

Let's Go!

School Nutrition Initiative

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Today, we will discuss:

School Nutrition Programs

- The Good
- The Challenges
- The Opportunities – The Let's Go! Workgroup
- Baseline data from 8 local school districts

The Good:

- The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) was signed into law in 1946.

- Primary goal of the NSLP:

Feed hungry kids – increase food security of low income households.

The Good:

- School lunch 31 million children each day.
- The meals must meet minimum nutrition standards:
 - No more than 30% calories from fat
 - No more than 10% calories from saturated fat.
 - 1/3 RDA of calories, vitamins A and E, iron, calcium, and protein.

The Good:

- Students who eat the school lunch consume more nutrients at lunch than those who do not¹.
- Students who eat the school lunch are less likely to consume sugar sweetened beverages².

1. Gordon, A R, Fox, M. K., (2007). School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study-III Summary of Findings. Office of Research, Nutrition, and Analysis. Food and Nutrition Services,USDA.

2. Briefel, R.R., Wilson, A., & Gleason, P.M. (2009). Consumption of Low-Nutrient Energy-Dense Foods and Beverages at School, Home, and Other Locations among School Lunch Participants and Nonparticipants. Supplement to the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 109(2), S79 – S90.

The Good:

School Lunches... are a **great deal!**

- Fruits and vegetables every day
- Low fat or skim milk
- Entrée choices daily
- Calorie and portion size control

The “TRI-LEMMA”

- Nutritional Quality of Foods
- Financial Burdens
- Student Participation (access)

bad reputation

Meant to be self-sustaining

Not an essential part of the school day

The Challenges: Finances

- Federal Reimbursement Rates (SY09/10):
 - Free meal for student - \$2.68
 - Reduced priced meal for student - \$2.28
 - Student paid meal - \$.25

What is the full cost to produce a meal?

\$3.72

Two main types of food sold:

1. Federal Reimbursable meal
2. Competitive foods



The Twisted:

Allowed:	Not Allowed:
Fruit 'drinks'	Jelly beans
French fries	Breath mints
Ice cream	Gum
Potato Chips	Seltzer water
Doughnuts	Caramel Popcorn
Cookies	Lollipops

Fruit drinks

French fries

USDA's current
Ice cream
nutrition standards
for Foods of

Minimal Nutritional
Standards result in

arbitrary limits on
the foods sold at
school.

Seltzer water
Caramel Popcorn

Doughnuts

Cookies

Lollipops

Could any business be successful if it:

- lost money on every meal sold?
- was told how much to pay its staff?
- was told what it could sell?
- was told how much it could charge for its services?
- had to do all the above AND compete with the corner store next door?

Let's Go! School Nutrition Plan for 2009 - 2010

- Implement a coordinated communications plan with the goal of promoting the National School Lunch Program.

- And...

Let's Go! School Nutrition Goals

The opportunities:

- Eliminate whole and 2% milk.
- Eliminate or limit the availability of french fries (and similar potato products) to once a week.
- Limit serving desserts that are not low in fat, as part of the reimbursable federal meal, to no more than once a week
- Replace fried potato chips with baked potato chips.
- Limit the types of competitive foods offered.

Data Collection

- Let's Go! collected data from 52 schools in eight districts in southern Maine.

Goals of data collection:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the School Nutrition business model
- Identify opportunities in each school to increase the nutritional quality of food offerings.
- Identify what % of foods meet the Healthier US School Challenge criteria.

Baseline Data

Competitive Foods	October 2009	n=6 districts
School Specific Goals	2008-2009 school year	n=8 districts
Financial Info	2008-2009 school year	n=6 or 7 districts

Overall Results:

- Milk Goal: 4 out of 8 districts
- French Fries Goal: 5 out of 8 districts
- Dessert Goal: 4 out of 8 districts
- Potato Chip Goal: 2 out of 8 districts
- Competitive Foods: 47% met criteria

The Challenges:

The districts are losing an average of \$1.51 on every lunch served.

Average Price: \$2.22

Average Cost: \$3.72

The Challenges: The Business Model

4 out of 7 school nutrition programs have to pay the district for various overhead (custodial, utilities, bookkeeping etc).

5 out of 7 school districts contribute financially to the school nutrition program.

Competitive Food Choices

SO MANY CHOICES!

- Middle and high schools provided a large range of packaged competitive food choices, from 25 to 114 items.
- Middle and high schools provided a large range of competitive beverage choices, from 10 to 74 items.

Competitive foods contribute between 11% and 70% of total school nutrition program revenue for the districts.

Only 47% of packaged competitive foods met the Healthier US School Challenge (HUSSC).

Only 12% of competitive
beverages met the Healthier US
School Challenge (HUSSC).

The Good:

Low-fat milks were the most common milk options

- A. Only low-fat milk options were available in all the elementary schools (n=31) across 8 school districts.
- B. 3 middle and high schools across 8 school districts sold whole or 2% milk a la carte.
- C. The National School Lunch Program offered ONLY low-fat milk options across 8 school districts.

5 out of 8 school districts are limiting french fries to once a week or less

The Good:

Eighty-seven percent (45/52) of schools limited desserts that were not low in fat, as part of the National School Lunch Program, to no more than once a week.

The Challenges:

Fifty-two percent (16/31) of elementary schools did *not* provide fried potato chips.



Lessons Learned

- School Nutrition Programs are chronically under-funded.
- Recommendations that we make can have significant impact on the economics of the lunch programs.
- We have to advocate for change. Get involved, learn the facts, and get vocal.
- No cookie cutter solution.

What can you do?

- Be a partner.
- Find out what's going well.
- If you have questions about something being served, ask your School Nutrition Director.
- Think of the cafeteria as a classroom.

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