



2024 SCHOOL NUTRITION TRENDS REPORT

ABSTRACT

SNA surveyed its school nutrition director members in Fall of 2023 to evaluate economic, procurement and operational trends in school nutrition programs and examine concerns regarding proposed school nutrition requirements.





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Cover photo: Students load up on fruits and vegetables during school lunch at Mountaineer Middle School in Clarksburg, West Virginia. School lunch offers students fruits, vegetables and low-fat or fat-free milk with every meal.

Photo credit: Rick Brady/SNA

Learn more about healthy school meals at www.SchoolNutrition.org/SchoolMeals/



Objectives

- Identify the most salient current challenges facing school nutrition programs.
- Track the adequacy of reimbursement rates and trends in school meal prices.
- Evaluate the financial sustainability of school meals programs and the extent of unpaid meal charges and debt.
- Examine concerns regarding forthcoming rules to update federal school nutrition standards.
- Capture emerging menu trends.

Background and Sample

1. Background and Sample	
Survey open period	10/24/23 - 11/10/23
Full sample of surveyed school districts	4,038
Total number of unique respondent school districts	1,343
Response rate	33.3%

A note on interpreting statistical significance in this report: throughout this report, associations between variables that have been found to be statistically significant are notated with the following symbols and corresponding meanings:

** Statistically significant at the .001 level or lower (highest level of significance).

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

If a specific association between two variables has *'s next to its name, then it is likely that there are real, measurable differences in the outcome value of one variable as it relates to the other variable. For example, if there is an ** next to 'Free and Reduced %' in a table on the results of a question asking if the respondents are 'Not all concerned', 'Moderately concerned' and 'Seriously concerned', then we can assume that the response results to the question significantly differ based on the respondents' free and reduced % category.

However, if there are no *s, then it is not likely that the difference in responses is statistically significant – in other words, there is no real, measurable difference in the outcome value of one variable as it relates to the other.



Executive Summary

Challenges for School Meal Programs

- The top 3 challenges for school meal programs are:
 - 1) Increasing costs – 99.3% (n = 1,313) report moderate or significant challenges
 - 2) Staff shortages – 90.5% (n = 1,199) report moderate or significant challenges
 - 3) Menu item shortages – 87.2% (n = 1,152) report moderate or significant challenges
- Staff shortages: Programs in the Mid-Atlantic FNS region (65.4%, n = 87), programs with free-and-reduced % rates of 65% or more (62.9%, n = 188), and programs with district enrollments over 25,000 students (64.9%, n = 87) reported the highest levels of significant challenges with staff shortages. The severity of reported challenges with staff shortages increased with enrollment size.
- Unpaid meal charges: Programs offering free meals to all students district-wide reported that unpaid meal debt was not a challenge at a rate almost 10 times higher (72.2%, n = 469) than programs that do not offer free meals to all students district-wide (7.3%, n = 49).
- Supply chain: Districts with the highest level of free-and-reduced eligibility percentage (65%+) consistently reported the highest levels of significant challenges with procurement processes among all other free-and-reduced percentage categories, including: menu item shortages (40.8% n = 122), late/delayed deliveries (22.1%, n = 66), supplier/distributor cancelling services/contracts (16.7%, n = 50), longer than normal lead times (31.8%, n = 95), and lack of competitive bid responses (33.0%, n = 98).
- The top 3 most challenging items to procure are:
 - 1) Breakfast items (eg cereals, granola bars, biscuits, pancakes) – 74.8% (n = 894) report moderate or significant challenges
 - 2) Entrees (eg pizza, burritos, chicken, burgers) – 74.2% (n = 889) report moderate or significant challenges
 - 3) Snacks (eg crackers/chips) – 58.4% (n = 699) report moderate or significant challenges



- In 7 out of 10 menu item categories, there was found to be a statistically significant association between FNS region and the reported severity of difficulty to procure the item category. In all these item categories, respondents from the Southeast FNS region reported having more significant difficulty than the overall sample. Respondents from the Southeast FNS region reported significant difficulty procuring milk (30.1%, n = 58) - almost twice the rate of the overall sample (16.8%, n = 201).

Meal Prices and Unpaid Meal Debt

- 59.1% (n = 794) of respondents report their programs offer free school breakfast to all students districtwide (through Community Eligibility Provision or state/local initiatives) and 49.3% (n = 662) offer free school lunch districtwide.
- A majority of directors with schools offering free meals to all their students report positive benefits after implementing free meals, including increased school meal participation (87.4%, n = 689) and positive social-emotional cafeteria environment (66.2%, n = 522).
- Overall reported median unpaid meal debt increased by 5.8% (\$301.50 per program) from \$5,164.00 (n = 847) in November of 2022 to \$5,495.00 (n = 808) in November in 2023. This continues the trend of increasing median unpaid meal debt that started before the COVID-19 pandemic: at the end of SY 2017-18 reported median unpaid meal debt was \$3,400 (n = 570), end of SY 2016-17 reported median unpaid meal debt was \$2,500 (n = 897), and end of SY 2014-15 reported median unpaid meal debt was \$2,000 (n = 627).
- Among the 808 unique school districts that reported unpaid meal debt, total accumulated debt equaled \$17.73 million, ranging from \$10.00 to \$1,000,000. 91.9% (n = 627) of programs not offering free meals to all students reported unpaid meal debt, while only 27.4% (n = 181) of programs offering free meals to all students district-wide reported unpaid meal debt.
- Free-and-reduced % category and rate of reporting unpaid meal debt have an inverse relationship: the lowest free-and-reduced % programs (<26%) reported unpaid meal debt at the highest rate (75.6%, n = 170) of all free-and-reduced % categories, while the highest free-and-reduced % programs (>65%) reported unpaid meal debt at the lowest rate (25.9%, n = 79) of all free-and-reduced % categories.



Funding and Financial Sustainability

- The percentages of programs reporting that School Breakfast Program (SBP)/National School Lunch Program (NSLP) reimbursement rates are insufficient to cover the costs of producing meals increased from SY 2022-23 to SY 2023-24, from 54.7% (n = 601) to 60.2% (n = 777) for breakfast, and from 56.6% (n = 620) to 64.4% (n = 833) for lunch.
- 91.6% (n = 1,183) of programs report serious or moderate concern regarding the financial sustainability of their school nutrition program three years from now. Programs in the Western FNS region reported the highest level of serious concern (56.4%, n = 97).
- Supply Chain Assistance (SCA) funds allowed schools to purchase unprocessed or minimally processed domestic foods. By partially offsetting food expenses, programs that accepted SCA) funds reported they were able to invest in program improvements in the following categories at the highest rates:
 - 1) Menu improvement - 62.4%, n = 692
 - 2) Equipment - 56.4%, n = 626
 - 3) Staffing (bonuses, wages, hiring) - 40.1%, n = 445

Federal School Nutrition Standards

- 90.4% (n = 1,160) of responding programs report significant or moderate challenges with the availability of foods that meet target 1A sodium limits and are well accepted by students.



- There are significant concerns regarding proposed school nutrition requirements, specifically:
 - additional sodium limits (3 more 10% reductions for lunch, 2 more 10% reductions for breakfast) – 98.7% (n = 1,270) serious/moderate concern
 - eliminating flavored milk options (grades K–8) – 94.7% (n = 1,219) serious/moderate concern
 - limiting added sugars to a weekly average of less than 10% of calories per meal, in addition to product-based limits – 94.7% (n = 1,215) serious/moderate concern
 - limits on added sugar in milk, yogurt, and cereal – 93.1% (n = 1,195) serious/moderate concern
 - limiting grain-based deserts, including whole-grain granola/cereal/breakfast bars, to no more than 2oz equivalents per week for breakfast – 92.8% (n = 1,193) serious/moderate concern

Menu Trends

- The top 3 menu changes for next year include:
 - 1) Adding menu choices – 64.6% (n = 868)
 - 2) Increasing locally-grown/raised foods – 55.6% (n = 747)
 - 3) Increasing scratch preparation – 52.6% (n = 706)
- The top 3 actions to increase student acceptance of nutrition menu options include:
 - 1) Student taste test/sampling – 66.0% (n = 886)
 - 2) Farm to school/School garden initiatives – 39.8% (n = 534)
 - 3) Nutrition education initiatives – 25.8% (n = 347)



Respondent Characteristics

2. USDA FNS Region

	n	%
Mid-Atlantic	134	9.9
Midwest	374	27.6
Mountain Plains	140	10.4
Northeast	128	9.6
Southeast	223	16.7
Southwest	165	12.4
Western	179	13.3
Total	1,343	100.0

3. District Enrollment

	n	%
<1,000	207	15.4
1,000 - 2,499	312	23.2
2,500 - 4,999	283	21.1
5,000 - 9,999	225	16.7
10,000 - 24,999	182	13.5
25,000+	135	10
Total	1,343	100.0

4. Free-and-Reduced Rate %

	n	%
<26%	225	16.8
26 - 50%	492	36.7
51 - 65%	318	23.7
>65%	305	22.8
Total	1,340	100.0



5. Do any of the schools in your district currently participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)?

	n	%
Yes	690	52.7
No	619	47.3
Total	1,309	100.0

6. What percentage of the schools in your district currently participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)?

	n	%
1 - 25%	89	12.9
26 - 50%	57	8.2
51 - 75%	71	10.3
76 - 99%	53	7.7
100%	420	60.7
Total	690	100.0
Note: Only respondents who answered 'Yes' to "Do any of the schools in your district currently participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)?" were asked this question.		

7. Do all schools in your district serve all meals free to all students?

	n	%
No	682	50.8
Yes	661	49.2
Total	1,343	100.0



Results

Challenges for School Meal Programs

- The top 3 challenges for school meal programs are:
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 3. Menu item shortages – 87.2% (n = 1,152) report moderate or significant challenges

Refer to Appendix A for response summary tables on each challenge, disaggregated by USDA FNS region, free-and-reduced percentage rate, district enrollment and other selected variables.

Several statistically significant associations were identified, including:

- Staff shortages: Programs in the Mid-Atlantic FNS region (65.4%, n = 87), programs with free-and-reduced % rates of 65% or more (62.9%, n = 188), and programs with district enrollments over 25,000 students (64.9%, n = 87) reported the highest levels of significant challenges with staff shortages. The severity of reported challenges with staff shortages increased with enrollment size.
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Most Challenging Menu Items to Procure

- The top 3 most challenging items to procure are:
 1. Breakfast items (eg cereals, granola bars, biscuits, pancakes) – 74.8% (n = 894) report moderate or significant challenges
 2. Entrees (eg pizza, burritos, chicken, burgers) – 74.2% (n = 889) report moderate or significant challenges
 3. Snacks (eg crackers/chips) – 58.4% (n = 699) report moderate or significant challenges

Refer to Appendix B for response summary tables on each challenge, disaggregated by USDA FNS region, free-and-reduced percentage rate, district enrollment and other selected variables.

Several statistically significant associations were identified, including:

- In 7 out of 10 menu item categories, there was found to be a statistically significant association between FNS region and the reported severity of difficulty to procure the item category. In all these item categories, respondents from the Southeast FNS region reported having more significant difficulty than the overall sample. Respondents from the Southeast FNS region reported significant difficulty procuring milk (30.1%, n = 58) - almost twice the rate of the overall sample (16.8%, n = 201).

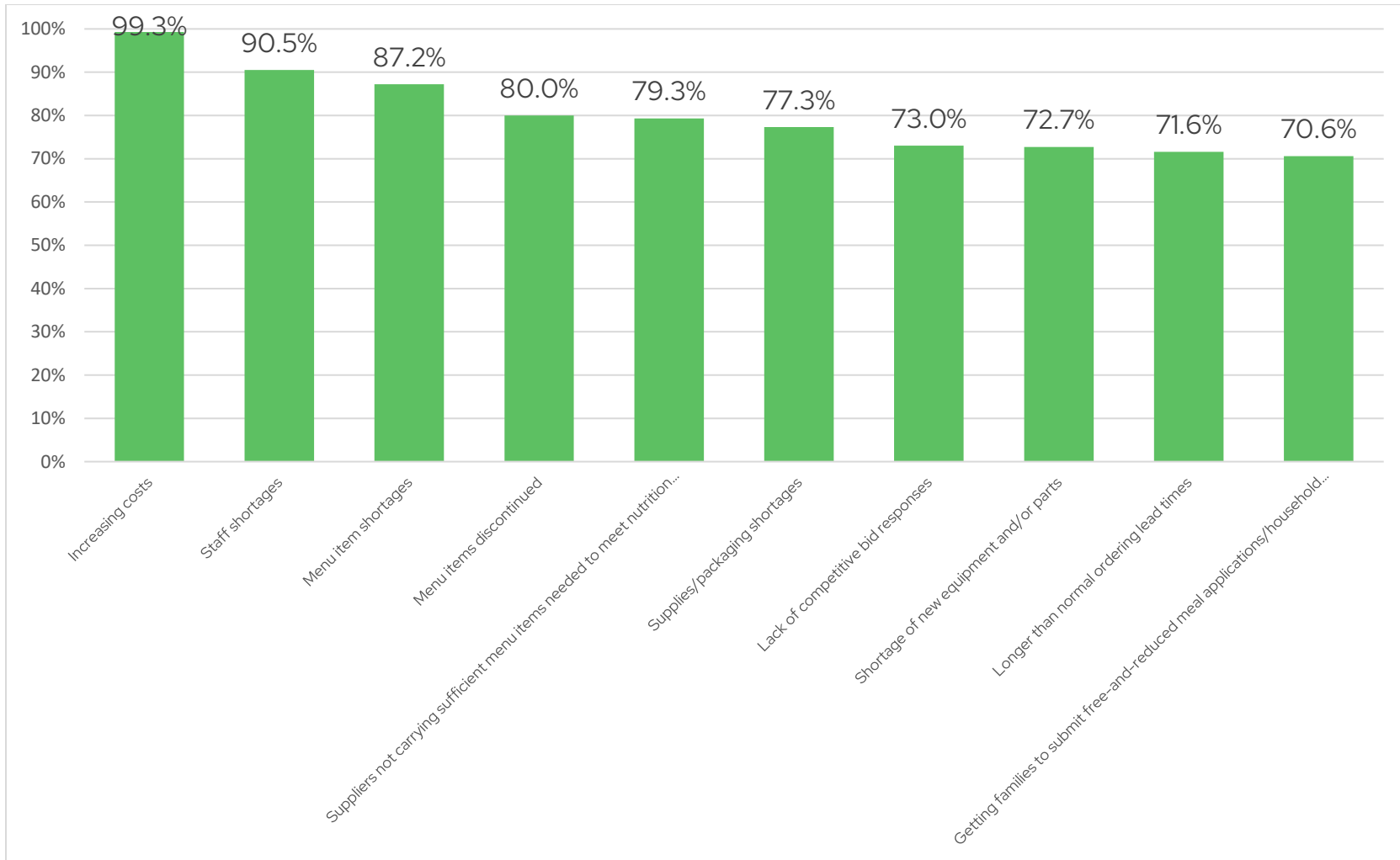


8. Challenges for Your School Meal Program - SY 2023-24 vs. SY 2022-23

#	Issue	SY 2023-24 Significant or Moderate Challenge	SY 2022-23 Significant or Moderate challenge
1	Increasing costs	99.3%	99.8%
2	Staff shortages	90.5%	92.9%
3	Menu item shortages	87.2%	96.7%
4	Menu items discontinued	80.0%	93.0%
5	Suppliers not carrying sufficient menu items needed to meet nutrition standards (e.g. whole-grain, low-sodium, low-fat)	79.3%	88.8%
6	Supplies/packaging shortages	77.3%	91.5%
7	Lack of competitive bid responses	73.0%	78.1%
8	Shortage of new equipment and/or parts	72.7%	87.5%
9	Longer than normal ordering lead times	71.6%	85.6%
10	Getting families to submit free-and-reduced meal applications/household income forms	70.6%	75.4%
11	Suppliers not carrying sufficient menu items to meet Buy American requirements	63.3%	76.2%
12	Late/delayed deliveries	61.3%	76.9%
13	Unpaid meal charges/debt	60.9%	70.0%
14	Obtaining and utilizing USDA Foods	56.0%	70.1%
15	Supplier/Distributor cancelling services/contracts	42.1%	59.7%



