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School food has

changed in recent years—

for the better.

But we need to make sure these healthy changes are being implemented in your school. Why? Nutritious food is critical to student success in school and in life, and many Chicago Public School students receive 80 percent of their meals during the school day.

Introduction

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC) have been working together for the past decade to transform the district's school meal program. CPS and HSC know that students who eat healthier at school and at home have better attention spans, better class participation and higher test scores. This is why CPS, HSC and other partners have been working together to ensure that positive change for school food in Chicago is meaningful, sustainable and in the best interest of the students whose health and learning it directly affects.

Parent voices are key to this work. Through HSC's Parents United for Healthy Schools program, parents develop the knowledge and skills to help bring about health-promoting changes at their children's schools and reinforce healthy eating habits at home. Since 2006, Parents United has been at the forefront of helping make Chicago schools healthier places for their children. Parent leaders were instrumental in championing the Breakfast in the Classroom program at individual schools and at the district level. Parents have also tirelessly advocated for healthier school menus and supported schools' successful efforts to achieve the USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge, which later inspired the Healthy CPS School Indicator.

In 2013, CPS and HSC piloted and launched a series of School Food 101 workshops to raise awareness of the new changes to the school meal program, increase understanding of school meal basics and hear about how those changes are being implemented at the school level. We asked elementary school parents to survey their kids about the school meals they were

receiving. From this learning process, CPS and HSC launched a comprehensive school meal survey for parents in the fall of 2014. The results from this survey made it clear that parents and school administrators needed more resources and information and ways to share their feedback. It's with that need in mind that CPS and HSC partnered to create new resources around school food. You can access all of these resources online at healthyschoolscampaign.org/school-food-resources.

CPS has made great progress in ensuring students receive healthy food as part of their school experience. Food served in CPS now meets, and—in some cases—exceeds, the standards set out by the USDA. We need to make sure this great progress is reflected in the meal programs of all CPS schools. That's where you come in.

This checklist includes items that CPS is committed to implementing as well as ideas and strategies to help create a school environment that is supportive of the school meal program and students' efforts to eat healthy.

Instructions: Please complete this checklist and share with your school wellness team. This checklist can help you think about ways your school can better support the success of the school meal program and share feedback with CPS Nutrition Support Services.

Look at the categories on the next page, and select the category you would like to focus on at your school and follow the directions.

I'm concerned about:

CPS offers breakfast, lunch, after school snack, after school supper and Saturday meals to all students during the school year. And during the summer months, CPS also serves breakfast and lunch to students. In 2010, CPS adopted new nutrition standards that require school meals to include more fruits and veggies; more whole grains; fewer potatoes and nachos; and no more doughnuts and breakfast pastries. CPS meals are meeting national standards and exceed the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Gold Standard of the HealthierUS School Challenge Guidelines. Is this happening in your school? Fill out the School Food Checklist, located on the next page, to see how well your school is doing.	□ Food used in celebrations and school fundraisers CPS schools are expected to adhere to the district's Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy, which encourages celebrations to focus on fun rather than food and limits schools to two unhealthy celebrations per year. All foods sold as part of school fundraisers must meet the policy's nutrition guidelines and cannot take place during school meals. Does your school focus on fun rather than food for celebrations? Are school fundraisers promoting healthy food choices and lifestyles? Learn more and follow the requirements and tips described in the CPS FundraiseWell toolkit: bit.ly/fundraiseWELL.
Food sold in vending machines The Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy establishes nutrition standards for food sold to students outside the school lunch program, including vending machines. Elementary schools can only sell water or 100 percent juice beverages in vending machines and nothing else. High schools must meet certain nutritional requirements for food in vending machines. What's in your school's vending machine? Learn more and follow the requirements and tips described in the CPS DineWell toolkit: bit.ly/Dine-WELL.	The Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy establishes nutritional standards for food available to students outside the school lunch program, including school stores. School store cannot be open during school meal times. Did you know that food sold to students on school grounds, outside the meal program, should not exceed 150 calories for elementary and 200 calories for high school students? Foods also must meet specific fat, sodium, and sugar requirements. Is your school meeting the requirements? Learn more and follow the requirements and tips described in the CPS DineWell toolkit: bit.ly/Dine-WELL.

