

Healthy School Nutrition Environment: Results of a Nationwide Survey of School Personnel



National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi

NFSMI Item Number R-65-03

2003

This publication has been produced by the National Food Service Management - Applied Research Division, located at the University of Southern Mississippi with headquarters at The University of Mississippi. Funding for the Institute has been provided with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, to The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of The University of Mississippi or the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

The National Food Service Management Institute complies with all applicable laws regarding affirmative action and equal opportunity in all its activities and programs and does not discriminate against anyone protected by law because of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, or status as a veteran or disabled veteran.

National Food Service Management Institute

The University of Mississippi

Building the Future Through Child Nutrition

PURPOSE

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at The University of Mississippi in Oxford. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

The purpose of NFSMI is to improve the operation of Child Nutrition Programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination. The Administrative Offices and Divisions of Technology Transfer and Education and Training are located in Oxford. The Division of Applied Research is located at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

MISSION

The mission of the National Food Service Management Institute is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of Child Nutrition Programs.

VISION

The vision of the National Food Service Management Institute is to be the leader in providing education, research, and resources to promote excellence in Child Nutrition Programs.

Administrative Offices **Education and Training Division** **Technology Transfer Division**

The University of Mississippi
6 Jeanette Phillips Drive
P.O. Drawer 188
University, MS 38677-0188
Phone: 800-321-3054
Fax: 800-321-3061

Applied Research Division

The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #10077
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601-266-5773
Fax: 888-262-9631

www.nfsmi.org

Acknowledgments

WRITTEN AND DEVELOPED BY

Alice Jo Rainville, PhD, RD, CHE, SFNS
NFSMI Scholar, Applied Research Division
Eastern Michigan University

Kyunghee Choi, RD
Eastern Michigan University

Denise M. Brown, PhD, RD
Director, Applied Research Division

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Charlotte B. Oakley, PhD, RD, FADA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	5
Healthy School Nutrition Environment: Results of a Nationwide Survey of School Personnel	
Introduction.....	8
Method.....	9
Results.....	10
Recommendations.....	27
References.....	29
Appendices.....	30

**Healthy School Nutrition Environment:
Results of Nationwide Survey of School Personnel**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Healthy eating behaviors and physical activity are important for children's health and physical well-being. The United States Department of Agriculture developed the *Changing the Scene Improving the School Nutrition Environment* kit to promote a healthy school nutrition environment (HSNE). An HSNE gives students consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. The purpose of this survey was to learn more about HSNE from the perspective of school personnel and have school personnel rank the most important components and barriers related to an HSNE.

A nationwide pilot survey (n=350) of K-12 school foodservice directors and managers, superintendents, principals, school business officials, teachers, and coaches was conducted in January 2002 in order to refine the survey instrument for the subsequent study of healthy school nutrition environment. The response rate was 41.4% (n= 145). A few minor changes to the survey instrument were made following analysis of the pilot survey responses.

In October 2002 the final survey was sent to a random national sample of K-12 school foodservice directors and managers, superintendents, principals, school business officials, teachers, and coaches. A total of 3,500 surveys was mailed, 500 from each group. The response rate was 34.9% (n= 1,222). Forty-eight percent of respondents were from districts with less than 2,500 students; 33% had 2,501-10,000 students; and 19% had more than 10,000 students. Eighty-nine percent of respondents were from districts that participate in the National School Lunch

Program. An HSNE was a high priority for 53% of respondents and 40% selected family education as most important for increasing awareness of HSNE.

Respondents identified and ranked the important components of an HSNE. The components were ranked in decreasing order of importance as follows:

- behavior-focused nutrition education
- adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources
- á la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns
- involvement of students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy
- meal schedules that meet the hunger needs of children
- adequate time for children to enjoy their meals with friends
- school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards as well as provide choices
- sufficient serving areas to ensure student access to meals with a minimum waiting time
- adults and peers as role models for healthy eating
- healthy snacks in vending machines, snack bars, and school stores
- customer service
- adequate dining space
- pleasant ambiance

Respondents ranked the following components as barriers to an HSNE in decreasing order of importance:

- funding for school foodservice
- competitive foods
- children's peer pressures

- television/media
- menus
- funding for school activities
- cafeteria atmosphere
- parental attitudes

Even though most respondents perceived they already had an HSNE, the survey responses to questions about vending, school stores, and fundraisers indicated that there are many opportunities for schools to enhance and maintain a healthy school nutrition environment. More collaboration is necessary among school personnel concerning policies and programs that will support an HSNE.

Healthy School Nutrition Environment: Results of a Nationwide Survey of School Personnel

INTRODUCTION

Healthy eating helps children grow, develop, and do well in school. Healthy eating prevents childhood and adolescent health problems such as obesity, eating disorders, dental caries, and iron deficiency anemia. It also lowers the risk of chronic diseases. Parents, nutrition professionals, health professionals, and education agencies have become concerned about the widespread availability of foods and beverages in schools that are not part of school meal programs.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA, 2000) developed the *Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment* kit to promote a healthy school nutrition environment (HSNE). An HSNE gives students consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. For example, in a healthy environment, the classroom, dining room, and other school activities provide clear and consistent messages that explain and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity habits that lead to a healthy lifestyle. Students learn to make healthy lifestyle choices not only in the classroom and dining room but also at school parties, sports events – wherever they are throughout the school day. Students have many opportunities to practice healthy habits.

In 2000 the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) Applied Research Division conducted focus groups regarding an HSNE and promotion of healthy eating behaviors in middle schools (Meyer et al., 2000). The results of the focus groups were used to design a

survey to learn more about components of an HSNE. A pilot survey mailed to 350 school personnel was conducted before the final survey was mailed to 3,500 school or school district personnel.

METHOD

A survey research method was used to collect information from school personnel. A survey instrument was developed, pilot tested, refined, and mailed to a nationwide random sample of school personnel. In order to maximize response rate, elements of the Dillman Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2000) were used – including a pre-notice letter, survey, thank you postcard, and replacement survey to non-respondents. Mailing labels reflecting a simple random sample for both the pilot and final survey were purchased from Market Data Retrieval, Shelton, Connecticut. The pilot survey was approved by the Education Information Advisory Committee of the Chief State School Officers Council in December 2001. Both the pilot and final survey protocols were approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee.

Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to have school personnel rank the most important components and barriers related to Healthy School Nutrition Environment (HSNE). The pilot survey was also conducted to refine the survey instrument for the subsequent survey of HSNE. The pilot survey (Appendix A) was sent to a random national sample of superintendents, principals, school foodservice directors, school foodservice managers, teachers, coaches, and school business officials. There were 50 from each group for a total of 350 surveys mailed in January 2002.

Full Survey

A few minor changes were made in the survey before the full survey was conducted. The final survey (Appendix B) was set up in software that allowed the returned surveys to be scanned. In October 2002 the survey was sent to a random national sample of superintendents, principals, school foodservice directors, school foodservice managers, teachers, coaches, and school business officials. A total of 3,500 surveys were mailed, 500 from each group.

Full Survey Data Entry and Analysis

Surveys were scanned twice using Inquisite (version 3.0) software, and data were also checked manually for quality control. The data were analyzed using the statistical package SPSS® Version 11.5 for Windows®. Descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, and percentages of total responses. Because of missing data, the number of respondents varied slightly across questions. Comments for open-ended questions 15 and 24 were categorized and summarized.

RESULTS**Pilot Survey**

The overall response rate was 42.3% (n= 148). Respondents were employed in school districts for an average of 16.4 years and were employed in their current district for 11.7 years. Fifty-one percent of respondents were from districts with less than 2,500 students; 33% had 2,501-10,000 students; and 16% had more than 10,000 students. Ninety-one percent of respondents were from districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program. An HSNE was a high priority for 45% of respondents.

Respondents identified and ranked the important components of an HSNE. The following components were ranked in decreasing order of importance:

- school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards as well as provide choices
- adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources
- á la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns
- behavior-focused nutrition education
- adequate time for children to enjoy meals with friends
- involvement of students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy

Respondents also ranked perceived barriers to an HSNE from most important to least important. The barriers were ranked as follows:

- funding for school foodservice
- competitive foods
- children's peer pressures
- television/media
- parental attitudes
- menus
- cafeteria atmosphere
- funding for school activities

Respondents reported nutrition education was offered in 82% of school districts; school foodservice personnel reported being involved in only 58% of school districts. Fifty-seven percent of school boards had a policy for vending contracts; 71% of respondents reported having vending machines for students. Soft drinks and bottled water were the most common offerings. Only 24% of respondents reported having school stores that sold candy, snacks, and soft drinks. Sixty percent reported foods were used as rewards with pizza, candy, and ice cream the most popular rewards.

Pilot Survey Responses

Foodservice Personnel as Compared to Other School Personnel

Foodservice managers' (n=25) and directors' (n=46) responses (n=71, 49.3%) were combined (FP) and compared to responses (n=73, 50.7%) from the other five groups combined (OSP). The responses from the other groups were: superintendents (n=16), principals (n=19), teachers (n=23), coaches (n=3), school business officials (n=7), and others (n=5). Both groups chose "school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards as well as provide choices" as the most important component of an HSNE. The other personnel ranked "à la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns" as the second most important component, but this same statement was ranked tenth by foodservice personnel. "Adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources" was ranked second most important by school foodservice directors and managers and third most important by other school personnel.

Table 1

Ranking of the Most Important Components of HSNE in Pilot Survey by Foodservice Personnel Compared to Other Personnel

Components of an HSNE	Foodservice Personnel (n=65)*	Other School Personnel (n=67)*
Involvement of students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy	5	6
Adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources	2	3
Behavior-focused nutrition education by staff with appropriate training	4	4
School meals that meet USDA nutrition standards as well as provide choices	1	1
À la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns	10	2
Healthy snacks in vending machines, snack bars, and school stores	12	7
Meal schedules that meet children’s hunger needs	9	5
Adequate time for children to enjoy their meals with friends	3	8
Sufficient serving areas for student access to meals with a minimum waiting time	7	9
Adequate dining space	13	13
Pleasant ambiance	11	11
Adults and peers as role models for healthy eating	6	10
Customer service	8	12

*1 is most important

Respondents were asked to rank the most important barriers to an HSNE. Foodservice personnel ranked “competitive foods” as the most important barrier while other school personnel ranked funding for school foodservice as the most important barrier. “Television/media” was ranked as the second most important barrier by school foodservice directors and managers and

the third most important barrier by other school personnel. Table 2 shows the ranking of all barriers by both sub-groups.

Table 2

Ranking of the Most Important Barriers to HSNE in Pilot Survey by Foodservice Personnel Compared to Other Personnel

Barriers	Foodservice Personnel (n= 62)*	Other School Personnel (n= 66)*
Funding for school activities	6	8
Competitive foods	1	5
Funding for school foodservice	4	1
Television/Media	3	2
Cafeteria atmosphere	8	7
Parental attitudes	5	3
Menus	7	6
Children's peer pressure	2	4

*1 is highest

Final Survey

The overall response rate was 34.9% (n= 1,222). Table 3 provides the respondents' job positions and response rate by position. Foodservice personnel were more likely to complete and return the survey; coaches and school business officials were least likely to complete and return the survey. This distribution of responses paralleled the response rates from the pilot survey.

Table 3

Respondents' Job Position and Response Rate in NFSMI HSNE Final Survey

Position	n (% of total n)	Response Rate (500/group) (Total N=3500)
Foodservice Director	402 (32.9%)	80.4%
Foodservice Manager	198 (16.2%)	39.6%
Superintendent	115 (9.4%)	23.0%
Principal	160 (13.1%)	32.0%
School Business Official	46 (3.8%)	9.2%
Teacher	169 (13.8%)	33.8%
Coach	34 (2.8%)	6.8%
Other*	98 (8.0%)	19.6%
Total	1,222 (100%)	34.9% (1,222/3,500)

* Included clerical staff, non-foodservice director, head cook, and school nurse.

Respondents were employed in school districts for an average of 15.7 ± 9.8 years and were employed in their current district for 12.8 ± 9.2 years. Forty-eight percent were from districts with less than 2,500 students; 33% had 2,501-10,000 students; and 19% had more than 10,000 students. Eighty-nine percent of respondents were from districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program. Although 75.8% of respondents indicated nutrition was included in school curriculums, school foodservice personnel indicated they were involved in nutrition education in only 54.6% of districts. Seventy-three percent of respondents reported having a healthy school nutrition environment.

