



NATIONAL FOOD SERVICE  
MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE  
The University of Mississippi

## **NFSMI Best Practice Guide**

*for Increasing High School Student Participation and  
Satisfaction in the National School Lunch Program*



# **NFSMI Best Practice Guide**

*for Increasing High School Student Participation and  
Satisfaction in the National School Lunch Program*



**National Food Service Management Institute  
The University of Mississippi**

Item Number R-148-09 (GY08)  
2009

This project has been funded at least in part with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) at The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

The information provided in this publication is the result of independent research produced by NFSMI and is not necessarily in accordance with U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) policy. FNS is the federal agency responsible for all federal domestic child nutrition programs including the National School Lunch Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. Individuals are encouraged to contact their local child nutrition program sponsor and/or their Child Nutrition State Agency should there appear to be a conflict with the information contained herein, and any state or federal policy that governs the associated Child Nutrition Program. For more information on the federal Child Nutrition Programs please visit [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd).

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/TitleVI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

© 2009, National Food Service Management Institute, The University of Mississippi

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use providing the following credit is included:

Suggested Reference Citation:

Asperin, A. E., & Castillo, A. (2009). *NFSMI best practice guide for increasing high school student participation and satisfaction in the National School Lunch Program*. (Resource Item No. R-148-09). University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute.

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by The University of Mississippi or The University of Southern Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The universities cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images. For more information, please contact [nfsmi@olemiss.edu](mailto:nfsmi@olemiss.edu).

# **National Food Service Management Institute**

## **The University of Mississippi**

*Building the Future Through Child Nutrition*

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

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the National Food Service Management Institute is to improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

### **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.

## **Contact Information**

### **Headquarters**

#### **Administrative Division**

The University of Mississippi

Phone: 800-321-3054

Fax: 800-321-3061

[www.nfsmi.org](http://www.nfsmi.org)

### **Education and Training Division** **Information Services Division**

The University of Mississippi

6 Jeanette Phillips Drive

P.O. Drawer 188

University, MS 38677-0188

### **Applied Research Division** **The University of Southern Mississippi**

118 College Drive #10077

Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601-266-5773

Fax: 888-262-9631

# Acknowledgments

## **Written and Developed by**

Amelia Estepa Asperin, PhD  
Research Scientist

Alexandra Castillo  
Research Assistant

Applied Research Division  
The University of Southern Mississippi

## **Graphic Design by**

Travis Brewington

## **NFSMI Executive Director**

Charlotte B. Oakley, PhD, RD, FADA

# Table of Contents

---

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Baseline Assessment</b>	<b>10</b>
Instructions for Using the Baseline Assessment	
Practice Areas	
Food Quality	
Staff	
Program Reliability	
Marketing and Communications	
<b>Progress Review</b>	<b>32</b>
Instructions for Using the Progress Review	
Practice Areas	
Food Quality	
Staff	
Program Reliability	
Marketing and Communications	
<b>References</b>	<b>53</b>

# Introduction

School nutrition (SN) programs operating under the regulations of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) continue to encounter the challenges of declining student participation at the high school level. Although increasing student participation is important to the success of SN programs, it is also advantageous for SN directors to focus on retaining the customer base that already participate in the NSLP. In light of this, the National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division (NFSMI, ARD) conducted a series of multi-faceted studies addressing high school student satisfaction and declining participation at the high school level. As a result, two high school foodservice surveys were developed, namely *The School Lunch Experience Survey* and *The Non-Participation Survey*. The *High School Student Satisfaction and Non-Participation Survey Guide* was then developed to provide step-by-step instructions for using the surveys and developing action plans framed around the Continuous Quality Improvement process.

Outcomes of these studies showed that in addition to providing survey tools to SN professionals, there was also a need to develop a compilation of best practices and/or strategies that complement the Continuous Quality Improvement Action Plans outlined in the *High School Student Satisfaction and Non-Participation Survey Guide*. Thus, the primary objective of this project was to identify and confirm best practices for increasing participation rates and improving high school student satisfaction with SN programs.