School Meal Basics

School meals meet the HealthierUS School Challenge	
Gold Standard. In 2010, new CPS nutrition standards	
were adopted that meet and exceed the HealthierUS	
School Challenge Gold Standard. This means that	
school meals now include more fruits and veggies;	
more whole grains; fewer potatoes and nachos; and no	
more doughnuts and breakfast pastries. To learn more about meal nutrition standards, cost and logistics of	
the CPS meal program, see the report, 10 Pathways to	
Excellence in School Meals, located at	
bit.ly/CPS-Pathways-report.	
✓ In 2011, CPS adopted universal Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC), an initiative that offers all elementary	
students, regardless of their families' income, a free	
breakfast when they arrive at school. This program is	
a proven strategy to increase breakfast participation,	
which helps students focus and do better in class.	
Although BIC must be implemented in every	
elementary school, it is not a one-size-fits all solution.	
There are several options for serving breakfast to all	
students, and principals can work with CPS to create	
a customized approach that works for their school's	
specific challenges and constraints.	
▼ The school participates in Farm to School. CPS has	
made a commitment to offer students more foods that	
are grown within 250 miles of Chicago. CPS indicates	
which items are local by placing an "L" next to the	
menu item. Each monthly menu features: a local frozen	
item once a week, fresh items twice a month and	
chicken raised without antibiotics twice a month. More	
information about this program and the monthly local foods menu are posted on	
cpsfarmtoschoolmarket.com.	
The school has achieved the Healthy CPS School	
Certification and/or LearnWell Certification. LearnWELL is one of the four badges required for a school to	
become Healthy CPS. Schools that are certified	
LearnWELL are considered to be 100% compliant with	
the district wellness policies regarding healthy food	
(including snacks and beverages) and physical activity.	
Learn more by visiting bit.ly/LearnWELL.	

Menus

CPS aims to offer nutritious, appealing foods and meals that contribute to the overall good health, growth and academic performance of our students. This section details fruit, vegetable and beverage requirements of the school meal program as well as other items that go above the set standards. Take a look!

Here are a few items that can

promote student fruit consumption:

Fruits

As part of each school meal, CPS requires and is committed to:

☐ Sliced or cut fruit is available daily. For breakfast The meal offers a different fruit daily and at least two Daily fruit options are given creative, age appropriate fresh fruits per week (daily where there is a choice of names. fruit). 100% juice may be counted as a fruit only once Daily fruit options are written legibly on menu boards in a week. all service and dining areas. ☐ Vegetables from the dark-green, red/orange, beans Fruit is available at all points of sale in the cafeteria. and peas and other sub-groups may be substituted for A mixed variety of whole fruits are displayed together. fruits to meet the breakfast fruit requirement. For lunch Five different fruits per week of which three must be fresh fruits. CPS does not serve fruit juice at lunch. Daily fruit options are available in at least two different locations on each service line. For all school meals Fruit options are not browning, bruised or otherwise damaged. Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing/hotel pans). Daily fruit options are easily seen by students of average height for your school. ☐ Daily fruit options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students.

Vegetables

As part of each school meal, CPS requires and is committed to:

For breakfast Individual salads are available to all students. No vegetable requirement, but vegetables from the ☐ Daily vegetable options are available in at least two dark-green, red/orange, beans and peas and other different locations on each service line. sub-groups may be substituted for fruits to meet the A daily vegetable option is bundled into grab-and-go breakfast fruit requirement. meals available to students. Available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names. For lunch All vegetable names are included on the published At least two types of vegetable are available daily. monthly school lunch menu. Offers one meatless entrée each day and a variety of protein each week. Limits starchy vegetables to 1 cup a week. Limits oven baked potato (i.e. french fries, tater tots, hash browns, etc.) items to once a week in elementary schools and twice a week in high schools. Limits nachos to once a week in high schools and once a month at elementary schools. At least one vegetable option is available in all food service areas. ☐ All vegetable names are printed/written on name-cards and displayed next to each vegetable option daily. Daily vegetable options are easily seen by students of average height for your school. For all school meals ☐ Vegetables are not wilted, browning or otherwise damaged. All vegetable names are written and legible on menu boards.

