1	2	3	4
Nutrition Standardized Recipes 1140	Operations	Administration	Communications & Marketing

» to *your credit*

Making the grade in your profession

What's Standard About Standardized Recipes?

By Sharon Schaefer, SNS

» Learn why these are valuable tools in school nutrition operations—and how to create them.

Do you have a favorite restaurant? Or maybe a friend or family member who makes that one perfect dish, *exactly* how you like it, *every single time*? Have you ever wondered, "How do they do that?" In school nutrition, is it a reasonable expectation for our customers to experience a similar level of reliably consistent scrumptiousness in our meals—*every single time*? Well, roll up your sleeves; grab a pencil, a calculator and a recipe of choice, because with the proper execution of a standardized recipe, that's *exactly* what your menus can deliver.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS But first, let's dig a little deeper into the benefits of using standardized recipes, so you know what your hard work is going to be worth. According to USDA, a standardized recipe "has been tried, adapted and retried several times for use by a given foodservice operation and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients."

Use of standardized recipes in K-12 school foodservice is a key component of a successful operation. Because they ensure consistency, the entire operation will benefit from well-written standardized recipes—from the director to the menu planner to the line employees and, ultimately, to the customers. They ensure a more consistent recipe outcome, accurate nutrients per serving, a valid meal pattern contribution, predictable food and labor costs and a reliable customer experience.

In school nutrition, projecting costs and accurately determining nutrition standard compliance are two huge aspects of menu planning. Standardized recipes help tremendously in this effort, because they are just that: "standard." They feature ingredients and measurements that are predetermined. This information is critical for effective menu planning. Standardized recipes also give operators better control in projecting procurement needs and controlling food costs.

For line employees, use of standardized recipes creates a reliably positive outcome, without requiring the "interpretation" of a recipe. One of the most challenging parts of a school nutrition professional's day is when recipes fail. Typically, this occurs when the directions are not clear or the recipe hasn't been tested—or if the cook decides to make independent adjustments.

As you begin to standardize your *current* recipes, review formats with prep kitchen and onsite staff of varying skill sets so that you can ensure everyone understands them, as well as has the opportunity to ask questions or make suggestions. This inclusive step can generate more ownership by the team, who then won't view it as "the district's" standardized recipe, but as "our" standardized recipe.

FACTOR IN SOME FLEXIBILITY Still, be prepared for the possibility of pushback—especially from long-time veteran cooks who are accustomed to applying their culinary skills. They may resist being instructed to follow a standardized recipe to the letter. Explain the reasons why it's important

they don't deviate. Seek to provide other opportunities for their culinary creativity—perhaps allowing for a weekly or monthly "manager's special," or maybe this is the perfect opportunity to expand your catering services. [*Editor's Note: Check "At Your Service," Food Focus, in the October 2016 issue for ideas!*]

Regardless of the initial reception from cafeteria teams to your standardized recipes, be sure to check back to see how the recipe is working. Encourage open feedback. Is every site seeing a similar reaction to the recipe from customers? If not, then look at the possible reasons. It might just be student preference—but it might be that staff aren't prepping or holding the item as specified. Show that you are open to constructive criticism—this type of inclusivity and teamwork will lead to better recipes and higher participation.

RECIPE ESSENTIALS The path to a standardized recipe begins with a well-written recipe. Here's a checklist of the *must-have* elements to include:

✔ **TITLE.** Choose a name that clearly describes the menu item. This will be *the* way the recipe is referenced every time by internal staff.

✔ **CATEGORY.** Before you classify any particular recipe, get organized by establishing a list of categories—but don't make it so long and detailed that you start getting confused as to which category to use or tempted to put recipes in multiple categories. Stick to the basics: grain, meat/meat alternate, fruit, vegetable, dessert, combination item. *All* of your school recipes should fit in one of your established categories.

✔ **PORTION SIZE.** State the amount of each serving using volume and/or weight measuring units.

✔ **RECIPE YIELD.** State the total number of servings the recipe makes. Yield also can include the total batch size.

✔ **INGREDIENTS.** Each individual food product used in a recipe must be listed and described completely. Avoid pitfalls in menu- or recipe-writing by making sure the ingredient description is accurate and

WHAT'S YOUR STYLE?