The best practices were framed around four best practice areas identified in previous NFSMI research, namely Food Quality, Staff, Program Reliability, and Marketing and Communications. The project was conducted in two phases, both involving SN professionals from exemplary SN programs across the United States. In Phase I of the study, an expert panel of SN practitioners reviewed draft best practice statements during a facilitated work group session. Members came to consensus on (1) wording of each best practice statement, (2) classification of statements under the appropriate research-based practice areas, and (3) grouping of similar themed statements into goals. Phase II utilized a nationwide review panel of SN directors to evaluate (1) appropriate grouping of best practice statements into goals and practice areas, (2) ease of use of assessment scales, (3) formatting, and (4) general content validity of the resource.

This resource contains 75 best practices grouped into 13 goals that support the four practice areas (Food Quality, Staff, Program Reliability, and Marketing and Communications). There are two components to the resource, the Baseline Assessment and the Progress Review. Both are provided to assist SN professionals in evaluating operational performance based on the best practice areas.

### **Baseline Assessment**

This form is designed to help the SN director/supervisor and/or SN manager initially identify practices that are applicable to his/her SN program. Completing this assessment will help identify strategies that the SN program can continue to implement (or implement in the future) to maintain and/or increase high school student participation and satisfaction. Each best practice statement is assessed using a current status scale (*fully addressed, partially addressed, not addressed, and not applicable*). The user is then instructed to assign a priority level (*high, medium, and low*) for addressing the best practices as these pertain to the user's SN program. Upon assessing the current status and priority level of the best practices, SN professionals can establish an action plan to address and prioritize the practices identified as needing attention.

### **Progress Review**

This form is designed to measure how effectively the action plan has been implemented to address challenges identified during the baseline assessment. Each best practice statement is evaluated using an implementation status scale (*demonstrates excellence, area of growth, needs improvement, unsatisfactory, and not applicable*). SN professionals are advised to perform the progress review annually to facilitate continuous quality improvement.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Best Practices**

Measurable practices that define achievable, effective, and efficient strategies for maintaining and/or increasing high school student participation and/or satisfaction in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

### **Practice Areas**

Research-based categories influencing high school student participation and satisfaction in the NSLP as identified in previous NFSMI studies:

#### ***Food Quality***

Practices that focus on improving the overall appeal of food to students (i.e., taste, appearance, aroma, and temperature).

#### ***Staff***

Practices that address student concerns regarding staff attitude towards work, service efficiency, and staff behavior towards students.

#### ***Program Reliability***

Practices that reflect the school nutrition program's ability to meet NSLP regulations and student expectations on the delivery of food and services in a consistent, timely, and reliable manner.

#### ***Marketing and Communications***

Practices that affect the awareness of students and other stakeholders regarding services offered through the NSLP. This also includes practices that affect and/or influence the students' dining experience and perception of the NSLP.

### **Goals**

Broad objectives that provide the context for what is to be accomplished under each practice area.

### **Stakeholders**

Individuals or groups of individuals (e.g., high school students, parents/guardians, school nutrition staff, community members, industry partners, and other school administrators/staff) that can directly or indirectly affect, influence, and/or benefit from the services offered by the school nutrition program.

# Baseline Assessment

## Instructions for Using the Baseline Assessment

### Step 1 – Current Status

Indicate the current status of each best practice statement pertaining to YOUR school nutrition program with regards to increasing high school student participation and satisfaction in the NSLP.

Scale	Anchor	Description
2	Fully Addressed	Practice is currently being implemented in your program.
1	Partially Addressed	Practice is implemented to some degree in your program.
0	Not Addressed	Practice can be done, but is not implemented in your program.
N/A	Not Applicable	Practice cannot be supported given the constraints of your program.

Compute the total score for each goal. Divide the total by the number of practices that you evaluated (i.e., exclude practices designated as N/A). The resulting number is your Goal Score.

Goals with the highest Goal Scores are your areas of strength and should be maintained.

Goals with the lowest Goal Scores are the areas where you have the greatest opportunity for improvement.

### Step 2 – Priority Level

Indicate the priority level of each statement pertaining to YOUR school nutrition program with regards to increasing high school student participation and satisfaction in the NSLP.

