Fresh from California

Menu Planning Support Session

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Angela Gomez
School Nutrition Coordinator
LunchAssist

Jessica Krug
School Nutrition Coordinator
LunchAssist

Crystal Whitelaw Hall
Program Manager
California Food for California Kids

Liz Carlton
Program Coordinator
California Food for California Kids
CALIFORNIA FOOD
FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS

California Food for California Kids is an initiative of the Center for Ecoliteracy
LunchAssist PRO
Professional Development and Resource Hub
session 4 | agenda

- fresh from california
- specialty crops
- inspiration to implementation
- resources
- discussion
Menu Planning Support. Online group sessions providing best practices for menu planning and substitutions, recipe development, and nutrition analysis with a Registered Dietitian.

Marketing Materials. Beautifully designed promotional banners and posters for your cafeterias offered in both English and Spanish.

Media Support. Media training and outreach to promote your district’s Farm to School program.
specialty crops

fresh from ca
fruits & veggies in focus

- avocado
- broccoli
- cantaloupe
- cucumber
- grapes
- kale
- kiwi
- strawberries
- tangerines
- watermelon
series recap
putting it into practice
series recap

we’ve covered the following topics:

- promoting flavorful, plant-forward, culturally-diverse recipes
- how to create compliant recipes
- review of special diets policies & procedures
- best practices for planning allergen-friendly, plant-forward recipes
- salad bars as a strategy for sustainability, scratch cooking, and plant-forward initiatives
- salad bar policy & recipe inspiration
implementation

how does a new recipe idea make it to the menu?

- idea
- recipe creation
- recipe testing - staff
- taste tests - students
- serve on the menu
recipe testing

inspiration to implementation
step 1: identify recipe

sources of inspiration

- staff
- students
- school districts
- local food trends
- social media food trends
- this menu planning support series 😊

today’s recipe inspiration: strawberry vinaigrette
step 2: adjust the recipe

1. verify the recipe ingredients and preparation steps
2. check the equipment needed and note any substitutions
3. prepare a small quantity of the recipe, up to 25 servings
   a. follow the recipe closely to verify the yield
   b. keep notes during preparation and record any changes needed
4. transfer the recipe to your standardized recipe template
Recipe Title: Strawberry Vinaigrette
Recipe Category: Condiments
Portion Size: 2 Tbsp (1 fl oz.)

Recipe #: N/A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Recipe Yield</th>
<th>Recipe Yield</th>
<th>Directions/HACCP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 Servings</td>
<td>1 Serving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>Measure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries, fresh</td>
<td>1 lb 2 oz.</td>
<td>3 1/4 cup</td>
<td>Combine all ingredients except olive oil in a blender. Blend until smooth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red wine vinegar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dijon mustard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meal Pattern Contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meat/Meat Alternate</th>
<th>Grains</th>
<th>Vegetable/Vegetable Subgroup</th>
<th>Fruit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
step 3: test the recipe with your staff

work through logistical kinks

- test recipe at different sites
- create different standardized recipes that match equipment available
- get staff opinions on taste and texture
- ask staff questions
  - recipe directions clear and concise
  - adjustments to ingredient amounts
  - proposed service style make sense
  - best day of the week to menu this item within current menu
poll time!

how often did you conduct student taste tests (pre-COVID) in a school year?

A. 0 times
B. 1-2 times
C. 3-4 times
D. More than 5 times
poll time!

how often do you conduct student taste tests currently (the 21-22 SY)?

A. 0 times
B. 1-2 times
C. 3-4 times
D. More than 5 times
If your goal is to conduct more student taste tests, what kind of support would you need to meet your goal?
step 4: student taste tests

why is this step important?
students are our main customers!

- create menus and recipes that students *like*
- encourage students to share their opinions
- make sure students feel seen and heard
- save money and effort
- reduce food waste
- increase participation
- maintain staff morale

goal: listen to student voice and choice
share in the chat!

what are some challenges you have found with student taste tests?
before you get started

● determine which grade groups you want to target
● determine approximately how many students you need to participate
● calculate how many servings will be needed
● decide what the sample portion size will be
  ○ note: this will likely be different than the portion provided on the menu!
● decide how the samples will be served
● when will the samples be served
● identify allergens and Special Diet considerations
before you get started

- decide how you will collect feedback
- what determines success
  - ex. 80% of students like the sample = add it to the menu
- recruit people to assist you
- where will you conduct the taste test and is it equipped with everything you need
- check in with the Kitchen Manager and schedule a day that works best for their team

🙌 engage staff in decision making process!
keeping it safe

safety first and always

- let students know if the sample is:
  - hot
  - spicy
  - has allergens
- tell students what the sample contains
- ask them if it is okay for them to try it
- always ask permission and remind students they can decline the sample
- continue to practice food safety
build excitement around the taste test

let students know that you will be taste testing it up!