9. SY 2023-24 Significant or Moderate Challenges to Your School Meal Program





10. Challenges for Your School Meal Program

#	Issue	Significant Challenge (%)	Moderate Challenge (%)	Not a Challenge (%)	N
1	Increasing costs	83.9%	15.4%	0.7%	1,322
2	Staff shortages	54.7%	35.8%	9.5%	1,325
3	Getting families to submit free-and-reduced meal applications/household income forms	34.2%	36.4%	29.5%	1,320
4	Unpaid meal charges/debt	34.2%	26.7%	39.1%	1,325
5	Suppliers not carrying sufficient menu items needed to meet nutrition standards (e.g. whole-grain, low-sodium, low-fat)	32.6%	46.7%	20.7%	1,321
6	Menu item shortages	32.5%	54.7%	12.9%	1,322
7	Lack of competitive bid responses	27.7%	45.3%	27.0%	1,317
8	Supplies/packaging shortages	25.8%	51.5%	22.7%	1,324
9	Menu items discontinued	24.2%	55.8%	20.1%	1,325
10	Longer than normal ordering lead times	23.8%	47.8%	28.4%	1,321
11	Shortage of new equipment and/or parts	21.1%	51.6%	27.3%	1,322
12	Suppliers not carrying sufficient menu items to meet Buy American requirements	18.9%	44.4%	36.6%	1,319
13	Late/delayed deliveries	17.4%	43.9%	38.7%	1,324
14	Obtaining and utilizing USDA Foods	13.0%	43.0%	44.0%	1,322
15	Supplier/Distributor cancelling services/contracts	10.3%	31.8%	57.9%	1,325



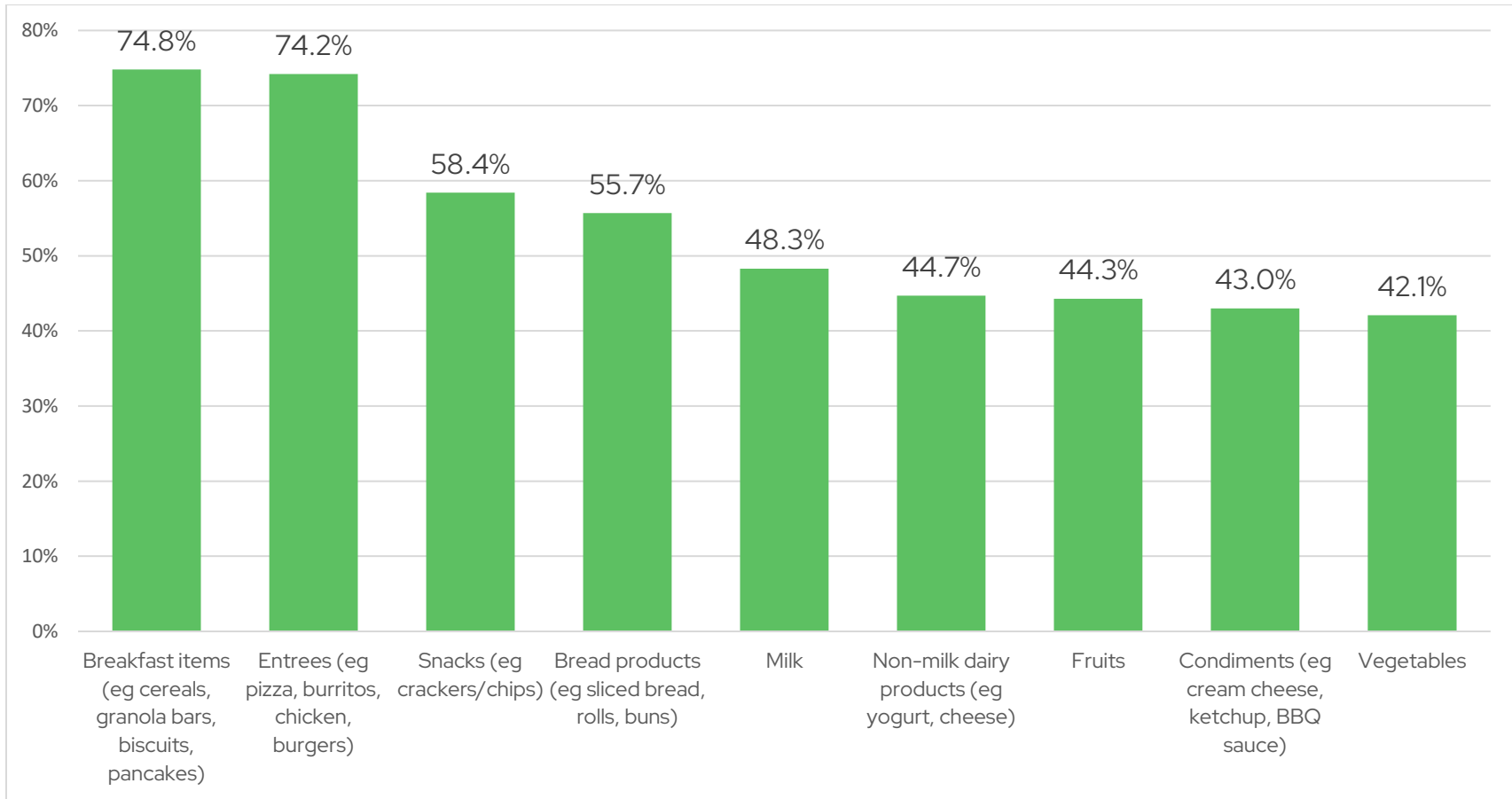
11. Most Challenging Menu Items to Procure - SY 2023-24 vs. SY 2022-23

#	Issue	SY 2023-24 Significant or Moderate Challenge	SY 2022-23 Significant or Moderate challenge
1	Breakfast items (eg cereals, granola bars, biscuits, pancakes)	74.8%	88.0%
2	Entrees (eg pizza, burritos, chicken, burgers)	74.1%	88.4%
3	Snacks (eg crackers/chips)	58.4%	77.6%
4	Bread products (eg sliced bread, rolls, buns)	55.7%	64.7%
5	Milk	48.3%	41.9%
6	Non-milk dairy products (eg yogurt, cheese)	44.7%	58.6%
7	Fruits	44.3%	60.5%
8	Condiments (eg cream cheese, ketchup, BBQ sauce)	43.0%	62.0%
9	Vegetables	42.1%	62.9%

Note: This question was only asked of the 1,218 respondents who selected "Significant challenge" or "Moderate challenge" on 'Menu items discontinued' or 'Menu item shortages' to the previous question regarding challenges for your school meal program. Number of responses varies by item. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding. 87 'Other' open-ended responses were collected as well and can be seen in Table B11 in Appendix B.



12. SY 2023-24 Significant or Moderately Challenging Menu Items to Procure



Note: This question was only asked of the 1,218 respondents who selected "Significant challenge" or "Moderate challenge" on 'Menu items discontinued' or 'Menu item shortages' to the previous question regarding challenges for your school meal program. Number of responses varies by item. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding. 87 'Other' open-ended responses were collected as well and can be seen in Table B11 in Appendix B.



13. Most Challenging Menu Items to Procure

#	Issue	Significant Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Not a Challenge	N
1	Breakfast items (eg cereals, granola bars, biscuits, pancakes)	26.2%	48.6%	25.3%	1,196
2	Entrees (eg pizza, burritos, chicken, burgers)	21.1%	53.0%	25.9%	1,199
3	Milk	16.8%	31.5%	51.6%	1,193
4	Bread products (eg sliced bread, rolls, buns)	13.4%	42.3%	44.3%	1,199
5	Snacks (eg crackers/chips)	11.8%	46.6%	41.6%	1,197
6	Fruits	8.2%	36.1%	55.7%	1,190
7	Vegetables	6.8%	35.3%	57.9%	1,194
8	Condiments (eg cream cheese, ketchup, BBQ sauce)	6.5%	36.5%	57.0%	1,194
9	Non-milk dairy products (eg yogurt, cheese)	5.9%	38.8%	55.3%	1,190

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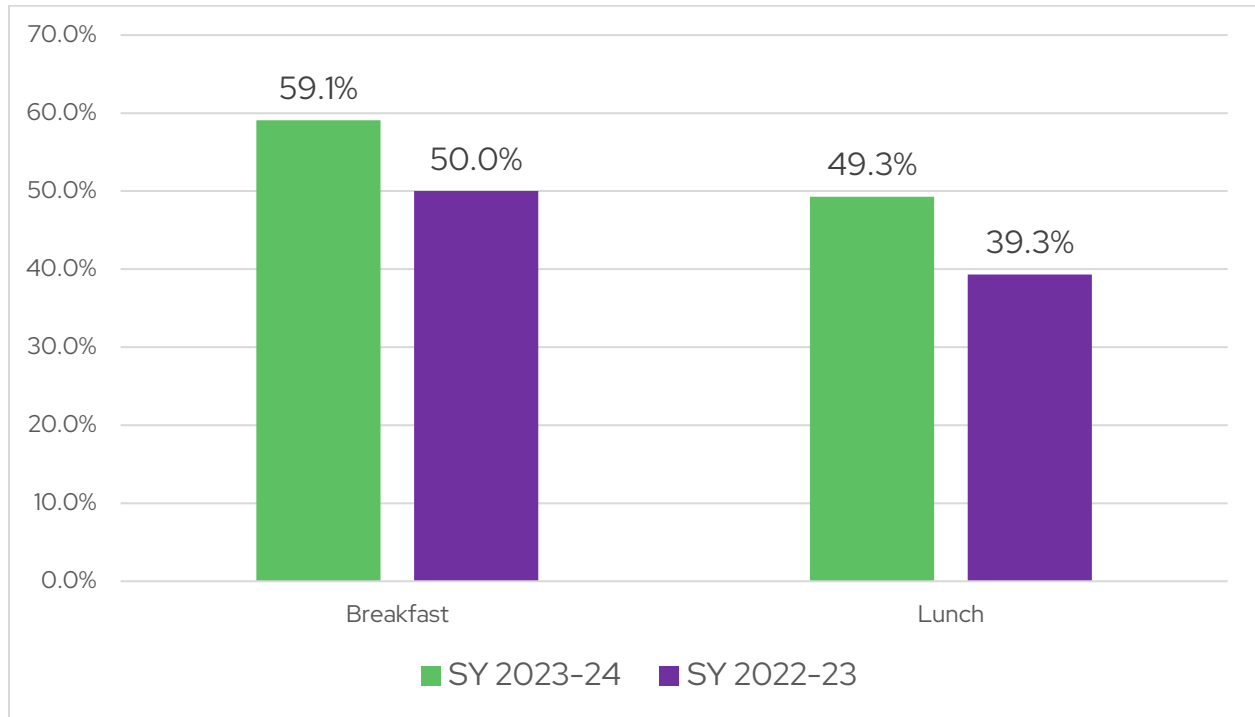


Meal Prices and Unpaid Meal Debt

- 59.1% (n = 794) of respondents report their programs offer free school breakfast to all students districtwide (through Community Eligibility Provision or state/local initiatives) and 49.3% (n = 662) offer free school lunch districtwide.
- A majority of directors with schools offering free meals to all their students report positive benefits after implementing free meals, including increased school meal participation (87.4%, n = 689) and positive social-emotional cafeteria environment (66.2%, n = 522).
- Overall reported median unpaid meal debt increased by 5.8% (\$301.50 per program) from \$5,164.00 (n = 847) in November of 2022 to \$5,495.00 (n = 808) in November in 2023. This continues the trend of increasing median unpaid meal debt that started before the COVID-19 pandemic: at the end of SY 2017-18 reported median unpaid meal debt was \$3,400 (n = 570), end of SY 2016-17 reported median unpaid meal debt was \$2,500 (n = 897), and end of SY 2014-15 reported median unpaid meal debt was \$2,000 (n = 627).
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- Free-and-reduced % category and rate of reporting unpaid meal debt have an inverse relationship: the lowest free-and-reduced % programs (<26%) reported unpaid meal debt at the highest rate (75.6%, n = 170) of all free-and-reduced % categories, while the highest free-and-reduced % programs (>65%) reported unpaid meal debt at the lowest rate (25.9%, n = 79) of all free-and-reduced % categories.



14. Percentage of school meal programs serving breakfast and/or lunch for free to all students districtwide - SY 2023-24 vs. SY 2022-23



Note: School nutrition programs offering free meals to all students districtwide may do so through several means: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) districtwide, local or state provision of free meals for all students, or a combination of the previous. SY 2023-24: n = 1,343. SY 2022-23: n = 1,224. Percentages may not total to 100.0% due to rounding.



15. Per meal charge for students who pay full price for reimbursable meals for SY 2023-24

15. Per meal charge for students who pay full price for reimbursable meals for SY 2023-24								
	School Level	10th percentile	25th percentile	50th percentile (median)	75th percentile	90th percentile	Average	n
Breakfast	Elementary	\$1.25	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$1.77	434
	Middle	\$1.35	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2.00	\$2.34	\$1.84	431
	High	\$1.35	\$1.55	\$1.80	\$2.09	\$2.50	\$1.88	428
Lunch	Elementary	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$2.83	\$3.10	\$3.31	\$2.83	568
	Middle	\$2.50	\$2.75	\$3.00	\$3.25	\$3.60	\$3.03	560
	High	\$2.50	\$2.75	\$3.05	\$3.40	\$3.75	\$3.10	553

Note: This question only asked of those who indicated that they were not 100% CEP districts and indicated that they were not providing breakfast and/or lunch for free to all students in their district.



16. Median per meal charge for students who pay full price for reimbursable meals - SY 2023-24 vs. SY 2022-23

	School Level	SY 2023-24 Median	SY 2022-23 Median	Difference
Breakfast	Elementary	\$1.75	\$1.73	\$0.02
	Middle	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$0.00
	High	\$1.80	\$1.80	\$0.00
Lunch	Elementary	\$2.83	\$2.75	\$0.08
	Middle	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$0.00
	High	\$3.05	\$3.00	\$0.05

Note: This question only asked of those who indicated that they were not 100% CEP districts and indicated that they were not providing breakfast and/or lunch for free to all students in their district.

Color code: Red indicates a price increase, yellow indicates no change from SY 2022-23 to SY 2023-24.



