Smarter Lunchroom Strategies

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Illinois State Board of Education
Agenda

SLM Introduction

SLM Strategies

Activity!
Smarter Lunchrooms Movement
What is it?

• Nationwide movement based on proven strategies for nudging students to select and eat the healthiest foods in the school lunchrooms by creating a lunchroom environment that makes the healthy choice the easy choice.
How Does it Work?

• Uses psychology and behavioral economics to create a lunchroom that makes the healthy choice the easy choice

• Behavioral economics is the study of the connection between environmental cues and how they impact food choices
How Does it Work?

1. Manage Portion Sizes
2. Increase Convenience
3. Improve Visibility
4. Enhance Taste Expectations
5. Utilize Suggestive Selling
6. Set Smart Pricing Strategies
What are the Benefits?

• Easy and inexpensive to implement
• Increases participation
• Improves student satisfaction
• Uses evidence-based strategies
• Increases healthy food consumption
• Reduces waste
• Engages school nutrition staff
Does it Work?

- Offering vegetables in two locations can result in students taking up to 40% more.
- Holding recess before lunch can increase vegetable and fruit consumption by 54%.
- Moving fruit from a stainless steel tray to a colorful fruit bowl can double sales.
- Giving healthy food choices fun, descriptive names – for example, calling green beans “supercharged green beans” – can increase consumption by over 30%.
- Offering sliced fruit can increase student consumption by over 70%.
- Suggesting students take a fruit can increase the number of students eating (not just taking) a fruit by as much as 70%.
Lunch’d!

Part 1
https://vod.video.cornell.edu/media/Lunch%27d+Part+1/1_qwjsb3ux

Part 2
https://vod.video.cornell.edu/media/Lunch%27d+Part+2/1_2bb2yw1
60-Point Scorecard

SMARter Lunchrooms Scorecard

Date __________________________ School Name __________________________ Completed by __________________________

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Review the scorecard before beginning.
2. Observe the lunchroom. Check off the following: a. Cafeteria staff and all others who serve meals are dressed properly. b. A menu board with today’s featured meal options with creative names is visible from 3 feet away. c. The lunchroom is clean and in good repair. d. Cafeteria staff and all others who serve meals are dressed properly.
3. Observe the lunchroom. Check off the following: a. Cafeteria staff and all others who serve meals are dressed properly. b. A menu board with today’s featured meal options with creative names is visible from 3 feet away. c. The lunchroom is clean and in good repair. d. Cafeteria staff and all others who serve meals are dressed properly.

FOCUS ON FRUIT
1. At least 2 kinds of fruit are offered. 2. At least 2 kinds of fruit are offered. 3. At least 2 kinds of fruit are offered. 4. At least 2 kinds of fruit are offered.

FOCUS ON VEGETABLES
1. At least one vegetable is offered. 2. At least one vegetable is offered. 3. At least one vegetable is offered. 4. At least one vegetable is offered.

FOCUS ON FISH
1. At least one fish option is offered. 2. At least one fish option is offered. 3. At least one fish option is offered. 4. At least one fish option is offered.

FOCUS ON HEALTHY FATS
1. At least one healthy fat option is offered. 2. At least one healthy fat option is offered. 3. At least one healthy fat option is offered. 4. At least one healthy fat option is offered.

FOCUS ON NUTRITION
1. A nutrition label is provided for all meal options. 2. A nutrition label is provided for all meal options. 3. A nutrition label is provided for all meal options. 4. A nutrition label is provided for all meal options.

FOCUS ON PORTIONS
1. Portion sizes are appropriate for all ages. 2. Portion sizes are appropriate for all ages. 3. Portion sizes are appropriate for all ages. 4. Portion sizes are appropriate for all ages.

FOCUS ON DRINKS
1. At least one low-fat dairy option is offered. 2. At least one low-fat dairy option is offered. 3. At least one low-fat dairy option is offered. 4. At least one low-fat dairy option is offered.

FOCUS ON SUGAR
1. At least one sugar-free option is offered. 2. At least one sugar-free option is offered. 3. At least one sugar-free option is offered. 4. At least one sugar-free option is offered.

FOCUS ON SODA
1. At least one zero-calorie soda option is offered. 2. At least one zero-calorie soda option is offered. 3. At least one zero-calorie soda option is offered. 4. At least one zero-calorie soda option is offered.

FOCUS ON FRUIT JUICE
1. At least one whole fruit juice option is offered. 2. At least one whole fruit juice option is offered. 3. At least one whole fruit juice option is offered. 4. At least one whole fruit juice option is offered.

FOCUS ON SODA JUICE
1. At least one low-sugar soda juice option is offered. 2. At least one low-sugar soda juice option is offered. 3. At least one low-sugar soda juice option is offered. 4. At least one low-sugar soda juice option is offered.