- announce it on social media
- put up a poster announcement
- post it on digital menus
- have a fun table set-up
- set a theme
  - “taste it Tuesday”
  - “try it Thursday”
  - “Friday try day”
set-up options

what works best for your team?

- set up on the lunchline
- set up a table in the cafeteria
- take a cart and hand out samples directly
- take a cart to a classroom (with teacher’s permission)
- organize a taste test or student menu planning committee
keep those samples splendid

a lot of students “eat” with their eyes!

- double check what the sample is being served in
  - does it still make sense
  - does it “show off” the sample
- keep it consistent
- line up the samples nicely
- have a garbage can nearby

🌟 strawberry vinaigrette in a clear container with a dippable veggie
taste test presentation

- invite students to try a “free” sample
- be intentional about how you describe the sample
- engage with students
collect student feedback

record your results

- consider how much time you have
- how do you want to get feedback
- encourage honest feedback
- make age-appropriate surveys
- ask close ended questions
  - elicits “yes” or “no” answer
- ask open ended questions if you have time to discuss it further
  - tell me...
student feedback examples

- ballot boxes
- ballot cups
- visual count or tally
- paper survey
- thumbs up or thumbs down (you record)
age-appropriate surveys

Photo credit: Action for Healthy Kids

Photo credit: Oklahoma Cooking for Kids
PLANT-FORWARD FLAVORS

Recipe name: ____________________________

☐ Loved it! ☐ Liked it! ☐ Tried it!

Tell us how you feel about this recipe:
survey for student menu planning committee

![Survey Image]

**SCHOOL CAFETERIA SURVEY**

Wouldn't it be great to see more of what you love, served in the cafeteria?

The cafeteria staff is always looking for ways to improve our offerings and overall experience. Please take a few minutes to complete our survey to give us some feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tell us about yourself</th>
<th>Age: ___</th>
<th>Grade: ___</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last week, how many times did you...</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy a lunch from school?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy a snack from the cafeteria?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring your own lunch?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you eat a lunch?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please rate the following...</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overall taste of the food</td>
<td>🍽️ 🍽️ 🍽️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The variety of the food served</td>
<td>🍽️ 🍽️ 🍽️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The healthy food options served</td>
<td>🍽️ 🍽️ 🍽️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cafeteria staff</td>
<td>🍽️ 🍽️ 🍽️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overall cafeteria environment</td>
<td>🍽️ 🍽️ 🍽️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you buy lunch today?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes, how would you rate your meal?</td>
<td>🍽️ 🍽️ 🍽️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Of the items served in our cafeteria, what is your...</th>
<th>Favorite</th>
<th>Least Favorite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please leave any comments/feedback you may have for the cafeteria staff.
results sheet example
view each taste test as an experiment

for both you *and* the students

- use each taste test as an opportunity to improve
- practice until you create a solid taste test system
- and of course... have fun!
give your followers a behind the scenes peek

- even if it is a “fail”
- people don’t know what you are doing unless you show (and tell) them
- share the winning recipe

share on social media
share in the chat!

what are some of your student taste test success stories?
step 6: finalize the recipe

incorporate feedback and test the final recipe

● did the recipe “pass” the student testing phase? should you move forward with the recipe?
● utilize staff and student feedback to make final adjustments
  ○ flavor
  ○ texture
  ○ appearance
● scale the recipe for service (e.g., 50 or 100 servings)
● test the final recipe and make any final adjustments
  ○ cooking time
  ○ salt, spices, herbs, liquids, etc. may need to be adjusted as you scale up>100 servings
  ○ take notes during the process!
step 7: serve on the menu

taking it from sample to (menu) study

- decide where this item best fits on the menu
- consider:
  - seasonality
  - time it takes to order and receive ingredients
  - prep time
  - difficulty of the menu that day and week
  - meal pattern
- advertise!
resources
resources

- standardized recipe guide (MN Dept. of Education)
- standardized recipe template (CO Dept. of Education)
- taste test guide (Action for Healthy Kids)
- taste test toolkit (Montana Harvest of the Month)
- cafeteria survey sample (Heartland)
- plant forward meal resources (Center for Ecoliteracy)
stay connected with LunchAssist

- **LunchAssist PRO membership** featuring Brigaid
  - staff training videos in English & Spanish
  - culinary training by Brigaid (coming soon)
  - templates, tools, and resources
  - weekly newsletter
resources | center for ecoliteracy

- learn more and sign up for fresh from california
- plant-forward school meal resources
- coming soon: webpage hosting all menu planning support session videos
- follow us!

linkedin @center-for-ecoliteracy | twitter @ecoliteracy
facebook @centerforecoliteracy | instagram @center_for_ecoliteracy
poll time!

overall, how would you rate the Menu Planning Support Sessions?

1. extremely helpful
2. very helpful
3. somewhat helpful
4. slightly helpful
5. not at all helpful
thank you
discussion time!