

You should receive this as I am heading to Washington D.C. for a meeting with USDA and SNA. In the meantime, I figured you should be brought up to date on a couple of topics:

- 1) Lunch Periods – We frequently are asked about how much time students should have to eat their school meals. While there is no guidance, here is a link to an interesting story on the topic - <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2013/12/04/248511038/these-days-school-lunch-hours-are-more-like-15-minutes>.
- 2) Salad Bars - Do you know of a school that has implemented salad bars in their schools and is doing a great job of marketing the salad bar to students? If you do, please send me their/your name and tell me a little about the success. I'm looking for some great testimonials from Michigan as we become more engaged in the "Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools," a grant program that will bring some free salad bars to schools in Michigan.
- 3) Hold the Dates - Save the following dates for School Nutrition Program trainings to be held here in Lansing over the next 9 months. School Meals Overview Training: March 5 - 6, 2014; Second Annual MDE June Conference: June 10 – 12, 2014; and School Meals Overview Training: August 18 – 19, 2014. More details to follow but the School Meals Overview Training is the new name for the training we hold on a regular basis for directors and managers.
- 4) Breakfast Challenge - Looking to boost your middle school/high school breakfast participation numbers? Do you have a breakfast program but feel that it needs a 'shot in the arm' in order to meet the Superintendent's Challenge? Michigan Team Nutrition will conduct four School Breakfast Showcases focused on the new school breakfast meal pattern, school breakfast recipes that meet Healthier US School Challenge (HUSSC) criteria, and innovative serving methods to increase school breakfast participation. Please use this survey to let Michigan Team Nutrition know of your potential interest in hosting a School Breakfast Showcase between January and April of 2014 <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5X5FD38>. Interest responses will be collected until December 12, 2013.
- 5) 6 Cent Certification – We want to strongly remind those schools that have not completed their 6 Cent Certification that they should try to complete this as soon as possible for more than one reason. First, the fact that you will start receiving reimbursement for following the meal patterns you are required to follow in any case. Secondly, due to not being approved in 2013, you will likely be having an Administrative Review (the old CRE) and it will go much better for all concerned if this is complete. Let us know if you are struggling getting this done.

6) Gluten Free Diets - These diets seem to be all the rage lately. Grains are an important part of a healthy diet and provide critical nutrients that cannot be found elsewhere. Good menu planning includes a variety of whole grains every day. When should school food service consider offering a gluten free menu? Gluten free diets are critical to treat Celiac Disease – an extremely painful genetic autoimmune condition where the body attacks the small intestine causing painful inflammation and diarrhea as well as a lack of nutrients being absorbed by the body. In addition to Celiac, some people experience non-celiac gluten sensitivity with symptoms such as abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, constipation, headaches, bone or joint pain, and chronic fatigue when they have gluten in their diet. For children needing a strict gluten free diet appropriately documented by a licensed physician, food service must follow strict gluten free menu planning and food safety guidelines to keep these children safe from harmful symptoms. Gluten is found in grains such as wheat, rye, and barley and can be extremely challenging to find appropriate menu items. It is critical to work closely with the family and to plan an appropriate menu ahead of time to assure food is safe, in stock, and affordable for your operation. Please remember, once the appropriate documentation is submitted, you must follow the diet order at all times without charging extra. That means that if your supplier hasn't yet delivered gluten free products that you've ordered, you must find another way of securing gluten free products safe for these children until your supplier does make the delivery. It is also best practice to have a standard operating procedure (SOP) specific to preventing cross-contamination and cleaning procedures assuring that gluten does not get into the gluten free foods. For further information or questions concerning making accommodations for children needing gluten free diets, please contact Diane Golzynski at GolzynskiD@michigan.gov or 517-373-3383.

Howard Leikert, MBA, SNS
Supervisor, School Nutrition Programs
Michigan Department of Education
517-373-3892

"The MDE School Nutrition Programs team is committed to the success of child nutrition programs through training, support, and leadership by fostering partnerships to ensure the nutritional well-being of all students in Michigan."