Consistency is the name of the game with standardized recipes. Beyond the essential and optional elements that you will include, how will the recipe *look*? Will you capitalize all ingredient names? Will you abbreviate units of measurement or nutrients, or will you spell these out?

There is no "right" way—although if you are using a recipe-specific software system, you may be restricted to its style and format defaults. If you are developing your own templates, look through some of your favorite cookbooks and recipe collections. What draws your eye? What looks right to you? Style formats are personal choices and will not affect the outcome of a standardized recipe. But be sure to create a reference guide of your decisions so that you—and anyone helping on this project, such as an intern—will be able to stay consistent. Following a standard format for your standardized recipes will allow you to create a more cohesive collection. Your format becomes part of your brand.

leaves no room for interpretation. For example, if you simply list "carrots," then you will have to add details in the directions about the form or type of carrots required so that the recipe is prepared the same way every time. Be specific. Are you using "shredded carrots," "diced carrots," "baby carrots" or another form? Each could drastically alter your end product.

✔ **INGREDIENT AMOUNTS.** Quantities needed for each recipe ingredient also should be defined using

an accurate description. Amounts typically are listed by weight, volume (also called measure) or both.

It's important to note that ingredient amounts by *weight* describe how much it weighs on a scale. Common units used for weight are: pounds, ounces and grams. Ingredient amounts by *measure* describe how much space the food item takes up or its volume. The most common units used for measures are: gallons, quarts, pints, cups, tablespoons, teaspoons and fluid ounces.

Occasionally, a recipe might call for an ingredient amount based on *packaging* or special foodservice *measuring tools.* These could include references to "#10 can" or "#6 scoop." If the ingredient is a very specific processed or branded product, it might be appropriate to reference "box" or "packet."

Certain ingredients are measured simply by counts. These might include slices of bread, tortillas, whole eggs and so on.

✔ **DIRECTIONS.** Detailed, step-by-step instructions are essential for standardizing your recipe and ensuring consistency. This means thinking through every step in the process and leaving no gaps for "interpretation" by individual cooks. Never presume that someone will "know what you mean." Each step should be clear to the most novice cook. Use the following considerations as your guide: when, what, how, how much, how long and at what temperature.

Your directions also should address the specific equipment to be used for each step. Don't forget to include HACCP procedures, as well, so that your cooks know exactly when to guard against food safety hazards.

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS. While the essential elements are non-negotiable when it comes to following a standard recipe format, there are other elements you might consider adding, as well. These optional details can help you develop and maintain an organized recipe library, make menu contribution calculations easier to determine and even aid in the process of your next state Administrative Review. The most

complete recipe includes each of the following optional elements:

☑ **ALTERNATE NAMES.** Recipes may be marketed to students through the use of fun, creative names. Also, basic preparations may be altered in different ways or given minimal tweaks to provide variety or other reasons for differentiation. Giving these recipes additional names can be a useful organizational tool. Most recipe databases offer a field for listing other names and/or uses. The comments section also can be designated for this information.

☑ **RECIPE NUMBER.** This is a unique number assigned to each recipe and it is not repeated. It's a universal tool that ensures that all staff members "touching" the recipe—from those at the planning stages through to those at meal service—are working with the same exact recipe. (I can't begin to detail how many hummus recipes we had at my former district.)

☑ **MEAL PATTERN CONTRIBUTION.** Prepare a list of the meal pattern components and identify the amounts the recipe contributes to each component. Presumably, if you've been using this recipe for the last two years, the calculations have already been made and stored (somewhere). But if this is a brand-new recipe—or one not from a source familiar with K-12 school nutrition requirements—you will have to perform those calculations before you plan, prepare and serve that menu item. Regardless, having this detail documented right on the recipe itself will make it easier for menu planners, staff who update apps or website information and state agency reviewers.

☑ **NUTRIENTS PER SERVING.** Although regulations no longer allow Nutrient Standard Menu Planning for reimbursable meals, nutrients per serving remains a helpful tool in planning menus, calculating weekly averages, offering scratch-prepared recipes on a la carte service lines and being able to answer questions from parents and other interested parties. Calculations about calories, fats and sodium are arguably the most important to include. Carbohydrate counts are important if you or your school

---

» the *test*

SAVE A STAMP!