FOCUS ON WATER
1. At least one water option is offered. 2. At least one water option is offered. 3. At least one water option is offered. 4. At least one water option is offered.

FOCUS ON MILK
1. At least one milk option is offered. 2. At least one milk option is offered. 3. At least one milk option is offered. 4. At least one milk option is offered.

FOCUS ON MEAL PREP
1. Meal prep is conducted in a clean and sanitary manner. 2. Meal prep is conducted in a clean and sanitary manner. 3. Meal prep is conducted in a clean and sanitary manner. 4. Meal prep is conducted in a clean and sanitary manner.

FOCUS ON CLEANUP
1. Cafeteria staff clean up after themselves. 2. Cafeteria staff clean up after themselves. 3. Cafeteria staff clean up after themselves. 4. Cafeteria staff clean up after themselves.

FOCUS ON SAFETY
1. Safety procedures are followed. 2. Safety procedures are followed. 3. Safety procedures are followed. 4. Safety procedures are followed.

FOCUS ON SECURITY
1. Security measures are in place. 2. Security measures are in place. 3. Security measures are in place. 4. Security measures are in place.

FOCUS ON SERVICE
1. Service is fast and friendly. 2. Service is fast and friendly. 3. Service is fast and friendly. 4. Service is fast and friendly.

FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENT
1. The environment is clean and inviting. 2. The environment is clean and inviting. 3. The environment is clean and inviting. 4. The environment is clean and inviting.

FOCUS ON INCLUSION
1. All students are treated equally. 2. All students are treated equally. 3. All students are treated equally. 4. All students are treated equally.

FOCUS ON ACCESS
1. Access to meals is easy for all students. 2. Access to meals is easy for all students. 3. Access to meals is easy for all students. 4. Access to meals is easy for all students.

FOCUS ON NAVIGATION
1. Navigation to meals is easy for all students. 2. Navigation to meals is easy for all students. 3. Navigation to meals is easy for all students. 4. Navigation to meals is easy for all students.

FOCUS ON COMPLAINTS
1. Compliments are welcomed and acted upon. 2. Compliments are welcomed and acted upon. 3. Compliments are welcomed and acted upon. 4. Compliments are welcomed and acted upon.

FOCUS ON TRAINING
1. Staff are trained on how to serve meals. 2. Staff are trained on how to serve meals. 3. Staff are trained on how to serve meals. 4. Staff are trained on how to serve meals.

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Scorecard Total: ______________ of 60
Scorecard Categories

- Focus on Fruit
- Vary the Vegetables
- Highlight the Salad
- Move More White Milk
- Boost Reimbursable Meals
- Lunchroom Atmosphere
- Student Involvement
- School Community Involvement
Focus on Fruit

- At least two kinds of fruit are offered.
- Sliced or cut fruit is offered.
- A variety of mixed whole fruits are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of stainless steel pans).
- Fruit is offered in at least two locations on all service lines, one of which is right before each point of sale.

- At least one fruit is identified as the featured fruit-of-the-day and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name at the point of selection.
- A fruit taste test is offered at least once a year.*

Focus on Fruit Subtotal _____ of 6
Vary the Vegetables

- At least two kinds of vegetables are offered.
- Vegetables are offered on all service lines.
- Both hot and cold vegetables are offered.
- When cut, raw vegetables are offered, they are paired with a low-fat dip such as ranch, hummus, or salsa.
- A serving of vegetables is incorporated into an entrée item at least once a month (e.g., beef and broccoli bowl, spaghetti, black bean burrito).

- Self-serve spices and seasonings are available for students to add flavor to vegetables.
- At least one vegetable is identified as the featured vegetable of the day and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name at the point of selection.
- A vegetable taste test is offered at least once a year.

Vary the Vegetables Subtotal _____ of 8
Highlight the Salad

**HIGHLIGHT THE SALAD**

- Pre-packaged salads or a salad bar is available to all students.
- Pre-packaged salads or a salad bar is in a high traffic area.
- Self-serve salad bar tongs, scoops, and containers are larger for vegetables and smaller for croutons, dressing, and other non-produce items.

- Pre-packaged salads or salad bar choices are labeled with creative, descriptive names and displayed next to each choice.

Highlight the Salad Subtotal _____ of 4
Move More White Milk

MOVE MORE WHITE MILK

- Milk cases/coolers are kept full throughout meal service.
- White milk is offered in all beverage coolers.
- White milk is organized and represents at least 1/3 of all milk in each designated milk cooler.
- White milk is displayed in front of other beverages in all coolers.

1% or non-fat white milk is identified as the featured milk and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name.

