

Expanding School Meal Programs
Outside of the Cafeteria:

Teacher Outreach, Grab and Go Carts, and Full-Meal Vending

A Toolkit for
School Meal Operators

Berkeley Public Health



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

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About this Toolkit

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), in partnership with University of California, Berkeley, Nutrition Policy Institute, and University of California Cooperative Extension, piloted three initiatives to promote school lunch participation and meal consumption. These initiatives — Teacher Outreach, Grab and Go (GnG) service lines, and Full-Meal Vending Machines — were implemented together in 12 middle and high schools. We have comprised our learnings and recommendations about implementing these initiatives into a toolkit that serves as a reference for growing school meal programs. This toolkit is designed for operators of public school district food and nutrition service departments. You are welcome to use the components that work best for your district, selectively or as a comprehensive approach.

Questions

For further information about implementation please contact Jennifer LeBarre, SFUSD Student Nutrition Services Executive Director, at lebarrej@sfusd.edu.

The 2014/15-2017/18 evaluation of the implementation of teacher outreach and the additional school lunch points of sale showed modest increases in some measures of student perceptions of school meals and in student school lunch participation in intervention schools versus comparison schools. However, teacher lunch participation decreased, and there were no positive changes in objective measures of student fruit and vegetable consumption during school lunch in intervention schools relative to comparison schools. Results suggest that additional efforts are needed to further increase student uptake and intake of school lunches. For more detailed evaluation results, please contact Lorrene Ritchie, Nutrition Policy Institute Director, at lritchie@ucanr.edu.

Acknowledgements

This project was funded in part by USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture · Award Number 2015-68001-23236.

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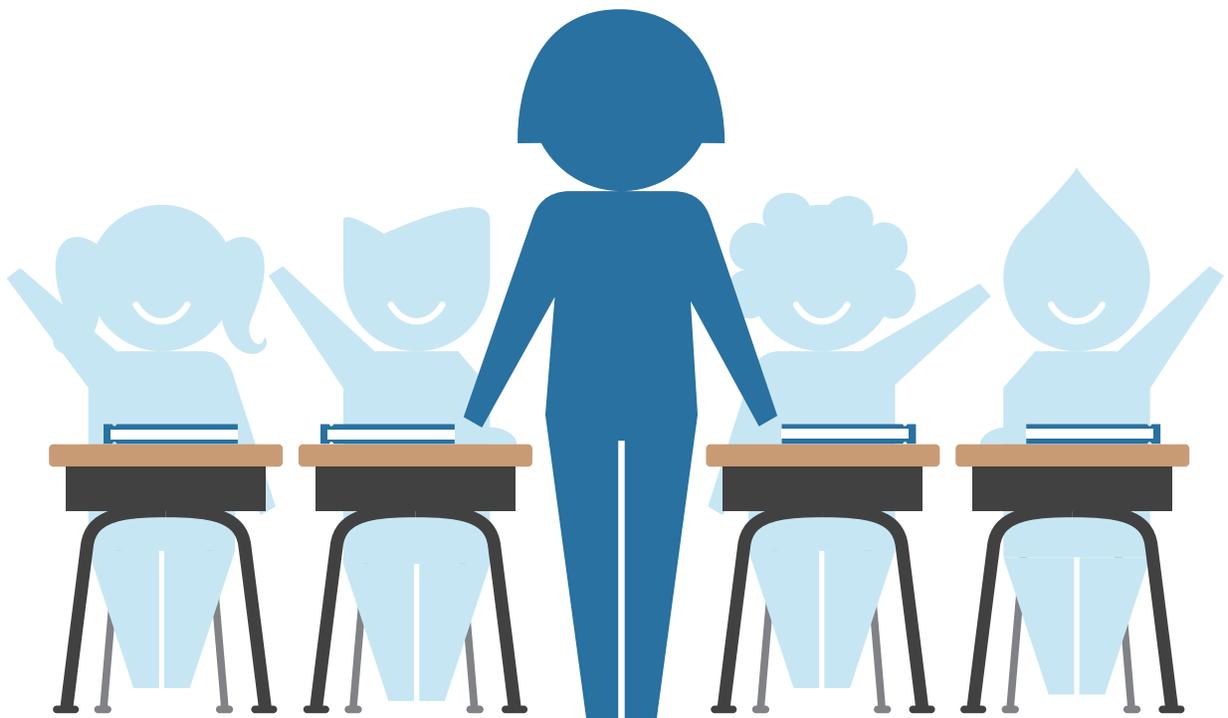
Expanding School Meal Programs Outside of the Cafeteria

Teacher Outreach

This section of the toolkit includes key technical and operational considerations for nutrition service departments who are considering including **teacher outreach** in their programming.