17. Median per meal charge for students who pay full price for breakfast for SY 2023-24 - Breakouts

	Overall	Elementary	Middle	High	n Range*
		\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.80	428 - 434
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	\$1.60	\$1.60	\$1.60	26 - 27
	Midwest	\$1.75	\$1.80	\$1.85	142 - 144
	Mountain Plains	\$1.75	\$1.85	\$1.85	77 - 78
	Northeast	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.83	18 - 19
	Southeast	\$1.65	\$1.75	\$1.75	51 - 57
	Southwest	\$1.55	\$1.70	\$1.75	67 - 69
	Western	\$2.00	\$2.15	\$2.20	43 - 45
Free and Reduced %	<26%	\$1.90	\$2.00	\$2.00	96 - 101
	26 - 50%	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.80	219 - 223
	51 - 65%	\$1.68	\$1.75	\$1.75	88 - 91
	>65%	\$1.63	\$1.75	\$1.75	21 - 22
District Enrollment	<1,000	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$1.80	53 - 62
	1,000 - 2,499	\$1.75	\$1.83	\$1.85	96 - 99
	2,500 - 4,999	\$1.85	\$1.88	\$2.00	81 - 85
	5,000 - 9,999	\$1.75	\$1.90	\$2.00	64 - 68
	10,000 - 24,999	\$1.65	\$1.75	\$1.75	71 - 72
	25,000+	\$1.58	\$1.63	\$1.65	53 - 56
<p>Note: This question only asked of those who indicated that they were not 100% CEP districts and indicated that they were not providing breakfast and/or lunch for free to all students in their district.</p> <p>* Elementary, middle, and high school grade levels varied in the reported n for each of the given categories in the first column (FNS region, Free and Reduced %, District Enrollment). For ease of presentation, we provide the range of n's (minimum and maximum) for breakout category rather than providing the n for each grade level and category.</p>					



18. Median per meal charge for students who pay full price for lunch for SY 2023-24 - Breakouts

18. Median per meal charge for students who pay full price for lunch for SY 2023-24 - Breakouts					
	Overall	Elementary	Middle	High	n Range*
		\$2.83	\$3.00	\$3.05	553 - 568
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	\$2.75	\$2.98	\$3.00	61 - 63
	Midwest	\$2.85	\$3.00	\$3.10	177 - 184
	Mountain Plains	\$2.85	\$3.00	\$3.00	83 - 84
	Northeast	\$3.00	\$3.25	\$3.50	28 - 30
	Southeast	\$2.75	\$2.80	\$2.95	65 - 70
	Southwest	\$2.58	\$2.83	\$3.00	84 - 90
	Western	\$3.13	\$3.50	\$3.50	49 - 50
Free and Reduced %	<26%	\$3.00	\$3.20	\$3.25	127 - 135
	26 - 50%	\$2.90	\$3.00	\$3.05	261 - 268
	51 - 65%	\$2.70	\$2.90	\$3.00	122 - 125
	>65%	\$2.70	\$2.75	\$2.85	38 - 41
District Enrollment	<1,000	\$3.00	\$3.05	\$3.00	67 - 74
	1,000 - 2,499	\$2.90	\$3.00	\$3.10	133 - 135
	2,500 - 4,999	\$2.80	\$3.00	\$3.10	127 - 129
	5,000 - 9,999	\$2.78	\$3.00	\$3.10	83 - 86
	10,000 - 24,999	\$2.80	\$3.00	\$3.00	76 - 78
	25,000+	\$2.78	\$2.95	\$3.00	63 - 66
<p>Note: This question only asked of those who indicated that they were not 100% CEP districts and indicated that they were not providing breakfast and/or lunch for free to all students in their district.</p> <p>* Elementary, middle, and high school grade levels varied in the reported n for each of the given categories in the first column (FNS region, Free and Reduced %, District Enrollment). For ease of presentation, we provide the range of n's (minimum and maximum) for breakout category rather than providing the n for each grade level and category.</p>					



19. Median unpaid meal debt - SY 2023-24 vs. SY 2022-23

		SY 2023-24 Median	SY 2022-23 Median	Difference	SY 2023-24 n	SY 2022-23 n
Overall		\$5,495.50	\$5,194.00	\$301.50	807	847
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	\$10,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$1,000.00	89	89
	Midwest	\$3,800.00	\$3,500.00	\$300.00	271	280
	Mountain Plains	\$7,150.00	\$7,500.00	\$350.00	108	107
	Northeast	\$4,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	73	67
	Southeast	\$5,931.00	\$7,000.00	\$1,069.00	103	143
	Southwest	\$7,881.00	\$9,509.50	\$1,628.50	98	86
	Western	\$13,315.50	\$10,000.00	\$3,315.50	66	75
Free and Reduced %	<26%	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	170	180
	26 - 50%	\$6,000.00	\$5,450.00	\$550.00	382	392
	51 - 65%	\$6,000.00	\$5,500.00	\$500.00	177	185
	>65%	\$5,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$3,000.00	79	90
District Enrollment	<1,000	\$1,055.00	\$1,400.00	\$345.00	117	121
	1,000 - 2,499	\$3,500.00	\$3,000.00	\$500.00	205	189
	2,500 - 4,999	\$5,931.00	\$4,275.00	\$1,656.00	173	192
	5,000 - 9,999	\$7,300.00	\$7,300.00	\$0.00	135	147
	10,000 - 24,999	\$19,030.00	\$20,000.00	\$970.00	103	122
	25,000+	\$39,500.00	\$60,000.00	\$20,500.00	75	76
Offer Free Meals to ALL students districtwide?	Yes	\$3,500.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,500.00	181	149
	No	\$6,394.00	\$6,000.00	\$394.00	627	698

Color Code: Median unpaid debt increased from SY 2022-23 to SY 2023-24
 Median unpaid debt decreased from SY 2022-23 to SY 2023-24
 Median unpaid debt did not change from SY 2022-23 to SY 2023-24

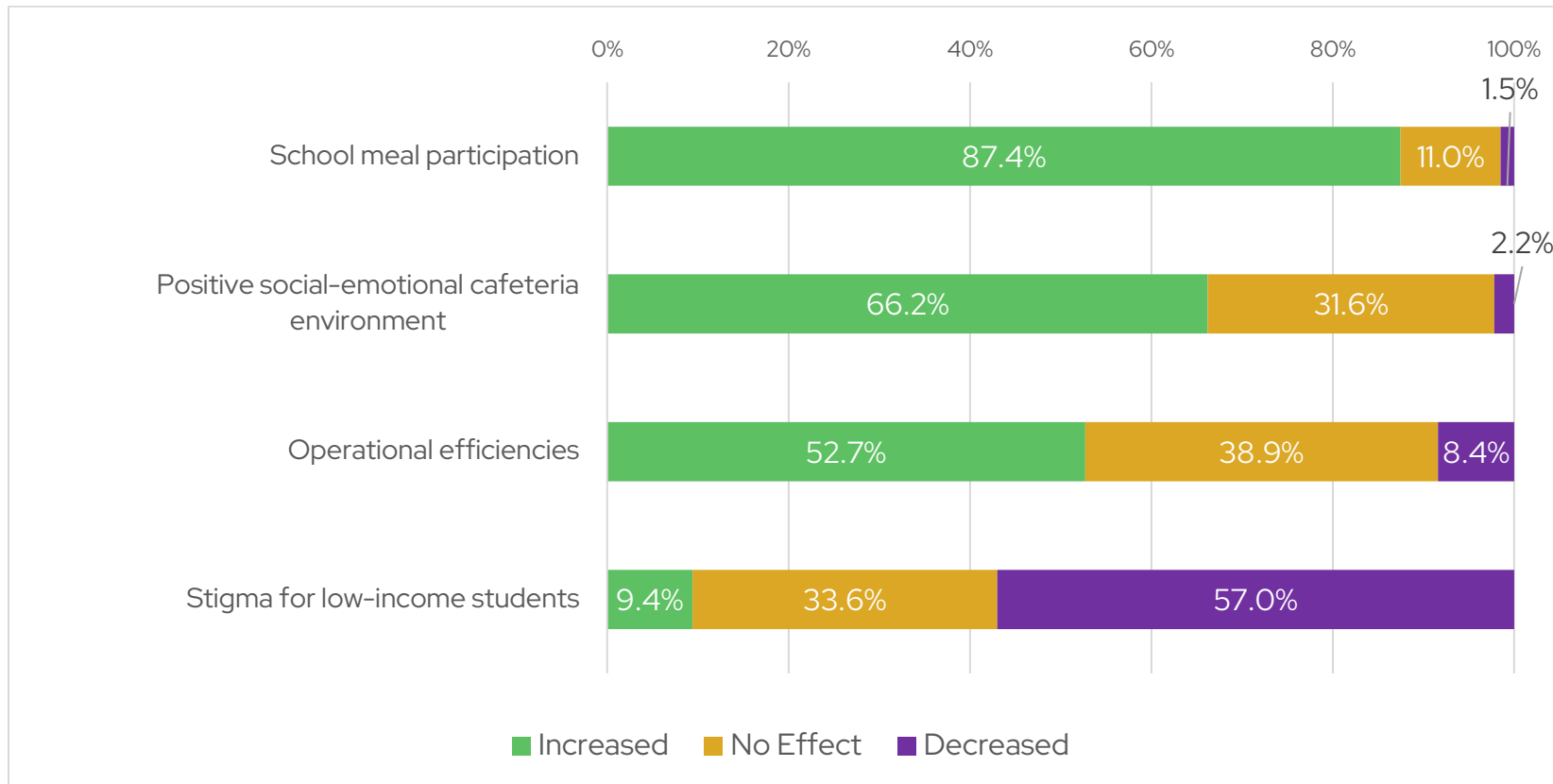


20. Unpaid Meal Debt: Breakouts

	Overall	Reported Unpaid Meal Debt (%)	10th percentile	25th percentile	50th percentile (median)	75th percentile	90th percentile	Average	n
		58.9%	\$500.00	\$1,900.00	\$5,495.00	\$19,000.00	\$56,100.00	\$21,939.98	808
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	65.4%	\$1,120.00	\$4,186.00	\$10,000.00	\$49,000.00	\$187,901.00	\$58,569.38	89
	Midwest	71.7%	\$300.00	\$1,000.00	\$3,800.00	\$10,000.00	\$25,800.00	\$9,875.31	271
	Mountain Plains	75.5%	\$450.90	\$1,000.00	\$7,150.00	\$26,510.25	\$62,000.00	\$20,316.94	108
	Northeast	55.3%	\$410.00	\$1,200.00	\$4,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$33,000.00	\$11,035.03	73
	Southeast	45.0%	\$586.80	\$2,000.00	\$5,931.00	\$22,000.00	\$50,800.00	\$20,160.26	103
	Southwest	57.6%	\$1,490.50	\$3,957.25	\$7,881.00	\$22,556.50	\$75,600.00	\$23,743.49	98
	Western	36.1%	\$500.00	\$3,225.00	\$13,315.50	\$42,500.00	\$116,300.00	\$36,901.05	66
Free and Reduced %**	<26%	75.6%	\$400.00	\$1,297.25	\$4,000.00	\$12,850.00	\$38,961.90	\$12,397.07	170
	26 - 50%	77.6%	\$500.00	\$1,987.50	\$6,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$61,780.90	\$22,381.54	382
	51 - 65%	55.7%	\$500.00	\$2,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$21,203.50	\$61,304.00	\$25,781.14	177
	>65%	25.9%	\$500.00	\$1,800.00	\$5,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$31,734.14	79
District Enrollment	<1,000	56.5%	\$158.00	\$500.00	\$1,055.00	\$4,176.50	\$13,177.40	\$4,316.49	117
	1,000 - 2,499	65.7%	\$368.00	\$1,020.50	\$3,500.00	\$9,500.00	\$23,067.40	\$8,714.52	205
	2,500 - 4,999	61.1%	\$666.80	\$2,863.50	\$5,931.00	\$15,000.00	\$28,996.20	\$13,503.60	173
	5,000 - 9,999	60.0%	\$1,260.00	\$2,700.00	\$7,300.00	\$20,000.00	\$60,727.60	\$19,940.99	135
	10,000 - 24,999	56.6%	\$1,940.00	\$5,491.00	\$19,030.00	\$46,276.00	\$119,600.00	\$48,350.43	103
	25,000+	55.6%	\$3,444.00	\$8,000.00	\$39,500.00	\$100,000.00	\$192,740.60	\$72,370.05	75
Offer Free Meals to ALL students district-wide? **	Yes	27.4%	\$200.00	\$500.00	\$3,500.00	\$12,750.00	\$39,000.00	\$18,880.84	181
	No	91.9%	\$716.80	\$2,253.00	\$6,394.00	\$20,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$22,823.09	627
Note: Debt ranges from \$10.00 to \$1,000,000. Among the 808 unique school districts that reported their unpaid meal debt, total accumulated debt equaled \$17,727,508.00.									
Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced %, and Offering Free Meals to ALL students districtwide, and reporting that a school district has unpaid meal debt.									
Note: School nutrition programs offering free meals to all students districtwide may do so through several means: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) districtwide, local or state provision of free meals for all students, or a combination of the previous.									



21. In your schools that offer free meals to all your students, since implementation, what effects have you observed on the following?



Note: This question only asked of those who indicated they were serving all free school breakfasts and lunches to all students in their district, or if any of the schools in their district currently participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

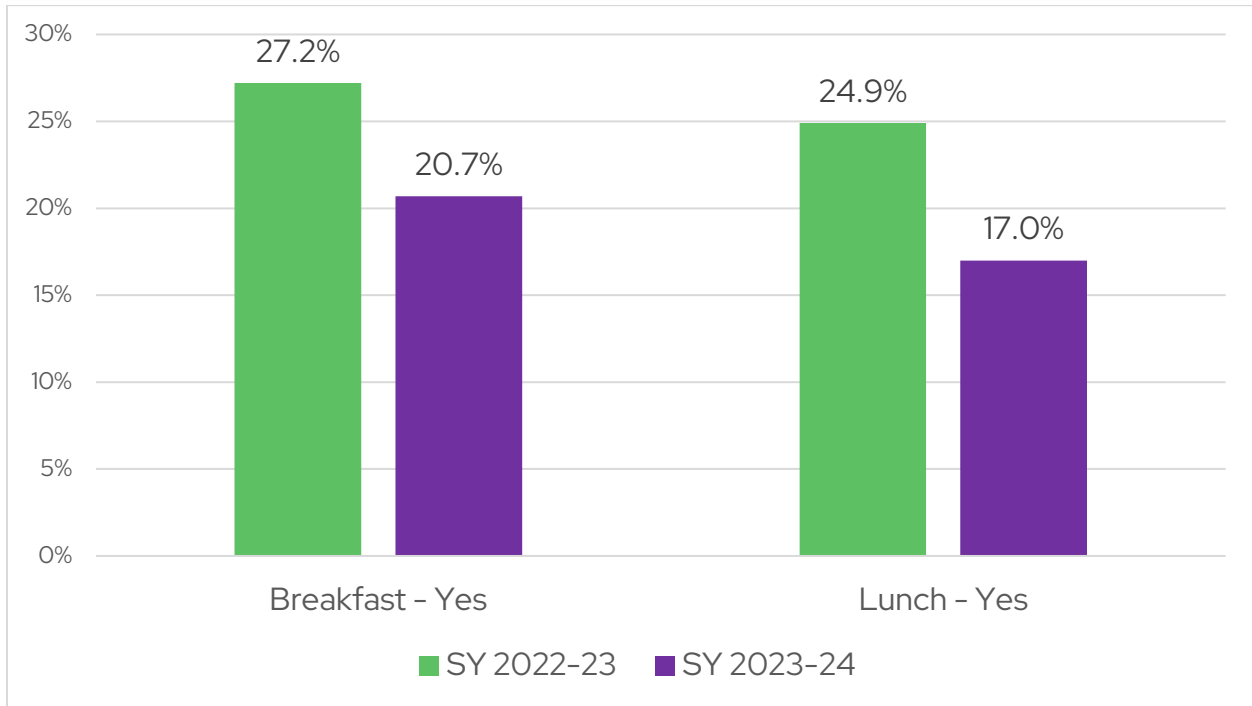


Funding and Financial Sustainability

- The percentages of programs reporting that School Breakfast Program (SBP)/National School Lunch Program (NSLP) reimbursement rates are insufficient to cover the costs of producing meals increased from SY 2022-23 to SY 2023-24, from 54.7% (n = 601) to 60.2% (n = 777) for breakfast, and from 56.6% (n = 620) to 64.4% (n = 833) for lunch.
- 91.6% (n = 1,183) of programs report serious or moderate concern regarding the financial sustainability of their school nutrition program three years from now. Programs in the Western FNS region reported the highest level of serious concern (56.4%, n = 97).
- Supply Chain Assistance (SCA) funds allowed schools to purchase unprocessed or minimally processed domestic foods. By partially offsetting food expenses, programs that accepted SCA) funds reported they were able to invest in program improvements in the following categories at the highest rates:
 - 1) Menu improvement - 62.4%, n = 692
 - 2) Equipment - 56.4%, n = 626
 - 3) Staffing (bonuses, wages, hiring) - 40.1%, n = 445



22. Since the expiration of the Keep Kids Fed Act additional reimbursements (15 cents per breakfast, 40 cents per lunch), are the current SY 2023-24 NSLP/SBP reimbursement rates sufficient to cover the cost of producing a meal (including food, labor, supplies and other costs) in your program?