Respondents were asked to identify the five most important components of an HSNE.

The following were identified in decreasing order of importance:

- behavior-focused nutrition education
- adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources
- à la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns
- involvement of students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy
- meal schedules that meet the hunger needs of children
- adequate time for children to enjoy their meals with friends
- school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards as well as provide choices
- sufficient serving areas to ensure student access to meals with a minimum waiting time
- adults and peers as role models for healthy eating
- healthy snacks in vending machines, snack bars, and school stores
- customer service
- adequate dining space
- pleasant ambiance

Respondents ranked the following components as barriers to an HSNE in decreasing order of importance:

- funding for school foodservice
- competitive foods
- children's peer pressures
- television/media
- menus

- funding for school activities
- cafeteria atmosphere
- parental attitudes

Even though most respondents perceived they already had an HSNE, the survey responses to questions about vending, school stores, and fundraisers indicated that there are many opportunities for schools to enhance and maintain a healthy school nutrition environment. More collaboration is necessary among school personnel concerning policies and programs that will support an HSNE. These findings were similar to those from the pilot survey.

Fifty-five percent of respondents reported that teachers and administrators used food as rewards. Thirty-one percent of respondents reported school stores that sold candy, chips, soft drinks, and other snack foods. Fifty-five percent of school boards had a policy for vending contracts; 72% of respondents reported having vending machines for students. The respondents ranked “healthy snacks in vending machines, snack bars, and school stores” tenth in a list of thirteen important components of healthy school nutrition environment.

Comparison with School Health Policies and Programs Study

Wechsler, Brener, Kuester, and Miller (2001) reported the findings of the School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS 2000). SHPPS 2000 assessed foodservice data from schools, districts, and states. They found 49.9% of districts had a contract with a soft drink company; in this study, 54.6% of districts reported having a contract.

In SHPPS 2000, 16% of states and 22% of districts prohibited or discouraged schools from using food or food coupons as rewards for good behavior or good academic performance. In this study, 55% of respondents reported that teachers and/or administrators used foods as

rewards. The most common rewards were candy, pizza, popcorn, soft drinks, and ice cream/frozen desserts.

Fundraisers by schools, school organizations, or parent-teacher organizations were reported by 82.4% of SHPPS respondents. Ninety-nine percent of respondents in this study reported fundraisers. Sixty-three percent of respondents reported that school organizations have fundraisers several times a year; 9.3% once a year; 13.4% monthly; 8.0% weekly, and 6.3% other. See Table 4 for the timing of fundraisers during the school day. Candy and baked goods were the most popular fundraising items in both this study and in the SHPPS 2000 study. See Table 5.

Table 4

NFSMI HSNE Timing of School Fundraisers Compared to SHPPS 2000 Results

Timing of Fundraisers	Percent of Fundraisers	
	NFSMI HSNE	SHPPS 2000
Before School	1.3%	16.2%
During School Hours	20.9%	22.6%
After School Hours	53.4%	NA*

* NA data not available.

Table 5

NFSMI HSNE Items Sold in School Fundraisers Compared to SHPPS 2000 Results

Foods and Other Items Sold as Fundraisers	NFSMI HSNE	SHPPS 2000
Candy	70.9%	76.4% (chocolate) 63.2% (other)
Baked Goods	48.9%	67.3%
Low-Fat Baked Goods	NA **	20.8%
Soft Drinks	16.4%	36.9% (includes sports drinks and fruit drinks)
Fruit and Vegetables	4.0%	27.8%
Chips and Snacks	20.5%	NA **
Discount Coupons	29.8%	NA **
Raffle Tickets	36.2%	NA **
Other*	40.8%	NA **

*Most popular other items sold were wrapping paper, pizza, magazines, candles, dinners, cookie dough, tee shirts, flowers, holiday gifts, and books.

** NA means not available.

Table 6 shows the NFSMI HSNE vending and school store results compared to the SHPPS 2000 results. The percentage of elementary and middle/junior high schools with vending machines was higher in the NFSMI HSNE survey while the percentage of high schools with vending was lower. Respondents in the NFSMI HSNE survey reported lower prevalence of school stores at all grade levels than the SHPPS study.

Table 7 contains the vended foods and beverages reported in this study compared to the SHPPS 2000 study. Except for bottled water, most food and beverage category percentages were lower than those reported in the SHPPS study.

Table 6

Vending and School Stores Results of NFSMI HSNE Study Compared to SHPPS 2000 Results

School Level	Vending		School Stores	
	NFSMI HSNE	SHPPS 2000	NFSMI HSNE	SHPPS 2000
Elementary	41.6%	23.6%	16.7%	26.8%
Middle and Junior High Schools	70.0%	62.0%	36.7%	39.4%
Senior High Schools	86.8%	94.9%	36.2%	59.3%

Table 7

Vended Food and Beverage Results of NFSMI HSNE Study Compared to SHPPS 2000 Results

SHPPS Food Category	NFSMI HSNE	SHPPS 2000		
	All levels*	Elementary	Middle/Junior High	Senior High
Bottled Water	80.6%	30.4%	56.1%	65.9%
Soft Drinks, Sports Drinks Fruit Drinks	78.6% (Soft) 55.5% (Sports) 65.1% (Fruit)	58.1%	83.5%	93.6%
Fruit Juice (100%)	37.4%	49.4%	53.1%	65.0%
Salty Snacks	53.6%	51.0%	62.4%	83.0%
Cookies Cakes	43.7% (Cookies) 31.5% (Cakes)	52.6%	61.2%	80.7%
Ice Cream	13.0%	31.1%	33.8%	42.5%
Fruit or Vegetables	3.8% Fruit	20.0%	11.8%	22.0%
Low-Fat Chips	14.2%	44.5%	54.5%	65.0%
Low-Fat Cookies	8.4%	26.4%	37.7%	49.6%

* All school levels (elementary, middle/junior high schools, and high schools) were combined.

**Final Survey–Responses of Foodservice Personnel
Compared to Other School Personnel**

Forty-nine percent of respondents were school foodservice directors and managers (FP). Fifty-one percent were superintendents, principals, teachers, coaches, and school business officials (OSP). When strongly agree and agree responses were combined, 76.9% of FP and 69.5% of OSP responded that their school(s) were providing an HSNE . When disagree and strongly disagree responses were combined, 4.2% of FP and 14.2% of OSP disagreed that their schools have an HSNE. See Table 8.

Table 8

Perceptions of Healthy School Nutrition Environment (HSNE) by Foodservice Personnel and Other School Personnel

My school has an HSNE.	Foodservice Personnel (n= 594)	Other School Personnel (n=613)
Strongly agree	21.9%	17.5%
Agree	55.0%	52.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	18.9%	16.3%
Disagree	3.9%	11.3%
Strongly disagree	0.3%	2.9%

In ranking most important components of an HSNE, both groups ranked “behavior-focused nutrition education” and “adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources” as first and second priority, respectively. FP ranked “adequate time for children to enjoy their meals with friends” as third, and OSP ranked “à la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns” as third. See Table 9.

Table 9

Ranking of the Most Important Components of Healthy School Nutrition Environment

Components	Foodservice Personnel* (n=600)	Other School Personnel* (n=619)
Involvement of students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy	5	4
Adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources	2	2
Behavior-focused nutrition education by staff with appropriate training	1	1
School meals that meet USDA nutrition standards as well as provide choices	7	5
À la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns	9	3
Healthy snacks in vending machines, snack bars, and school stores	11	7
Meal schedules that meet children’s hunger needs	4	6
Adequate time for children to enjoy their meals with friends	3	9
Sufficient serving areas for student access to meals with a minimum waiting time	6	10
Adequate dining space	12	11
Pleasant ambiance	13	12
Adults and peers as role models for healthy eating	8	8
Customer service	10	13

*1 is most important.

Family education was ranked number one by both groups to increase awareness of an HSNE. FP ranked “teachers and administrators as role models” as number two, and OSP ranked it last. See Table 10.

Table 10

Ranking for Increasing the Awareness of Healthy School Nutrition Environment

Methods to Increase Awareness	Foodservice Personnel* (n=575)	Other School Personnel* (n=591)
Advertising	4	5
Family education	1	1
Teachers and administrators as role models	2	6
Local, state, and regional focus groups	6	3
Federal and state education departments	5	4
Other (more than one of the above)	3	2

*1 is highest.

When asked the priority of an HSNE in daily activities, 68.2% of FP placed a high priority on HSNE as compared to 39.2% of OSP who ranked an HSNE as a high priority. See Table 11.

Table 11

Priority of Healthy School Nutrition Environment in Daily Activities

Priority Level	Foodservice Personnel (n=584)	Other School Personnel (n=603)
High priority	398 (68.2%)	237 (39.3%)
Medium priority	163 (27.9%)	227 (37.7%)
Low priority	20 (3.4 %)	113 (18.7%)
Not a priority	3 (0.5%)	26 (4.3%)

An open-ended question with respondents’ comments on what could be done to move HSNE to a higher priority yielded insights into the concerns of each group. Comments from each

group were categorized to determine the main issues for each group. All comments are listed in Appendix C. Foodservice directors (n=140) mentioned nutrition education, adequate funding, support from principals and superintendents, and competitive foods. Foodservice managers (n=37) mentioned nutrition education, parental involvement, and support from administrators.

Superintendents (n=49) mentioned adequate funding, competing priorities, parental involvement, and nutrition education. Principals (n=57) mentioned better menus with healthy choices, competing priorities, parental involvement, and nutrition education. School business officials (n=16) mentioned adequate funding and parental involvement. Teachers (n=72) mentioned better menus with more variety and healthy choices, nutrition education, and family education. Coaches (n=12) mentioned offering healthy choices and removing candy and soft drink machines.

When asked to rank barriers to an HSNE, FP and OSP identified different rankings for possible barriers. FP chose funding for school foodservice, competitive foods, and children's peer pressure as the three most important barriers while OSP chose television and media, funding for school foodservice, and competitive foods as the three most important barriers. See Table 12 for a complete ranking of all barriers for each group.

Table 12

Ranking of the Most Important Barriers to a Healthy School Nutrition Environment

Barriers	Foodservice Personnel (n=600)	Other School Personnel (n=618)
Funding for school activities	7	8
Funding for school foodservice	1	2
Cafeteria atmosphere	8	7
Menu	5	6
Competitive foods	2	3
Television/media	6	1
Parental attitudes	9	9
Children's peer pressure	3	4
Other*	4	5

*Foodservice personnel mentioned lack of support from administrators and children's food preferences most often, and other school personnel mentioned children's food preferences most often.

Respondent Comments by Job Position

The final question in the survey was an opportunity for respondents to make additional comments in an open-ended format. See Appendix D for all comments. Many foodservice directors (n=115) provided input. Their comments focused on adequate funding, administrative support, nutrition education, vending, impact of fast food, and need for regulations. Foodservice managers (n=27) provided comments related to adequate funding, nutrition education, student preferences for fast food, and establishment of dietary habits at home. Thirteen superintendents wrote comments and they were primarily related to student preferences and funding. The majority of principals' (n=25) comments related to menus, parental involvement, waste of food, and eligibility for free and reduced price meals. Six school business officials wrote comments about nutrition, available choices, parental responsibility, and time available for meal periods.

Forty-two teachers wrote comments; they were concerned about menus, unappealing foods, and parental involvement. Six coaches gave comments and three out of six were related to choices and healthy food options.

When comments were grouped by foodservice personnel and other school personnel, most FP comments were related to adequate funding, administrative support, nutrition education, student preference for fast food, and need for regulations. OSP comments concerned menus, foods offered, student preferences, parental involvement, and funding. Teachers and coaches seemed to have more negative attitudes toward school foodservice than superintendents, principals, and school business officials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the final survey, respondents identified the five most important components of an HSNE as behavior-focused nutrition education; adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources; á la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns; involvement of students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy; and meal schedules that meet the hunger needs of children. Family education was ranked as the number one need for increasing awareness of HSNE. Respondents ranked funding for school foodservice, competitive foods, children's peer pressures, and television/media as the most important barriers to an HSNE.

There were differences between FP and OSP on opinions related to HSNE. Foodservice directors want more support from superintendents and principals. OSP are concerned with food quality and menu choices while FP did not perceive those to be a problem. FP would like OSP to be role models for awareness of HSNE.