OVERVIEW

School district food and nutrition service departments know that proper nourishment throughout the day is a key element to support thriving students inside and outside the classroom. Teachers and school staff are uniquely positioned to hold strong relationships with students, offering an opportunity to positively impact health outcomes and academic success. However, school staff tend to know very little about school meal programs and often share negative perceptions about them in terms of convenience, flavor, and nutritional quality. As a low-cost initiative, outreach to teachers and school staff may be a promising strategy to help your department address perceptions of and participation in your school meal program.



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Your Audience

We expect stronger impact when extending outreach efforts beyond only teachers, including all adults who play a pivotal role in the school environment.

- **Primary Audience** — Teachers, school administrators, wellness staff, counselors
- **Secondary Audience** — Family liaisons, afterschool staff, secretaries, security guards, custodians and community based organizations
- **Key Players** — Food and nutrition department staff should be equally included and accountable to the work. Dining staff are a strong additional direct connection to the school site.

Project Components

Three project components — Communication, Participation, and Resources — outline specific elements to inform the success of your outreach efforts with teachers and school staff. See the “Outreach Timeline” (pg. 6) for ideal times of the year to focus on each component, including detailed examples.

COMMUNICATION

Increase awareness about school meal programs and strengthen your department’s relationships with the school community.

- **Needs Assessment:** Conduct interviews with school staff to identify high need areas and high impact opportunities.
- **Contact Directory:** Maintain updated list of school contacts for general outreach and announcement purposes, emphasizing inclusivity across your district and grade levels.
- **Communication Channels:** Learn methods of communication that work best for each school and target audiences for providing resources and information on how to access meal programs.
- **Communication Materials:** Develop content for a variety of print and digital resources.
- **Cohesive Messaging:** Mirror consistent messaging across all channels and audiences to strengthen program support.
- **Physical Presence:** Schedule frequent visits to schools to build relationships and provide a face for your department.
- **Online Presence:** Establish a web-based portal to host resources and program information accessible to school staff.
- **Transparency:** Promote program values, food quality and nutritional commitments to dispel myths and false assumptions about school meals and nutrition services.

PARTICIPATION

Encourage adult participation in school meal programs to shift perceptions of school meals and improve health behaviors of both staff and students.

- **Accessibility:** Simplify processes and remove barriers to adult participation to make your program an easy and desirable option for staff. It is likely that many school staff will not have tried the school meals.
- **Menu Tastings:** Provide tastings at presentations and large meetings with staff to build awareness and excitement.
- **Direct Connection:** Introduce school staff to dining staff to align their shared value of supporting students.
- **Incentives:** Leverage incentive options, such as a free meal, to increase adult participation in school meals*
- **Program Success:** Track changes in staff and student meal participation to inform future efforts.

* Denotes potential need for additional funding.

RESOURCES

Provide resources and partnership opportunities that encourage student involvement and integrate meal programs into the school culture.

- **Nutrition Education:** Develop and share curriculum lessons and activities that align with various academic subjects to promote nutrition and provide transparency about district meal programs.
- **Integration:** Meet with teachers of various subjects to align their curriculum with opportunities for student engagement across your program.
- **Program Liaison:** Provide connections to other district departments, program materials and resources and external food or nutrition related curriculum and youth programs.
- **Wellness Support:** Promote and host work-site wellness opportunities. Many districts have a Staff Wellness Section of their Wellness Policy to guide this work.
- **Best Practices:** Ensure policies and procedures align with district goals and support your shared mission to serve students with equity and care.

OUTREACH TIMELINE: HOW AND WHEN TO ENGAGE

This timeline highlights key moments in the school year to focus on particular program elements for highest impact with teachers, staff and students. It is designed to suggest where to concentrate resources and align your workflow.