SY 2023-24: Breakfast n = 1,291, lunch n = 1,293; SY 2022-23: Breakfast n = 1,099, lunch n = 1,095.

Note: The 2023 question read, "At the current time, are the SY 2022/2023 NSLP/SBP per meal reimbursement rates sufficient to cover the cost of producing a reimbursable meal (including food, labor, supplies, and other costs)?" The 2024 question read, "Since the expiration of the Keep Kids Fed Act additional reimbursements (15 cents per breakfast, 40 cents per lunch), are the current SY 2023/24 NSLP/SBP reimbursement rates sufficient to cover the cost of producing a meal (including food, labor, supplies and other costs) in your program?"



23. Since the expiration of the Keep Kids Fed Act additional reimbursements (15 cents per breakfast), are the current SY 2023-24 SBP reimbursement rates sufficient to cover the cost of producing a **breakfast** (including food, labor, supplies and other costs) in your program?

23. Since the expiration of the Keep Kids Fed Act additional reimbursements (15 cents per breakfast), are the current SY 2023-24 SBP reimbursement rates sufficient to cover the cost of producing a breakfast (including food, labor, supplies and other costs) in your program?					
	Overall	Yes	No	Don't know/Not sure	n
		20.7%	60.2%	19.1%	1,291
USDA FNS Region*	Midwest	23.5%	59.1%	17.4%	132
	Mid-Atlantic	19.7%	54.5%	25.8%	356
	Mountain Plains	16.3%	68.1%	15.6%	135
	Northeast	21.6%	62.4%	16.0%	125
	Southeast	26.8%	58.4%	14.8%	209
	Southwest	21.6%	63.0%	15.4%	162
	Western	15.1%	64.5%	20.3%	172
Free and Reduced %	<26%	16.4%	64.3%	19.2%	213
	26 - 50%	18.9%	60.2%	20.8%	475
	51 - 65%	20.5%	59.7%	19.8%	308
	>65%	26.8%	57.6%	15.6%	295
District Enrollment**	<1,000	20.5%	50.0%	29.5%	200
	1,000 - 2,499	25.1%	55.2%	19.7%	299
	2,500 - 4,999	17.3%	66.4%	16.2%	271
	5,000 - 9,999	18.2%	67.3%	14.5%	220
	10,000 - 24,999	21.5%	61.6%	16.9%	172
	25,000+	20.9%	60.5%	18.6%	129
*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS region and District Enrollment, and whether the SY 2023/2024 SBP per meal reimbursement rates were sufficient for a school meal program to cover the cost of producing a reimbursable breakfast (including food, labor, supplies, and other costs).					

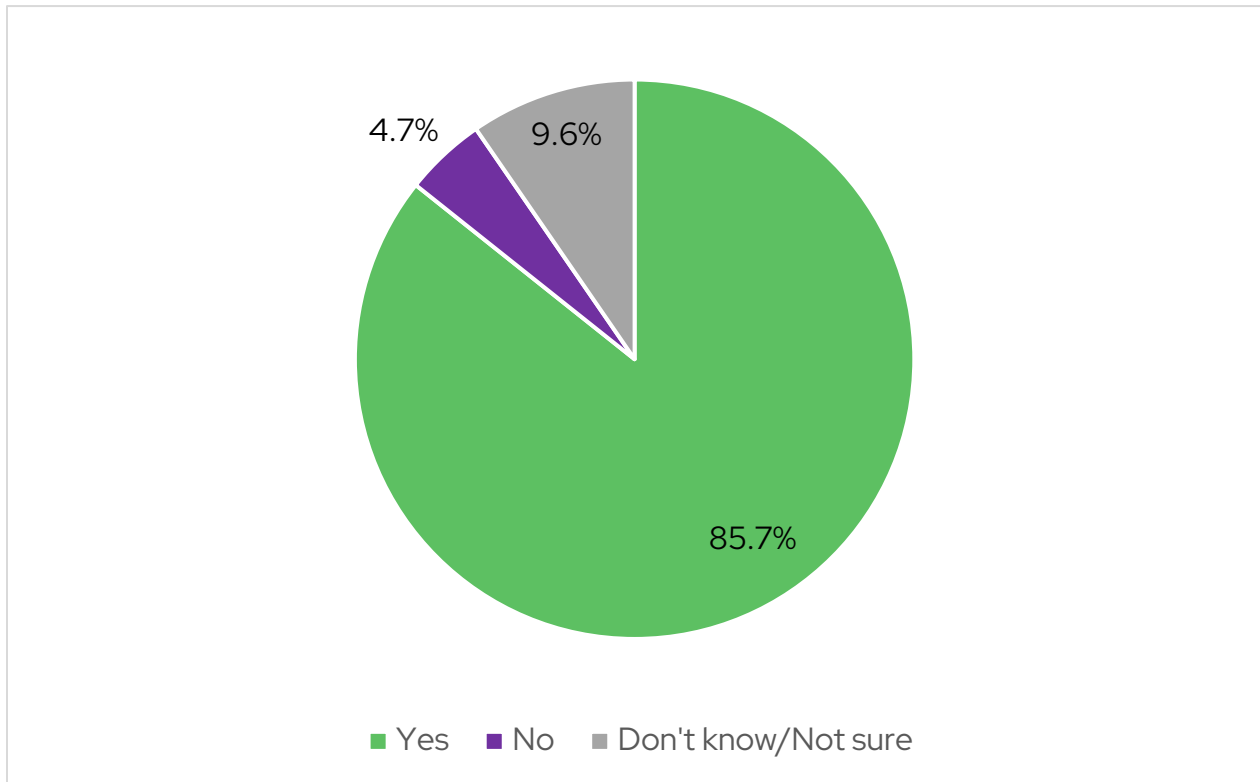


24. Since the expiration of the Keep Kids Fed Act additional reimbursements (40 cents per lunch), are the current SY 2023–24 NSLP reimbursement rates sufficient to cover the cost of producing a **lunch** (including food, labor, supplies and other costs) in your program?

	Overall	Yes	No	Don't know/Not sure	n
		17.0%	64.4%	18.6%	1,293
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	17.3%	66.9%	15.8%	133
	Midwest	18.7%	57.4%	24.0%	359
	Mountain Plains	11.1%	71.1%	17.8%	135
	Northeast	22.4%	62.4%	15.2%	125
	Southeast	17.8%	67.3%	14.9%	208
	Southwest	16.8%	68.3%	14.9%	161
	Western	13.4%	66.3%	20.3%	172
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	13.4%	68.1%	18.5%	216
	26 - 50%	14.7%	65.8%	19.5%	477
	51 - 65%	16.0%	64.4%	19.6%	306
	>65%	24.5%	59.5%	16.0%	294
District Enrollment*	<1,000	15.4%	56.7%	27.9%	201
	1,000 - 2,499	19.3%	60.1%	20.6%	301
	2,500 - 4,999	14.3%	68.9%	16.8%	273
	5,000 - 9,999	20.2%	67.9%	11.9%	218
	10,000 - 24,999	14.5%	69.2%	16.3%	172
	25,000+	18.0%	64.8%	17.2%	128
*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant association between FNS region, Free and Reduced %, and District Enrollment, and whether the SY 2023/2024 NSLP per meal reimbursement rates were sufficient for a school meal program to cover the cost of producing a reimbursable lunch (including food, labor, supplies, and other costs).					



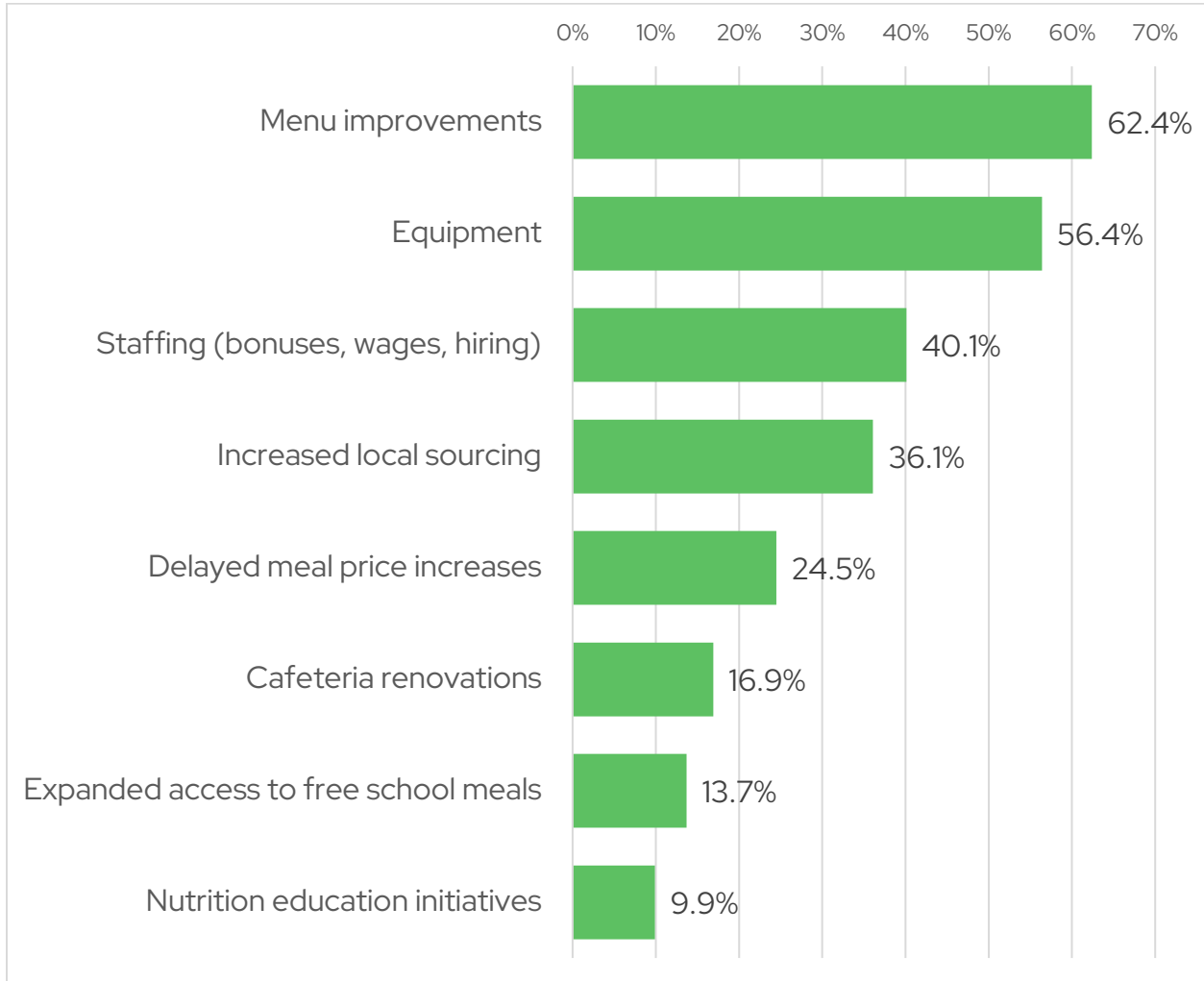
25. Has your program accepted any Supply Chain Assistance (SCA) funds?



n = 1,294.



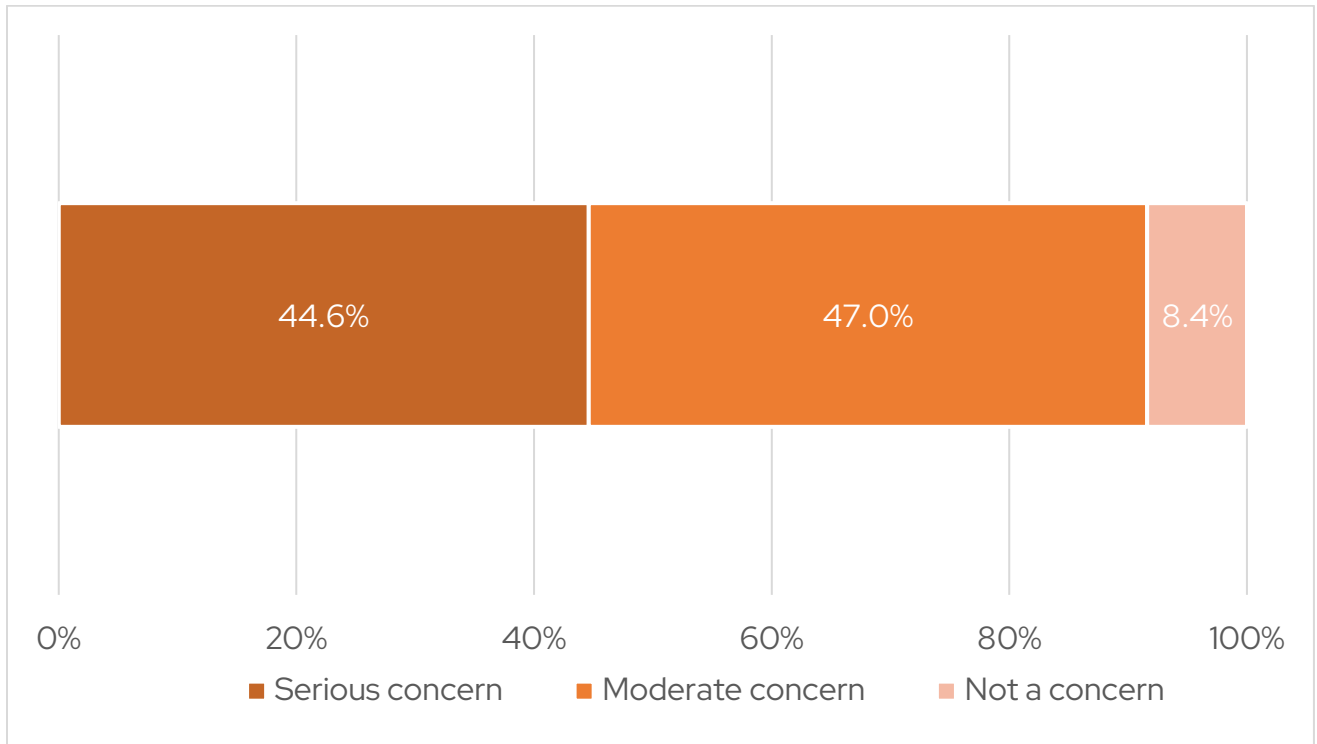
26. As a direct result of SCA funds partially offsetting food expenses, did your program invest in any of the following since January 2022?



Note: This question only asked of those who indicated their program accepted Supply Chain Assistance (SCA) funds. n = 1,109. Respondents could select multiple options so %'s will not total 100.0%.



27. What is your level of concern regarding the financial sustainability of your school nutrition program 3 years from now?



n = 1,292.



