

National Food Service Management Institute Research Summary

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Job Functions, Competencies and Skills

The review and revision of the *Manager's Competencies, Knowledge and Skills*, first published in 1995, is near completion. Four regional workgroups were held in 2002 to review the existing document; recommend items that could be deleted, revised, or updated; and to identify areas that needed to be addressed. Recommendations from the four workgroups were incorporated into the new document and six new topic areas were identified. The final revised document should be available on the NFSMI Web site by December 2003.

Management of Operations

The final report that identifies the characteristics of long-term successful employees is available online at http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/successful_longterm.pdf. This research study was the basis of a presentation, entitled "Hiring the Cream of the Crop," by Dr. Mary Kay Meyer at the ASFSA 2003 Annual National Conference in Reno, NV.

The final report on *The Physical Dining Environment and Service Styles to Plate Waste in Middle/Junior High Schools* is available online at http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/environment_and_plate_waste.pdf. The study evaluated light, temperature, humidity, noise levels, and other aspects of the physical dining environment in relation to total plate waste. Preliminary results of the study conducted by Central Washington State University, *Relationship of Meal and Recess Schedules to Plate Waste in Elementary Schools*, were received Fall 2003. The final report will be available on the NFSMI Web site by December 2003.

Healthy School Nutrition Environment

A nationwide survey was conducted in October 2002 with a total of 3500 surveys mailed. The random sample included 500 in each of seven categories: superintendents, principals, school business officials, coaches, teachers, foodservice directors, and foodservice managers. The overall return rate was 34.9 % (1,222 returned surveys). Forty-eight percent of respondents represented districts with enrollments of 2,500 students or less; 33% of respondents had enrollments of 2,501 to 10,000; and 19% had more than 10,000 students enrolled.

Foodservice directors (32.9% of total responses) and managers (16.2% of total responses) represented 49.1% of all returned surveys. Survey response rates for other categories were: superintendents (9.4%), principals (13.1%), teachers (13.8%), coaches (2.8%), and school business officials (3.8%). When asked if "any school has a healthy school nutrition environment," 71.9% of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Five of the most important components of a healthy school environment identified by respondents included: behavior-focused nutrition education; adequate funds provided by local, state, and federal sources; a la carte menu items that contribute to healthy eating patterns;

involvement of students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy; and meal schedules that meet the hunger needs of children.

The most important barriers to a Healthy School Nutrition Environment identified by respondents were funding for school foodservice, competitive foods, children's peer pressures, and television and media. The full research report will be available at the NFSMI Web site by December 2003.

Financial Management

The software tool *FUNDamentals* is available on CD and on the NFSMI Web Site. Over 200 school districts have registered copies of *FUNDamentals*. Development of the national database is in-progress. Review and validation of the Financial Management Information Systems (FMIS) using an expert panel and preliminary information from *FUNDamentals* is planned for 2004. The NFSMI Applied Research Division staff conducted an introductory financial management session at ASFSA 2003 Annual National Conference, entitled "Dollars and Sense," in Reno, NV.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The report *Management Issues Impacting Family Day Care Homes Operating Within the Child and Adult Care Food Program Guidelines* is available online at <http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/management-issues-impacting-fdch.pdf>. Two additional project reports are being finalized and will be available later this fall. The first project, *Report on Identification of Available Training Resources Appropriate for Family Day Care Home Providers*, identifies current training resources available to train providers. The project also identifies obvious gaps in training resources and provides information that training coordinators can use to plan training. The report includes a checklist that can be used locally to evaluate training materials.

The second project, *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist: A Program Self-Assessment Checklist for Family Day Care Home and Child Care Center Providers Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)*, identifies quality indicators for child care settings that reflect best practices as outlined in the regulations and guidance for the CACFP. The checklists will support CACFP providers in the continuous quality improvement of the food and nutrition services offered in their facilities. The report, checklists, and NFSMI *Insight 21* will be available from the NFSMI Web site late Fall 2003.

NFSMI Research Agenda Conference

Thirty-eight individuals met at NFSMI in Oxford, MS, June 5-8, 2003 to identify the research needs for Child Nutrition Programs for the next three to five years. Participants identified the expansion and continuation of current research efforts as key focus areas. A report of the conference and research needs will be available on the NFSMI Web site late Fall 2003.

NFSMI Scholar Program

Dr. Alice Jo Rainville from Eastern Michigan University completed three years as the NFSMI Scholar on August 31, 2003. The Applied Research Division (ARD) staff wishes to thank Dr. Rainville for her dedication and contributions to NFSMI. We wish her much success in her research and future academic career. The ARD staff welcomes the newest NFSMI Scholar, Dr.

Priscilla Connors from the University of North Texas. Dr. Connors joined the ARD staff on September 1, 2003.