Even though most respondents perceived they already had an HSNE, the survey results on vending, school stores, and fundraisers indicated that most schools need improvement in creating and maintaining a healthy school nutrition environment. School personnel need more collaboration with each other on policies and programs that will support an HSNE. The following activities are suggested:

- Develop communication tools and strategies for foodservice directors and managers to use when communicating the importance of HSNE with superintendents, principals, school business officials, teachers, and coaches.
- School personnel should work together to implement existing tools for improving HSNE such as *Changing the Scene* (USDA, 2000) and/or the age-appropriate *School Health Index* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002).

- Develop federal, state, and district policies that would address nutritional quality of foods offered and sold other than reimbursable school meals and snacks. The SHPPS 2000 study found that most states and districts do not provide much policy support for an HSNE.
- Increase local, state, and federal funding for behavior-based nutrition education so that healthy food choices can be encouraged.
- Foodservice personnel need additional training opportunities to learn more about nutrition, preparing healthy meals, and marketing healthy choices.
- Educate adults who influence children, including parents, to become effective role models for healthy eating behaviors.
- Conduct a study that includes children's opinions on HSNE.

REFERENCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2002). *School health index for physical activity, healthy eating, and a tobacco-free lifestyle: A self-assessment and planning guide*. Elementary school version. Atlanta, GA: Author.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2002). *School health index for physical activity, healthy eating, and a tobacco-free lifestyle: A self-assessment and planning guide*. Middle school/high school version. Atlanta, GA: Author.
- Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored design method*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Meyer, M. K., Conklin, M. T., Lewis, J. R., Marshack, J., Cousin, S., Turnage, C., et al. (2000). *School nutrition environment in the middle grades and the promotion of healthy eating behaviors* (R-44-01). University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2000). *Changing the scene: Improving the school nutrition environment*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Wechsler, H., Brener, N. D., Kuester, S., & Miller, C. (2001). Foodservice and foods and beverages available at school: Results from the school health policies and programs study 2000. *Journal of School Health, 71*, 313-324.

APPENDIX A
Pilot Survey Instrument

Healthy School Nutrition Environment Survey

National Food Service Management Institute
Applied Research Division
The University of Southern Mississippi
Box 10077
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0077

1. Are school food service personnel involved in nutrition education? (Check one box.)

yes no not sure

2. Is nutrition included in the curriculum in your school or school district? (Check one box.)

yes no not sure

3. Does the school board in your district have a policy for vending contracts with food and/or beverage suppliers? (Check one box.)

yes no not sure

4. Are vending machines available for students in your school or your school district during the school day? (Check one box.)

yes ⇒ skip to question 5

no ⇒ skip to question 6

not sure ⇒ skip to question 6

5. What foods/beverages are offered in the vending machine(s)? (Check all that apply.)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> soft drinks | <input type="checkbox"/> fresh fruit | <input type="checkbox"/> peanuts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bottled water | <input type="checkbox"/> fruit juices (100%) | <input type="checkbox"/> peanut butter snacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> flavored water | <input type="checkbox"/> juice drinks | <input type="checkbox"/> other nuts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> milk | <input type="checkbox"/> snack cakes | <input type="checkbox"/> sports drinks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cookies | <input type="checkbox"/> ice cream | <input type="checkbox"/> chips /snack foods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> candy | <input type="checkbox"/> low-fat chips | <input type="checkbox"/> low-fat cookies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ | please specify | |

6. What will it take to increase awareness of a healthy school nutrition environment?
(Check one box.)

- advertising
- family education
- teachers and administrators as role models
- other _____ please specify
- local, state, and regional focus groups
- federal and state education departments

7. How often do organizations within the school have fundraisers? (Check one box)

- once a year
- several times a year
- other _____ please specify
- monthly
- weekly

8. When do organizations within the school conduct fundraisers? (Check one box.)

- before school
- during school hours
- after regular school hours
- other _____ please specify

9. What do organizations sell during fundraisers? (Check all that apply.)

- candy
- chips/snacks
- soft drinks
- other _____ please specify
- baked goods
- discount coupons
- raffle tickets

10. Do your schools have school stores other than the cafeteria that sell foods such as candy, chips, soft drinks, or other snack foods? (Check one box.)

- yes
- no
- not sure

11. Do teachers/administrators in your schools or district use foods as rewards?
(Check one box.)

- yes ⇒ please give examples _____
- no
- not sure

12. Select the five most important components of a school’s nutrition environment and then rank those five components from 1 to 5 with “1” being the most important.

- involvement of students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy
- adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources
- behavior-focused nutrition education by staff with appropriate training
- school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards as well as provide choices
- à la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns
- healthy snacks in vending machines, snack bars, and school stores
- meal schedules that meet children’s hunger needs
- adequate time for children to enjoy their meals with friends
- sufficient serving areas for student access to meals with a minimum waiting time
- adequate dining space
- pleasant ambiance
- adults and peers as role models for healthy eating
- customer service

13. What priority is a healthy school nutrition environment in your daily activities? (Check one box.)

- high priority ⇒ skip to question 14
- medium priority ⇒ answer question 13
- low priority ⇒ answer question 13
- not a priority ⇒ answer question 13

14. What could be done to move healthy school nutrition environment to a higher priority?

15. Select the three most important barriers to a healthy school nutrition environment, and then rank the barriers from 1 to 3 with “1” being the most important.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> funding for school activities | <input type="checkbox"/> competitive foods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> funding for school foodservice | <input type="checkbox"/> television/media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cafeteria atmosphere | <input type="checkbox"/> parental attitudes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> menus | <input type="checkbox"/> children’s peer pressures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ | _____ please specify |

16. What position do you hold? (Check one box.)

- superintendent
- principal
- teacher
- coach
- food service director
- food service manager
- school business official

17. How many years have you been employed in your field? _____

18. How many years have you been employed in your current school district? _____

19. What type of school(s) do you work in? (Check one box)

- all schools in district
- elementary
- middle/junior high
- high school
- elementary and middle/junior high
- middle/junior high and high school
- other _____

20. How many students are enrolled in your district? (Check one box)

- less than 2,500
- 2,500-10,000
- greater than 10,000

21. Does your school or district participate in the federally funded National School Lunch Program?

- yes
- no
- don't know

22. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Thank you very much for your time.

Please mail in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division, University of Southern Mississippi, Box 10077, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0077.

APPENDIX B
Final Survey Instrument

Healthy School Nutrition Environment Survey 2002

Please return completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to:

National Food Service Management Institute
Applied Research Division
The University of Southern Mississippi
Box 10077
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0077

Healthy School Nutrition Environment Survey
 National Food Service Management Institute
 Applied Research Division

1. My school has a healthy nutrition environment. (Check one box.)
 strongly agree agree neither agree nor disagree disagree strongly disagree

2. Are school food service personnel involved in nutrition education? (Check one box.)
 yes no not sure

3. Is nutrition included in the curriculum in your school or school district? (Check one box.)
 yes no not sure

4. Does the school board in your district have a policy for vending contracts with food and/or beverage suppliers? (Check one box.)
 yes no not sure

5. Are vending machines available for students in your school or your school district during the school day? (Check one box.)
 yes ⇒ if yes, answer question 6
 no ⇒ if no, skip to question 7
 not sure ⇒ if not sure, skip to question 7

6. What foods/beverages are offered in the vending machine(s)? (check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> soft drinks	<input type="checkbox"/> fresh fruit	<input type="checkbox"/> peanuts
<input type="checkbox"/> bottled water	<input type="checkbox"/> fruit juices (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> peanut butter snacks
<input type="checkbox"/> flavored water	<input type="checkbox"/> juice drinks	<input type="checkbox"/> other nuts
<input type="checkbox"/> milk	<input type="checkbox"/> snack cakes	<input type="checkbox"/> sports drinks
<input type="checkbox"/> cookies	<input type="checkbox"/> ice cream	<input type="checkbox"/> chips/snack foods
<input type="checkbox"/> candy	<input type="checkbox"/> low-fat chips	<input type="checkbox"/> low-fat cookies
<input type="checkbox"/> other _____ please specify		

7. What will it take to increase awareness of a healthy school nutrition environment? (Check one box.)

- advertising
- local, state, and regional focus groups
- family education
- federal and state education departments
- teachers and administrators as role models
- other _____ please specify

8. How often do organizations within the school have fundraisers? (Check one box.)

- once a year
- monthly
- several times a year
- weekly
- other _____ please specify

9. When do organizations within the school conduct fundraisers? (Check one box.)

- before school
- during school hours
- after regular school hours
- other _____ please specify

10. What do organizations sell during fundraisers? (Check all that apply.)

- candy
- baked goods
- chips/snacks
- discount coupons
- soft drinks
- raffle tickets
- other _____ please specify

11. Do your schools have school stores other than the cafeteria that sell foods such as candy, chips, soft drinks, or other snack foods? (Check one box.)

- yes
- no
- not sure

12. Do teachers/administrators in your schools use foods as rewards? (Check one box.)

- yes ⇒ please give examples _____
- no
- not sure

13. Rank 1-5 (1 is highest) the five most important components of a school’s nutrition environment.

- involvement of students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy
- adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources
- behavior-focused nutrition education by staff with appropriate training
- school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards as well as provide choices
- à la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns
- healthy snacks in vending machines, snack bars, and school stores
- meal schedules that meet hunger needs of children
- adequate time for children to enjoy their meals with friends
- sufficient serving areas to ensure student access to meals with a minimum waiting time
- adequate dining space
- pleasant ambiance
- adults and peers as role models for healthy eating
- customer service

14. What priority is a healthy school nutrition environment in your daily activities? (Check one box.)

- high priority ⇒ skip to question 16
- medium priority ⇒ answer question 15
- low priority ⇒ answer question 15
- not a priority ⇒ answer question 15

15. What could be done to move healthy school nutrition environment to a higher priority?

16. Select the three most important barriers to a healthy school nutrition environment, then rank the barriers from 1-3 with “1” being the most important.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> funding for school activities | <input type="checkbox"/> competitive foods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> funding for school foodservice | <input type="checkbox"/> television/media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cafeteria atmosphere | <input type="checkbox"/> parental attitudes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> menus | <input type="checkbox"/> children’s peer pressures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ please specify | |

17. What position do you hold? (Check one box.)

- superintendent
- principal
- teacher
- coach
- food service director
- food service manager
- school business official

18. How many years have you been employed in your field? _____

19. How many years have you been employed in your current school district? _____

20. What type of school(s) do you work in? (Check one box.)

- all schools in district
- elementary
- middle/junior high
- high school
- elementary and middle/junior high
- middle/junior high and high school
- other _____

21. How many students are enrolled in your district? (Check one box.)

- less than 2,500
- 2,501-10,000
- greater than 10,000

22. Would you classify your district as rural, urban, or major city?

- rural
- urban
- major city

23. Does your school or district participate in the federally funded National School Lunch Program?

- yes
- no
- don't know

24. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Thank you very much for your time.

Please mail in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division, University of Southern Mississippi, Box 10077, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0077.

APPENDIX C
How to Move HSNE to a Higher Priority Comments

Foodservice Directors' Comments

Give the foodservice directors more time in each day to organize, education groups-teams and meetings. Need more time for education and not to be tied up stocking and running a line.

Make it economically feasible.

Adequate funding and other resources.

Less paperwork for regulatory reasons, employees that show to work—want to work and learn about the program so I could focus on this issue.

This healthy nutrition has to be introduced to children at home and carried over into school. You can't force these children to eat altogether different items than they see their families eat.

Remove vending machines that offer unhealthy snacks and give students adequate time to eat meals.

More interaction with faculty.

Education; Public advertisement and notices.

Student/parent awareness, more nutrition education.

Need more focus on nutrition and health.

More funding, bigger à la carte.

Include daily P.E. classes for all students. Foodservice staff included in nutrition curriculum and its development.

Remove vending machines, require nutrition education.

School nutrition is not the major problem – a healthy meal is provided. Parents who do not expose their children to a variety of foods, especially fruits and vegetables is a bigger problem.

Offer if through the commodity program.

More time to eat, not so rushed.

At our school we are at an extremely high degree of healthy food and nutrition with menus based on nutritional needs and reviewed by Certified Dietary Manager and Registered Dietitian monthly.

Give students more time to eat.

More funding so we don't have to "sell-out" and use à la carte and snack sales to help fund the program.

I need the cooperation of principals and their soft drink vending machines—also complete with school store. To have cooperation – support- from principals who could encourage their staff.

Board involvement and policy, teachers' attitudes.