Scale	Anchor	Description
H	High	Practice has significant impact on participation and/or satisfaction. Plan for action should be implemented immediately.
M	Medium	Practice has moderate impact on participation and/or satisfaction. Plan for action should be developed with implementation following completion of high priority practices.
L	Low	Practice can potentially impact participation and/or satisfaction. Plan of action and timeline for implementation may be included in long-term planning for the school lunch program.

**Practice Area: Food Quality**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on improving the overall appeal of food to high school students. This includes characteristics such as taste, appearance, aroma, freshness, temperature, variety, and perceived healthfulness of menu items.

Goal 1 The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to effectively plan and prepare nutritious, high quality, good tasting meals that appeal to high school students.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager establish a menu planning team that may include, but is not limited to, school nutrition staff, high school students, school wellness team members, and other school staff.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Healthier versions are provided for menu items commonly preferred by high school students (e.g., whole grain pizza with low-fat cheese, hamburgers on whole wheat buns).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The planned menu offers a variety of food choices to accommodate the nutritional, ethnic, and religious/cultural diversity of students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition manager ensures that the appropriate quantity is prepared.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff is trained to develop and follow standardized recipes.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

## Food Quality

Goal 2 The school nutrition director/designee develops and implements policies and/or procedures for collecting information from a variety of stakeholders to guide menu planning.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
District/school staff and parents/guardians are encouraged to provide feedback to school nutrition staff on the students' acceptance of menu items.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and manager collaborate to modify district-wide menus to accommodate flavor, texture, or service preferences of high school students, as appropriate.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager develop and implement procedures for site-level staff to provide feedback to menu planners regarding excessive plate waste for specific items.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
District/school administration promotes and encourages students, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders to provide feedback to the school nutrition staff (e.g., via e-mail, through suggestion boxes, filling out comment cards).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

## Food Quality

<b>Goal 3</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to ensure that food quality, including taste, temperature, texture, safety, and appearance, is maintained throughout the serving period.</b>	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
Menu items are displayed in an appealing manner.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff is trained to use simple and edible garnishes that complement the flavor and color of the menu items.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition manager establishes procedures to ensure that menu items on the serving line remain fresh.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition manager ensures that there is sufficient refrigeration and/or hot holding equipment available to maintain food quality throughout the serving period.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff is trained to evaluate and/or modify food holding procedures to maintain desired serving temperature of menu items.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Menu items are clearly labeled at point of selection and descriptions are provided, as needed.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Quality standards are established for storage and re-service of leftovers (e.g., texture and appearance of menu items after reheating are evaluated before service, shelf life of leftover menu items).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

## Food Quality

<b>Goal 4</b> <b>The school nutrition director/</b> <b>designee establishes partnerships with</b> <b>stakeholders to determine products</b> <b>that meet the nutritional standards</b> <b>of the NSLP while appealing to high</b> <b>school students.</b>	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee communicates with food suppliers regarding products appropriate for high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee coordinates with suppliers, distributors, and other industry partners for student taste panels of new products.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Printed menus and/or promotional materials indicate menu items that are recommended by students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

***Notes for Action Plan***

A large, empty rectangular box with a green border, intended for notes. The box is positioned below the 'Notes for Action Plan' header and occupies most of the page's vertical space.

**PRACTICE AREA: STAFF**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that address student concerns regarding staff attitude towards work, service efficiency, and staff behavior towards students.

Goal 1 The school nutrition director/designee provides training opportunities to ensure that school nutrition staff effectively communicate and interact with high school students.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition manager assists in training school nutrition staff on addressing comments and resolving complaints from high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff is trained to encourage high school students to try the foods offered, including new and unfamiliar foods.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff participates in cultural sensitivity training on appropriate ways to communicate with a diverse group of students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff is trained on communication techniques to address different social and cognitive needs of high school students (e.g., addressing students by first names, using non-verbal cues, recognizing teen terminology).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<p><b>Total Score</b> _____ ÷ <b># of BPs (exclude N/A)</b> _____ = <b>Goal Score</b> _____</p>							