28. What is your level of concern regarding the financial sustainability of your school nutrition program 3 years from now? - Breakouts

	Overall	Serious Concern	Moderate Concern	Not a Concern	n
		44.6%	47.0%	8.4%	1,292
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	44.3%	51.1%	4.6%	131
	Midwest	36.4%	53.1%	10.6%	360
	Mountain Plains	48.5%	44.8%	6.7%	134
	Northeast	36.0%	48.0%	16.0%	125
	Southeast	47.8%	45.0%	7.2%	209
	Southwest	49.7%	44.1%	6.2%	161
	Western	56.4%	37.2%	6.4%	172
Free and Reduced %	<26%	50.2%	39.6%	10.1%	217
	26 - 50%	42.1%	51.2%	6.7%	475
	51 - 65%	45.8%	46.4%	7.8%	308
	>65%	43.2%	46.2%	10.6%	292
District Enrollment	<1,000	43.5%	48.5%	8.0%	200
	1,000 - 2,499	41.7%	49.7%	8.6%	302
	2,500 - 4,999	44.8%	49.3%	5.9%	270
	5,000 - 9,999	46.1%	42.9%	11.0%	219
	10,000 - 24,999	48.8%	43.6%	7.6%	172
	25,000+	44.2%	45.0%	10.9%	129
Offer Free Meals to ALL students districtwide?*	No	49.8%	44.1%	6.1%	655
	Yes	39.2%	49.9%	10.8%	637
<p>*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS region and All Meals Free status, and reported level of concern regarding the financial sustainability of your school nutrition program 3 years from now.</p>					



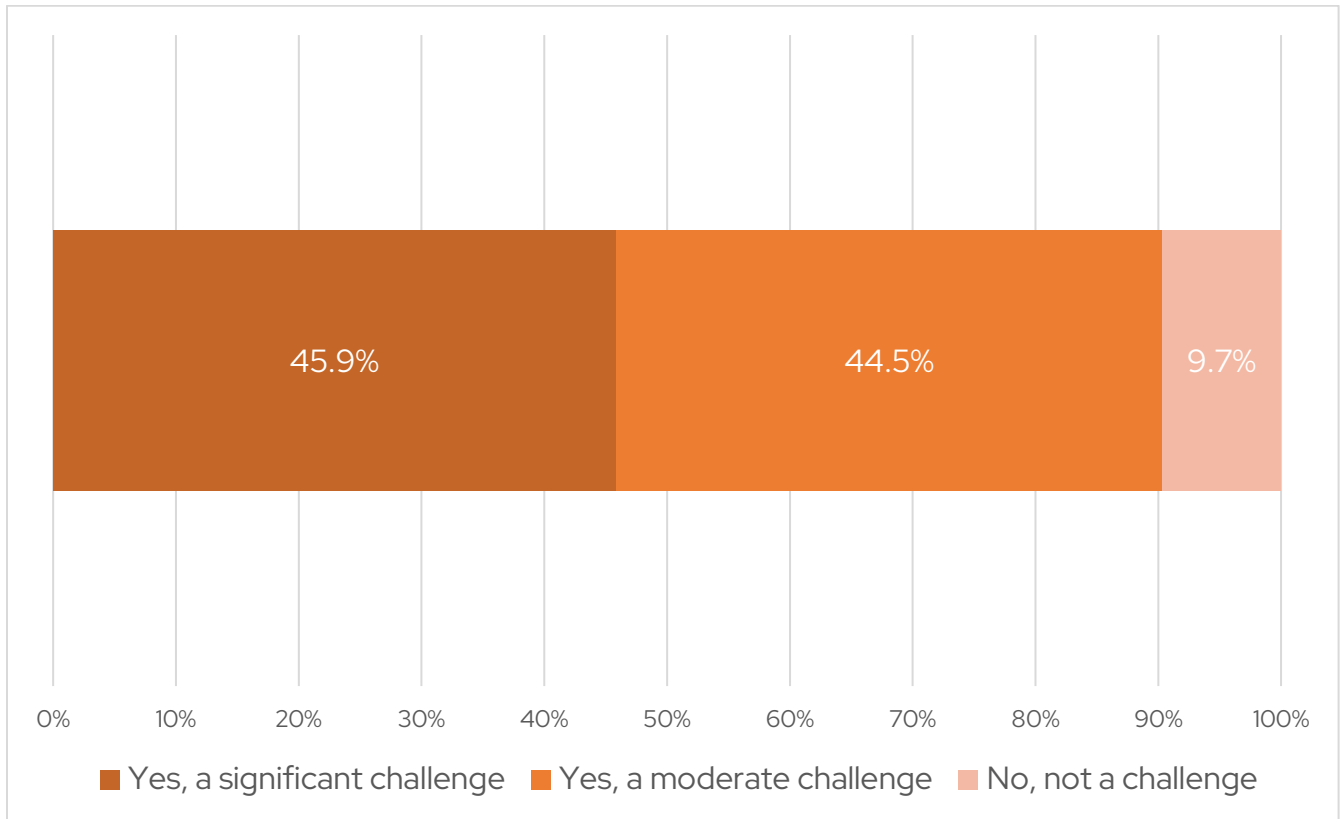
Federal School Nutrition Standards

- 90.4% (n = 1,160) of responding programs report significant or moderate challenges with the availability of foods that meet target 1A sodium limits and are well accepted by students.
- There are significant concerns regarding proposed school nutrition requirements, specifically:
 - additional sodium limits (3 more 10% reductions for lunch, 2 more 10% reductions for breakfast) – 98.7% (n = 1,270) serious/moderate concern
 - eliminating flavored milk options (grades K–8) – 94.7% (n = 1,219) serious/moderate concern
 - limiting added sugars to a weekly average of less than 10% of calories per meal, in addition to product-based limits – 94.7% (n = 1,215) serious/moderate concern
 - limits on added sugar in milk, yogurt, and cereal – 93.1% (n = 1,195) serious/moderate concern
 - limiting grain-based deserts, including whole-grain granola/cereal/breakfast bars, to no more than 2oz equivalents per week for breakfast – 92.8% (n = 1,193) serious/moderate concern

Refer to Appendix C for response summary tables on each proposed school nutrition requirement, disaggregated by USDA FNS region, free-and-reduced percentage rate, district enrollment and other selected variables.



29. Has the availability of foods that meet target 1A sodium limits and are well accepted by students been a challenge for your school meal program?



n = 1,284.

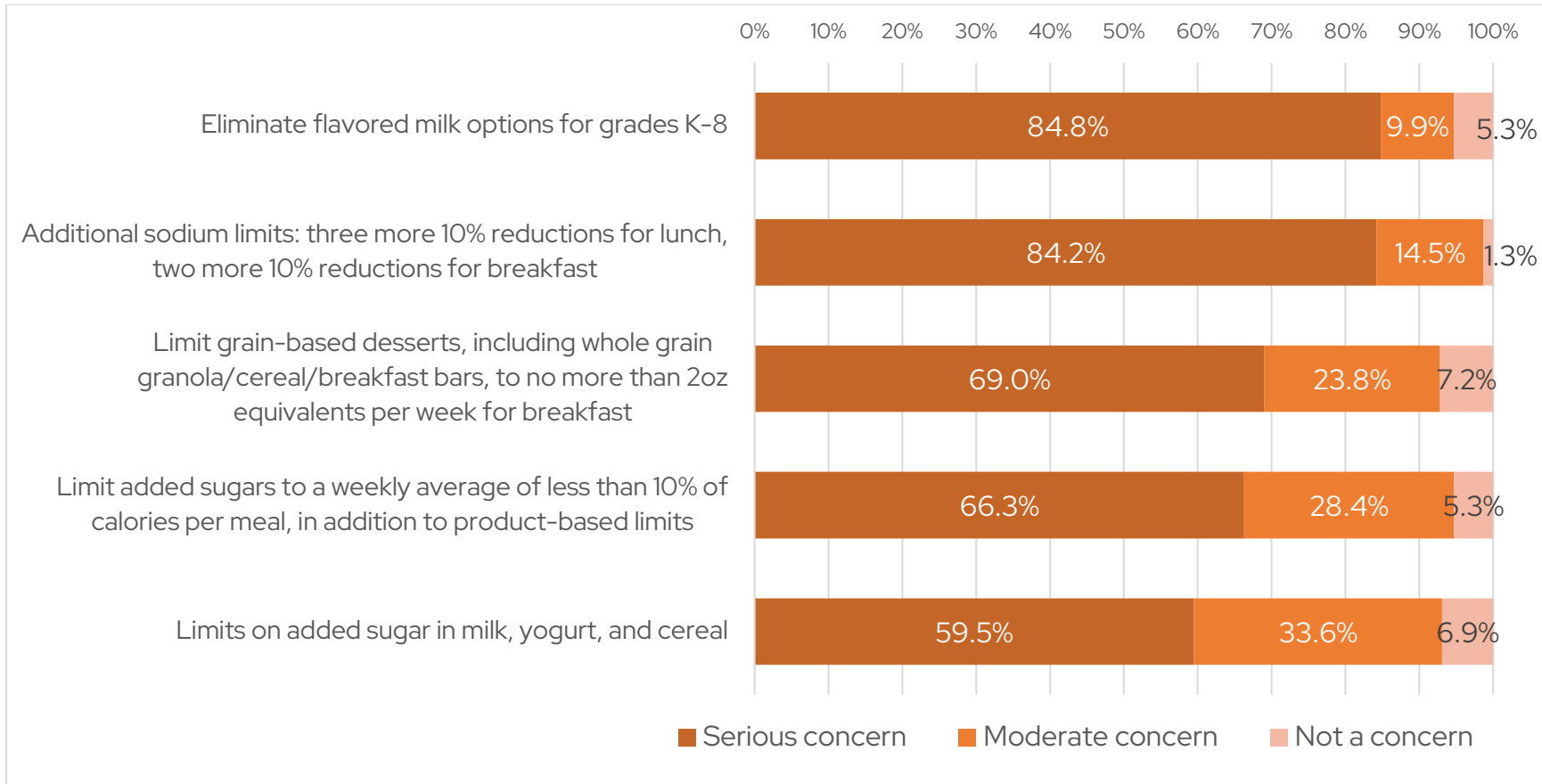


30. Has the availability of foods that meet target 1A sodium limits and are well accepted by students been a challenge for your school meal program?

	Overall	Yes, a significant challenge	Yes, a moderate challenge	No, not a challenge	n
		45.9%	44.5%	9.7%	1,284
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	33.1%	56.9%	10.0%	130
	Midwest	43.9%	45.8%	10.3%	358
	Mountain Plains	50.0%	40.8%	9.2%	130
	Northeast	43.5%	43.5%	12.9%	124
	Southeast	52.6%	38.3%	9.1%	209
	Southwest	51.6%	42.2%	6.2%	161
	Western	44.8%	45.3%	9.9%	172
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	41.0%	47.5%	11.5%	217
	26 - 50%	41.7%	48.7%	9.6%	470
	51 - 65%	49.8%	43.6%	6.6%	305
	>65%	52.1%	36.3%	11.6%	292
District Enrollment	<1,000	44.4%	42.9%	12.6%	198
	1,000 - 2,499	50.0%	42.0%	8.0%	300
	2,500 - 4,999	51.9%	41.1%	7.0%	270
	5,000 - 9,999	44.4%	46.3%	9.3%	216
	10,000 - 24,999	38.4%	50.0%	11.6%	172
	25,000+	38.3%	49.2%	12.5%	128
*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between Free and Reduced % and reported severity of challenge in the availability of foods that meet target 1A sodium limits and are well accepted by students.					



31. What is your level of concern for each of the following proposed requirements?



n = varies by item: minimum = 1,283, maximum = 1,287

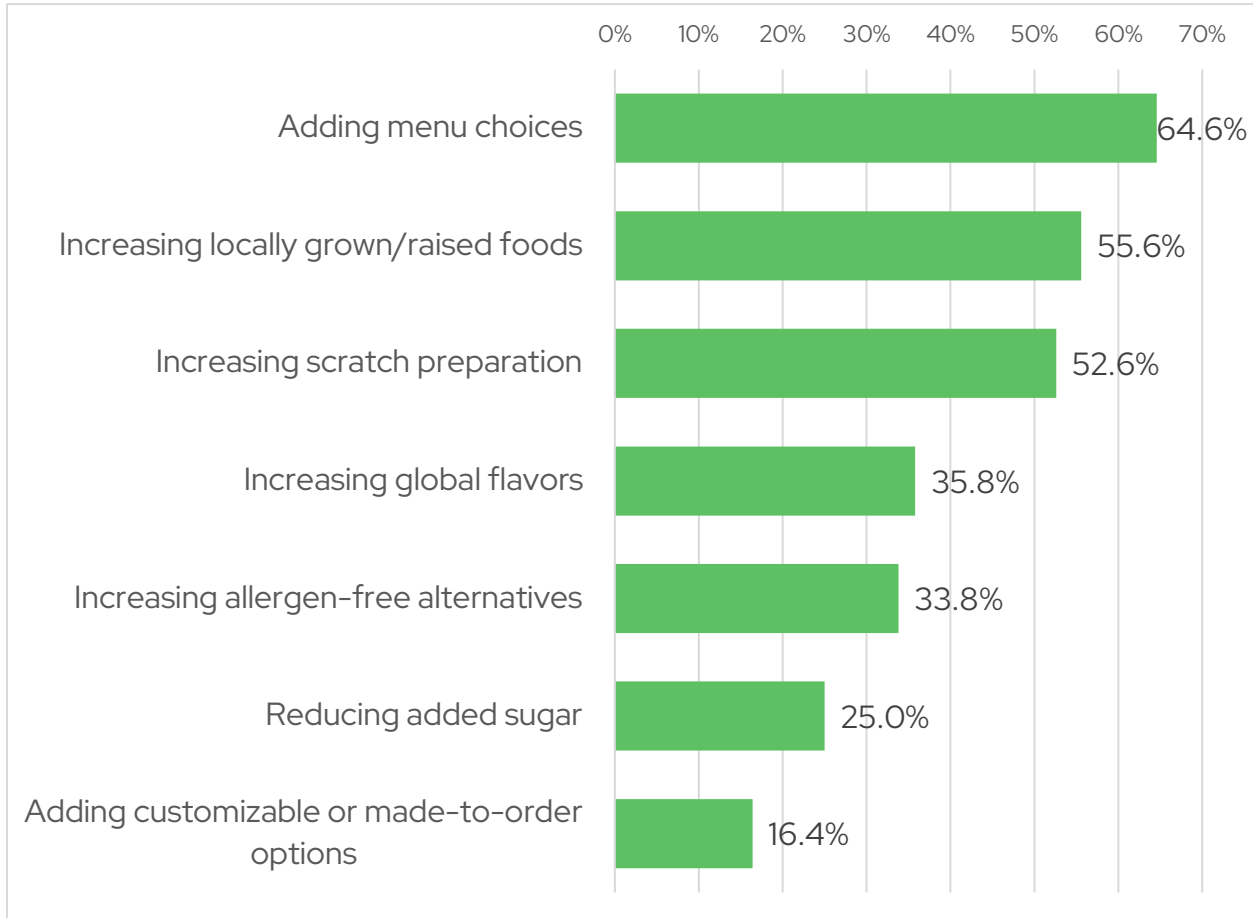


Menu Changes

- The top 3 menu changes for next year include:
 - 1) Adding menu choices – 64.6% (n = 868)
 - 2) Increasing locally-grown/raised foods – 55.6% (n = 747)
 - 3) Increasing scratch preparation – 52.6% (n = 706)
- The top 3 actions to increase student acceptance of nutrition menu options include:
 - 1) Student taste test/sampling – 66.0% (n = 886)
 - 2) Farm to school/School garden initiatives – 39.8% (n = 534)
 - 3) Nutrition education initiatives – 25.8% (n = 347)