Move More White Milk Subtotal ____ of 5
Boost Reimbursable Meals

- Cafeteria staff politely prompt students who do not have a full reimbursable meal to select a fruit or vegetable.
- One entrée is identified as the featured entrée-of-the-day, is labeled with a creative name next to the point of selection, and is the first entrée offered.
- Creative, descriptive names are used for featured items on the monthly menu.
- One reimbursable meal is identified as the featured combo meal and is labeled with a creative name.
- The combo meal of the day or featured entrée-of-the-day is displayed on a sample tray or photograph.

- A (reimbursable) combo meal is offered as a grab-and-go meal.
- Signs show students how to make a reimbursable meal on any service line (e.g., a sign that says “Add a milk, fruit and carrots to your pizza for the Power Pizza Meal Deal!”)
- Students can pre-order lunch in the morning or day before.*
- Students must use cash to purchase à la carte snack items if available.
- Students have to ask a food service worker to select à la carte snack items if available.*
- Students are offered a taste test of a new entrée at least once a year.*

Reimbursable Meals Subtotal _____ of 11
Lunchroom Atmosphere

**LUNCHROOM ATMOSPHERE**

- Cafeteria staff smile and greet students upon entering the service line and throughout meal service.
- Attractive, healthful food posters are displayed in dining and service areas.
- A menu board with today’s featured meal options with creative names is readable from 5 feet away when approaching the service area.
- The lunchroom is branded and decorated in a way that reflects the student body.
- Cleaning supplies or broken/unused equipment are not visible during meal service.

- All lights in the dining and meal service areas work and are turned on.
- Compost/recycling and trash cans are at least 5 feet away from dining students.
- There is a clear traffic pattern. Signs, floor decals, or rope lines are used when appropriate.
- Trash cans are emptied when full.
- A menu board with tomorrow’s featured meal with creative names is readable from 5 feet away in the service or dining area.

**Lunchroom Atmosphere Subtotal _____ of 10**
Student Involvement

- Student artwork is displayed in the service area or dining space.
- Students, teachers, or administrators announce today’s menu in daily announcements.*
- Students are involved in the development of creative and descriptive names for menu items.*
- Students have the opportunity to volunteer in the lunchroom.

- Students are involved in the creation of artwork or marketing materials to promote menu items.*
- Students provide feedback (informal – “raise your hand if you like…” or formal – focus groups, surveys) to inform menu development.*

Student Involvement Subtotal _____ of 6
School Community Involvement

- A monthly menu is posted in the main office.
- A menu board with creative, descriptive names for today's featured meal options is located in the main office.
- A monthly menu is provided to students, families, teachers, and administrators.*
- Information about the benefits of school meals is provided to teachers and administration at least annually.*
- Nutrition education is incorporated into the school day.*
- Students are engaged in growing food (for example, gardening, seed planting, farm tours, etc.).*

- Elementary schools provide recess before lunch.*
- The school participates in one or more food promotion programs such as Chefs Move to Schools, Fuel Up to Play 60, Share Our Strength, etc.*
- The school has a partnership with Farm to School, local business(es), or a farmer's market.*
- Smarter Lunchrooms strategies are included in the Local School Wellness Policy.*

School Involvement Subtotal ____ of 10
Scorecard Award Levels

**AWARD LEVEL**

- **Bronze 15-25**
  Great job! This lunchroom is off to a strong start.

- **Silver 26-45**
  Excellent. Think of all the kids that are inspired to eat healthier!

- **Gold 46-60**
  This lunchroom is making the most of the Smarter Lunchroom Movement. Keep reaching for the top!
Scorecard Updates

• School Community Involvement

The school participates in one or more food promotion programs such as Chefs Move to Schools, Fuel Up to Play 60, Share Our Strength, etc.*

The school has a partnership with Farm to School, local business(es), or a farmer’s market*
Using the Scorecard

• Arrive 20 minutes before the first meal service to make observations before students arrive

• Plan to stay for at least one entire lunch period; try to stay for two lunch periods if you can

• Remember: each school is unique and may not be able to implement all the items on the scorecard

• Mark off items that currently reflect the lunchroom and use the scorecard as a list of items to consider for the future
Scorecard Tips

• Only check off an item if it is completely true

• Verify certain items with additional staff members prior to marking them

• Be aware that some strategies may not work for certain schools
Scorecard FAQs

WHY SHOULD I USE THE SCORECARD?
It offers research-based strategies that can increase participation in school meal programs, reduce food waste, and increase consumption of healthy foods. It provides a snapshot of how many strategies are currently in place in a lunchroom and which areas the lunchroom can work toward. The Scorecard can be filled out repeatedly to measure improvement over time.

WHO SHOULD COMPLETE THE SCORECARD?
The Scorecard is a valuable tool for school nutrition professionals to use in their own lunchroom(s). School nutrition professionals are encouraged to welcome stakeholders such as students, administrators, PTO members, and outside professionals to complete a Scorecard to gain diverse perspectives. Always ask permission before completing a scorecard in a lunchroom that is not your own and always provide results and feedback to the lunchroom leadership afterwards.