## STAFF

<b>Goal 2</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee provides training and professional development opportunities that support the enhancement of NSLP services.</b>	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition staff attends annual training on topics associated with food and nutrition needs of high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition manager is trained on techniques to promote high staff morale and maintain a positive working environment.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff is trained to conduct informal evaluations to assess student satisfaction with their dining experience (e.g., the menu for the day, the dining environment, a new item on the menu).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff is trained on understanding specific special food and/or nutrition needs, as appropriate.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
District/school administrators support professional development for school nutrition staff serving high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

***Notes for Action Plan***

A large, empty rectangular box with a green border, intended for notes. The box is positioned below the 'Notes for Action Plan' header and occupies most of the page's vertical space.

**PRACTICE AREA: PROGRAM RELIABILITY**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that reflect the school nutrition program’s ability to meet NSLP regulations and student expectations on the delivery of food and services in a consistent, timely, and reliable manner.

Goal 1 The school nutrition director/designee develops and implements policies and/or procedures to ensure all high school students have access to NSLP services.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition staff collaborates with school staff to protect the confidentiality of high school students participating in the NSLP.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Parents/guardians are provided information regarding free and reduced priced meal eligibility and application procedures.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee establishes secure, confidential, and expedient procedures for approval of free and reduced priced meal applications.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff is trained to avoid the overt identification of high school students who receive free or reduced priced lunches.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager provide information to parents/guardians regarding menu items served through the NSLP, when requested.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

Goal 1 (continued) The school nutrition director/designee develops and implements policies and/or procedures to ensure all high school students have access to NSLP services.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee and district/school administrators communicate with parents/guardians regarding services available to accommodate students with special food and/or nutrition needs, as requested.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee consults with a Registered Dietitian or other health specialists to plan meals for high school students who have special food and/or nutrition needs, as appropriate.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff informs students of any changes to the posted menu, as needed.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to minimize academic or extracurricular activities scheduled during the lunch periods (e.g., remedial classes, student organization meetings).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

Goal 2 The school nutrition director/designee develops and/or implements a training module on food safety, food handling, and portion control.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
School nutrition staff is trained on food safety and food handling practices to ensure that students are protected from food-borne illnesses.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Menu items are evaluated regularly for appropriate portion size and student acceptability.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff is trained to identify and utilize appropriate serving utensils to maintain consistent portion sizes.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

<b>Goal 3</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to establish a system for ensuring that a pleasant, attractive, and functional serving and dining environment is provided for students.</b>	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to schedule lunch periods that provide high school students sufficient time to eat.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Alternative service options are provided to meet the needs of high school students (e.g., reimbursable vending, kiosks, to-go sacks, self-service salad bars).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators when developing lunch period schedules that optimize seating capacity.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The dining room atmosphere is relaxed and inviting to high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The dining room is well lit with natural or soft light that is conducive to dining.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Dining room furniture is appropriately designed and configured to meet the needs of high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Eating and serving utensils are suitable for high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

Goal 3 (continued) The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to establish a system for ensuring that a pleasant, attractive, and functional serving and dining environment is provided for students.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to design and/or renovate the cafeteria to meet the needs of high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with other district departments to seek additional funding sources to update/renovate the cafeteria.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Service and/or check-out lines are organized to facilitate the smooth flow of students from point-of-selection to point-of-sale.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The cafeteria has enough service and/or check-out lines to accommodate the number of students served per meal period.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff maintains a clean and sanitary serving and dining area.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

Goal 4 The school nutrition director/designee develops and implements a Continuous Quality Improvement program.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee participates on a district-level team to identify, prioritize, and address customer service needs and areas of improvement to increase high school student participation in the NSLP.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee develops a plan to routinely review and implement program improvements based on data analysis.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

***Notes for Action Plan***

A large, empty rectangular box with a green border, intended for notes. The box is positioned below the 'Notes for Action Plan' header and occupies most of the page's vertical space.

**PRACTICE AREA: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that affect the program awareness of students and other stakeholders regarding services offered through the NSLP. This also includes practices that affect and/or influence the students’ dining experience and perception of the NSLP.

