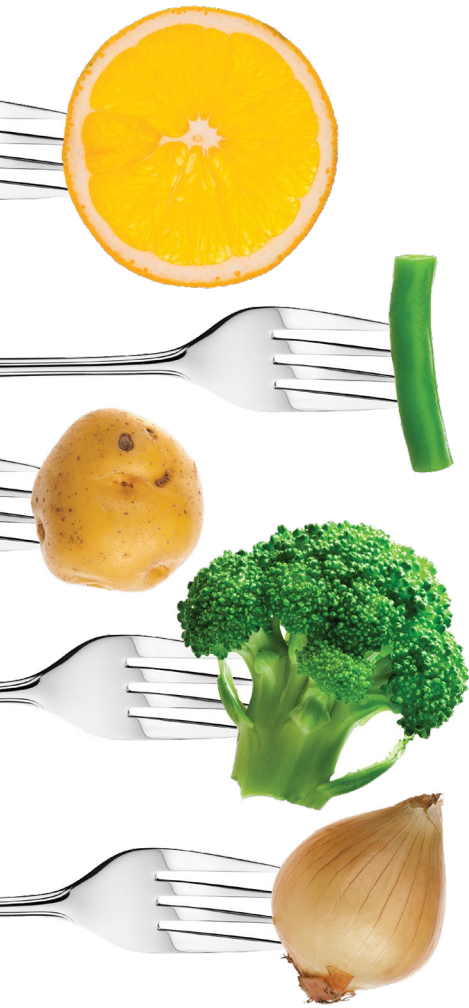
Families

- Taste tests allow schools to introduce students to new foods in fun ways.
- Students need to try most foods multiple times before liking them. Offering taste tests exposes students to new foods before they are placed on the menu.
- The cafeteria is a classroom where students learn about new foods and healthy eating.
- New menu items introduce students to a variety of new foods and flavors and boosts nutrition.



“ When we feature a Harvest of the Month or other new food item, I find it very beneficial to send out an email to teachers with a picture and a few talking points about the item the day before. When possible, I attach a short video that they can show on their SmartBoard. The students then come excited to try the new item. ”

- Michelle Denk, School Nutrition Director
Mount Horeb Area School District



Students

- Students provide valuable input to help shape school meal menus.
- New menu items show students that schools are in touch with current food trends.
- Offering new menu items keeps school lunch interesting.

School Staff

- Teachers serve as role models and can encourage students to try new foods by participating in taste tests as a class.
- Teachers can support the school nutrition programs by promoting new menu items and/or taste test events to students and families.
- New menu items provide opportunities to connect the classroom to the cafeteria.
- Teachers can engage students by discussing food history, gardening practices, and health benefits.

Photos and Videos

Photo ideas:

- The taste testing station, set up and ready for students
- School nutrition professionals preparing food for the taste test
- A close-up of the colorful food that will be served at the taste test
- Students having fun participating in the taste test
- The new menu item on a lunch tray
- Students reaching for the new menu item in the lunch line

Video ideas:

- School nutrition professionals preparing food for the taste test
- Students trying the new food
- Students explaining why they enjoy taste testing activities or trying new menu items

Use facts about the new menu item or taste testing activities in your promotion strategies. Highlight a main ingredient in the food item. To find fact sheets on fruits and vegetables, check out the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable webpage](#).

Tool Examples and Templates:

[Tool: Social Media Post Examples](#)

[Tool: Social Media Post Templates](#)

[Tool: Family Letter Template](#)

[Tool: Newsletter Insert Templates](#)

[Tool: Staff Email Templates](#)

[Tool: Presentation Slides Template](#)



FARM TO SCHOOL

Farm to school includes school gardens, food from local farms, and nutrition education as a part of the school nutrition programs. Farm to school increases opportunities for students to engage in hands-on activities and provides students with a better understanding of where food comes from. School gardens offer students the opportunity to grow different fruits and vegetables. Students are often excited about being able to enjoy the fresh foods that they have helped grow, which in return promotes the school nutrition programs.

This chapter provides tools to assist with promoting farm to school activities. For an overview of each tool, visit the Tool Overview section.

Key Messages

Families:

- Purchasing locally grown foods supports the local economy.
- Students who participate in school gardens are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables.
- School gardens provide the opportunity for students to learn about food and nutrition through hands-on activities.

Students:

- School meals feature student-grown fruits and vegetables.
- School meals feature fresh and delicious Wisconsin grown foods.
- Students are able to be involved with growing food by participating in the school garden.

School Staff:

- School gardens provide increased opportunities for innovative teaching platforms for core subjects such as science, math and language arts.
- Students who participate in school gardens have a greater opportunity for hands on learning.
- Farm to school provides an opportunity to connect the classroom with the cafeteria.