Legend: Project Components

 COMMUNICATION  PARTICIPATION  RESOURCES

SUMMER — GET A HEAD START

| | |
|-----------|---|
| QUARTER 1 |  Needs assessment preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assess your department’s current inclusivity and relationships with school staff▪ Determine fields of information to gather from school staff; Examples include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ How might meal programs support school staff?▫ What curriculum projects could align with school meal topics?▫ What are current perceptions, familiarity with and barriers to adult and student participation in the meal program? |
| |   Create content for communication and marketing materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Newsletters, brochures, flyers, memos, wallet cards, digital attachments, videos*, activities, web content |
| |  Back to school meetings and trainings <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Record dates of planned sessions for administrators, secretaries, teachers and staff▪ Select information to share about your department▪ Select representatives from your department to attend staff engagement opportunities |

* Denotes potential need for additional funding.

FALL — BACK TO SCHOOL

| | |
|-----------|--|
| QUARTER 2 |  Gather pre-implementation data Reference Overview section (pg. 3) for suggested metrics |
| |  Conduct needs assessment interviews with school staff <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Interview a range of staff who hold different kinds of relationships with students▪ Note district-wide patterns and differences at different grade levels |

QUARTER 2

- Schedule taste tests and recurring menu sampling days in partnership with food provider and kitchen teams*
- ■ ■ Present at teacher and staff meetings or trainings for anyone that facilitates meal programs a minimum of 1-2 times per year. Suggested topics and resources include:
 - Promote access to online resources
 - Provide a clear department contact
 - Promote staff meal account opportunity
 - Display marketing materials that inform about nutritional quality of school meals, benefits to students, department mission and vision, etc.
 - Share school menus and locations where they are posted
 - Share additional points of sale options such as Grab and Go carts or full-meal vending machines, if applicable (see Chapters 2 and 3)
 - Share curriculum activities
 - Share Best Practices for mealtime supervision, leftover foods, and school bell schedules
- Visit schools frequently. At minimum monthly, depending on capacity.
 - Main Office, Teacher’s Lounge, Counselor Office, Wellness Center, Nurses Office, Library
- ■ Distribute or mail communication materials
 - New staff
 - Schools you did not attend
- ■ Facilitate creation of adult meal accounts (year around)

* Denotes potential need for additional funding.

WINTER — RETURN SESSION

QUARTER 3

- ■ Partner with teachers to integrate food topics into curriculum. Examples include:
 - Video production class creates PSAs about school meal programs
 - Classes such as Agriculture or Culinary pilot food service programs
 - Journalism class writes articles about program changes and staff stories
 - Student research topics about program improvements and international history of school meals

Legend: Project Components

 COMMUNICATION  PARTICIPATION  RESOURCES

| | |
|------------------|--|
| QUARTER 3 |  Distribute digital or printed* activity kits |
| |  Host wellness-based Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wellness fairs▪ Nutrition education▪ Cooking demos▪ Field trips or offsite events* |

* Denotes potential need for additional funding.

SPRING — END OF YEAR

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|------------------|---|
| QUARTER 4 |  National Teacher Appreciation Week: The Teacher's Lounge is a great entry point to show care from your department. Suggested offerings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Menu tastings▪ Appreciation banner*▪ Raffle prizes* |
| |  Collect post-implementation data |
| |   Thank you letter and/or gift* for allies instrumental to program success |
| |  Host listening sessions as addendum to initial needs assessment |
| |   Create outreach summary of successes, learnings and feedback opportunities. Potential to share with internal or external audiences. |

* Denotes potential need for additional funding.