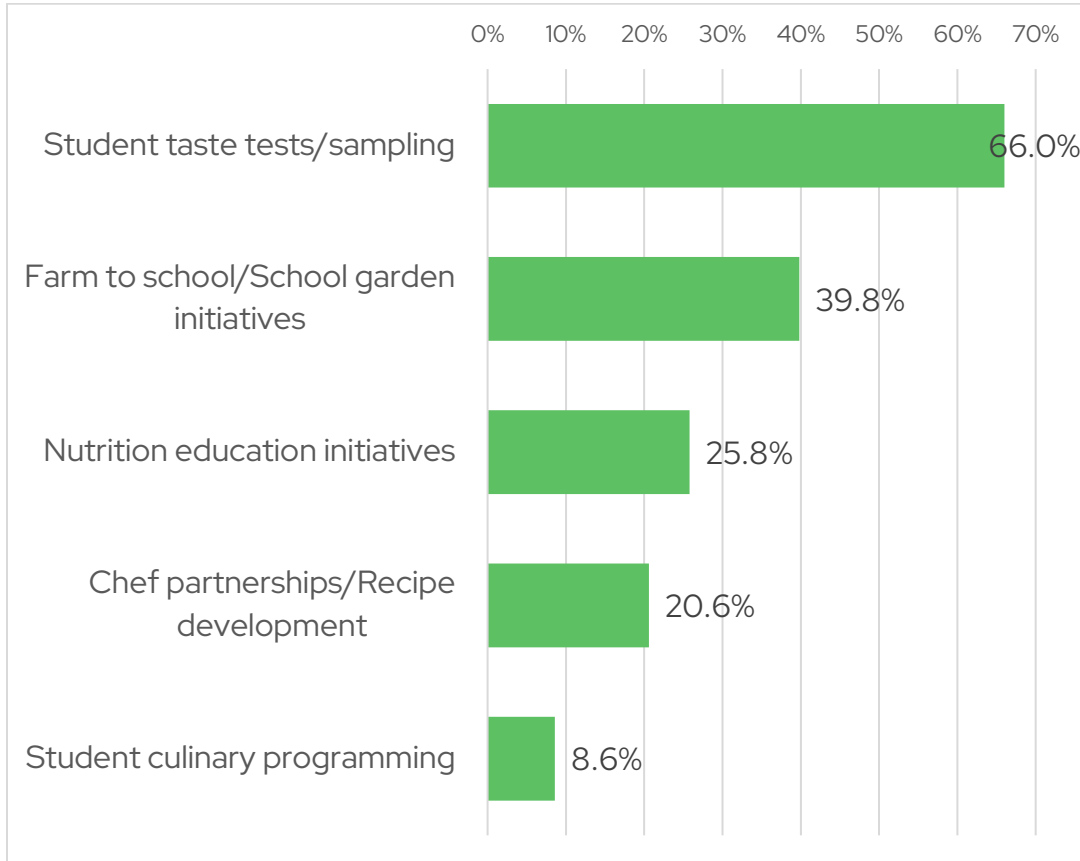
32. In SY 2023-24, is your program implementing any of the following menu changes?



Note: Respondents could select multiple options, %'s will not total to 100. n varies by item: minimum = 220, maximum = 868.



33. To help increase student acceptance of nutritious menu options, which of the following are you implementing this school year?



Note: Respondents could select multiple options, %'s will not total to 100. n varies by item: minimum = 116, maximum = 886.



Appendices

Appendix A: Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program.

Table A1. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Menu items discontinued					
	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		20.1%	55.8%	24.2%	1,325
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	20.3%	60.2%	19.5%	133
	Midwest	21.2%	54.3%	24.5%	368
	Mountain Plains	20.0%	61.4%	18.6%	140
	Northeast	27.2%	56.8%	16.0%	125
	Southeast	16.6%	53.5%	30.0%	217
	Southwest	15.2%	55.5%	29.3%	164
	Western	21.3%	53.4%	25.3%	178
Free and Reduced %	<26%	20.6%	55.2%	24.2%	223
	26 - 50%	20.7%	56.7%	22.6%	487
	51 - 65%	18.7%	59.8%	21.5%	316
	>65%	20.1%	50.5%	29.4%	299
District Enrollment	<1,000	19.0%	56.6%	24.4%	205
	1,000 - 2,499	24.3%	48.2%	27.5%	309
	2,500 - 4,999	19.1%	59.7%	21.2%	278
	5,000 - 9,999	18.0%	58.1%	23.9%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	20.3%	55.9%	23.7%	177
	25,000+	17.2%	59.7%	23.1%	134



Table A2. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Menu item shortages

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		12.9%	54.7%	32.5%	1,322
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	12.0%	62.4%	25.6%	133
	Midwest	15.4%	55.3%	29.3%	369
	Mountain Plains	13.7%	61.2%	25.2%	139
	Northeast	15.2%	62.4%	22.4%	125
	Southeast	11.1%	46.8%	42.1%	216
	Southwest	11.0%	55.2%	33.7%	163
	Western	9.6%	46.3%	44.1%	177
Free and Reduced %**	<26%	13.0%	60.5%	26.5%	223
	26 - 50%	15.9%	55.6%	28.5%	484
	51 - 65%	11.7%	53.5%	34.8%	316
	>65%	9.0%	50.2%	40.8%	299
District Enrollment	<1,000	17.2%	57.4%	25.5%	204
	1,000 - 2,499	14.9%	55.5%	29.5%	308
	2,500 - 4,999	12.9%	51.8%	35.3%	278
	5,000 - 9,999	9.9%	53.2%	36.9%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	10.7%	54.5%	34.8%	178
	25,000+	9.1%	57.6%	33.3%	132

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region and Free and Reduced %, and the rating of the severity of the challenge of menu item shortages by respondents.



Table A3. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Supplies/packaging shortages

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		22.7%	51.5%	25.8%	1,324
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	20.3%	54.1%	25.6%	133
	Midwest	25.4%	51.4%	23.2%	370
	Mountain Plains	30.0%	51.4%	18.6%	140
	Northeast	22.6%	48.4%	29.0%	124
	Southeast	17.5%	51.6%	30.9%	217
	Southwest	19.5%	58.5%	22.0%	164
	Western	22.2%	45.5%	32.4%	176
Free and Reduced %	<26%	24.4%	52.0%	23.5%	221
	26 - 50%	25.4%	50.6%	24.0%	488
	51 - 65%	21.2%	53.2%	25.6%	316
	>65%	18.4%	50.8%	30.8%	299
District Enrollment	<1,000	32.0%	44.7%	23.3%	206
	1,000 - 2,499	21.4%	52.8%	25.9%	309
	2,500 - 4,999	23.6%	52.5%	23.9%	276
	5,000 - 9,999	19.0%	52.5%	28.5%	221
	10,000 - 24,999	21.3%	50.6%	28.1%	178
	25,000+	17.2%	56.7%	26.1%	134

*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between FNS Region and the rating of the severity of the challenge of supplies/packaging shortages by respondents.



Table A4. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Increasing costs

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		0.7%	15.4%	83.9%	1,322
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	1.5%	14.4%	84.1%	132
	Midwest	0.5%	19.0%	80.4%	368
	Mountain Plains	0.0%	12.1%	87.9%	140
	Northeast	0.8%	24.0%	75.2%	125
	Southeast	0.5%	12.0%	87.5%	216
	Southwest	0.0%	10.4%	89.6%	164
	Western	1.7%	14.1%	84.2%	177
Free and Reduced %	<26%	0.5%	16.7%	82.8%	221
	26 - 50%	0.4%	16.2%	83.4%	487
	51 - 65%	0.3%	16.5%	83.2%	316
	>65%	1.7%	12.1%	86.2%	298
District Enrollment	<1,000	1.0%	17.5%	81.6%	206
	1,000 - 2,499	1.0%	14.3%	84.7%	308
	2,500 - 4,999	0.0%	18.1%	81.9%	277
	5,000 - 9,999	0.5%	13.1%	86.4%	221
	10,000 - 24,999	0.6%	13.0%	86.4%	177
	25,000+	1.5%	16.5%	82.0%	133

*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between FNS Region and the rating of the severity of increasing costs by respondents.



Table A5. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Late/delayed deliveries

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		38.7%	43.9%	17.4%	1,324
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	36.1%	49.6%	14.3%	133
	Midwest	50.7%	37.7%	11.7%	369
	Mountain Plains	41.4%	49.3%	9.3%	140
	Northeast	46.4%	36.0%	17.6%	125
	Southeast	34.1%	48.8%	17.1%	217
	Southwest	30.9%	50.0%	19.1%	162
	Western	21.3%	42.1%	36.5%	178
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	42.8%	39.6%	17.6%	222
	26 - 50%	43.1%	42.9%	14.0%	487
	51 - 65%	36.4%	45.6%	18.0%	316
	>65%	31.1%	46.8%	22.1%	299
District Enrollment**	<1,000	51.0%	37.9%	11.2%	206
	1,000 - 2,499	49.0%	42.2%	8.8%	308
	2,500 - 4,999	41.5%	37.5%	20.9%	277
	5,000 - 9,999	32.9%	48.2%	18.9%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	27.7%	45.2%	27.1%	177
	25,000+	14.9%	61.2%	23.9%	134

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced %, District Enrollment, and the rating of the severity of the challenge of late/delayed deliveries.



Table A6. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Supplier/Distributor cancelling services/contracts

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		57.9%	31.8%	10.3%	1,325
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	50.4%	42.9%	6.8%	133
	Midwest	66.2%	26.5%	7.3%	370
	Mountain Plains	68.3%	25.2%	6.5%	139
	Northeast	64.0%	26.4%	9.6%	125
	Southeast	50.9%	34.3%	14.8%	216
	Southwest	50.0%	35.4%	14.6%	164
	Western	49.4%	37.6%	12.9%	178
Free and Reduced %**	<26%	64.6%	27.4%	8.1%	223
	26 - 50%	60.9%	31.5%	7.6%	486
	51 - 65%	57.3%	32.9%	9.8%	316
	>65%	48.7%	34.7%	16.7%	300
District Enrollment**	<1,000	51.0%	37.9%	11.2%	206
	1,000 - 2,499	49.0%	42.2%	8.8%	308
	2,500 - 4,999	41.5%	37.5%	20.9%	277
	5,000 - 9,999	32.9%	48.2%	18.9%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	27.7%	45.2%	27.1%	177
	25,000+	14.9%	61.2%	23.9%	134

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced %, District Enrollment, and the rating of the severity of the challenge of suppliers/distributors cancelling services/contracts.



Table A7. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Longer than normal ordering lead times

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		28.4%	47.8%	23.8%	1,321
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	24.8%	51.9%	23.3%	133
	Midwest	40.4%	47.7%	11.9%	369
	Mountain Plains	28.1%	51.1%	20.9%	139
	Northeast	33.1%	51.6%	15.3%	124
	Southeast	26.4%	48.1%	25.5%	216
	Southwest	25.3%	49.4%	25.3%	162
	Western	8.4%	38.2%	53.4%	178
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	33.3%	47.7%	18.9%	222
	26 - 50%	30.9%	48.8%	20.4%	486
	51 - 65%	26.8%	48.4%	24.8%	314
	>65%	22.4%	45.8%	31.8%	299
District Enrollment**	<1,000	40.7%	42.6%	16.7%	204
	1,000 - 2,499	36.6%	50.0%	13.4%	306
	2,500 - 4,999	29.9%	43.5%	26.6%	278
	5,000 - 9,999	19.8%	52.7%	27.5%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	17.4%	46.6%	36.0%	178
	25,000+	16.5%	53.4%	30.1%	133

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced %, District Enrollment, and the rating of the severity of the challenge of longer than normal lead times.



Table A8. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Suppliers not carrying sufficient menu items needed to meet nutrition standards (e.g. whole-grain, low-sodium, low-fat)

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		20.7%	46.7%	32.6%	1,321
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	24.8%	48.1%	27.1%	133
	Midwest	24.5%	46.5%	29.1%	368
	Mountain Plains	17.1%	52.1%	30.7%	140
	Northeast	25.8%	43.5%	30.6%	124
	Southeast	15.7%	45.8%	38.4%	216
	Southwest	16.7%	48.8%	34.6%	162
	Western	19.1%	43.3%	37.6%	178
Free and Reduced %	<26%	23.5%	43.0%	33.5%	221
	26 - 50%	22.4%	46.4%	31.2%	487
	51 - 65%	20.7%	48.4%	30.9%	314
	>65%	16.1%	48.2%	35.8%	299
District Enrollment	<1,000	24.9%	44.4%	30.7%	205
	1,000 - 2,499	20.5%	45.0%	34.5%	307
	2,500 - 4,999	20.1%	49.6%	30.2%	278
	5,000 - 9,999	18.5%	46.8%	34.7%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	22.6%	41.8%	35.6%	177
	25,000+	17.4%	54.5%	28.0%	132



Table A9. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. -
Suppliers not carrying sufficient menu items to meet Buy American requirements

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		36.7%	44.4%	18.9%	1,319
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	41.7%	43.2%	15.2%	132
	Midwest	38.2%	43.1%	18.7%	369
	Mountain Plains	31.4%	45.7%	22.9%	140
	Northeast	41.9%	39.5%	18.5%	124
	Southeast	37.0%	44.4%	18.5%	216
	Southwest	34.4%	44.2%	21.5%	163
	Western	32.0%	50.9%	17.1%	175
Free and Reduced %	<26%	38.1%	42.6%	19.3%	223
	26 - 50%	41.2%	41.0%	17.7%	485
	51 - 65%	34.3%	48.7%	17.0%	312
	>65%	30.8%	46.8%	22.4%	299
District Enrollment*	<1,000	26.5%	52.5%	21.1%	204
	1,000 - 2,499	37.7%	38.0%	24.4%	308
	2,500 - 4,999	38.8%	44.9%	16.3%	276
	5,000 - 9,999	39.8%	43.9%	16.3%	221
	10,000 - 24,999	38.4%	44.6%	16.9%	177
	25,000+	38.3%	46.6%	15.0%	133

*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between District Enrollment and the rating of the severity of the challenge of suppliers not carrying sufficient menu items to meet Buy American requirements.



Table A10. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Staff shortages

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		9.5%	35.8%	54.7%	1,325
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	3.8%	30.8%	65.4%	133
	Midwest	10.8%	36.0%	53.1%	369
	Mountain Plains	16.5%	31.7%	51.8%	139
	Northeast	8.0%	33.6%	58.4%	125
	Southeast	8.8%	38.2%	53.0%	217
	Southwest	7.9%	34.8%	57.3%	164
	Western	9.0%	41.6%	49.4%	178
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	11.3%	32.4%	56.3%	222
	26 - 50%	10.0%	40.2%	49.8%	488
	51 - 65%	8.2%	38.3%	53.5%	316
	>65%	8.7%	28.4%	62.9%	299
District Enrollment**	<1,000	18.0%	40.0%	42.0%	205
	1,000 - 2,499	8.4%	39.2%	52.4%	309
	2,500 - 4,999	9.4%	35.3%	55.4%	278
	5,000 - 9,999	10.4%	31.5%	58.1%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	4.5%	35.0%	60.5%	177
	25,000+	4.5%	30.6%	64.9%	134

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced %, and District Enrollment, and the rating of the severity of the challenge of staff shortages.