Photos and Videos

Photo ideas:

- Students watering the vegetables in the school garden
- Close up picture of the foods provided by the school garden or the farm to school program
- Farm to school professionals talking to students about the different local fruits and vegetables
- A sign describing where the local food was grown

Video ideas:

- Students planting the vegetables in the school garden
- Students explaining why they enjoy eating the foods that they helped grow
- School nutrition staff chopping the local vegetables

Tool Examples and Templates:

[Tool: Social Media Post Examples](#)

[Tool: Social Media Post Templates](#)

[Tool: Family Letter Template](#)

[Tool: Newsletter Insert Templates](#)

[Tool: Staff Email Templates](#)

[Tool: News Release Template](#)

[Tool: Presentation Slides Template](#)





SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE CAFETERIA

Special events in the cafeteria are opportunities to promote the school nutrition programs to students, families, and school staff. These events spark interest and engage the school community around the school nutrition programs. When a school cafeteria hosts a special event, the event may pull in students who typically do not participate in the school nutrition programs.

This chapter provides tools to assist with promoting special events in the cafeteria. For an overview of each tool, visit the Tool Overview section.

Key Messages

- Special events engage students, families, and school staff sparking interest in the school nutrition programs.
- Special events provide the opportunity to promote the school nutrition programs to the community.
- Special events provide an opportunity to connect the school nutrition programs with other school or community activities.
- Special events in the school cafeteria generate student involvement.

Event Ideas:

National School Lunch Week and National School Breakfast Week:

For National School Lunch and Breakfast Weeks, visit the [School Nutrition Association's website](#) for themes and marketing toolkits.

Family Nights: Host one in the cafeteria or work with other departments when they host a family night, such as a science fair or reading night.

Theme Days: Select a theme for the cafeteria and tailor the menu to the theme. Simple decorations in the cafeteria can also be included in theme days.

- School event theme, such as homecoming or a school play
- Holiday or culture theme to celebrate diversity
- Breakfast at Lunch with the school's pajama day
- Special food day, such as National Pancake Day
- Grandparents Day

Photos and Videos

Photo ideas:

- Close up of a featured food for the special event
- Decorations in the cafeteria
- Signage around the cafeteria
- Students or families participating in the event

Video ideas:

- School nutrition staff member speaking about the details of the event, with event decorations seen in the background
- Short video of school nutrition staff setting up the special event food options
- Students explaining why they enjoy special events
- Families commenting on what they enjoyed at the special event
- The busy cafeteria during the event

Tool Examples and Templates:

[Tool: Social Media Post Examples](#)

[Tool: Social Media Post Templates](#)

[Tool: Family Letter Template](#)

[Tool: Newsletter Insert Templates](#)

[Tool: Staff Email Template](#)

[Tool: News Release Template](#)





ALTERNATIVE FOOD PROGRAMS

Alternative food programs, such as the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and Afterschool Snack Program, provide students with healthy foods that they may not have the opportunity to eat outside of school. This chapter highlights the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the Afterschool Snack Program. However, school nutrition professionals can apply these communication tools to other alternative food programs as well.

This chapter provides tools to assist with promoting alternative food programs. For overviews of each tool, visit the Tool Overview section.

Key Messages

Families

- The Afterschool Snack Program provides students an opportunity to receive a healthy snack when away from home.
- The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program introduces children to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

Students

- The Afterschool Snack Program allows students the opportunity to refuel before after school activities.
- The Afterschool Snack Program provides students with the nutrition to help them do their best at school and sports.
- The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program allows students the opportunity to try new and enjoy their favorite fruits and vegetables.

School Staff

- Teachers serve as role models and can encourage students to try the foods offered through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
- Use the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program as a vehicle to provide nutrition education to students by discussing the food's history, gardening practices, and health benefits.

Photos and Videos

Photo ideas:

- Close-up of the fresh fruits and vegetables offered
- The after school snack display
- Nutrition staff preparing the fruits and vegetables
- Teachers passing out fresh fruits and vegetables
- Students enjoying after school snacks
- Nutrition education activities in action

Video ideas:

- School nutrition professionals chopping up vegetables
- Student explaining why they participate in the Afterschool Snack Program
- School nutrition professionals explaining why they value alternative food programs
- School nutrition professionals distributing fresh fruits and vegetables

Tool Examples and Templates:

[Tool: Social Media Post Examples](#)

[Tool: Social Media Post Templates](#)

[Tool: Family Letter Templates](#)

[Tool: Newsletter Insert Templates](#)

[Tool: News Release Template for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#)



References

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