Goal 1 The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to communicate with stakeholders the programs available for high school students through the NSLP.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee establishes a procedure for documenting and addressing parental concerns regarding meal issues through ongoing communication.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Parents/guardians are contacted regarding their child’s access to school lunches (e.g., available meal credits, low balance, pending payments, free and reduced priced meal approvals).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee initiates media coverage of lunch services provided for high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition staff engages parents/guardians by inviting them to visit the cafeteria during meal time.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager encourage district/school administrators and school staff to eat school lunches regularly.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

<b>Goal 2</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to ensure that students receive consistent, positive, and motivating messages promoting healthy eating and the school lunch program.</b>	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager utilize promotional messages that link proper nutrition to the priorities of high school students (e.g., better academic performance, weight control, enhanced athletic performance, improved quality of life).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager practice peer-to-peer marketing by utilizing prominent campus figures in their promotional messages (e.g., Student Council officers, athletic team captains, most popular teacher, famous alumni).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager utilize targeted promotional materials to address the needs of different market segments (e.g., athletes, females/males, ethnic groups).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager utilize multiple communication channels (e.g., Web, flyers, menus, table tents, posters) to disseminate consistent promotional messages related to building a healthy school nutrition environment.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Goal 2 (continued) The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to ensure that students receive consistent, positive, and motivating messages promoting healthy eating and the school lunch program.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager translate and disseminate promotional messages into the most prominent languages spoken by the student population.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager meet with student leaders to educate them about the role of good nutrition and encourage them to be advocates for the school lunch program.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Students are involved in developing menu merchandising and marketing plans for the school lunch program.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager establish partnerships with the media to announce school menus and/or the day's featured meal on local radio stations and in newspapers.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager provide nutrition information on menu items through diverse forms of communication (e.g., Web site, printed materials, displays, public service announcements).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>							

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

<b>Goal 3</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to communicate with stakeholders the role of the school lunch program in providing adequate nutrition to high school students.</b>	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee communicates to stakeholders the importance of adequate nutrition in the educational performance of students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
The school nutrition director/designee encourages district/school administrators to actively endorse healthy foods, while discouraging advertising that promotes less nutritious food choices.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
A representative from the school nutrition staff is included on the school wellness team.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
School nutrition staff and teachers collaborate to provide parents/guardians information about meeting the nutritional needs of high school students.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
School nutrition staff members and teachers are trained in nutrition education activities to promote healthy eating habits and its relationship to academic achievement and wellness.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Goal 3 (continued) The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to communicate with stakeholders the role of the school lunch program in providing adequate nutrition to high school students.	Current Status				Priority Level		
	Fully Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Applicable	High	Medium	Low
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager establish a partnership with health and/or nutrition teachers to promote healthy eating behaviors.	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
Nutrition information for food items is available in the cafeteria (e.g., calories, carbohydrates, protein, fats, major allergen ingredients).	2	1	0	N/A	H	M	L
<p><b>Total Score</b> _____ ÷ <b># of BPs (exclude N/A)</b> _____ = <b>Goal Score</b> _____</p>							

***Notes for Action Plan***

A large, empty rectangular box with a green border, intended for notes. The box is positioned below the 'Notes for Action Plan' header and occupies most of the page's vertical space.

# Progress Review

## *Instructions for Using the Progress Review*

For practices previously identified as *Fully Addressed*, *Partially Addressed*, and *Not Addressed*, indicate the level at which the practices have been implemented since the last assessment.

This form should be used for each succeeding periodic assessment.

Scale	Anchor	Description
3	Demonstrates Excellence	Practice was successfully implemented with effects exceeding forecasted results.
2	Area of Strength	Practice was implemented as planned with consistent results.
1	Needs Improvement	Implementation is inconsistent with mediocre results.
0	Unsatisfactory	Implementation was planned, but was not performed.
N/A	Not Applicable	Practice was not part of the school nutrition program's plan of action.

Compute the total score for each goal. Divide the total by the number of practices that you evaluated (i.e., exclude practices designated as N/A). The resulting number is your Goal Score.

Goals with the highest Goal Scores indicate your greatest success with implementing your plan of action.