Make nutrition education part of the state standards on tests.

Make all meals to all children free- they do not pay to use other school facilities- just another way to separate kids.

To have the support of school board and other administrations, teachers, principals, and parents.

Involvement of students and parents.

Less paperwork in foodservice office to concentrate more on food than on their items.

I want it to be a very high priority but daily tasks always seem to push it aside. So I guess more time to dedicate to the program development.

Board and education support: more time to work on this issues.

More encouragement from instruction staff to students; adequate funding of program; more time to eat, especially for high school students.

It is very difficult to get students to eat healthy foods.

I'm not sure. The NSLP meals in most schools, if not all, are a pretty healthy meal. The problem is, the kids don't usually eat the "healthy" components, and others in the district are focused on money.

More time for nutrition education and more staff to provide education catchy signs to catch students' attention.

Provide state and federal regulations.

Help from other departments.

Reduce other tasks that get in the way.

Involvement from the faculty.

More national attention and education on school nutrition.

Focus should be placed on this by school and community. This is of particular importance in areas of high ratio of poverty to non-poverty.

Management and operational concerns take priority over nutrition—These include safety, sanitation, following government regulations and financial management.

Ban vending machines use during the school day.

State law to force nutrition training.

With the current funding and reimbursement rate we are finding it is more and more difficult to provide a low-fat meal at a low cost.

Policy to exclude other departments from sale of all food items. I think perhaps then the students would spend their money for a lunch in the cafeteria.

Local interest, time in the day to implement education.

Consistent philosophy and support throughout the district; teacher support and instruction; tour of the cafeteria kitchen for parents and students during open house or orientation.

More interaction with PTO educating item on the program and guidelines set by the Department. Of Child Nutrition.

Provide school with adequate funds so that “making money” is not the priority over nutrition.

More education, healthy foods, and beverages in vending machines.

Communication and cooperation from all nutritional educators and foodservice personnel. Creating a diversion of the cafeteria perception as “uncool.”

More time to get things accomplished.

More funding-healthier foods cost more; fewer personnel issues; less employee turnover.

More education on nutrition in the schools!

Emphasize nutrition education, especially in elementary levels.

Emphasis and co-operation from Board of Trustees and top administrators; eliminate competitive foods.

Decrease paper work for foodservice staff.

Children coming to school well nourished. Many children in our district come from drug-addicted parents where drugs take 1st priority.

Emphasizing nutrition education in K-12 curriculum with staff who are qualified to teach.

Providing nutritious foods that look and taste good and food the children will want to eat.

State and federal government should state and enforce standards for all schools.

I think it's on an individual school basis. At our particular school we need the support of the administration and staff. Because we are primarily low income, many believe just providing meals is the greater good.

If teachers and principals didn't see lunch as a 'nuisance', (students with sticky hands or spills), the nutrition environment would be better.

More education on child nutrition programs, positive promotion by faculty, and administrators on lunch program.

Monitor snack foods for sale during lunch.

State Department of Education and USDA could pass laws about vending machines and food sales during school. Also, we need laws about bringing outside food into school setting.

The current position of foodservice coordinator would need more than four hours a day to incorporate an education component into the schedule. The cafeteria budget is not sufficient to meet the purchasing requirements for educational materials. Classroom teachers would also require nutrition training and adequate funds to create a healthier nutrition environment.

Have superintendent and board members consider it to be a high priority.

Stop the junk food and vending competition.

Federal and state funding for: 1) nutrition education at school and for parents, 2) physical education everyday at school for all levels, 3) only nutritious foods sold on campus during school hours.

It should be a high priority with all school nutrition professionals but the fact of life is that we have to be concerned with adequate funding.

More parent involvement in nutrition education at home, in early years.

Provide support and assistance from school authorities and staff.

We are removing all food items that do not provide any nutritional food value.

Integrate it into instructional curriculum and provide appropriate materials and/or educate teachers and principals regarding creating a healthy school environment.

It all starts at home! It is a priority; it is just a task that seems to be getting harder each year. Our children's taste buds and choices are driven by competitive foods – fast food.

Remove vending machines, limit fundraisers that sell non nutritious items.

I don't know-maybe lengthen lunch times and get rid of candy and soft drink machines.

More attention paid to it by administration and faculty.

Get positive response and encouragement and support of county and school administrators.

Legislation that focuses on making a healthy school nutrition environment mandatory.

Parents and teachers need to be more conscious of proper eating habits, and impress them on students. We are a fast food society. Students don't know enough about good nutrition.

Time and office paperwork reduction.

Community groups exerting pressure.

Administration to quit picking on stupid things – ex. Ground turkey-healthy-but the meat is lighter-so something is wrong with the meat.

Increase awareness of importance of eating healthy as a means of prevention of diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.

It is difficult to find nutritious meals the students will eat. They prefer pizza, burger, fries, etc. They are using the salad bar more.

More time to work on this issue and support from the superintendent and staff in making changes in the individual schools and with principals.

Children love the education coming from the parents.

Backing from school board and administrators – no support for nutrition – all that matters is money.

More federal funding for nutrition education projects.

Universal meals for all children regardless of their ability to pay.

Adequate funding for school meals.

More help in the office.

More time in my schedule.

Teacher/parent education and involvement that starts at home.

If I had more time and could wear less hats, I could focus more on child nutrition.

Address current funding requirements that force food service programs to be self-supporting – pressured from school boards that operations not cost the general fund forcing operators to market non- or less-nutritious items in order to generate operating income.

Schools need to be funded so that they are not forced to have fundraisers to support educational objectives. I am not willing to take on the school principals and challenge to them fund raise with activities not in competition with school foods.

Funds for the child nutrition program adequate enough so à la carte items and vending items can be nutritious rather than money makers that are high fat and high calorie.

First, I need to complete the transfer of our menus to Nutrikids; Second, more cooperation from administrators and teachers to see that the cafeteria staff are an available resource for nutrition education.

Have funding.

Involve all administrators in nutrition forum.

Time restrictions on director do not afford time for promoting and fostering a healthier environment.

More funding for this cause – districts do not have the resources needed.

Competitive foods being sold during the day must be addressed – being a district with low free and reduced eligibility, we get caught up trying to outdo each other in any way that's needed.

Funds to provide less competition and more service room.

More education for managers.

Breakfast time increased – 10 minutes in some schools; new equipment needed to promote healthier foods, i.e. soup wells for oats, soups, chili, etc.

More time to work in this area.

Provide funds to allow for paid staff time to implement – there is not enough money to do more programs and the day-to-day work.

*School board support; change their attitude; I don't know how to do this.
Administrators need to understand the link between good nutrition and learning.*

More interest by local district staff in this topic. More personnel to work toward improving the overall environment. It cannot be done by foodservice department alone.

Make funding available to allow me into classrooms in grades 1-12 more often to taste test new foods with students. I can barely get my daily duties done.

Regulations prohibiting sale of foods with low to no nutritional integrity.

Funding

More awareness of the seriousness of obese children in our schools and how they can learn to eat healthier foods and continue into adulthood.

Support from administrators re: soft drink sales; educate and train teachers re: nutrition issues; flexibility with lunch schedules.

Willingness of campus administrators to work with foodservice on establishing a school nutrition environment that benefits student's health.

Cooperative efforts between school nutrition programs, educators and administration. More resources for providing education.

We compete with outside businesses for student participation. McDonalds and other have tried to serve "healthy food" ie. McLean Burger - these items do not seem to have high priority in the consumer market. We are a business and must operate in the black.

Advertise on national television news channels – we need to increase public awareness. Schools cannot and should not attempt to do this alone.

Funding needs to be increased to insure proper monetary awareness toward more healthy choices for center of the plate.

Our lunch counts are increasing and we could use more help.

It's tough kids like fatty fried foods.

Laws that focus on a healthy school nutrition environment.

Student parties and bake sales should be more nutritious.

Educate administrators, supervisors, teachers, students, parents, principals, and continual training for school food service employees.

Increase funds from federal government so schools do not have to depend on à la carte revenues to run a break-even business.

The school nutrition environment will not change unless children (our customers) demand that change. This will not happen unless healthy foods are offered at home as well.

Cut down on vending machines.

There are so many 'fires' (personnel problems, equipment problems). There is little energy left for nutrition education.

Let parents and students more involved.

Funds for additional teachers, nutrition education materials, etc.

Interest in both school and foodservice. Not restricted because of funding, time or space.

We will be building 8 new building in the next 5 years. Again, our staff is trying to develop a nutrition program.

Increased funding so that we could meet all of the above rated components in a fiscally responsible way. Hiring qualified foodservice directors or FMCs and paying them accordingly.

Eliminate financial constructs.

It should not be a higher priority; our cafeterias and cafeteria-sponsored vending offer healthy choices. Unfortunately, students and parents want/need to fundraise. The major soft drink and candy companies are happy to help. Until soft drinks and candy are banned from the public schools, before, during and after school hours, nothing will change. It seems that the soft drink and candy companies are becoming more aggressive while parents and the public in general are more accepting of their products in school, even during school.

Items listed on #13—if funds were available we could develop programs to educate students and families and take pressure off food service department financially so we are not dependent on sales of chips, juice, ice cream to survive.

Time constraints. Would love to do nutrition education in classrooms if not so much paperwork etc.

Federal or state regulations/mandates.

Foodservice Managers' Comments

Funding

More time to instruct classes about nutrition.

I believe healthy school nutrition environment has an appropriate priority level in our school.

The school board working with a concerned foodservice administrator.

Serve their favorite meals at least once a week.

Educate

More cooperation with administration, more time available, more money available.

Add more salad items - students like them.

More funds to purchase more of healthy foods.

Variety

Have a supportive administration that includes foodservice professionals and students in decisions affecting times of service and choices.

Parental support of the school foodservice.

I'm not sure.

Receive more government food of good quality – the government commodity program needs more healthy foods.

Unfortunately, I feel students and parents aren't up to the work to changes they would have to make to be healthy. Life is so fast paced and families aren't together. Society pushes junk food! It's a big business!

More time.

Take out vending machines.

Educate the nutrition staff first, make them certified in basic food and nutrition (not just sanitation and safety) so that they can pass this onto the students and set an example for faculty.

Prepare more of high school's food on site.

More nutritious snacks.

More parent involvement.

Use the C.A.T.C.H program in classes and have foodservice use EAT SMART Program.

Educate the parents about good nutrition. It has become a fast food society. And have more education on nutrition in school. Perhaps tie it into health classes.

Educate through classes being taught in school about the school foodservice program. Understanding why we do what we do, in turn the children would understand why certain foods are important.

Education and awareness of products and nutritional values. Most government commodity foods do not list any ingredient or nutritional information.

Parent involvement, this is a poor district.

Removing all vending machine from school building.

Adequate time.

Allow time in day for education. Funding to allow for nutrition education.

Advertising

It is hard because some of the better nutritious food choices the students do not like.

Get parents involved.

Get children involved with planning menus.

I only serve the kids at lunch, it is hard to make sure the day's worth of nutrition is packed into their meal.

Better understanding is needed by parents to understand what choices are available and why, to their children. Instruction sessions for adults and staff.

Food service program have become a business with little or no monies provided by the district.

Superintendents' Comments

As superintendent of a small district, the nutrition program is just one of many program and services I am responsible to manage.

Make that my only responsibility.

Local (parents, students) requests.

Legislative mandates.

Time to devote to improving environment.

In a school setting this would be difficult to accomplish. Although I know nutrition is related to academic achievement, learning will always be the high priority.

More funds to provide food service personnel with training to offer instruction on nutrition.

More money for personnel and supplies to train students.

I am not a building served by foodservice- you would need to either move my office or have parents call in complaints.

Parents serve healthy meals.

All institutions – hospitals, health groups, business, etc. Everybody moving into a higher priority.

Comments and concerns from parents that indicate they are dissatisfied with meal choices currently offered.

We are outstanding in this area.

Funding for salad bars.

Reduce competing priorities.

Funds to implement a food program in all schools. As private schools, parents develop lunch program.

Other school items and issues are more pressing now.

This is not a major issue in my mind.

Time

Priority is already high.

Mandated instruction.

Less paper work and surveys – more money, more employees to distribute work load. One employee to answer surveys.

Leaders in schools become involved.

Better menus, better commodities.

Funding!

Finances and nutrition information to parents about state and federal guidelines/mandates.

Fat content affects taste – taste affects attitudes – attitudes affect participation – participation affects budget – the challenge is to request healthy and nutritious meals and have parents want it for their children.