REVIEW (RELEVANT AFTER YEAR ONE)

| | |
|------------------|---|
| QUARTER 4 |   Document and reference outreach summary from previous school year |
| |  Identify school staff turnover rates to ensure your outreach continues to reach staff. District HR departments can assist with this by school. |
| |   Update communication materials and resources |

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

| Potential Challenges | Suggested Solutions |
|--|--|
| <p>Historical negative perceptions of school food.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dispel myths by continuing to share program changes and ongoing updates. ▪ Involve the school community in program changes and decisions. ▪ Conduct taste tests with teachers and other staff. |
| <p>Teachers and staff resistant to engage due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimal capacity for additional projects. ▪ Lack of support from school leadership. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify allies beyond teachers. ▪ Involve school administration. ▪ Describe that the program is providing resources; this work benefits their students and their own wellbeing. |
| <p>Funding is limited for school district departments.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leverage private/public partnership opportunities. ▪ Prioritize projects that are doable for the district. |
| <p>In response to program promotion, participation rates may exceed capacity to serve well.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain transparency and accountability. |
| <p>Difficult to engage deeply with all schools.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain a variety of personal connections combined with broad outreach strategies. ▪ Ensure equal reach to different grade levels and school demographics. |
| <p>Assumptions that the program only cares about business sales.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate how the program values align with district goals to support student achievement. |

WAYS TO SUSTAIN THE MOMENTUM

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|----------------------------|--|
| Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Keep continued physical presence in schools.■ Maintain two-way communication for feedback and partnership opportunities. |
| Expanding Engagement Reach | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Identify ambassadors at each site for ongoing implementation support.■ Leverage internal and external partnerships.<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Cooperative Extension in land-grant Universities offer evidence-based Food and Nutrition Education programs and resources to assist with school meal promotion efforts at no cost for qualifying schools.□ Connect with local programs and organizations focused on youth in the food movement.□ Connect with additional district departments that support worksite wellness, professional development, nutrition resources, and more. |

RESOURCES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT

- Materials and printing
 - Communication and marketing resources
 - Activity and curriculum documents
 - Data collection supplies
- Mailing system
- Potential funding needs
 - Printing
 - Food samples
 - Incentive items
 - Thank you gifts
 - Event logistics and supplies
 - Outside consultants: graphic designers, video production, guest presenters
 - Salaried position*, including transportation and professional development

*Option to appoint ambassadors within the school or internally delegate tasks to existing positions

Additional Points of Sale: Grab and Go Service Lines

This section of the toolkit includes key technical and operational considerations for food and nutrition service departments who are considering including **grab and go service lines** in their programming.

OVERVIEW

Why Include Grab and Go Service Lines in School Food and Nutrition Programs?

National School Lunch Program meals are the healthiest lunch option for students, yet participation often remains low, particularly among high school students with easily accessible off-campus options and busier schedules. Diversifying points of sale can increase appeal and modernize the meal program. Improving the convenience of meals could increase program participation, as students are more likely to eat school meals if they are convenient. A potential way to improve convenience is through grab and go (GnG) service lines that bring lunch to where students are – which may be especially important at larger campuses. Instead of requiring students to go to the cafeteria, students can purchase a USDA reimbursable hot or cold meal at a GnG location. Offering meal options outside of the cafeteria reduces the barriers for students to grab a meal and make the most of their lunch period.

Suggested locations:

- Outside areas
- Building entrances
- High-traffic hallways
- Breezeways
- Courtyards



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

PLANNING

| Implementation Components | Technical/Operational Considerations |
|--|--|
| <p>Equipment and Design</p> <p>Choose a GnG model that meets the needs of your district.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conduct a needs assessment to determine the desired function and location of your GnG point of sale before selecting a design.▪ There are a variety of GnG designs available, depending upon your school’s needs. Points of sale vary from elaborate “food truck” type carts with electrical heating/cooling capabilities to simple rolling tables. Think creatively about design possibilities. Stations that were previously used as salad bars and Cambro GnG carts are great options.▪ When choosing a GnG model consider how many hot and cold meals you plan to serve, and purchase equipment capable of meeting these needs. Develop a plan for how increases in demand will be met, including additional equipment that may be needed over time.▪ Keep in mind that GnGs must be able to fit through doorways and elevators for safe storage during school breaks. Choose a model that fits through these areas.▪ Ask for references from potential vendors to determine how the models have worked in other schools.▪ Get information on maintenance costs for your chosen model. Some models require more upkeep and part replacement than others.▪ Make sure dining staff who will be operating the GnG lines are included in the GnG design process. This will ensure operational feasibility and help with staff buy-in for these new operating models. |
| <p>Regulatory Considerations</p> <p>Involve the local health department in choosing a GnG design.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Meet with your local health department to understand regulations before purchasing your selected GnG model.▪ Collaborate with your local health department to develop standard operating procedures that align both with health regulations and also the needs of your dining staff.▪ Keep in mind that different types of carts may have different health department requirements. |