Goals with the lowest Goal Scores should be the focus of your next plan of action.

**PRACTICE AREA: FOOD QUALITY**

In this section, you will evaluate your performance on the best practices that focus on improving the overall appeal of food to high school students. This includes characteristics such as taste, appearance, aroma, freshness, temperature, variety, and perceived healthfulness of menu items.

<b>Goal 1</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to effectively plan and prepare nutritious, high quality, good tasting meals that appeal to high school students.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager establish a menu planning team that may include, but is not limited to, school nutrition staff, high school students, school wellness team members, and other school staff.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Healthier versions are provided for menu items commonly preferred by high school students (e.g., whole grain pizza with low-fat cheese, hamburgers on whole wheat buns).	3	2	1	0	N/A
The planned menu offers a variety of food choices to accommodate the nutritional, ethnic, and religious/cultural diversity of students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition manager ensures that the appropriate quantity is prepared.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff is trained to develop and follow standardized recipes.	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

## Food Quality

<b>Goal 2</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee develops and implements policies and/or procedures for collecting information from a variety of stakeholders to guide menu planning.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
District/school staff and parents/guardians are encouraged to provide feedback to school nutrition staff on the students' acceptance of menu items.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and manager collaborate to modify district-wide menus to accommodate flavor, texture, or service preferences of high school students, as appropriate.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager develop and implement procedures for site-level staff to provide feedback to menu planners regarding excessive plate waste for specific items.	3	2	1	0	N/A
District/school administration promotes and encourages students, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders to provide feedback to the school nutrition staff (e.g., via e-mail, through suggestion boxes, filling out comment cards).	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

## Food Quality

<b>Goal 3</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to ensure that food quality, including taste, temperature, texture, safety, and appearance, is maintained throughout the serving period.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Menu items are displayed in an appealing manner.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff is trained to use simple and edible garnishes that complement the flavor and color of the menu items.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition manager establishes procedures to ensure that menu items on the serving line remain fresh.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition manager ensures that there is sufficient refrigeration and/or hot holding equipment available to maintain food quality throughout the serving period.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff is trained to evaluate and/or modify food holding procedures to maintain desired serving temperature of menu items.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Menu items are clearly labeled at point of selection and descriptions are provided, as needed.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Quality standards are established for storage and re-service of leftovers (e.g., texture and appearance of menu items after reheating are evaluated before service, shelf life of leftover menu items).	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

## Food Quality

<b>Goal 4</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes partnerships with stakeholders to determine products that meet the nutritional standards of the NSLP while appealing to high school students.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition director/designee communicates with food suppliers regarding products appropriate for high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee coordinates with suppliers, distributors, and other industry partners for student taste panels of new products.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Printed menus and/or promotional materials indicate menu items that are recommended by students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

***Notes for Action Plan***

A large, empty rectangular box with a blue border, intended for notes. The box is positioned below the 'Notes for Action Plan' header and occupies most of the page's vertical space.

**PRACTICE AREA: STAFF**

In this section, you will evaluate your performance on the best practices that address student concerns regarding staff attitude towards work, service efficiency, and staff behavior towards students.

<b>Goal 1</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee provides training opportunities to ensure that school nutrition staff effectively communicate and interact with high school students.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition manager assists in training school nutrition staff on addressing comments and resolving complaints from high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff is trained to encourage high school students to try the foods offered, including new and unfamiliar foods.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff participates in cultural sensitivity training on appropriate ways to communicate with a diverse group of students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff is trained on communication techniques to address different social and cognitive needs of high school students (e.g., addressing students by first names, using non-verbal cues, recognizing teen terminology).	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

## STAFF

<b>Goal 2</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee provides training and professional development opportunities that support the enhancement of NSLP services.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition staff attends annual training on topics associated with food and nutrition needs of high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition manager is trained on techniques to promote high staff morale and maintain a positive working environment.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff is trained to conduct informal evaluations to assess student satisfaction with their dining experience (e.g., the menu for the day, the dining environment, a new item on the menu).	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff is trained on understanding specific special food and/or nutrition needs, as appropriate.	3	2	1	0	N/A
District/school administrators support professional development for school nutrition staff serving high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

***Notes for Action Plan***

A large, empty rectangular box with a blue border, intended for notes. The box is positioned below the 'Notes for Action Plan' header and occupies most of the page's vertical space.