We have a lunch supervisor who has it as her top priority.

Adequate funding/staffing for curriculum development, facilities, athletes, discipline, special education, transportation, and public relations.

Change eating habits of students.

Our highest priority will continue to be a focus on teaching and learning.

It would be a higher priority if we had a problem with our program—which we do not.

Make school nutrition more important than school learning.

More time in day.

Education—recognize its importance in learning.

Less pressure (state & federal) for higher test scores. We are too consumed with reading and math scores to give nutrition the attention it should have.

Heightened awareness of the magnitude of nutrition-related problems in schools.

Great money for planning and support from parents.

The cafeteria operates on the money it generates. Low sales = low/no profit. Schools are forced to sell what students will eat.

Emphasize through curriculum. Also, more parent education.

It doesn't occupy a high priority because of so many other demands. It is a high priority with our food service staff, however.

Education to increase of the importance of a healthy school nutrition environment.

Principals do not have to sell snacks for spending money. Child nutrition does not have to sell à la carte items to stay financially in the black.

Increase funding to allow menu planners broader choices.

Staff who have the time to be so involved.

Reduce or eliminate other mandates.

Educate parents.

More funding to underwrite expenses.

Trained staff to focus on nutrition education.

Principals' Comments

Parents complain about high sugar items sold, but they are also the ones that don't support the program. We could change things if we had more support.

Need more administration help-not enough time to go around.

Decrease state and federal accountability standards in reading and math (good luck!).

Media support.

Educate students.

Nutritious and varied menu items.

More emphasis on nutrition education.

Begin a foodservice program.

Reduce discipline. Better educated parents. Parents with better parenting skills.

Funds to provide more personnel.

I think we are in fairly good shape although more training for teacher would be helpful.

Have parents involve students BEFORE they ever come to school. Kid may not eat a nutritious lunch, because it differs from the hot dogs, pizza, chips, and soft drinks they have at home.

Stop parents from taking children to fast food restaurants 4-5 times a week.

Change in schedule.

More time to become involved.

Nutrition committee, school policies, education.

Others are responsible for this area.

Taste and presentation are key ingredients. Enough time and money would help. Education—it's tough to compete with McDonalds and Pizza Hut.

Educating the public.

Educate parents!! They pack their children's lunches.

I do not have time to deal with school nutrition.

More advertisements (posters, etc.)

Focused attention on quality nutritious foods instead of focusing on outsourcing food services to the lowest bidder.

So many other issues to deal with. Healthy school nutrition is not a priority.

Better menu planning, less emphasis on profit.

Public input.

State funding.

More healthful choices in vending machines and à la carte lines.

Provide school funding that would lower class size, lengthen the school year and provide adequate materials for teachers to use.

Limit the scope of responsibility for building –level administrators.

Funding to purchase healthy foods.

Greater student, staff, and parent interest.

School nutrition is handled by an autonomous department lacking in customer service and creativity. Individual buildings have been shut down when requesting creativity and providing input.

More time or less other responsibilities.

Decent food, nice environment in which to eat. Having real silverware and straws!

I don't know.

Remove some of the high priority issues.

We do pay a lot of attention to it, but it cannot complete with curriculum, discipline, etc.

Time to focus on this as an issue.

Separate lunch, better planning.

If nutrition played a larger role in the state-mandated curriculum, and was tested on the state accountability tests, it would be a higher priority.

We could stop selling so much fried food.

Raising awareness of families that send poor food choices with their children.

Time is the issue.

Nothing- I trust my cafeteria staff to provide nutritionally sound lunches. Our lunch periods are 30 minutes—only two grades each lunch (small) and an activity time is provided.

I don't know.

If parents, teachers, and students were concerned about the issue it would become #1.

It is important but pragmatically speaking, other things are more so.

Take other items off my plate- aligning curriculum, student discipline, state and federal paperwork...It's not a matter of disinterest but a matter of time.

We have more than we can teach in a school year already.

I don't know at this time.

A district-wide policy supported on a regular basis by department administrators and boards of education.

Have someone take care of all of the other things that occur in a school and there would be more time and concern given to the nutrition programs.

Support from nutrition services department. Re: environment, improved service to students, etc.

Media promotion, less junk food available.

À la carte menu items, privatize cooking.

School Business Officials' Comments

Less emphasis on other higher priority duties.

A heart attack.

Revised state standard and regulation.

Board of Education, Administration, and Teachers.

Unsure

Greater Awareness.

I do not have supervisory responsibility. I assist with financial management and reporting.

Curriculum

Adequate funding to move healthy nutrition to an attainable goal. Buy-in from all staff to prioritize healthy nutrition over the financial gains obtained from contracts with junk food and soft drink vendors.

Educating parents and teachers of the benefits to eating a healthy and nutritious breakfast and lunch.

Breakfast

Make meals so good that people look forward to eating in cafeteria.

Adequate funding for the program.

Need more hours in the day. There are lots of competing issues/priorities. Lack of parental support.

Priority is appropriate based on other issues.

Teachers' Comments

Cut down the amount of fat used in cooking, serve more fruits and vegetables, less meat and processed foods.

Incorporate nutrition in the curriculum.

More nutrition-related TV ads, parental developmental awareness.

Better foods, better choices.

Take the profit making out of junk food sales.

Provide more nutrition education in health and foodservice classes.

Offer more nutritious meals and breakfast for the students.

Provide funding if certain steps are met.

Our society as a whole needs to develop a healthier nutrition environment. Once that is in place, then the schools will have it easy.

System wide, state, regional, initiatives.

Foodservice personnel, school administration, and school boards must provide leadership.

Ban junk food!! French fries, cheese and soft drinks.

Units of curriculum in the different subject areas to teachers to use. Flyers to send home with students. PTA could initiate parent education.

More variety within a month.

Document obesity, anorexia and bulimia case numbers. Assemblies to discuss problems with real people who suffer(ed) from problems with nutrition and how it's affected their lives.

I would like to see candy, chips, fried foods, and sugary drinks removed from our cafeteria. Seventy-seven percent of our student population is eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Yet they still have money for the junk food.

Implement a school-wide nutrition focus program. Send information to parents to better educate them about nutrition.

More choices than one main meal.

Eliminate high fat foods from the menu—French fries, sausages, hot dogs etc. Encourage students to visit salad bar.

Educate families on nutrition.

We are a Catholic school with no cafeteria. We have independent contract for vending machines and hot lunch program several times a month. Nutrition is not a priority. Everything needs to change – not possible at this time.

Better meal selection and more healthy choices.

Having fresher foods and a greater variety of food.

A complete menu revamping as to healthy vs. non-healthy. Adequate eating time to enjoy lunch and breakfast.

Offering more choices. There are students who would eat veggies and fruits, but the school does not have funds to make lots of choices (must make choices kids will eat).

Healthier food served in cafeteria. Foods contain lots of fat.

Educate students and parents, and other teachers, about the importance of proper nutrition and eating fresh and healthy foods.

I feel our school does an adequate job of providing hot meals that are nutritious to our students... so I don't really think about it all that much.

Overall awareness of the issue. There are so many "more pressing" issues to deal with (test scores, instructional matters) that nutrition is not a big priority.

Emphasis on nutrition.

Parental concern.

Meet with cafeteria director and staff to discuss concerns.

Parents need to push for it, school board members need to be convinced of the necessity for it, probably more funding available for it.

Provide less fat, sugar, starch, but more fruits (not canned in syrup) and vegetables.

I am unsure, my plate is full with the many items I do daily and many items I put off until tomorrow.

Limit number of snacks/junk food that students can buy at lunch.

Better lunches.

Time and commitment to a long-range program – stop the politics.

Quit worrying about the free/reduced lunches and have lunches that are good, filling, and nutritious.

As a teacher my "daily activities" concern the classroom where I have designed a short nutrition unit on my own. The cafeteria is a place I haven't "taken on."

Allow sufficient teaching time.

Teaching health-we don't anymore.

Adequate time to eat.

Low sugar, low fat snack ideas. Processed snacks are not healthy!

With the volume of basics necessary to ensure success in the curriculum, the educational focus is not nutrition until basic/fundamental skills are addressed- there is no place for this topic in isolation (other than health class).

Good snack options.

More time provided to eat lunch. Provide more healthy snacks in vending machines and as à la carte menu items.

Education and a helpful and cooperative food staff.

Educate people about the risks of not eating healthy. (provide more fresh fruits at lunch & breakfast).

I don't feel it needs to be a higher priority.

Parental awareness. Students must eat the hot lunches provided by the district if they buy it daily. They don't look good.

Promote wrestling because wrestlers eat healthy!

Tighter state requirements.

We were given a wonderful program this year that includes weekly nutrition lessons. It has step-by-step directions, the standards addressed, materials are provided and the perishable items are delivered to us each week. It is great and has already moved nutrition up as a priority.

Better food in snack machines.

Parents, students, and foodservice employees must be committed to establish a better program.

Funding

Administration understanding of its importance.

I don't believe this is my concern—we have qualified nutrition managers in our school system.

I don't know—I am a specialist so I don't have contact with students when they go to lunch.

I didn't know how to answer the question. Of course I want the children to have healthy, good meals but I'm not sure this affects my reading and math classes.

Serve healthier food. More variety (we have same choices daily.)

The National School Lunch Program should provide nutritious food. This is paid for with tax money, and heavily subsidized. Why should children decide how tax money is spent?

Put nutrition above money. Don't sign soft drink contracts at the district level.

Have a child in school.

Use of less fatty food preparation.

More awareness, more choices, more time.

I feel this should be a family priority.

Coaches' Comments

Advertising, parental involvement.

We need to offer a better variety of healthy foods.

More targeted messages and announcements.

Longer lunch periods, healthier foods available.

Nothing! Our kids are pretty healthy, with choices of meals at our school.

Illustration of how it helps students think and be alert.

Get rid of soft drink and candy machines.

Remove snack food availability and reduce the high fat items served by our lunch program.

There should be a greater variety and the presentation of food could be better.

People need to express their concerns and be provided with nutritious choices.

As a coach I believe students and athletes should eat healthy such as vegetables, pasta, and fruit at the proper time. Too much candy and soda. Sports drinks with guidance.

I believe it is a high priority but not the highest.

APPENDIX D
Open-Ended Comments

Open-Ended Comments

Foodservice Directors' Comments

Teach the reasons for change, do not change without teaching.

I've always believed the media is harming the school lunch programs across the nation. Most cartoons and children's show present the "Hot Lunch Ladies" and the food they are serving in a terrible light. We are still the overweight, gray haired, scowling grouchy women serving a ladle of gray slop onto a tray— according to their presentations. When is this going to change!

We cite all kinds of statistics about how much influence TV has on our children. Yet Nickelodeon, Disney, even PBS and so called "Good for your Child" shows continue to present a VERY negative picture of school lunch programs. Someone needs to force these companies and program directors into portraying us accurately. What is it going to take? A class action lawsuit? They do us financial damage by slandering us on a daily basis and we allow it to continue. Comic strips in the newspapers are equally guilty. A quote from The Family Circus, "It's the cafeteria menu for next week, looks like Thursday would be a good day to be sick." Said by Billy to a friend while he is pictured with a sheet of paper in hand standing next to a friend. When will it end?

Schools need adequate funding so that fund raising and school vending would not be necessary.

Competitive food sales hurt healthy food choice greatly. We need more regulations to prevent poor food choice offerings.

Today we had chicken stir fry and teachers loved it but most of it went in the garbage. If they don't get hamburgers, hot dogs, and pizza with French fries, they don't want to eat good food.

Think we have good nutritious meals, we offer fresh fruits and vegetable sticks and have choices trying to encourage healthy eating, however, a lot of the nutritious items such as fruits and vegetables are eaten by the garbage disposals. Children form a lot of their eating patterns at home and changing them is hard to do. In regards to obesity in children, I feel that the lack of physical activity is a leading cause of this. Many children sit at school all day, go home and sit in front of a computer monitor, video game or television until bedtime. Physical activity should also be stressed. There can be all kinds of mandates or legislation, but if the children don't like and won't eat, we have lost the chance to try and change their outlook, if we drive them from coming through and participating with nothing they like.

I think we are making great strides to provide healthy school meals. Not enough focus I put on what the child receives in the home. Some of our cafeterias may not be the most pleasant of atmospheres but what we offer for meals is meeting the Dietary Guidelines.