| Implementation Components | Technical/Operational Considerations |
|---|--|
| <p>Location</p> <p>Involve the schools in GnG placement decision-making.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with school administrators to determine locations where students are allowed to eat on campus. Align GnG placement with these areas. ▪ Choose a variety of locations that are high-traffic areas where students typically congregate at lunch. ▪ Develop an inclement weather location plan so that the GnGs are sheltered and can operate throughout the school year. |
| <p>Electrical and WiFi Capabilities</p> <p>Involve the IT and maintenance departments in plans for GnG installation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with IT network specialists to ensure that there is adequate WiFi coverage in intended GnG locations. WiFi is needed for point of sale systems. ▪ If the GnG model has electrical needs, this will be a key consideration in placement decisions. Make sure that outlets are available and there is adequate power from the outlets to run the GnG equipment. ▪ Electrical GnG models typically also have batteries that need to be charged regularly. GnGs need to be stored close to electrical outlets for charging. |
| <p>Dining Staff Responsibilities</p> <p>Staff have the opportunity to learn a new role.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As GnGs must be staffed during the lunch period, additional staff members may need to be hired to fill these roles. ▪ In developing a staffing plan, include time for both set up and break down. Staff time needed for proper cleaning and storage is dependent upon the chosen model. ▪ Location of GnGs must also be considered when developing staffing plans. Some locations require more time to get to than others. ▪ Adding an additional GnG line will increase the number of meals that need to be prepared. Factor this into staffing considerations. Plan to cross-train employees and think of creative ways to find staff to operate GnG lines. |

PILOTING AND IMPLEMENTATION

| Implementation Components | Technical/Operational Considerations |
|---|--|
| <p>Training</p> <p>Support staff members through GnG trainings.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider having a trainer on site for at least the first day of service to ensure dining staff are comfortable with the new lines and additional training can be provided if necessary. ▪ In many districts, dining staff turnover is an issue. In order to prevent closed GnGs during staffing shortages, consider training all dining staff members in GnG operations so they can operate them if needed. |
| <p>Troubleshooting and Maintenance</p> <p>Factor in troubleshooting and maintenance costs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider piloting one to two GnGs first, to assess the maintenance requirements of the chosen model. ▪ If you have a GnG model that requires electricity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Create a maintenance contract with the vendor as part of the initial contract. ▫ Invite GnG vendor representatives to train dining managers and district operations staff in basic troubleshooting of electrical issues. |
| <p>GnG Popularity</p> <p>Location is key to success.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider piloting GnGs in schools that have requested them. Administration and teacher support is critical to successful implementation. ▪ Communicate participation goals and timelines with administrators at pilot sites. Shared understanding and ownership of the pilot may result in more staff encouraging students to use the GnG. If pilots are ultimately unsuccessful, upfront understanding of the goals and timelines can help with difficult conversations and problem solving. ▪ Consider piloting GnGs in multiple locations at each school to determine areas where sales are the highest. ▪ Track meal participation rates to determine if there is an increase in participation as a result of the GnGs. Share this information with dining staff and school administrators so they are informed of the outcomes. Work together to adjust the pilot if needed. ▪ After 4-5 months of piloting, if participation rates have not increased, consider moving the GnGs to other locations or other schools. |

