Elevating School Meals - Checklist

Serving school meals during a pandemic creates its own challenges for participation. How can more students be reached to increase meal participation? Use this checklist to see what great practices you already have in place. Consider trying some of these options, keeping in mind they may not be feasible for every program. Just changing one item may have a big impact on increasing participation!

MEAL SERVICE

District currently serves the following meals:
- □ Breakfast
- □ Lunch
- □ At Risk After School Supper
- □ Afterschool Snack

Frequency of meals:
- □ Monday through Friday meals
- □ Weekend meals
- □ Meals over breaks

District is serving meals to all possible groups:
- □ Elementary, Middle and High School
- □ Preschool
- □ Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)
- □ Head Start
- □ District run day care (before and/or after school care)
- □ After school programs
- □ Sports teams

Meal distribution times:
- □ Morning
- □ Afternoon
- □ Evening
- □ Weekends
- □ Deliver meals to homes
- □ Multiple days' worth of meals are available at one pick up
- □ Contactless, curbside pick-up is available
- □ Consider using more than one of the above options to accommodate family schedules

Types of meals served:
- □ Half the meals served are hot meals
    - □ Heating/reheating instructions are included
- □ Half the meals served are fresh meals, like an entrée salad

□ Hot meals (or meals for reheat) are served at least 1 day per week
□ Shelf stable meals are not the only type of meals served
□ Requests for special dietary needs are being accommodated

MENUS

□ Menus are posted for pick up meals, so parents and students know what they are getting
□ Menus are posted on school's webpage with times and days of meal distribution
□ Juice is limited to less than half of the fruit servings
□ A colorful variety of fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables is used
□ Bulk milk is available for multi meal packs
□ A variety of milk is offered whenever possible, including fat content and flavor options
□ Recipes about how to use milk is included, so milk not consumed can be used in other items, such as smoothies, waffles, or cream soups
□ A two or three week cycle menu is used to provide variety and avoid repetition of food items

SIMPLIFICATION OF PRE-ORDERED MEALS

□ Parents' convenience was considered when developing an ordering system and forms
□ Parent feedback was solicited before developing an order form
□ Order form includes only necessary information (no student ID numbers needed)
□ Google Forms or other easy to use order form is used
□ Order form takes only a few minutes to complete
□ Choices are offered for pre-ordered meals
□ Consider eliminating pre-order forms if meal counts are fairly consistent

IN-PERSON MEALS

□ Face to face students can take meals home for days they are not in session
□ All students, regardless of learning modality, are offered the same number of weekly meals
□ Multiple entrée choices are available for face to face students
□ More than a 1-week cycle menu is used to increase variety of offerings
□ Breakfast in the classroom is offered for face to face students

BREAKFAST

□ Cereal is limited to 2-3 times a week
□ Juice is limited to less than half the fruit servings
□ Hot and cold breakfast items are available
□ Reheating instructions included for hot meals

COMMUNICATION/MARKETING

□ The whole district promotes school meals
    □ Teachers promote school meals
    □ Principals promote school meals

    □ School counselors promote school meals

    □ Superintendent and other administrators promote school meals

    □ Meal distribution information is easy to find on the school district's home web page and food service page

    □ Robo calls and direct emails to promote school meals

    □ Text messaging

□ The district uses social media to promote school meals

    □ Facebook

    □ Twitter

    □ Instagram

    □ YouTube

    □ Staff members use personal accounts to share about school meals

    □ We have 'local celebrities' who post about school meals

    □ We have community partners who post about school meals

□ Parents are reminded weekly about meal pick-ups

□ Meal prices are removed from the monthly menus or food service website

□ Parents have been surveyed for feedback on meals and service

□ Minimize stigma implied in the messaging about school meals.

    □ Meals promoted at no cost, not 'free'

    □ Local jobs and foods are highlighted

    □ Convenience and time saving for parents are promoted

□ Meal information is provided to any students that are quarantined

□ QR Codes used to provide more information. (Google QR code generator to find out how)

□ Promoting meals for students that are switching from online to in-person school

□ Remind families that meals are still no charge for in-person and virtual students

FINANCIAL

□ Participating in E-SFSP versus NSLP to maximize reimbursement rates, benefits to families, and participation

□ Applied for grants to meet operational needs. (No Kid Hungry, United Dairy Industry of MI)

□ Financial information reviewed with business office officials and am informed on the food service department's financial situation

ENTITLEMENT DOLLARS

□ Use >100% of entitlement dollars

□ Take advantage of all DoD dollars

□ Review district's PAL report so entitlement dollars are spent wisely

STAFFING

□ Additional customer service training provided for staff with parent interaction

□ Staff knows they are appreciated

□ Provide SFSP program adults with a free meal each day

□ Consider how many changes can impact staffing

□ Revising job description according to new positions

□ Training on social distancing with staff and students