Food service funds aren't adequate to update school kitchens that are 30-40 years old. We aren't in the business of profit yet we have to compete with "big money" fast food restaurants and

serve the students a healthy meal that they will consume. We strongly agree with serving healthy meals but it seems like we do it with “hands tied.” Thank you!

School food service is not able to do much in the way of nutrition education. We can put up posters, serve healthy food, but when you have less than 10 seconds on average to interact with each student, no time can be spent even trying to encourage them to take the fruits and vegetables offered. No school district I know of gives the student more than 20 minutes for lunch at the elementary level. The schools usually combine lunch and recess. It just takes time to move hundreds of children from recess to lunch. (I also think it’s a shame that there is not time allotted for hand washing). The older students generally have more time to eat. Our district does have a recess at the 6-8-grade level and this reduces the lunch period to 20 minutes.

The main problem I believe is societal. Schools are funded locally. Parents do not understand the schools would need to lengthen the school day to provide adequate time for all the programs required by the state. Since this would cost more money, taxpayers don’t want to hear we are increasing your property taxes so the lunch period can be lengthened. Plus, most adults in this country have horrible eating habits and have not a clue as to how their example affects the children. Thanks.

I would like to replace the vending machines with healthy snack machines, but there is not a local distributor who carries the milk vending machines.

Public awareness of obesity in our country and promotions by professional groups has expanded progress in helping the importance of nutrition and health move to the forefront in topics of discussion, recognition and approval.

Nutrition education should start at home! Parents need to be better educated in what living on fast foods is doing to our nation’s children. I have been doing nutrition education in schools for at least 20 years and have seen student-eating habits getting worst over the years rather than improving. I have also observed that socio-economic status has little to do with eating habits. Students from affluent families eat just as poorly as those students from less affluent families.

We try to make menus that appeal to the children in this generation, because they have way different likes and types of foods, so to have them eating with us we have to have menus that please them.

Have free lunch available for all students.

Our school is a very small, rural school and funding is getting harder and harder. In the past we have offered our students a soup everyday- this has been cut this year. Am afraid there are more cuts coming. Money is the big issue.

We also do breakfast program and summer school breakfast and lunch program. Great program, supportive district, hard work, challenging, but very rewarding.

The USDA programs are becoming a bigger hassle than they are worth – too much paperwork, too much figuring. We get an entitlement allotted according to lunches served. It would save a lot of time if we just received the money and had to show receipts of the CN food it was spent on.

Vending machines are at high school and middle schools. Carbonated drinks are only at high school.

Our school food program is administered by a renowned food service corporation that provides the best in nutritionally selected and balanced foods for our students. Our foodservice is under the supervision of a dietary manager, an RD, MS, certified dietitian and under professional supervision for Kosher food.

Everyone gives lip-service to eat healthy, but in reality want their fries and burgers, etc. Many fast-food chains have offered low-fat healthier options only to give up because it's not what people buy. To change America eating habits will require a major catastrophe, so severe that food is strictly rationed.

We can and do prepare healthy meals- doesn't mean students will eat. Parents need to do more at home. Our staff is very good about nutrition education.

We need the entire support of principals, teachers, and staff. Quit using vending machines to supply principals with their "slush" fund. Extend or make multiple lunch periods so students have enough time to buy and eat a lunch instead of grabbing a soda and candy bar.

Vending machines: high schools—continuous vend, school policy on when and where consumed. Middle and elementary: before and after school only.

Things to do to improve situation--> more than one lunch period; close vending machines during lunch and breakfast; more supportive faculty.

I think universal feeling would be a great idea.

If you ever hope to change current administration mind set...start with their budget...increase the dollars. Too many fundraisers, vending machines. If you increase budget money, we can do away with safety issues. Hone in on education in all classrooms. Nutrition-nutrition-nutrition.

Administrators have got to be educated on the importance of mealtime and concentrate on more than curriculum. Breakfast is our biggest problem. They do not want to allow kids to eat, hungry or not, after a certain time that is 15-20 minutes before the start of the school day.

The vending machines are available to students only after breakfast and lunch have been served.

Healthful eating, I believe, begins at home. The more parents are educated, concerning nutrition, children will make healthier choices.

Need increased nutrition education at various educational levels and taught by instructors who are not overweight!

Need better ways to get staff, parents and educators involved. Need better explanation of school lunch program and that our commodities are not ever abundant and we do not serve our program for free. We spend a lot of money, purchasing food to make a good program.

Competition from local school vending machines is destroying the school lunch program.

I am very committed to providing healthy school meals in my lunch program. However I do feel school administrators need to make nutrition and physical activity a priority in the school curriculum. Parents also need to be educated and they need to reinforce healthy eating habits and exercise at home.

Thanks you for your efforts in helping us out here in the field.

Competitive foods have evolved from the lack of funding for the extra things schools need to function well and to be able to “market” public schools to parents. In some cases kickbacks are provided by vendors to school officials in change of the vending sales. This may come in the form of gifts or cash.

School lunch programs have to have good student participation to survive financially. Our highest participation days are pizza, chicken nuggets, fries, etc. Lowest are stir-fry, fresh fruits, and salad bars. Our students seem to be “hooked on fast foods.”

Our school provides healthy meals yet sells and promotes the sale of junk food for fundraising purposes. Even in school foodservice we are not as pure as we would like to be due to the need to increase à la carte sales (of course we sell only items that met USDA guidelines, whereas the schools sell sodas, candy, etc.).

I have been director since 1998. I have been employed in school lunch in my district for 29 years. Competitive foods are a big issue to school lunch directors. We need a definitive policy that will be upheld.

I think all fast food institutions set the standards of how children and adults eat today and if schools don't follow what's popular (not necessarily healthy) we won't have the participation to keep our programs financially fit. We are in a catch position.

I feel very strongly about the work we do each day feeding our students, but really feel the frustration at the educational side. Yes, we have posters, sponsor contests, talk to the students about making choices, but the time and money is not there to go to classrooms to talk to the students in smaller groups.

Advertising and branding affect all of us (adults and children) in our eating habits. Convenience foods have great appeal and populations are overweight due to eating and exercise patterns. Education is necessary but eating habits still come down to personal choices. We need to provide the variety and the demand determines what is popular.

Please stop soft drinks from being on any campus!

ASFSA needs to have a strong presence and message at the National School Board Association Convention and the National ASBO convention. These two arenas are where school boards and school business officials are getting pummeled by “erase your deficit” schemes.

Our school food seems to be more in competition with fast food restaurants because of our “marketing segmentation.” I would love to create an atmosphere of the fast food chains but with the healthy options, of course; funding is an issue.

Nutrition curriculum is not required except in Home Economics and Life Skills classes. Otherwise, it’s teacher discretion. Milk and juice vending machines are controlled by foodservice, soda machines are controlled by the schools.

Congress needs to regulate the sale of all foods in schools not just the foods that are sold in the food service areas during meal times. When students can step just outside the service area and buy foods that the programs can’t sell, what good does it do to regulate the programs and not the rest of the school?

I find that even if we try to convey good nutrition to students with our menus, the peer pressure, the disinterest of most parents in providing good nutrition at home, and the media advertising of fast food, we can’t compete with all these factors. The government has imposed guidelines that rarely coincide with student’s choices. We can serve the best we can afford, but we can’t “force” kids to eat!

Nutritional awareness must start from the top down with parents, commitment from district leadership, and emphasis on food service as an integral part of the school environment instead of a “necessary evil.”

Make sure nutrition questions are included on SAT test to ensure education continues at all grade levels.

Every initiative that is proposed increases paperwork/accountability. That pressure plus profitability, auditors, and other district pressures are becoming greater constantly.

Fresh fruit and veggies sell best for us. Salad is a popular choice.

Help with snack machines in dining rooms and campus. Administration is sending mixed messages to our students.

We need support to convince principals and coaches that soft drink vending machines are not the answer for funding their programs.

Nutrition is the responsibility of each individual. Education is extremely important in the choices with parental reinforcement. Good nutrition is not important to many people in our district. During summer feeding we see a lot of milk thrown away because the children bought soda pop and chips on their way.

This is my personal opinion. Elementary students will pick up their food no matter how will it look or how nice it is prepared. There is a lot of plate waste. I think because of a short lunch period (20 minutes maximum) they are hurried. Junior high children are not into eating what's good for them; they can't be bothered to busy so they eat lots of snacks. High school students develop a more mature likeness for food. They can't get enough of it.

As food service directors, all professionals would love to offer nutritious reimbursable meals to all children. Our à la carte programs generate funds necessary to maintain our budget. Until school districts (local), state, and federal agencies assist the program financially, we will continue to sell à la carte items.

Although we use nutrient standard menu planning to make meals that meet the Dietary Guidelines, I have noticed something noteworthy. Many students don't think there is enough food on their trays, and they order an extra entrée (or juice or cookie). Quantity of food is an issue, and that is society-wide.

We are a parochial school. We prepare all meals. We also need to order all food produce and milk individually. Since we are a small school, some companies do not wish to service us, the milk company will not supply milk to our school.

I believe that requiring 3 servings a day for grains is entirely too much. This would work if we could count potatoes as a carbohydrate just as diabetic exchange and most other diets. Schools should limit the times pizza can be offered in a month. Schools need more money for employees to prepare a greater variety of foods. One worker per 100 student meals is absolutely ridiculous.

Without adequate funding to allow for equal access to all students, whether poor or rich (paying or non-paying), a real healthy environment will be difficult to achieve.

Competitive foods are a major problem in secondary schools but not in elementary schools.

The USDA Commodity Program is not set up for school lunch programs. We get products that are not conducive to our nutrition programs, just to keep farmers and other producers in business.

I would really like to provide a more nutritional environment but there are many obstacles to this happening. #1: funding- unfortunately to stay afloat we must sell à la carte because this is what sells. #2 must compete all the time with outside competition from school. #3 not enough support

from other upper level management (they don't understand and don't want to understand our situation).

Our district is on the move to remove soft drinks and snacks from the choices, however we have to deal with a lot of old system and the finances derived from them. In three years I can see our students getting more nutritional items and our food services not having to compete against student stores and other outside sales. We hope!

I feel the obesity issues today are not so much a result of offerings in school but the lack of physical activity, lack of parental education and communication, and the fast food industry is push to "super size" meals. I went to high school 1967-1971. The same types of "snacks" were offered in the cafeteria (probably worse because they were made with lard and butter) but we didn't have to obesity problem we have today. We also had mandatory physical education every day for all four years.

The kids do not have time to eat. They are rushed through the line and then hurried to eat so they can clean the cafeteria. Even though we can't make a child eat, I think the aides should encourage them to eat. Most of elementary age students are in a hurry to get outside to play so they need to be reminded to eat first so they have the energy.

Principals and teachers should cooperate move in providing our children with better ways of fundraising rather than allowing them to sell foods of minimal nutritional value.

We have 47 students in our school, grades K – 8.

I work in a small inner-city district, with low income students (80% free and reduced). We are multi-cultural with 5 major languages spoken. Our students have problems passing basic skills math and language classes. Our teachers might have 3 – 5 hours a year to teach nutrition and that is it. I plan good menus, with offerings limited by space, time, and money. I am a one-person operation, where I do everything to keep my department operational and get our students fed. That is my priority, feeding my kids good meals that they will eat.

Our students need nutrition information related to the foods we get as commodities. We need nice, colorful visuals – we don't have the time to make them ourselves. Also, we need more variety in commodities.

We need stronger regulations concerning competitive foods and more funding to make the cafeterias a more pleasant place to eat.

The environment of schools will not improve when education has to rely on vending for such a significant part of its funding. Soft drinks outsell juice and water by more than 10 to 1 – it becomes very hard for administrators to remove them from schools.

The changing of the school environment requires all parties to buy in to the concept. Principals often make building decisions that go against sound health practices for various reasons. School

food service administrators and staff are often out there by themselves trying to promote a healthy school environment.

There is no nutritional integrity in our program due to non interest in the health of our students – only money. We continually fight battles with our nutritionally planned breakfast against doughnuts and parent group fundraisers. Principals are continually fighting for student meal money with different promotions. Parents are allowed to bring fast food into our cafeteria and use our condiments, etc. Soft drink contract limits our beverage sales, etc.

Try hard with younger children to shape the way they choose which foods to eat. Once they are high school age, you've lost them.

The participation in our schools is quite good. We do have a small problem area – parents bringing outside food in to their children.

The federal government will have to find ways to subsidize school lunch if you take away à la carte sales.