Table A11. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Getting families to submit free-and-reduced meal applications/household income forms

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		29.5%	36.4%	34.2%	1,320
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	50.4%	32.3%	17.3%	133
	Midwest	16.3%	41.8%	41.8%	368
	Mountain Plains	7.9%	46.4%	45.7%	140
	Northeast	32.3%	30.6%	37.1%	124
	Southeast	46.3%	29.4%	24.3%	214
	Southwest	35.6%	31.9%	32.5%	163
	Western	30.3%	36.5%	33.1%	178
Free and Reduced %**	<26%	12.2%	48.9%	38.9%	221
	26 - 50%	17.9%	40.7%	41.5%	487
	51 - 65%	37.7%	31.0%	31.3%	316
	>65%	52.7%	25.7%	21.6%	296
District Enrollment*	<1,000	30.6%	31.1%	38.3%	206
	1,000 - 2,499	23.0%	38.8%	38.2%	304
	2,500 - 4,999	30.0%	37.2%	32.9%	277
	5,000 - 9,999	35.6%	27.5%	36.9%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	29.4%	40.7%	29.9%	177
	25,000+	31.3%	46.3%	22.4%	134
Offer Free Meals to ALL students districtwide?***	No	9.9%	47.2%	42.9%	674
	Yes	49.8%	25.1%	25.1%	646

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced %, District Enrollment, and Free Meals Status, and the rating of the severity of the challenge of getting families to submit free-and-reduced meal applications/household income forms



Table A12. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Lack of competitive bid responses

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		27.0%	45.3%	27.7%	1,317
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	23.3%	48.1%	28.6%	133
	Midwest	37.4%	45.3%	17.3%	369
	Mountain Plains	28.3%	40.6%	31.2%	138
	Northeast	29.3%	44.7%	26.0%	123
	Southeast	15.8%	45.6%	38.6%	215
	Southwest	23.3%	46.0%	30.7%	163
	Western	22.2%	46.6%	31.3%	176
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	32.1%	44.3%	23.5%	221
	26 - 50%	29.3%	43.2%	27.5%	484
	51 - 65%	21.9%	52.1%	26.0%	315
	>65%	24.6%	42.4%	33.0%	297
District Enrollment**	<1,000	35.8%	43.8%	20.4%	201
	1,000 - 2,499	34.6%	45.6%	19.7%	309
	2,500 - 4,999	21.7%	46.2%	32.1%	277
	5,000 - 9,999	26.0%	42.0%	32.0%	219
	10,000 - 24,999	16.9%	53.9%	29.2%	178
	25,000+	21.8%	39.1%	39.1%	133

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced % and District Enrollment, and the rating of the severity of the challenge of lacking competitive bid responses.



Table A13. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Unpaid meal charges/debt

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		39.1%	26.7%	34.2%	1,325
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	35.3%	25.6%	39.1%	133
	Midwest	28.3%	32.6%	39.1%	371
	Mountain Plains	19.3%	43.6%	37.1%	140
	Northeast	50.8%	22.6%	26.6%	124
	Southeast	49.1%	20.8%	30.1%	216
	Southwest	36.2%	25.8%	38.0%	163
	Western	62.4%	12.9%	24.7%	178
Free and Reduced %**	<26%	25.2%	29.7%	45.0%	222
	26 - 50%	24.5%	32.1%	43.4%	489
	51 - 65%	43.7%	25.3%	31.0%	316
	>65%	68.5%	17.1%	14.4%	298
District Enrollment	<1,000	44.4%	28.0%	27.5%	207
	1,000 - 2,499	37.5%	26.1%	36.5%	307
	2,500 - 4,999	33.9%	27.1%	39.0%	277
	5,000 - 9,999	42.3%	25.2%	32.4%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	41.0%	24.7%	34.3%	178
	25,000+	37.3%	30.6%	32.1%	134
Offer Free Meals to ALL students districtwide?***	No	7.3%	34.7%	58.1%	675
	Yes	72.2%	18.5%	9.4%	650

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region and Free and Reduced % and Free Meals Status, and the rating of the severity of the challenge of unpaid meal charges/debt.



Table A14. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Obtaining and utilizing USDA Foods

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		44.0%	43.0%	13.0%	1,322
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	54.2%	38.9%	6.9%	131
	Midwest	39.5%	41.4%	19.2%	370
	Mountain Plains	46.4%	43.5%	10.1%	138
	Northeast	50.4%	37.6%	12.0%	125
	Southeast	49.1%	40.3%	10.6%	216
	Southwest	35.4%	51.2%	13.4%	164
	Western	41.6%	48.3%	10.1%	178
Free and Reduced %	<26%	43.9%	40.4%	15.7%	223
	26 - 50%	43.8%	42.8%	13.4%	486
	51 - 65%	46.8%	43.4%	9.8%	316
	>65%	41.4%	44.8%	13.8%	297
District Enrollment*	<1,000	46.1%	37.9%	16.0%	206
	1,000 - 2,499	39.9%	46.8%	13.3%	308
	2,500 - 4,999	48.4%	41.5%	10.1%	277
	5,000 - 9,999	45.5%	37.4%	17.1%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	42.9%	45.2%	11.9%	177
	25,000+	40.2%	51.5%	8.3%	132

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region and District Enrollment, and the rating of the severity of obtaining and utilizing USDA Foods.



Table A15. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues are a challenge for your school meal program. - Shortages of new equipment and/or parts

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		27.3%	51.6%	21.1%	1,322
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	28.6%	51.1%	20.3%	133
	Midwest	32.1%	53.0%	14.9%	367
	Mountain Plains	33.6%	48.6%	17.9%	140
	Northeast	33.6%	47.2%	19.2%	125
	Southeast	19.0%	53.7%	27.3%	216
	Southwest	22.7%	52.8%	24.5%	163
	Western	21.5%	50.8%	27.7%	177
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	32.9%	48.6%	18.5%	222
	26 - 50%	29.6%	51.3%	19.1%	487
	51 - 65%	24.8%	53.7%	21.6%	315
	>65%	22.1%	52.0%	25.8%	298
District Enrollment**	<1,000	39.5%	44.9%	15.6%	205
	1,000 - 2,499	34.6%	50.8%	14.6%	309
	2,500 - 4,999	22.8%	56.9%	20.3%	276
	5,000 - 9,999	23.4%	48.2%	28.4%	222
	10,000 - 24,999	15.8%	60.5%	23.7%	177
	25,000+	22.6%	46.6%	30.8%	133

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced % and District Enrollment, and the rating of the severity of the challenge of shortages of new equipment and/or parts.



Appendix B: You reported experiencing challenges procuring menu items.

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure.

Table B1. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Fruits					
	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		55.7%	36.1%	8.2%	1,190
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	68.9%	30.3%	0.8%	122
	Midwest	51.4%	39.9%	8.7%	323
	Mountain Plains	45.3%	43.0%	11.7%	128
	Northeast	62.8%	27.4%	9.7%	113
	Southeast	55.4%	34.7%	9.8%	193
	Southwest	52.3%	37.6%	10.1%	149
	Western	61.1%	33.3%	5.6%	162
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	62.7%	31.3%	6.0%	201
	26 - 50%	55.9%	36.7%	7.4%	433
	51 - 65%	58.4%	33.8%	7.8%	281
	>65%	47.6%	40.7%	11.6%	275
District Enrollment*	<1,000	44.5%	45.1%	10.4%	182
	1,000 - 2,499	55.5%	34.9%	9.6%	272
	2,500 - 4,999	56.6%	36.7%	6.8%	251
	5,000 - 9,999	52.0%	36.0%	12.0%	200
	10,000 - 24,999	68.3%	28.0%	3.7%	161
	25,000+	60.5%	34.7%	4.8%	124
*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced %, and District Enrollment, and the rating of the extent to which fruit has been a challenge to procure by respondents.					



Table B2. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Vegetables

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		57.9%	35.3%	6.8%	1,194
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	71.8%	25.0%	3.2%	124
	Midwest	54.0%	39.2%	6.8%	324
	Mountain Plains	50.4%	39.4%	10.2%	127
	Northeast	68.4%	25.4%	6.1%	114
	Southeast	55.4%	36.8%	7.8%	193
	Southwest	56.7%	36.0%	7.3%	150
	Western	57.4%	37.0%	5.6%	162
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	63.2%	31.8%	5.0%	201
	26 - 50%	59.6%	33.9%	6.5%	433
	51 - 65%	59.6%	34.5%	5.9%	287
	>65%	49.5%	41.0%	9.5%	273
District Enrollment*	<1,000	49.7%	42.0%	8.3%	181
	1,000 - 2,499	55.7%	37.4%	7.0%	273
	2,500 - 4,999	60.7%	34.5%	4.8%	252
	5,000 - 9,999	54.2%	35.0%	10.8%	203
	10,000 - 24,999	67.1%	27.3%	5.6%	161
	25,000+	62.9%	33.9%	3.2%	124

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region, Free and Reduced %, and District Enrollment, and the rating of the extent to which vegetables have been a challenge to procure by respondents.



Table B3. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Milk

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		51.6%	31.5%	16.8%	1,193
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	40.7%	38.2%	21.1%	123
	Midwest	59.9%	28.7%	11.4%	324
	Mountain Plains	60.2%	22.7%	17.2%	128
	Northeast	51.3%	33.6%	15.0%	113
	Southeast	40.4%	29.5%	30.1%	193
	Southwest	48.3%	35.8%	15.9%	151
	Western	53.4%	36.0%	10.6%	161
Free and Reduced %	<26%	59.0%	27.5%	13.5%	200
	26 - 50%	51.3%	31.0%	17.7%	435
	51 - 65%	50.5%	34.0%	15.4%	285
	>65%	48.0%	32.6%	19.4%	273
District Enrollment*	<1,000	53.3%	33.9%	12.8%	180
	1,000 - 2,499	55.1%	28.7%	16.2%	272
	2,500 - 4,999	57.9%	28.6%	13.5%	252
	5,000 - 9,999	43.3%	37.9%	18.7%	203
	10,000 - 24,999	48.4%	32.3%	19.3%	161
	25,000+	46.4%	28.8%	24.8%	125

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant associations between FNS Region and District Enrollment, and the rating of the extent to which milk has been a challenge to procure by respondents.



Table B4. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Non-milk dairy products (eg yogurt, cheese)

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		55.3%	38.8%	5.9%	1,190
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	66.9%	30.6%	2.5%	121
	Midwest	53.1%	41.7%	5.2%	324
	Mountain Plains	55.8%	37.2%	7.0%	129
	Northeast	58.0%	32.1%	9.8%	112
	Southeast	55.4%	37.4%	7.2%	195
	Southwest	54.1%	41.9%	4.1%	148
	Western	49.7%	44.1%	6.2%	161
Free and Reduced %	<26%	55.0%	38.1%	6.9%	202
	26 - 50%	55.7%	37.1%	7.2%	431
	51 - 65%	57.0%	38.7%	4.2%	284
	>65%	53.1%	42.1%	4.8%	273
District Enrollment	<1,000	56.4%	38.7%	5.0%	181
	1,000 - 2,499	56.6%	36.5%	6.9%	274
	2,500 - 4,999	56.0%	40.1%	4.0%	252
	5,000 - 9,999	50.3%	40.7%	9.0%	199
	10,000 - 24,999	57.1%	38.5%	4.3%	161
	25,000+	55.3%	39.0%	5.7%	123



Table B5. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Entrees (eg pizza, burritos, chicken, burgers)

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		25.9%	53.0%	21.1%	1,199
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	29.3%	55.3%	15.4%	123
	Midwest	24.2%	55.8%	19.9%	326
	Mountain Plains	21.7%	57.4%	20.9%	129
	Northeast	38.9%	47.8%	13.3%	113
	Southeast	26.2%	44.6%	29.2%	195
	Southwest	23.8%	55.6%	20.5%	151
	Western	22.2%	53.7%	24.1%	162
Free and Reduced %	<26%	22.3%	56.9%	20.8%	202
	26 - 50%	28.3%	52.5%	19.1%	434
	51 - 65%	25.9%	54.2%	19.9%	286
	>65%	24.5%	49.8%	25.6%	277
District Enrollment	<1,000	26.2%	59.0%	14.8%	183
	1,000 - 2,499	29.2%	47.4%	23.4%	274
	2,500 - 4,999	24.8%	52.8%	22.4%	254
	5,000 - 9,999	23.3%	52.0%	24.8%	202
	10,000 - 24,999	25.9%	54.9%	19.1%	162
	25,000+	24.2%	56.5%	19.4%	124

*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between FNS Region, and the rating of the extent to which entrees (eg pizza, burritos, chicken, burgers) have been a challenge to procure by respondents.



Table B6. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Bread products (eg sliced bread, rolls, buns)

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		44.3%	42.3%	13.4%	1,199
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	46.0%	39.5%	14.5%	124
	Midwest	46.0%	40.8%	13.2%	326
	Mountain Plains	49.2%	43.8%	7.0%	128
	Northeast	49.6%	40.7%	9.7%	113
	Southeast	31.3%	48.2%	20.5%	195
	Southwest	39.7%	41.7%	18.5%	151
	Western	51.9%	40.7%	7.4%	162
Free and Reduced %	<26%	48.5%	42.6%	8.9%	202
	26 - 50%	44.5%	41.2%	14.3%	434
	51 - 65%	44.9%	41.5%	13.6%	287
	>65%	40.2%	44.6%	15.2%	276
District Enrollment	<1,000	42.3%	45.6%	12.1%	182
	1,000 - 2,499	48.4%	39.2%	12.5%	273
	2,500 - 4,999	42.7%	42.4%	14.9%	255
	5,000 - 9,999	40.6%	42.6%	16.8%	202
	10,000 - 24,999	48.8%	38.3%	13.0%	162
	25,000+	41.6%	48.8%	9.6%	125

*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between FNS Region, and the rating of the extent to which bread products (eg sliced bread, rolls, buns) have been a challenge to procure by respondents.



Table B7. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Breakfast items (eg cereals, granola bars, biscuits, pancakes)

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		25.3%	48.6%	26.2%	1,196
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	17.7%	54.8%	27.4%	124
	Midwest	28.7%	43.7%	27.5%	327
	Mountain Plains	26.6%	56.3%	17.2%	128
	Northeast	23.4%	51.4%	25.2%	111
	Southeast	26.8%	44.3%	28.9%	194
	Southwest	29.6%	48.0%	22.4%	152
	Western	18.1%	51.2%	30.6%	160
Free and Reduced %	<26%	27.6%	50.3%	22.1%	199
	26 - 50%	27.1%	45.5%	27.4%	435
	51 - 65%	23.0%	51.2%	25.8%	287
	>65%	22.9%	49.5%	27.6%	275
District Enrollment	<1,000	28.0%	51.6%	20.3%	182
	1,000 - 2,499	26.0%	46.2%	27.8%	273
	2,500 - 4,999	25.1%	48.6%	26.3%	255
	5,000 - 9,999	20.9%	46.8%	32.3%	201
	10,000 - 24,999	23.0%	48.4%	28.6%	161
	25,000+	29.8%	52.4%	17.7%	124

*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between FNS Region, and the rating of the extent to which breakfast items (eg cereals, granola bars, biscuits, pancakes) have been a challenge to procure by respondents.



Table B8. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Snacks (eg crackers/chips)

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		41.6%	46.6%	11.8%	1,197
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	37.1%	50.0%	12.9%	124
	Midwest	39.2%	49.1%	11.7%	324
	Mountain Plains	47.3%	42.6%	10.1%	129
	Northeast	45.1%	40.7%	14.2%	113
	Southeast	42.8%	44.3%	12.9%	194
	Southwest	43.7%	49.0%	7.3%	151
	Western	39.5%	46.9%	13.6%	162
Free and Reduced %	<26%	36.3%	47.8%	15.9%	201
	26 - 50%	44.1%	44.8%	11.0%	435
	51 - 65%	40.0%	49.8%	10.2%	285
	>65%	43.1%	45.3%	11.6%	276
District Enrollment*	<1,000	45.3%	46.4%	8.3%	181
	1,000 - 2,499	42.3%	44.5%	13.1%	274
	2,500 - 4,999	37.5%	51.4%	11.1%	253
	5,000 - 9,999	36.9%	44.8%	18.2%	203
	10,000 - 24,999	47.5%	41.4%	11.1%	162
	25,000+	42.7%	51.6%	5.6%	124

*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between District Enrollment, and the rating of the extent to which snacks (eg crackers/chips) have been a challenge to procure by respondents.