HOW CAN I MAKE THE SCORECARD WORK FOR MY SCHOOL?
Each school is unique and may not be able to implement all the items on the Scorecard—back off items that currently reflect the lunchroom and use the Scorecard as a list of items to consider for the future.

WHAT IF A STRATEGY IS ONLY HALF TRUE FOR THE SCHOOL?
Only mark can if it is completely true for the school. Consider partially true strategies to be prime candidates to implement first.

IS THE SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING ALL OF THE STRATEGIES ON THE SCORECARD?
The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement was designed to include support from students, administrators, and the wider school community. These stakeholders can assist with some strategies, especially those in the Student Involvement and School Community Involvement sections.

THE SCORECARD ITEMS WITH ASTERISKS (*) ARE NOT OBSERVABLE. HOW DO I KNOW IF I SHOULD CHECK IT OFF OR NOT?
Check in with the school nutrition director, teachers, or administrators for input on items that are not easily visible.

HOW LONG SHOULD I OBSERVE WHEN COMPLETING THE SCORECARD?
About 20 minutes before the first meal service begins and plan to stay for at least one entire lunch period. The best practice is to stay for at least two lunch periods.

MY SCHOOL DOESN’T HOLD RECESS. HOW WILL THAT AFFECT MY SCORECARD TOTAL?
Absence of recess results in kids eating more fruits and vegetables. However, many middle and high schools don’t have recesses. If your school doesn’t hold recess, do not check this box. It will not prevent the school from achieving the gold award level.

WHAT IF ONLY HALF OF THE STUDENTS GO TO RECESS BEFORE LUNCH AND THE OTHER HALF GO AFTER?
Only check off the strategy if it is completely true for all students. If only half the students get recess before lunch, do not check off the strategy.

WHAT IS AN EXAMPLE OF A GRAB-AND-GO MEAL?
A prepackaged meal as an elementary school might consist of a turkey sandwich, apple, carrots and ranch, and milk. A grab-and-go meal at a middle or high school might include a grilled chicken salad with whole grain crackers, an orange, and milk. The grab-and-go meal should be prepackaged for quick service and, ideally, be branded with a creative name and/or imagery. These meals may be served from a special line, window or cart for added speed and convenience.

Online Scorecard Tracker

- Key features:
  - Mobile friendly so you can fill it out on-site right on your phone or tablet
  - Save a Scorecard in progress and return anytime to complete it
  - Upload photos to accompany Scorecard strategies
  - Save/Print a completed Scorecard with photos
  - Save/Print a certificate indicating the cafeteria’s award level
  - Makes tracking Smarter Lunchrooms progress EASY and provides a one stop location for Scorecard record keeping
Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard Summary

- Complete this page alongside the scorecard to provide a quick snapshot of the results

- 4 sections:
  - First impressions
  - Strengths
  - Opportunities
  - Next steps
The 4-Step Path

Spot
Plan
Do
Prove
The 4-Step Path

- Assessing where your lunchroom stands before any changes are made
- How to:
  - Complete the Scorecard
  - Take Photographs
The 4-Step Path

- Develop your Smarter Lunchroom Action Plan
- How to:
  - Review the scorecard and photographs to identify areas of need
  - Choose 3-5 strategies
  - Create a plan for each strategy
The 4-Step Path

• Complete the Smarter Lunchrooms Action Plan

• How to:
  • Ensure lunchroom staff are aware of the changes that are going to happen
  • Complete the necessary training and communication, if needed
The 4-Step Path

• Evaluating the impact of the changes implemented

• How to:
  • Complete a new Scorecard
  • Take pictures of the changes made
Activity
Resources & Tools

• The National Smarter Lunchrooms Handbook: How to Build a Smarter Lunchroom

• Available online as a PDF or a printed version can be obtained from the Smarter Lunchrooms office

Resources & Tools

• Webinars related to Smarter Lunchrooms and other school food topics
  – Smarter Lunchrooms scorecard and techniques
  – School food service leadership
  – Smarter Mealtimes & Early Childhood Education
  – Waste Reduction
  – Research

https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/scorecard-tools/webinars
Resources & Tools

• Resources from Pioneers

https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/scorecard-tools/resources-smarter-lunchrooms-pioneers
Smarter Lunchrooms Illinois Collaborative

To stay up-to-date on the latest Smarter Lunchrooms Movement information, news, and events, consider joining the Smarter Lunchrooms Illinois Collaborative!

To join, please contact Beth Tanner at etanner@isbe.net
Next Steps

Assess your current lunchroom needs

Develop an action plan

Create Smarter Lunchrooms!
Thank you!