If overall increased funding for national school lunch and breakfasts were provided, it would reduce the need to sell alternate foods during the day.

Schools know about competitive foods regulations – but do they comply? We can't be everywhere all the time (16 schools). Antiquated surroundings (old buildings) take away from café atmosphere. Vending machines are programmed to turn off during the lunch periods.

Our modern society has become fast paced and few families have the traditional mom at home, dad providing the income. Most families are two-income and don't have time for home cooked nutritious meals – grab and go at any of dozens of fast food restaurants is now the norm. Educating families may not be enough to change current eating habits. A change in lifestyle, though unlikely, seems the answer to the current nutrition challenge.

There are many school nutrition programs that sell snack foods in such a way that the sale competes with school meals. I think we need to clean our own house, and “walk the talk” before we address competitive foods from the school administration.

Soft drink sales seem to be the most detrimental to our students' health. Soft drink sales bring in about \$15,000 to the school's ASB budget. Money talks. Until the states mandate nutrition education and physical education and allow time and money for it, it will not become a priority to the schools.

I feel the need is a strong one – the challenge is finding the time and resources.

As Americans we have a lot of years of bad eating habits which won't be broken over night, but I think, we are on the right track. Soft drinks, sweets, and fried foods are America's biggest eating problems.

Our state currently has high unemployment – school budgets are being cut – however our district has very low free and reduced percentages and schools are not used to cutting back. So lots of fundraisers are going on – pizza sales, candy, soft drinks, all “legal” – but they kill our programs. Until there are more consequences for allowing competitive foods, it is a war.

Funds and personnel to conduct nutrition education are severely limited. Until it becomes a priority at the highest level, it will not be a priority in the annual budget.

It’s challenging to run a nutritionally sound and financially sound program. I do my best to offer a varied diet with choices and realize that I too liked pizza and nuggets as a youth, but as a grown up, I value nutritious foods - something that my parents instilled in me at home!

Our town is fast food heaven. We have at least ten fast food places within easy access of our high school. Our schools are primarily open campus.

I feel schools have to compete with fast foods too often. We need more fresh fruits and vegetables offered to all age groups.

It would greatly help if USDA provided us with low-fat foods.

We have very few students eligible for free/reduced meals. Marketing our program is very important to keep up a good customer base.

In order to implement, funding would be very helpful to cover staff time needed to organize, plan, and implement.

The biggest determinant to school food success is that the community, administrators, and teachers expect ADULT style food “like grandma used to make.” They put up road blocks everywhere to prevent low fat cooking, fresh fruit (instead of dessert), etc.

The balancing act between nutrition and finances must come to a stop in the child nutrition programs. Loads of children are at risk.

Recently there have been conferences on this topic in our state – and this has been marketed to principals, teachers, nurses, etc. – in some cases these groups have formed teams without foodservice representation/input in an attempt to dictate policy. Nutrition environment policy development must include local foodservice input from the start.

Many small schools are well-staffed and have pretty nutritious menus. We make homemade bread, cookies, and cakes from scratch, barbeque sauce, spaghetti sauce, etc. My school board does not pressure me to stay “in the black.” One hungry child is one child too many. I have a great school and I have a master’s degree in institution management.

Help is needed with breakfast. Funding would be nice, but we need to educate the educators to include time in the child’s day for breakfast, just as they do lunch. They agree on importance, but won’t allow time when buses don’t arrive until 10 minutes before classes start. We need a

morning break around 30 minutes into the day for breakfast, even if it means starting school 30 minutes earlier.

I would like see more funds for school foodservice and help incorporating more healthy foods.

We do the best we can with what we have to work with.

I really feel there is a need to educate and model good choices in nutrition throughout the U.S. I applaud cities (Los Angeles, El Paso) that have banned soft drink sales on campus. We've got more to do though!

I believe that the federal governments should make sure all school lunch programs could afford and have whatever it takes to feed our children healthy. So many schools do not have the equipment because no money is in the budget. Our children are our future.

We need to remove soft drink/candy/snack vending machines from schools – probably via government mandate. School personnel who receive the profits from these machines are not about to let go of it. I have talked with administration about removing vending machines and am told they are acceptable as long as not used during lunch. And that they make money!

Campus administration/staff in general do not view student's health as a top priority. Their focus is education-centered, i.e. passing academic skills tests, discipline, and management of campus. Unless legislation directs school districts to eliminate all competitive foods, campus will not be motivated to promote good health through a healthy nutrition environment.

Healthy food and good nutrition must be modeled at home. Healthy food choices can then be emphasized in the schools. As a school lunch program, we emphasis low fat preparation of foods that are most familiar to students. The purchase of such items (ie. low fat hot dogs and deli meats) cost us more. We will continue to do this as long as our budget can support such purchases. Foodservice cannot take funds from the general fund.

Nutrition education has been done in the schools for years! It's time this subject/promotion be picked up and practiced in all media (television, radio, etc.) and the burden put on individuals, not the schools. Advertising dollars are not being spent to improve the health of our country. Instead we spend advertising dollars on pills and treatments to ask your doctor about because you already have problems. Promote prevention!

I am trying to increase student breakfast participation. I seem to hit walls with transportation (the time buses arrive), administrative support (or lack of), and staff support (very difficult to change their ways). We currently serve less than 800 breakfasts a day, while there are 9000 students enrolled. I don't care if they don't buy breakfast at school - I just want them to eat breakfast.

We don't have vending machines or á la carte items except ice cream and iced tea. We usually sell a reimbursable lunch and we put a lot of home cooking into our menus. Children should not have access to a lot of junk food; they can have fast foods at night.

We do very well providing nutrition education in the classroom to our children. We are looking at funds to offer it on our printed menus. We have excellent support from the board of education and superintendent.

We have always worked to provide a rounded, healthy environment. Parental education is as important as the school environment; the schools can not do it alone. Funding for healthy activities is a major help, such as 1) milk vending machines sponsored in part by the National Dairy Council, 2) fruit and vegetable pilot by USDA.

I would like to see a policy where no carbonated beverages could come into lunchroom in sack lunches. Parents also go to fast food restaurants and bring lunches to students.

Nutrition education needs to receive more emphasis in the curriculum. Parent education needs to be part of the process.

Parents are the most important partners schools can have in turning out well-educated and healthy young adults. Unfortunately more and more parents want the schools to do all the work with no involvement from the households. The key to healthy individuals begins and ends at home.

I'm a member of a health advising task force for the district. We are developing an educational program to promote healthy eating and physical activity. Any support will be appreciated.

Foodservice Managers' Comments

Help get rid of vending snack machines on campuses. Help to change stigma of "cafeteria food"! Our state is working hard but has a long way to go.

Our school has been privatized and the menus have too much starch.

No matter how excellent a school nutrition program is, there are two elements, which from my observation, determine the choices children make at meals. One is the type of foods served at home. Children exposed to a wide range of healthy food generally choose to eat that way at school. Others will go hungry instead. Also, children who eat and appreciate a wide range of healthy foods influence others to try them.

No matter what USDA guidelines are: most teens eat what "they" want, not what is nutritious and good for them.

I'm so tired of the school lunch programs getting bashed because of the obesity problem with our youth. Let's start with the fast food meals the kids are getting before they get to school and after they walk out these doors. Then let's address the 6-8 hours of television each day. We have open campus and if I don't have the candy, chips, etc., in the snack bar and vending machines, they will go and buy it elsewhere. These kids will eat the junk food because that is what they are getting at home. American doesn't cook anymore!

I would like to see different foods offered for breakfast and lunch. The monthly menus seem to be the same food over and over, and children get tired of the same foods.

Thank you to all who are so helpful with your ideas and work.

I think that the principle and all staff in a school should eat in cafeteria instead of carrying foods for students and parents to see.

I feel like the meals I serve are very important to a child's education and I do feel like school lunches are an important part of a child's day. I also feel like I only serve most of the students in the school one meal, and their eating habits are established at home, not the one meal I serve a day.

I manage the hot lunch program for a non-public school with a total population of 191 students K-8. We have 3 paid staff. I am the only "full time" employee at 32 hours per week. While I try to contribute to nutrition curriculum, it is sporadic given the time constraints. I do what I can, but usually "volunteer" my time to do what I can. I use materials from the Dairy Council and state Department of Public Instruction.

We really need a lot more commodity foods to do a better job feeding the children a healthy meal.

We are in the process of building a new high school and remodeling the middle school.

Children today have no restrictions. They eat and do as they please. They aren't held responsible for anything they do. Parents give them anything they want to shut them up. If you want students to eat better, stop selling soft drinks, chips, and candy. Lower the prices so students can afford to eat. Give them healthy choices. There's a real problem for students without free and reduced lunch applications and without money. There's a problem with lack of time and help in the cafeterias.

I would like to see government restrictions on vending machines in schools.

Many of these questions addressed "school fundraisers," vending machines and organizations outside of the school cafeteria. Therefore, I don't feel I can answer the questions very accurately because the foodservice department is separated from the district building. If foodservice employees are educated in nutrition (which we try to do) I feel they can inform the kids as they pass and it's a great start!

It's important that students have at least 30 minutes lunch time so they will be better educated in school.

We are a progressive school district. Our officials have provided the food service department with the equipment we need to prepare nutritious meals and to carry out the business aspects of the program. We have been privileged to have made available to us the latest in nutrition

education classes. To sum up- our district promotes and provides for our pursuit of professionalism.

My district puts more and more on the managers to do as working managers. I have only myself, one full time (6hrs) worker, and a ½ day temp. We are ensuring the meals are prepared to recipes, keeping records, promoting products, dialoguing with teachers, parents, staff, and going to classes. We managers have a hard time smiling when our feet, head and body hurt and our mind is exhausted. We need more workers in our cafeterias to be able to give better service to our customers. I love my job as “the lunch lady.” I enjoy making children smile.

Our biggest challenge is to serve nutritious foods that the students will eat when the foods don't look like they came from a fast food restaurant.

Having adequate money in order to employ enough qualified people to do the jobs within a school food service program is a concern. We need to be able to pay benefits for full time employees to get a qualified person or someone who will commit to learning and stay. We have high employee turnover. If our jobs are so important to children then why aren't our jobs made more important with salary and benefits?

I believe at an early age children should become aware of what the body's daily needs are. They need to understand how sugars and fats work, to eat all the food groups needed daily, and to choose an apple instead of a candy bar.

Perhaps federal funds could be used to teach students in after school programs directed by food service managers that teach nutrition facts and educate students.

Soft drinks do not belong in schools.

I try my best to give the students a very nutritional lunch. Special treats are usually often on Holidays only with other nutritional treats offered periodically. The work atmosphere in the kitchen is a factor with lunch count.

I do not think that our schools should be allowed to sign contracts which require us to have soft drinks in our schools!

It is easy to serve a nutritious reimbursable lunch to children in grades K-8. But in high school where they have the ability to leave campus, we must sell what the students are willing to buy. Our society is fast food consumers. We offer both nutritious items and fast food items.

I had no clue what the people in the cafeteria did before I started working in one. I love my job here and I am just amazed at all the training that goes into this job. It is a great atmosphere to work in here at our school.

Superintendents' Comments

The increased paper work that is being required to run the program is an unreasonable burden on the program.

It is difficult sometimes to meet the government requirements and find foods that the children will eat.

We are a private Christian school. K through 12th grade with 325 students.

Provide lean beef.

Kids' eating patterns are driven by media and fast food companies. They want McDonald's, Wendy's, Pizza Hut, and Taco Bell.

The National School Lunch Program is a drop in the bucket!

Competitive foods should be off limits in a school district. All students should eat free at school.

The compromise between what kids will eat and what we want them to eat is a concern. Families dictate a lot of what their children will eat.

Students and parents are used to fast food and expect a school foodservice to offer similar selections and flexibility. Those fast food companies have constant advertising has changed the way America eats.

We need more dollars provided and additional equipment for maintaining proper storage and service of food items.

School nutrition programs will never compete with national fast food advertising. We need to stay the course and offer pleasing/appetizing food selections in warm, caring environments.

The schools can't be responsible for total child nutrition issues. It seems to me that compliance issues forget that this is America, and choice is much more important to most people than is a healthy meal. The schools can't make children eat healthy. Children must choose to eat healthy.

Schools' nutrition programs usually struggle with funds to operate. That is the primary reason schools are forced to sell what kids see in the media. They have to have a profit!

Principals' Comments

My dream would be to see every student eat for free at school regardless of income.

We don't have a great deal of control over menus locally because of county-wide choices as well as a local culture out of the picture.