Table B9. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Juices

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		51.3%	37.5%	11.2%	1,193
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	53.7%	36.6%	9.8%	123
	Midwest	52.0%	39.7%	8.3%	325
	Mountain Plains	57.5%	36.2%	6.3%	127
	Northeast	50.9%	42.1%	7.0%	114
	Southeast	37.8%	41.5%	20.7%	193
	Southwest	54.0%	33.3%	12.7%	150
	Western	57.1%	30.4%	12.4%	161
Free and Reduced %	<26%	51.7%	41.3%	7.0%	201
	26 - 50%	53.2%	35.0%	11.8%	434
	51 - 65%	52.6%	37.6%	9.8%	287
	>65%	46.5%	38.4%	15.1%	271
District Enrollment	<1,000	51.6%	37.4%	11.0%	182
	1,000 - 2,499	52.0%	36.3%	11.7%	273
	2,500 - 4,999	49.8%	39.9%	10.3%	253
	5,000 - 9,999	45.5%	43.5%	11.0%	200
	10,000 - 24,999	53.1%	35.6%	11.3%	160
	25,000+	59.2%	28.0%	12.8%	125

*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between FNS region, and the rating of the extent to which juices have been a challenge to procure by respondents.



Table B10. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure.
 - Condiments (eg cream cheese, ketchup, BBQ sauce)

	Overall	Not a Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Significant Challenge	n
		57.0%	36.5%	6.5%	1,194
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	57.7%	39.0%	3.3%	123
	Midwest	55.2%	38.0%	6.7%	326
	Mountain Plains	65.4%	29.9%	4.7%	127
	Northeast	54.9%	34.5%	10.6%	113
	Southeast	53.6%	42.3%	4.1%	194
	Southwest	61.7%	31.5%	6.7%	149
	Western	54.3%	35.8%	9.9%	162
Free and Reduced %*	<26%	51.5%	40.6%	7.9%	202
	26 - 50%	58.3%	36.1%	5.6%	432
	51 - 65%	60.7%	31.2%	8.1%	285
	>65%	54.9%	39.6%	5.5%	275
District Enrollment	<1,000	59.0%	34.4%	6.6%	183
	1,000 - 2,499	55.7%	37.4%	7.0%	273
	2,500 - 4,999	60.6%	34.7%	4.8%	251
	5,000 - 9,999	49.3%	43.8%	6.9%	203
	10,000 - 24,999	59.4%	34.4%	6.3%	160
	25,000+	58.9%	32.3%	8.9%	124

*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between Free and Reduced %, and the rating of the extent to which condiments (eg cream cheese, ketchup, BBQ sauce) have been a challenge to procure by respondents.



Table B11. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following product types have been a challenge to procure. - Other, write-in responses:
A bigger challenge is the price increases due to supply chain and distribution costs
A variety of fruits is difficult to procure - it is the same fruits every week. Cost is an issue.
Ala carte items like juices, envy's, switch's, propel water
Allergy foods. We have over 600 student special diets. The number seems to increase each day.
Allergy friendly items
any farm to school has been hard with ordering and knowing will show up
any fully processed food is not much of a challenge to procure, its the healthy foods we have a challenge with procurement
Being able to utilize US Foods K-12 program has greatly alleviated a lot of our supply chain issues, which is why I answered this way. If I didn't have access to that as a state contract, procuring most of these items would be very problematic.
bleach and other cleaning products
Bread contain sesame: hamburger and hot dog buns, sliced bread. No options.
Breakfast items such as different varies of pancakes & waffles
Canned, frozen, and dried fruits have been especially difficult to get this year. Both via commodity delivery, as well as through my vendor.
Cannot plan a menu with such long lead times and then not even have it delivered when day comes.
cereal
COMMODITY BROWN BOX
Culturally appropriate foods
Disposable Items
disposals - portion cups, plates, etc.
DOD - commodity Fresh fruits and vegetables
equipment
Equipment repairs in a timely manner
FDP
Filling Quantities needed
Finding items that meet CNP guidelines as a whole. Sodium guidelines have been difficult to meet.
flour as we bake, some canned fruits
For us it is more about companies raising their minimum order amounts and distributors being limited to holding so much of one product. High prices and lack of employees to watch and babysit food form school to distributors and to manufactures and ALL of the GOV regulations in the school programs!



Fresh fruit/veggies not the freshest
Fresh fruits and vegetables
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables are more difficult to procure than canned and frozen from our distributor
gluten-free products
Good tasting low-sodium, whole grain products.
Grains seem to be a particular issue. Especially IW bowls of cereal.
I can't find entree items to meet nutritional
I have already exceeded my commodity entitlement for processed foods
I was dropped by my bakery just before school started, I was luck to have one more company that picked me up.
Inconsistent availability
Increase in cost - sub items are higher in price with no help in price matching.
Individually wrapped items to support breakfast in the classroom
Issues with the distributor wanting to carry a limited amount of items and we have to special order NOI and normal menu items.
It differs week to week for shortages/outages. Different products but nothing we can't work around.
It is a significant challenge to find products that are not filled with additives and preservatives. We'd like to find foods with clean labels and ecofriendly packaging, but these are practically non-existent in combination.
Items vary from week to week.
its with reduced sodium and sugar, whole grain, there is reduction in processing, thus a reduction in availability!
IW Gluten Free Items and IW GF/DF Items
lack of paper goods available for purchase
Limited fresh bread companies and produce companies have reduced the competition on our fresh bread and produce bids
linen bids(aprons and towels)and hood cleaning bids
Lots of discontinued items that students loved.
low in sodium products are a challenge
Low Sodium items are very hard to find to meet the new requirements.
Low-sugar cold breakfast items
Lower sodium foods that taste good
Lower sugar and lower sodium items that taste good is the problem.
meat/meat alternate
Menu selections for my students. When the food trends change it is a challenge to feed the kids what they like with the staff shortages.
Milk- cardboard for cartons
n/a
NA



Nationwide Milk Carton Shortage.
NOI items
None I can think of other than already mentioned.
our bread company on bid is struggling with staffing, which impacts them getting products to us. Milk carton shortage, has not impacted my district yet, but soon i will be paying staff more to come in and pour milk which i did not budget for.
Our main distributor has a bad habit of not communicating with us when there are manufacturing issues. We often find out days after the fact that a product is temporarily/permanently discontinued.
paper goods
paper products and smallwares
Paper products are expensive and struggle to receive the amount we ordered
Paper products that directly affect menu items
paper supplies
Paper supplies for meal service.
plant based and halal options
pre cupped hummus
Product consistency from vendors
Quality from distributor packaging and damaged goods
Some food items are now a direct ship and you never know when or if they will be shipped
Some of our challenges are in-between the not a challenge and Moderate challenge. Another issue we were experiencing this year has been the quality of the fruits and vegetables we were receiving.
Specialty items
Sun chips changing their recipe and now making them not smart snack compliant
There manufacturer-specific supply chain issues. it is difficult to utilize commodity pounds that have been sent to them if they are not making the products we need to serve to our students. We make the choice to send them pounds early in the spring, but don't know there is an issue until our prime vendor can't get them from the manufacturer. Our state has worked with us to carry-over pounds, so that has been helpful, but we still are not able to get some items for our planned menus, causing us to have to shift gears at the last minute.
Variety is the largest concern. We are able to meet meal patterns but our menu is stale and very repetitive.
Various menu items and smart snack items we sell



We do not find Bread products that are completely acceptable to our students. Whole Grain items are not the item we find at our chain restaurants or in great supply in our grocery stores. The sodium in bread is prohibitive with the stringent sodium regulations. We could use so much more USDA Corn, peas, green beans, applesauce, peaches, pears, and cheese however, with the formula limiting what we can purchase, and when the product is available, notwithstanding harvest and processing timelines, we can use so much more. I know there are places that don't use their allotment. We have an amazing individual in place that handles our USDA Foods, and she does a great job at encouraging entities to utilize their allotment. I do NOT think Cash in lieu is the answer, because that doesn't change the formula, and I believe there are price hikes happening for administrative burden and stringent processing for USDA Foods at the processing level. Milk is another place that funds could go to keep our dairies in operation and more local, not to the manufacturer but to the producer. Our producers are declining in our region.

We occasionally have entree items out, but they usually become in stock within a few weeks. Fruits and vegetables from multiple vendors have arrived moldy/unusable.

We only have one food distributor that will take our business-that is a huge problem!

whole grain items seem to be out of stock all the time, making staying in compliance is extremely challenging.

Whole grain products. Not a lot of variety.

with sodium keeping to going down - kids are not liking the modified items and participation is decreasing

with the shortage I am keeping more inventory on hand to try to compensate for items I may not get with limited storage at our small school this is a challenge

Note: Some responses were edited to correct spelling or format for ease of reading.



Appendix C: In January 2023, USDA proposed a rule to update federal school nutrition standards.

What is your level of concern for each of the following proposed requirements being considered under this rule?

Table C1. What is your level of concern for each of the following proposed requirements? – Additional sodium limits: three more 10% reductions for lunch, two more 10% reductions for breakfast					
	Overall	Serious concern	Moderate concern	Not a concern	n
		84.2%	14.5%	1.3%	1,287
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	78.5%	20.8%	0.8%	130
	Midwest	88.5%	10.6%	0.8%	358
	Mountain Plains	83.5%	15.8%	0.8%	133
	Northeast	71.8%	25.0%	3.2%	124
	Southeast	87.1%	12.0%	1.0%	209
	Southwest	86.3%	11.8%	1.9%	161
	Western	83.7%	14.5%	1.7%	172
Free and Reduced %	<26%	79.7%	19.4%	0.9%	217
	26 - 50%	86.4%	12.3%	1.3%	471
	51 - 65%	86.0%	13.0%	1.0%	308
	>65%	82.1%	15.8%	2.1%	291
District Enrollment	<1,000	78.5%	19.5%	2.0%	200
	1,000 - 2,499	85.6%	13.4%	1.0%	298
	2,500 - 4,999	85.2%	13.3%	1.5%	270
	5,000 - 9,999	84.4%	14.7%	0.9%	218
	10,000 - 24,999	88.4%	10.5%	1.2%	172
	25,000+	82.2%	16.3%	1.6%	129
*A chi-square test of independence showed there is a statistically significant association between FNS Region and the rating of the level of concern regarding additional sodium limits: three more 10% reductions for lunch, two more 10% reductions for breakfast.					



Table C2. What is your level of concern for each of the following proposed requirements? – Eliminate flavored milk options for grades K-8

	Overall	Serious concern	Moderate concern	Not a concern	n
		84.8%	9.9%	5.3%	1,287
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	87.7%	9.2%	3.1%	130
	Midwest	86.6%	9.8%	3.6%	358
	Mountain Plains	89.5%	6.8%	3.8%	133
	Northeast	79.0%	11.3%	9.7%	124
	Southeast	91.9%	5.7%	2.4%	209
	Southwest	86.3%	8.7%	5.0%	161
	Western	69.2%	18.6%	12.2%	172
Free and Reduced %	<26%	85.3%	11.5%	3.2%	217
	26 - 50%	86.2%	9.1%	4.7%	471
	51 - 65%	85.4%	8.8%	5.8%	308
	>65%	81.4%	11.3%	7.2%	291
District Enrollment*	<1,000	86.0%	8.0%	6.0%	200
	1,000 - 2,499	87.6%	8.1%	4.4%	298
	2,500 - 4,999	88.1%	8.1%	3.7%	270
	5,000 - 9,999	86.2%	8.3%	5.5%	218
	10,000 - 24,999	76.7%	18.0%	5.2%	172
	25,000+	77.5%	13.2%	9.3%	129

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant s between FNS Region and District Enrollment, and the rating of the level of concern regarding eliminating flavored milk options for grades K-8.



Table C3. What is your level of concern for each of the following proposed requirements? - Limits on added sugar in milk, yogurt, and cereal

	Overall	Serious concern	Moderate concern	Not a concern	n
		59.5%	33.6%	6.9%	1,284
USDA FNS Region**	Mid-Atlantic	54.3%	37.2%	8.5%	129
	Midwest	65.0%	29.4%	5.6%	357
	Mountain Plains	62.1%	33.3%	4.5%	132
	Northeast	48.4%	44.4%	7.3%	124
	Southeast	63.2%	32.5%	4.3%	209
	Southwest	64.6%	28.0%	7.5%	161
	Western	48.8%	38.4%	12.8%	172
Free and Reduced %	<26%	56.9%	36.6%	6.5%	216
	26 - 50%	57.6%	35.2%	7.2%	469
	51 - 65%	64.3%	30.2%	5.5%	308
	>65%	59.5%	32.3%	8.2%	291
District Enrollment*	<1,000	60.3%	33.2%	6.5%	199
	1,000 - 2,499	66.3%	29.3%	4.4%	297
	2,500 - 4,999	61.1%	32.6%	6.3%	270
	5,000 - 9,999	56.7%	35.0%	8.3%	217
	10,000 - 24,999	60.5%	32.0%	7.6%	172
	25,000+	42.6%	45.7%	11.6%	129

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant s between FNS Region and District Enrollment, and the rating of the level of concern regarding limits on added sugar in milk, yogurt, and cereal.



Table C4. What is your level of concern for each of the following proposed requirements? - Limit added sugars to a weekly average of less than 10% of calories per meal, in addition to product-based limits

	Overall	Serious concern	Moderate concern	Not a concern	n
		66.3%	28.4%	5.3%	1,287
USDA FNS Region*	Mid-Atlantic	65.9%	27.9%	6.2%	130
	Midwest	70.9%	25.5%	3.6%	358
	Mountain Plains	70.5%	28.0%	1.5%	133
	Northeast	54.8%	36.3%	8.9%	124
	Southeast	66.0%	29.2%	4.8%	209
	Southwest	70.8%	23.0%	6.2%	161
	Western	57.9%	33.9%	8.2%	172
Free and Reduced %	<26%	63.0%	33.8%	3.2%	216
	26 - 50%	66.1%	27.5%	6.4%	469
	51 - 65%	67.9%	28.6%	3.6%	308
	>65%	67.2%	25.9%	6.9%	290
District Enrollment*	<1,000	63.3%	32.2%	4.5%	199
	1,000 - 2,499	73.7%	22.6%	3.7%	297
	2,500 - 4,999	65.1%	30.9%	4.1%	269
	5,000 - 9,999	65.0%	28.6%	6.5%	217
	10,000 - 24,999	67.4%	23.8%	8.7%	172
	25,000+	56.6%	37.2%	6.2%	129

*Chi-square tests of independence showed there are statistically significant s between FNS Region and District Enrollment, and the rating of the level of concern limiting added sugars to a weekly average of less than 10% of calories per meal, in addition to product-based limits.



Table C5. What is your level of concern for each of the following proposed requirements? - Limit grain-based desserts, including whole grain granola/cereal/breakfast bars, to no more than 2oz equivalents per week for breakfast

	Overall	Serious concern	Moderate concern	Not a concern	n
		69.0%	23.8%	7.2%	1,286
USDA FNS Region	Mid-Atlantic	66.7%	24.0%	9.3%	129
	Midwest	74.0%	19.8%	6.1%	358
	Mountain Plains	70.7%	23.3%	6.0%	133
	Northeast	60.5%	29.8%	9.7%	124
	Southeast	68.9%	24.4%	6.7%	209
	Southwest	68.9%	23.0%	8.1%	161
	Western	65.1%	27.9%	7.0%	172
Free and Reduced %	<26%	65.4%	26.3%	8.3%	217
	26 - 50%	68.1%	24.3%	7.7%	470
	51 - 65%	70.8%	23.1%	6.2%	308
	>65%	71.1%	22.0%	6.9%	291
District Enrollment	<1,000	66.0%	26.5%	7.5%	200
	1,000 - 2,499	70.8%	22.5%	6.7%	298
	2,500 - 4,999	68.5%	24.4%	7.0%	270
	5,000 - 9,999	72.8%	19.8%	7.4%	217
	10,000 - 24,999	70.3%	22.1%	7.6%	172
	25,000+	62.0%	30.2%	7.8%	129