

Editor's Note

Please note that this study was published before the implementation of Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which went into effect during the 2012-13 school year, and its provision for Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Food in Schools, implemented during the 2014-15 school year. As such, certain research may not be relevant today.

This issue of *The Journal of Child Nutrition and Management* contains a current issues article and seven research articles on a variety of timely school nutrition topics. You may have been a participant or respondent in some of the research and your willingness to assist researchers is very important. These peer-reviewed articles cover a range of topics that can assist school nutrition professionals in managing their programs.

Diabetes mellitus is becoming more prevalent among children and Grenici has provided recommendations for providing diabetes-supportive school meal environments in the current issues article. She provides tips and resources for school nutrition personnel.

Bounds and colleagues explored perceptions and practices of school professionals regarding recess before lunch in elementary schools. They found strong program leadership, inclusive policy making, and scheduling were key factors in successful implementation of recess before lunch programs. School nutrition professionals should not underestimate the role they play in supporting the nutritional and academic benefits of recess before lunch.

Zoellner and Carr surveyed school nutrition directors for their interest in web-based training opportunities and discovered high interest in web-based training. The benefits of web-based training outnumbered barriers; most frequently identified benefits included completing training at any time, self-directed learning, not traveling, and financial savings.

Longley and Sneed surveyed school nutrition directors from medium- and large-sized school districts for their attitudes about the potential benefits of school wellness policies. Attitudes of school nutrition directors differed based on socioeconomic status of school districts and geographic region. Directors from districts with a high percentage of free and reduced price eligible students were more optimistic that wellness policies would have a positive impact on health, nutrition, and physical education than directors from schools with a low percentage of free and reduced price eligible students. Directors in the southeast region were more optimistic than directors in the mountain plains and southwest regions.

Nettles and colleagues identified competencies, knowledge, and skills needed for school nutrition assistants who work at school cafeterias under the direction of a school nutrition manager. Through a two phase research design, they also determined at what point the school nutrition assistant should be able to know/perform the knowledge/skill statement, at time of hire or after training. Their findings provide needed information for defining the role of an effective school nutrition assistant.

Lofton and colleagues identified and confirmed best practices for serving the nutritional needs of Pre-Kindergarten (PreK) children in the public school setting. The best practice guide is available at www.nfsmi.org and school nutrition professionals could use the guide as a checklist to evaluate program effectiveness and identify staff training needs specific to serving PreK children.

Sherrin and colleagues surveyed Texas school nutrition directors and found meals per labor hour was the most commonly used labor productivity measure. In their study, volume of meals produced, available equipment, and on-site vs. central kitchen production were considered the most important variables to consider when staffing a school foodservice kitchen.

Researchers at the University of Minnesota have been focusing on increasing whole grain menu offerings in school meals. Hesse and colleagues conducted focus groups with school nutrition directors and managers and found there is a need for more communication among schools,

vendors, manufacturers, and governmental agencies. There is a need for clarification on definitions, specifications, and standards for whole grain foods.

This issue also includes Endahl's summary of child nutrition research conducted by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Kyunghye Choi, MS, RD, copy editor, and Amber King, graduate assistant, both from Eastern Michigan University. They have contributed their expertise to ensure the continued success of the Journal. I look forward to your feedback on the Journal.

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Editor