Our foodservice only has to meet nutrition standards 3 out of 5 days. That leaves 40% for “junk food.” The behavior and education of our students is at risk nationally due to poor nutrition.

We are a private Christian school where students bring their meals everyday. We are not licensed to provide any meals. We receive no funding and don't expect to.

We are a small, church-governed private school and daycare with approximately 250 students. Our school cafeteria also serves as a social area for the church, and the kitchen was not designed to accommodate health department guidelines for food preparation. Budget issues are the biggest hindrance to making modifications to allow for lunch preparation.

Our meals here are nutritious and excellent for our students and staff. Our lunchroom staff does a fantastic job.

What is the end purpose of this information?

Cafeteria managers should be “highly trained” in order to promote good nutrition and to present activities that correlate with the school's health curriculum and promote good nutrition.

If it tastes good they will eat it. If it looks good, they will eat it. The cafeteria settings-light, tablecloths are all important. Attitude-parents don't think we have a good product. Vending machines are tied to how many people work in the cafeteria supplemental sales.

Several of your questions were difficult to answer due to the fact that I know my school but not other schools in the district (many schools have vending machines but I have no idea what they provide).

Parents need to be educated. The problem is that they wouldn't show up to any PTO meeting when we could have a presentation on nutrition.

Clearly, the work is cut out for all of us—Bottom line, most foods that are not very nutritious just plain taste good –we know it, and more importantly, the children know it. Good luck to all of us on this issue.

We don't allow students to use vending machines during the school day. They may use the machines before and after the school day.

Our lunch program is a satellite sight. Our menu is very limited and repetitive. The choices are very high in fat and we have strange combinations like French toast and corn.

Although we have not audited the garbage, we estimate that more than half the food is thrown away. Many students are not allowed to stay for extended learning opportunities because they have to go home to eat (especially ESL students). The days of “hot” school lunches have disappeared. Personnel were not trained to use facilities effectively to ensure hot, appealing, diverse foods.

Since we have offered more lunch choices, our participation rate has increased by 1/3.

We are part of a pilot program that serves breakfast each morning in the classroom—as part of our daily instructional time! We love it.

We really need a national, state, local partnership with parents/families, businesses, and commercial interests to re-shape nutrition policies and attitudes. Food companies should not be the principle influence, nor should fast food companies.

We have many children who should get free lunch but their parents don't or can't fill out the paperwork.

I think the federally funded free and reduced lunch program provides too many fatty foods and foods with high sugar content.

Our country seems to have fallen back to unhealthier habits. The fitness craze, while still very strong, has lost momentum. Most parents of students at my school who send lunches with their children, send too much food. And most of it has little nutritional value. Even items like fruit juice drinks have little nutritional value and a great deal of sugar. The meals served at school are mostly wasted. Children don't like sliced cooked carrots, spinach, and peas.

We are a small rural school district. We offer a large variety of foods for our students. Our staff also offers vegetarian plates everyday for those students who request them.

School lunch menus need to be adjusted to eliminate the high amount of fat. More nutritious menus need to be available to students.

Nutrition I feel is at the top for students as well as a healthy life style.

We are a private school with 184 students. We really don't have access to district funds for better food choices. Many (30%) are on free/reduced lunch provided by church-contracted food service that is mostly processed/frozen foods.

School Business Officials' Comments

We do not have kitchen facilities on site. All meals must be transported to our lunchrooms. In order to meet all mandates (health inspectors; NSLP etc), the food is wrapped and packed in "coolers." The presentation is unappealing therefore even though nutritious; students don't want to eat the meals.

Encourage nutrition-based menu planning, on food-based menu planning, the USDA regulations do not allow you to serve a healthy pizza.

Maintaining a balance in funding vs. sales vs. needs of students. Students have a wonderful healthy group of choices—many prefer fast food.

Our cooks are very committed to serving healthy meals as well as serving items kids like. They do keep our lunch count high. They do an excellent job.

If students have a free period they can sell to people in school, otherwise it is before or after school hours.

We are a private school with 21 students. Our issues are funding for a better facility and technology. School nutrition is not a high priority.

Teachers' Comments

Institutional food, e.g. hospitals, schools is traditional in nature and goes a long way towards keeping people fat. Fast food restaurants have found their way into our institutions. There will be no end to the fattening of America except for the inevitable heart attacks.

Students today are very conscious of what they eat. Given healthy alternatives, they would choose a potato bar or salad bar over chips and candies. Our students are dismissed at 2:35. They eat from 12:15 to 1:00. Most prefer not to eat at school because they can eat what they want an hour and a half later after they're dismissed.

Our children go to the lunchroom hungry and often get cold, un-kid-friendly food. Choices are few, foods are overcooked, and children barely have enough time to eat.

Kids don't eat breakfast.

Our school lunch program provides many high-fat, "fast-food" type items to students. Most are just heat and eat items – French fries, potato rounds, chicken patties, pizza pockets, etc. They come frozen and are simply warmed in the oven. Few fresh vegetables and fruits are served. Canned (with fruit in syrup) items predominate. Childhood obesity is common.

Our cafeteria serves a lot of high fat/low nutrition foods. Many children do not eat anything but the main entrée (salad is a choice as a side dish) and sometimes not even that. If we can tell the students they must sit at least 10 minutes before being excused perhaps they will not rush (thus, hopefully eat something) to go and play.

I believe good nutrition habits and choices are important. I don't see it receiving attention or discussion at our school.

We sell only milk. Our school has no lunch service. The PTO sells pizza, hot dogs, grinders on a monthly basis and ice cream weekly.

I see an extraordinary number of eating disorders (primarily teenage girls). High quality healthy food choices would greatly benefit school districts. We had an amazing salad bar at my high school growing up- it only cost \$1.00 although that was years ago...in the late 1980's. School food looks very unappetizing.

As a health teacher, I would like to see only healthy foods and drinks sold in school cafeterias. Many of our students are obese. I have cafeteria duty everyday so I get to see first hand the poor choices the students make when it comes to food. Public schools should be leaders in nutrition.

We have made attempts to improve nutrition in our café as a faculty. But certain items make too much money- French fries, nachos, and soft drinks.

I particularly like our salad bar- it's stacked with lots of fresh fruits and vegetables.

I would be very interested in my school receiving information about the Nutri-Kids software or any equivalent software program that regulates the number of calories and the amount of fats that are fed to our school children on a daily basis.

Our school foodservice director provides a healthy menu with variety of foods within a month's breakfast and lunch plans. She is open to suggestions. She helps us meet the needs of students with special food concerns.

How is it justified to sell those sugary drinks and chips during lunch time?

Cookies, ice cream, fruit drinks are offered at an extra cost. This is a money maker for the cafeteria but it makes it harder to get children to stay on a balanced meal plan.

Our lunch program is catered by a local business that is contracted out to other businesses as well as Catholic schools. I find very little nutritional value in what is being served.

I think our school does the best it can with the funding they have and the variety of kids they need to feed. I would like to see more veggies – and vegetable dishes for non-dairy or meat eaters.

Our school is a small town in suburban area. We have less than 300 students in K-8. The cafeteria situation differs greatly from other schools.

Until the price of healthy food (salads, fruits, etc.) is equal or less than the junk food (fries, nachos, etc.) I don't see the kids changing.

Our menu is very limited. The same lunches are offered over and over again. The high school has a soup and salad bar but we do not. Choices make children want to eat better instead of bringing candy and buying pop or ice cream.

I appreciate your effort in trying to help to improve nutrition in our schools.

Children who buy or are given a breakfast or lunch from the cafeteria throw away most of it uneaten. Sack lunches from home are usually only partially eaten (i.e. middle of sandwich) but all of the cookies and chips are eaten. Both candy and soft drinks come from home for lunch.

My school does not have a cafeteria lunch program. All students eat in their classrooms. Therefore, a majority of the students bring snacks that are peer acceptable. Parents need to be informed more of nutritious needs.

Our district prides its food service budget for operating in the black primarily due to funds from vending machines, soft drinks, and snack foods bought á la carte. Lunches consist of pizza, hot dogs, hamburgers, fried-coated chicken strip/nuggets, French fries, tacos, and hoagies.

I'm not sure USDA nutrition standards guarantee a healthy balanced meal. The food served in our cafeteria often looks beige- lacking freshness and variety. You could eat a lot of it without teeth. Some of our students have 5-10 minutes to eat and ice cream may be served within a couple minutes of students sitting down with their trays. It's shame.

Parent education for home lunches is a key. "Lunchables" are a big fad with early elementary kids. Yuck!! I monitor the snacks I give my students. It's impossible to fight the home eating habits.

Lunch program bid went to an outside company with added "snack bar" (chips, candy, slushes, etc.) after contract was signed. Parents and teachers protested but no change was made.

Our school is working to provide healthy foods. However, we still offer food as rewards. We need to allow more than 25 minutes to serve 200 students.

The best school lunch can be supplied by the parents. It would be less expensive for parents to provide food from home rather than having students purchase meals at school everyday. I don't see a problem with vending machines in schools. With limited funding, schools need alternative sources of funding and vending machines turn quick and high profits.

I would like to see healthy items á la carte. I think the school breakfast program is a great service for our students. In our cafeteria, the adults pay more but get the same portions as students.

The schools that cook their own foods (they have kitchens) provide a better looking lunch than the schools that have hot lunches covered by plastic wrap. The food is served and usually it's tasteless and the kids don't really eat it all. The schools that have salad bar every so often do well—I'll eat lunch that day.

I have enough self-discipline to eat healthy. I think if more students were involved with sports and being healthy was important then we would a greater demand for healthy food. Plus, if all we sold was healthy food then our kids would be forced to eat healthy or at least run.

It would be nice to have more choices for teachers to choose from in the elementary levels (such as soup and salad).

The program I described before has been put together by University of Colorado Health Science Center, Colorado State University, and Denver Public Schools Comprehensive School Health

and funded by USDA Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. It is titled Integrated Nutrition and Physical Activity Program. It is wonderful because as a teacher all I have to do is read over the lesson and everything is done or provided for me.

Lunchroom personnel yell at and demean students, especially when they get loud. I don't do this in the classroom and don't want this to happen at lunch. Perhaps some training in this area would be appropriate.

We need more funding for good, healthy meals!

A relationship between the food service staff and the students would contribute to a better understanding of nutrition in our school.

Many times the menu sounds good but doesn't taste that good. Sometimes the food is cold. Sometimes there are not big enough portions. I believe there should be a salad bar for adults and many more choices for children. If they don't like the choice they often get a piece of cheese on bread.

I have taught in this system for 27 years. I have eaten lunch from the school lunch program for all those years. The quality of nutrition has declined over time. This is the "fault" of a permissive society of parents, students, and administration. I believe our food service workers attempt to serve healthful, nutritious foods, but families demand their children be served what they "want." Students will choose hot dogs for Thanksgiving dinner over a turkey meal. When what a wiener is made from is explained to children they will shudder, but they continue to request that food. In a nation which could have the best-fed children in the world, we allow the children to make poor decisions. Bending to the "rights" of the students, the food service is not permitted to demand that children eat what they are served, or in fact accept what is offered. The good food thrown in the garbage would make a hog or chicken farmer ecstatic. Free/reduced price lunch eligible children will throw away what they are served, then go to the "seconds" table to buy snacks with cash. The system obviously needs revamping. I note a comment on "hunger needs" of children. I reside in one of the most economically depressed states in the nation, yet I have witnessed very few "hungry" students. A truly hungry individual does not discard nutritious food while demanding what they "want."

In education we have bought into all the unhealthy eating habits of the general population. We promote eating and drinking sugar and fat all day long at school. Kids now believe it is a right to have junk food all day.

With the strong emphasis on reading, writing, math, science, social studies, etc. I feel the family should be responsible for their child's nutritional health.

Coaches' Comments

Nutrition involves everyone- parents, siblings, grandparents, school employees, and anyone who has contact with students. It is not a part time venture.

Choices- students need choices.

Foods provided in the cafeteria are high in fat content and do not provide athletes with the necessary nutrition to perform at their best. The athletes have to bring food from home to supplement the poor choices provided at school. The students are only permitted to purchase snacks at a certain time of the day, which eliminates some access to supplement their daily diet.

Junk food prevails.

There needs to be more options so students can enjoy a healthy meal.

The home refrigerator is the start (parents' philosophy/role model). Time to have meals is a concern. We have short eating periods, a lack of time to be served, and lack of variety.