Ingredients for Increased Student Engagement

Top 10 Ways to Involve Students in Your School Nutrition Program

1. INFORM  Make sure students know who to talk to if they have a suggestion, comment or question about school meals

2. INTRODUCE  Help students get to know the person behind the counter who serves them lunch every day

3. SOCIALIZE  Help students connect to your program with social media by capitalizing on major events

4. COMMUNICATE  Find ways to get feedback about what students want

5. INVOLVE  Invite students to participate in developing menus and taste tests

6. INTERACT  Engage with students outside of the lunch line through student organizations/clubs, tours of the cafeteria, or promotional activities

7. CAPTIVATE  Use the time students spend in the lunch line and cafeteria as an opportunity to engage students

8. CONNECT  Use technology to enhance (not replace) communication with students

9. RESPOND  Always reply to student feedback and suggestions individually

10. APPRECIATE  Communicate and show what impact students’ feedback is making on your program

See next pages for resources and ideas for how to implement this top 10 list

schoolnutrition.org/engage
1 INFORM
Make sure students know who to talk to if they have a suggestion, comment or question about school meals.
- Use customizable signage/templates that encourage students to communicate their thoughts about school meals.

2 INTRODUCE
Help students get to know the person behind the counter who serves them lunch every day.
- Staff Trivia Resources: Staff members can write an answer to a trivia question on a poster board/chalkboard/white board. They can get their picture taken holding the answer and the images can be showcased around the cafeteria.
- Example Trivia Questions:
  - What was your favorite school lunch growing up?
  - What is a surprising fact about you?
  - What do you like to do on weekends?
  - What is your favorite thing about working here?

- Staff Bingo: Give students bingo cards with questions on them about staff members, encouraging them to mark off the member who matches that prompt. The first to get “BINGO” wins a prize.

3 SOCIALIZE
Help students connect to your program with social media by capitalizing on major events.
- See SNA’s shareable content and tools for social media: www.schoolnutrition.org/PR.
- Keep in mind that student feedback suggests that most students use Instagram socially and Facebook for college prep, while Twitter is the popular source for getting news.

4 COMMUNICATE
Find ways to get feedback about what students want.
- “SNA Beyond the Taste Test” Series: Collect feedback from students on everything from specific menu items to their lunch line experience.

5 INVOLVE
Invite students to participate in developing menus and taste tests.
• Sampler Stations: Create an area with a new food(s) that kids can sample before it becomes a menu item. Kids can “vote” on whether they like it and give feedback on how to incorporate it into the menu.

• “What’s Your Dream Meal?”: Students can share their favorite meal. The staff can select various favorites to feature and name that day’s lunch after that student.

• Student’s Choice: Classrooms can be given handouts with a selection of new meals. Students can each select their favorite and the winning meal could be featured.

• The “Lunch Bunch”: Create a school club that kids can join to excite others about eating a healthy school lunch. They can brainstorm new recipes, decorate the cafeteria, thank the lunch staff, and more.

6 INTERACT
Engage with students outside of the lunch line through student organizations/clubs, tours of the cafeteria, or promotional activities.

• Work with Fuel Up to Play60 Ambassadors: Use available resources and the “playbook” of ideas to work with the student ambassadors to problem-solve and create school meal excitement.

7 CAPTIVATE
Use the time students spend in the lunch line and cafeteria as an opportunity to engage students.

• “Good Food Is an Art” Day: Host a “food craft” day. On this day, a piece of food(s) is given out that can be used to make a specific creation. Afterwards, everyone can eat their “art.”

• Idea Sheet: Tips could encourage feedback with activities like sampling, staff meet-and-greets and interactive games.

• Trivia or Bingo Game (see section 2 INTRODUCE)

8 CONNECT
Use technology to enhance (not replace) communication with students.

• Real Time Food Rating Apps
• Virtual Lunch Games
• Digital Signage Templates

9 RESPOND
Always reply to student feedback and suggestions individually.

• Use tips and techniques on how to respond to student suggestions and criticisms in “their language.”

10 APPRECIATE
Communicate and show what impact students’ feedback is making on your program.

Note: Students shared that this is an extremely important component .

• Share tools, resources and examples of how to communicate and promote student-driven changes/menu items.

For more information and resources, please visit: schoolnutrition.org/engage
For more information, please visit www.schoolnutrition.org/engage