You can take this test online and pay by credit card.

Go to: www.schoolnutrition.org/OnlinePDAs

"What's Standard About Standardized Recipes?"
Completion of this test, with a passing score,
will count as 1 Continuing Education Unit (CEU) in Key Area 1,
Nutrition, Code 1140.

Please Print

Name: _____

SNA Member Number: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

1. Use of standardized recipes can help to ensure many things, but not ___.
- ☐ more consistent recipe outcomes
- ☐ valid meal pattern contributions
- ☐ a more satisfied school board
- ☐ a reliable customer experience

2. Essential components of standardized recipes include ___.
- ☐ alternate recipe names
- ☐ nutrients per batch
- ☐ ingredient prices
- ☐ none of the above

3. It's a best practice to stick with a limited number of recipe categories.
- ☐ True   ☐ False

4. When listing your ingredient quantities, use either weights or measures, but not both.
- ☐ True   ☐ False

5. Step-by-step recipe directions should include ___ to guard against food safety hazards.
- ☐ precise ingredient amounts
- ☐ the source of the ingredient
- ☐ HACCP procedures
- ☐ all of the above

6. ___ is among the most important nutrients to include on a standardized recipe.
- ☐ Sodium
- ☐ Vitamin C
- ☐ Folic acid
- ☐ all of the above

7. Always convert your current library of recipes before writing new ones.
- ☐ True   ☐ False

8. Referencing a #10 can leads to fewer errors than asking cooks to use ___ of an ingredient.
- ☐ 9 ⅝ quarts   ☐ 65 ounces
- ☐ a large pot full   ☐ all of the above

9. If a new recipe passes the first evaluation, you should add it to the menu right away.
- ☐ True   ☐ False

10. When it comes to formatting the look of your recipe, you should ___.
- ☐ follow USDA's example
- ☐ assign different styles to different categories
- ☐ develop a style that works for you
- ☐ not worry about it

TEST COMPLETION & SUBMISSION DETAILS

To earn 1 Continuing Education Unit (CEU) toward SNA's Certificate/Credentialing programs for this professional development article (PDA) test, you must achieve a passing score and the issue date **(November 2016)** must not be older than five (5) years from your Certificate/Credentialing period, A maximum of three (3) PDAs per year is allowable for SNA's Certificate in School Nutrition program. There is no maximum of passing PDAs for those with the SNS Credential, submitted within the three-year period.

To pay by check: Mail this completed form before your expiration date. Include $11 (SNA Members) or $17 (non-members) for processing to: SNA, Attn: PDA, PO Box 759297, Baltimore, MD 21275-9297. Do not send cash!

To pay by credit card: Pay for and take the test online at **www.schoolnutrition.org/OnlinePDAs**. Processing fees for tests completed online are $9 (SNA Members) or $15 (non-members).

Due to administrative costs, refunds will not be made for any reason.

Westside Community Schools

Recipe

Oct 2, 2014

Recipe: 002639 MEATBALL W/SAUCE, BEEF
Recipe Source: WRB
Recipe Group: ENTREES

Recipe HACCP Process: #2 Same Day Service

Alternate Recipe Name: MEATBALL WITH
RED SAUCE
Number of Portions: 175
Size of Portion: SERVINGS

Ingredient	Amount	Instructions
R002638 MEATBALL MIXTURE, BEEF.........................	1 BATCH	1. Follow recipe #002638 to make meatball mixture. (Batch = 175 meatballs) 2. Using a #12 scoop (1/3 cup), form meatballs and place on parchment lined sheet pan close together. 3. Bake in 350°F oven for approximately 20 minutes. CCP: Heat to 165° F or higher for at least 15 seconds
903991 SPAGHETTI SAUCE, CANNED ANGELIA MIA....	6 #10 CAN	4. Warm spaghetti sauce in two hotel pans. Three cans in each pan. 5. Add 1/2 of the meatballs to the first pan of warm spaghetti sauce and the other half to the second pan. 6. Lower oven temp to 325°F. Return meatballs and sauce to oven for approximately 1 hour. 7. During service portion 1/4 cup sauce and one meatball on tray. CCP: Heat to 165° F or higher for at least 15 seconds. CCP: Hold at 135° F or higher.