WAYS TO SUSTAIN THE MOMENTUM

| Implementation Components | Technical/Operational Considerations |
|---|--|
| <p>Marketing and Communication</p> <p>Create awareness of the availability and location of the GnGs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Display large, colorful signage near the GnGs to educate students on how to purchase a meal, and what GnG meal options are available to encourage meal participation. If your GnG cart model includes customizable signage, consider setting aside grant funds to pay for this.▪ Utilize school announcement systems, school newsletters, flyers, and posters to build awareness of GnGs.▪ Collaborate with administrators, counselors, and teachers to promote the GnGs to students. For example, teacher partnerships can result in student-based projects that help educate their peers about the meal programs.▪ GnGs can be a more accessible for teachers than the traditional serving line, so they might be new school meal customers. Communicate with teachers that GnGs are available for both student and teacher use.▪ Provide progress updates to dining staff. Use meal sales data to develop meal sales strategies with dining staff and maintain enthusiasm for their work. |
| <p>Consistency of Operating Days and Times</p> <p>Develop a communication plan to inform students and staff.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Work with dining staff to ensure that GnG lines are operating consistently so that they become a reliable place for students to access a meal. GnGs that are non-operational for long periods of time could create mistrust among students, administrators and teachers.▪ Develop a communication plan for each school with a GnG line so that students can be made aware if lines must be taken out of service. Include timelines for lines returning to service so expectations among staff and students are clear. |
| <p>Menu Development</p> <p>Choose menu items that are popular at each school.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Work with students at each school to develop a menu rotation that is popular.▪ Consider rotating the menu items seasonally so that students have variety, while keeping some student favorites on the menu to help drive participation.▪ Offer items that are unavailable at other points of sale. |

RESOURCES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT

- Funding to purchase GnGs (carts range from \$3,500 to 15,000.) Look for grant opportunities to cover this expense such as the Federal Equipment Assistance Grant and Share Our Strength grants for GnG breakfast. Purchase of the GnGs are allowable using Federal funding.
- Dedicated staff time allocated towards planning and implementation.
- Dedicated point person in the department to coordinate planning and implementation.
- Dining staff time to prepare meals, setup/break down, and staff the GnG line during service.
- Relationships with the local department of public health and fire department, as well as district departments that service buildings and grounds, facilities, and IT.
- Colorful signage and other marketing materials to promote GnGs.

Additional Points of Sale: Full-Meal Vending Machines

This section of the toolkit includes key technical and operational considerations for food and nutrition service departments who are considering including **full-meal vending machines** in their programming.

OVERVIEW

Why Include Full-meal Vending Machines in School Food and Nutrition Programs?

School district food and nutrition service departments know that proper nourishment throughout the day is a key element to support thriving students inside and outside the classroom. Meals offered through the National School Lunch Program are often the healthiest lunch option available to students, yet participation runs low while food waste remains high. Two major contributors to these issues are time and convenience. Students can spend the majority of their lunch period waiting in line for food, leaving limited time to actually eat, which may deter students from participating in the meal program. Further, students report that they are more likely to eat foods that are convenient to access. Offering school meals through vending machines is a promising strategy to address these barriers.

Cold USDA reimbursable school meals can be served via refrigerated vending machine units. These machines can be linked to your food and nutrition department's point of service software allowing students to input a PIN in order to link their purchase with their meal account. They offer a way for students to avoid the long serving lines in order to get a quick meal on the go. Placing the machines outside of the cafeteria means students can purchase meals without having to go into the cafeteria. Also, by setting an operating window that extends outside of the normal lunchtime students with a busy schedule or a club meeting can access school meals through vending machines at times when the cafeteria is not open. Vending machine meals can be prepared and stocked in the morning and do not require staff supervision during meal times, freeing up staff to work on other duties.



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

PLANNING

| Implementation Components | Technical/Operational Considerations |
|--|--|
| <p>Procurement Process</p> <p>Identify a vendor that meets the needs of your district.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Select a vending machine model that has successfully operated in schools with your point of sale software. Include this specification in the bidding requirements.▪ Select a vending machine model that has the potential to run with multiple point of sale software, in the event that your department changes software providers.▪ Require bidding vendors to submit references with contact information. Use this information in your vendor selection process.▪ Consider vendors that offer the option to lease a vending machine to allow for a program pilot.▪ Identify vendors who provide machines that allow for compliance with all state and federal meal collection procedures and menu requirements. |
| <p>Key Collaborations</p> <p>Develop relationships with both internal and external departments early in the planning process.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create a working group that has representation from all school departments working on the project (could include buildings and grounds, IT, nutrition services).▪ Invite external organizations (such as the health department, the fire marshal, and vending machine representative) to planning meetings. |
| <p>Electrical and IT Capabilities</p> <p>Work with IT and facilities departments to find a good location for the machines.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Many older schools have inadequate electrical infrastructure. Consult an electrician to determine the electrical requirements for the vending machines and the estimated cost of installing necessary electrical components.▪ Work with an IT network specialist to ensure that the vending machines can be connected to the school's network and the point of sale software. |