**PRACTICE AREA: PROGRAM RELIABILITY**

In this section, you will evaluate your performance on the best practices that reflect the school nutrition program’s ability to meet NSLP regulations and student expectations on the delivery of food and services in a consistent, timely, and reliable manner.

<b>Goal 1</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee develops and implements policies and/or procedures to ensure all high school students have access to NSLP services.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition staff collaborates with school staff to protect the confidentiality of high school students participating in the NSLP.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Parents/guardians are provided information regarding free and reduced priced meal eligibility and application procedures.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee establishes secure, confidential, and expedient procedures for approval of free and reduced priced meal applications.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff is trained to avoid the overt identification of high school students who receive free or reduced priced lunches.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager provide information to parents/guardians regarding menu items served through the NSLP, when requested.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and district/school administrators communicate with parents/guardians regarding services available to accommodate students with special food and/or nutrition needs, as requested.	3	2	1	0	N/A

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

<b>Goal 1 (continued)</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee develops and implements policies and/or procedures to ensure all high school students have access to NSLP services.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition director/designee consults with a Registered Dietitian or other health specialists to plan meals for high school students who have special food and/or nutrition needs, as appropriate.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff informs students of any changes to the posted menu, as needed.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to minimize academic or extracurricular activities scheduled during the lunch periods (e.g., remedial classes, student organization meetings).	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

<b>Goal 2</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee develops and/or implements a training module on food safety, food handling, and portion control.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
School nutrition staff is trained on food safety and food handling practices to ensure that students are protected from food-borne illnesses.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Menu items are evaluated regularly for appropriate portion size and student acceptability.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff is trained to identify and utilize appropriate serving utensils to maintain consistent portion sizes.	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

<b>Goal 3</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to establish a system for ensuring that a pleasant, attractive, and functional serving and dining environment is provided for students.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to schedule lunch periods that provide high school students sufficient time to eat.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Alternative service options are provided to meet the needs of high school students (e.g., reimbursable vending, kiosks, to-go sacks, self-service salad bars).	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators when developing lunch period schedules that optimize seating capacity.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The dining room atmosphere is relaxed and inviting to high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The dining room is well lit with natural or soft light that is conducive to dining.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Dining room furniture is appropriately designed and configured to meet the needs of high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Eating and serving utensils are suitable for high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to design and/or renovate the cafeteria to meet the needs of high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

Goal 3 (continued) The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with district/school administrators to establish a system for ensuring that a pleasant, attractive, and functional serving and dining environment is provided for students.	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition director/designee collaborates with other district departments to seek additional funding sources to update/renovate the cafeteria.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Service and/or check-out lines are organized to facilitate the smooth flow of students from point-of-selection to point-of-sale.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The cafeteria has enough service and/or check-out lines to accommodate the number of students served per meal period.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff maintains a clean and sanitary serving and dining area.	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

## PROGRAM RELIABILITY

<b>Goal 4</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee develops and implements a Continuous Quality Improvement program.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition director/designee participates on a district-level team to identify, prioritize, and address customer service needs and areas of improvement to increase high school student participation in the NSLP.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee develops a plan to routinely review and implement program improvements based on data analysis.	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

***Notes for Action Plan***

A large, empty rectangular box with a blue border, intended for notes. The box is positioned below the 'Notes for Action Plan' header and occupies most of the page's vertical space.

**PRACTICE AREA: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

In this section, you will evaluate your performance on the best practices that affect the program awareness of students and other stakeholders regarding services offered through the NSLP. This also includes practices that affect and/or influence the students' dining experience and perception of the NSLP.

