

Broadening Appeal of School Lunch Entices Students

Many parents know that getting kids to eat can be a challenge. Getting them to eat foods that are good for them can be an even bigger challenge. Imagine what it would be like to provide food to satisfy an entire school of kids!

Providing meals that appeal to kids is more art than science but thankfully, our school excels at art, science and kid-friendly school meals. We know that when kids eat well, they learn well. When it comes to school meals, we entice kids to eat by:

Offering a Wide Variety of Meals

Our school serves a varied menu of meals from week-to-week. We have a variety of different weekly menus, which all meet the federal government's nutritional limits for calories, fat and sodium, and the requirements for whole grains and a variety of vegetables. Varying our menus from week-to-week and month-to-month helps keep kids from getting bored and looking forward to lunch.

Diversifying Our Menus

Our menus include the meals kids like most: hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken nuggets. We also try to expand their tastes and expose them to other cultures through meals they may not know. We look to food trends students may be exposed to through TV ads or menus at their favorite restaurants. Street tacos and walking tacos, or meatless burgers are examples of foods that kids may have heard about through pop culture. Hamburgers of a wide variety appear on restaurant menus everywhere. We tap into that trend by going beyond plain hamburgers and cheeseburgers and serving varieties with a little spin that make traditional favorites even more appealing.



As our student population grows more diverse, so too does our school lunch menus. We offer entrees that trace their originals to Asian or Middle Eastern countries, for example. Of course, Mexican entrees are always popular with kids. Regional influences such as Tex-Mex and Cajun have been well received by many students.

From time-to-time, we will also serve breakfast for lunch. Kids really love French Toast Sticks, Waffles and even omelets.

Offering Daily Choices for School Lunch

As a parent, you know kids like to be in control of what they eat. Our students appreciate options for lunch rather than being forced to take foods they find disagreeable. Our school offers multiple options each day, including at least one hot entrée, a cold lunch option and our salad bar. A higher percentage of our students eat lunch each day since we began giving them choices.



Taste Testing

Our lunch offerings are all taste tested by students before they make it onto our menus. Sometimes we're surprised by what our evaluators like and don't like. Even after all these years in school foodservice, we can't predict with 100% accuracy what foods kids will like best.

It just goes to show you that kids are unpredictable. That's why we continue to change up our menus, offer them multiple options and conduct taste testing. We want kids to eat well to learn well.