| Implementation Components | Technical/Operational Considerations |
|--|--|
| <p>Regulatory Considerations</p> <p>Work with the local fire marshal and health department to ensure the machine aligns with regulations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vending machines require adequate space. Work with a fire marshal representative to understand where machines can be legally placed. ▪ Work with your health department representative to understand food storage requirements. |
| <p>Vending Machine Accessibility</p> <p>Involve school staff in vending location discussions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with school administrators to ensure that vending machines are in locations that are unlocked so that students can access the meals throughout the school day. ▪ Place vending machines in areas that students spend time in and that are accessible to dining staff during prep time. |
| <p>Cost Benefit Analysis</p> <p>Compare costs of a vending machine versus building another traditional serving line.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calculate how many meals need to be sold in order to cover the costs of the machine, the maintenance contract, and the additional food preparation labor and food cost. ▪ Calculate labor costs saved by not needing to staff an additional line during meal service. |

PILOTING AND IMPLEMENTATION

| Implementation Components | Technical/Operational Considerations |
|--|---|
| <p>Troubleshooting and Maintenance</p> <p>Factor in troubleshooting and maintenance costs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pilot a small number of vending machines first to assess the maintenance requirements.▪ Include a maintenance contract with the vendor as part of the initial contract.▪ Invite vendor representatives to train dining managers and district operations staff in basic troubleshooting of computer and electrical issues to ensure maintenance and sustainability of equipment. |
| <p>Vending Machine Popularity</p> <p>Location is key to success.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Purchase or lease a small number of machines to assess popularity amongst specific school populations.▪ After 4-5 months of “actively promoting” the machines, if they are unpopular in a school consider moving them to another school or another location within the school. <i>See Marketing and Communication section below for information about “active promotion”.</i> |
| <p>Dining Staff Responsibilities</p> <p>Staff have the opportunity to learn new skills and tasks.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assess the additional time that is needed to prepare meals and stock the machine and align new work schedules that reflect this increase.▪ Assign new responsibilities to individual staff members, including meal preparation and cleaning of the machine.▪ Train all staff in new vending machine standard operating procedures, in the event of staffing shortages.▪ Consider training other school staff members in helping students use the machine, particularly when launching a new machine. |

WAYS TO SUSTAIN THE MOMENTUM

| Implementation Components | Technical/Operational Considerations |
|---|---|
| <p>Marketing and Communication</p> <p>Create awareness of the location and use of machines through “active promotion.”</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Display visually attractive signage near the machines to promote the new meals available.▪ Utilize school announcement systems, peer promotion activities, school newsletters, flyers and posters to build awareness of new vending machines.▪ Collaborate with administrators, counselors, and teachers to promote the vending machines to students. For example, teacher partnerships can result in student-based projects that help educate their peers about the meal programs▪ Work with students to develop step-by-step instructions on how to use their PIN or ID card to purchase a meal. Post these instructions on the machine. Post instructions in the languages spoken by the student body.▪ If staff can use the machines, develop step-by-step instructions on how to purchase a meal. Post the instructions on the machine. If conducting teacher outreach (see Chapter 1), include vending meal promotion in outreach plan. |
| <p>Menu Development</p> <p>Choose menu items that are popular at each school.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Work with students at each school to develop a menu rotation that is popular.▪ Rotate the menu items seasonally to offer students variety, while keeping some student favorites on the menu to help drive participation. |

RESOURCES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT

- Funding to purchase machines (machines range from \$9,000 to \$20,000.) Look for grant opportunities to cover this expense.
- Funding for electrical and wiring upgrades if needed (dedicated circuits with specific amperage is typically required for vending machines).
- Contract with an internal or external entity experienced in electrical, IT, and refrigeration systems.
- Dedicated staff time allocated towards planning and implementation.
- Dedicated point person in the department to coordinate planning and implementation.
- Relationships with the local department of public health and fire department, as well as district departments such as buildings and grounds, facilities, and IT.
- Time and ability of dining staff to prepare, stock, and maintain vending machines.
- Marketing materials to promote vending machine adoption and ongoing use.