<b>Goal 1</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to communicate with stakeholders the programs available for high school students through the NSLP.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition director/designee establishes a procedure for documenting and addressing parental concerns regarding meal issues through ongoing communication.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Parents/guardians are contacted regarding their child's access to school lunches (e.g., available meal credits, low balance, pending payments, free and reduced priced meal approvals).	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee initiates media coverage of lunch services provided for high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition staff engages parents/guardians by inviting them to visit the cafeteria during meal time.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager encourage district/school administrators and school staff to eat school lunches regularly.	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

<b>Goal 2</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to ensure that students receive consistent, positive, and motivating messages promoting healthy eating and the school lunch program.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager utilize promotional messages that link proper nutrition to the priorities of high school students (e.g., better academic performance, weight control, enhanced athletic performance, improved quality of life).	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager practice peer-to-peer marketing by utilizing prominent campus figures in their promotional messages (e.g., Student Council officers, athletic team captains, most popular teacher, famous alumni).	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager utilize targeted promotional materials to address the needs of different market segments (e.g., athletes, females/males, ethnic groups).	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager utilize multiple communication channels (e.g., Web, flyers, menus, table tents, posters) to disseminate consistent promotional messages related to building a healthy school nutrition environment.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager translate and disseminate promotional messages into the most prominent languages spoken by the student population.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager meet with student leaders to educate them about the role of good nutrition and encourage them to be advocates for the school lunch program.	3	2	1	0	N/A

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

<b>Goal 2 (continued)</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to ensure that students receive consistent, positive, and motivating messages promoting healthy eating and the school lunch program.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Students are involved in developing menu merchandising and marketing plans for the school lunch program.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager establish partnerships with the media to announce school menus and/or the day's featured meal on local radio stations and in newspapers.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager provide nutrition information on menu items through diverse forms of communication (e.g., Web site, printed materials, displays, public service announcements).	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

<b>Goal 3</b> <b>The school nutrition director/designee establishes a system to communicate with stakeholders the role of the school lunch program in providing adequate nutrition to high school students.</b>	Implementation Status				
	Demonstrates Excellence	Area of Strength	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
The school nutrition director/designee communicates to stakeholders the importance of adequate nutrition in the educational performance of students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee encourages district/school administrators to actively endorse healthy foods, while discouraging advertising that promotes less nutritious food choices.	3	2	1	0	N/A
A representative from the school nutrition staff is included on the school wellness team.	3	2	1	0	N/A
School nutrition staff and teachers collaborate to provide parents/guardians information about meeting the nutritional needs of high school students.	3	2	1	0	N/A
School nutrition staff members and teachers are trained in nutrition education activities to promote healthy eating habits and its relationship to academic achievement and wellness.	3	2	1	0	N/A
The school nutrition director/designee and/or manager establish a partnership with health and/or nutrition teachers to promote healthy eating behaviors.	3	2	1	0	N/A
Nutrition information for food items is available in the cafeteria (e.g., calories, carbohydrates, protein, fats, major allergen ingredients).	3	2	1	0	N/A
<b>Total Score _____ ÷ # of BPs (exclude N/A) _____ = Goal Score _____</b>					

***Notes for Action Plan***

A large, empty rectangular box with a blue border, intended for notes. The box is positioned below the 'Notes for Action Plan' header and occupies most of the page's vertical space.

# References

For more information about improving student participation and satisfaction in the National School Lunch Program at the high school level, please review the following resources:

Asperin, A. E., Nettles, M. F., & Carr, D. (2008). *Investigation of factors impacting participation of high school students in the National School Lunch Program*. (Technical Report Item No. R-133-08). University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute.

Asperin, A. E., Nettles, M. F., & Carr, D. (2009). *Exploring factors that affect the school lunch experience of high school students participating in the National School Lunch Program*. (Technical Report Item No. R-147-09). University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute.

Asperin, A. E., & Carr, D. (2009). *High school student satisfaction and non-participation survey guide: Internal benchmarking for school nutrition programs*. (Resource Item No. R-147-09). University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute.



## **National Food Service Management Institute**

The University of Mississippi  
P. O. Drawer 188  
University, MS 38677-0188  
[www.nfsmi.org](http://www.nfsmi.org)

© 2009 National Food Service Management Institute  
The University of Mississippi

Item Number R-148-09 (GY08)