*Nutrients are based upon 1 Portion Size (SERVINGS)

Calories	251 kcal	Cholesterol	99.79 mg	Protein	14.75 g	Calcium	56.31 mg	48.83%	Calories from Total Fat
Total Fat	13.59 g	Sodium	760.59 mg	Vitamin A	87.16 RE	Iron	2.24 mg	19.05%	Calories from Saturated Fat
Saturated Fat	5.30 g	Carbohydrates	15.78 g	Vitamin A	475.00 IU	Water*	*35.15* g	*0.04%*	Calories from Trans Fat
Trans Fat*	*0.01* g	Dietary Fiber	2.08 g	Vitamin C	6.50 mg	Ash*	*0.62* g	25.20%	Calories from Carbohydrates
								23.54%	Calories from Protein

N/A - denotes a nutrient that is either missing or incomplete for an individual ingredient
* - denotes combined nutrient totals with either missing or incomplete nutrient data
? - denotes optional nutrient values

NOTICE: The data contained within this report and the NUTRIKIDS® Menu Planning and Nutritional Analysis software should not be used for and does not provide menu planning for a child with a medical condition or food allergy. Ingredients and menu items are subject to change or substitution without notice. Please consult a medical professional for assistance in planning for or treating medical conditions.

nurse is responsible for providing these to parents of children with diabetes. There's also growing interest in sugars, fiber, calcium and iron.

WRITE OR REVISE? If you are moving your operation to standardized recipes, where's the best place to start? Do you alter existing recipes or just start from scratch (so to speak)? Converting existing recipes is a good place to begin if you and your team already have experience with the recipe and are basically satisfied with the results. Concentrating on your existing recipe library first is also a good tactic if you simply don't have the time or staff assistance to invest in writing new recipes.

Starting from scratch in writing new standardized recipes may seem daunting, but once you've mastered a few techniques, it is the best way to create recipes that address your program's unique needs. After all, sometimes the "right" recipe isn't out there waiting for you to find it. When recipes are written by your design, they allow you to leverage such advantages as customer preferences and locally produced ingredients. Your new recipes also can be built around foodservice packaging options. For example, instructing cooks to use "1 #10 can of drained red kidney beans" helps to eliminate errors that stem from instructing cooks to use "65

ounces" or "9 ⁵/₈ cups"—measurements that are equivalent to 1 #10 can.

The bottom line is to write a recipe in a way that reflects *your* foodservice operation. Focus on ingredients that you have the ability to buy and the equipment you have available. Don't overlook the human resources involved. Does your staff have the skill sets to produce certain recipes? Do they have the time—can you literally afford for them to follow a recipe with many steps?

You can avoid common pitfalls related to writing recipes from scratch by following a few simple steps:

1. **Plan** time to calculate ingredients and develop cooking steps. Produce a rough draft—it doesn't have to be pretty and certainly not perfect. Plan for the time to test the recipe in a controlled environment.
2. **Record** the weight and measurements of ingredients, as well as each individual step. Pay close attention to how ingredients react during prep. For example, raw ingredients that then are cooked might change drastically or only very little.
3. **Make** the recipe.
4. **Evaluate** the end result. Was it a success? Was the yield portion size and meal pattern correct? If so, make the recipe a few more times to confirm the results. Try it in various

kitchens, with different staff members. If the menu item was *not* a success, review the recipe—looking at every step—and reflect on possible changes. A standardized recipe format allows for making changes; relieve yourself of needing to create a "perfect" recipe.
5. **Track** your progress, as well as any adjustments.

One of the biggest joys of a cafeteria employee at service time is when the students and staff love one of your meals or menu items. This is the best outcome of a well-designed standardized recipe: the perfect bite—every time. **SN**

Chef Sharon Schaefer is a K-12 school nutrition consultant. Follow her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/evolutionofthelunchlady *or Twitter at* @chefsharonsns. *She can be reached at* www.evolutionofthelunchlady.com.

BONUS WEB CONTENT

What's Standard About Standardized Recipes?

One challenge in writing standardized recipes is in converting ingredient amounts to produce a standard yield that is appropriate for your operation. It's not uncommon for these to range from 25 to 100 servings, depending on how your team manages batch cooking. Chef Schaefer explains the "factor method" in this month's online extras.

Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/ snmagazinebonus to access.