Here are a few items that can promote

student vegetable consumption:

Moving More White Milk and Water

CPS follows the Federal Regulations of the USDA which governs the National School Lunch Program, and must offer milk to all students and have access to drinking water. Accommodations can and must be made for students with special dietary needs.

As part of each school meal, CPS requires and is committed to:	As a way to reduce student calorie and sugar consumption:
 □ CPS offers low-fat and skim white and fat-free chocolate milk. Milk must be free of added water, preservatives, neutralizers, rGHB, BST (bovine somatotropin) or other foreign matter. □ Free water is available to students during lunch meal times where they are served and when breakfast is served in the cafeteria drinking water must be made available. 	☐ The school principal can request that only white milk be served during meals. Alternatively, you can keep chocolate milk but request to have white milk be more visible by keeping white milk in all beverage coolers; making white milk at least a third of all visible milk in the cafeteria; putting white milk in front of other beverages; and bundling white milk with all grab-and-go meals as the default beverage. To request a change, please contact the Aramark Area Manager for your school.
	☐ Ensure that water fountains are clean and properly maintained.
	Provide access to water fountains, dispensers, and hydration stations throughout the school.
	Allow students to have water bottles in class or to go to the water fountain if they need to drink water.

Dining Center Atmosphere

CPS aims to provide a safe and pleasant environment for students to enjoy meals at school. As part of each school meal experience, CPS requires and is committed to:

Removing trash on floors, in or near garbage cans between each lunch period.	
Cleaning supplies and utensils are returned to a	
cleaning closet or are not visible during service and dining.	
Compost, recycling, tray return and garbage cans are tidied between lunch periods and compost, recycling, tray return and garbage cans are at least 5 feet away from dining students.	
 Dining and service areas are clear of any non- functional equipment or tables during service. 	
☐ Sneeze guards in all service areas are clean.	
Obstacles and barriers to enter service and dining areas have been removed (i.e. garbage cans, mop buckets, cones, lost & found etc.).	
Clutter is removed from service and dining areas	
promptly (i.e. empty boxes, supply shipments, empty crates, pans, lost & found etc.).	
 All lights in the dining and service areas are currently functional and on. 	
Trays and cutlery are within arm's reach to the students of average height for your school.	
Lunchroom equipment is decorated with decals, magnets, signage, etc. wherever possible.	
Staff smiles and greets students upon entering the service line and continually throughout meal service.	
Students who do not have a fully reimbursable meal are politely prompted to select additional items as	
needed.	

Nutrition Education

Exposure to nutrition education will contribute to students' understanding of the benefits of eating healthy foods and meals.

CPS Policy Requirements for Nutrition Education	Four ways to integrate nutrition education in the dining center are:
All students K-8 must receive nutrition education at all grade levels.	Healthy messages can be promoted and reinforced through cafeteria signage. This can include:
☐ Middle Schools must provide nutrition education in at least two grade levels.	Posters displaying healthful foods are visible and readable within all service and dining areas. For
High Schools must provide nutrition education in two required courses.	example, dining center staff can work with teaching staff to create and display posters that incorporate children's artwork and spotlight certain foods of the
Nutrition Education should be integrated into multiple channels, including dining centers.	menu. Signs promoting the lunchroom and featured
	menu items are placed in other areas of the school such as the main office, library or gymnasium. For example, art teachers can collaborate with dining staff to create a festive bulletin board or art focused on the specific school meal items. Rotating
	promotional signs and posters that are updated or changed at least quarterly. For example, in collaboration with dining staff teachers can feature a food of the month or menu item of the week and
	dedicate a classroom lesson that incorporates learning about that food item as part of their learning goals of the week. The lessons can be art-inspired, science and health-based or focus on literacy goals.
	 All creative and descriptive names are rotated, updated or changed at least quarterly.
	 A monthly menu is available to all student families, teachers and administrators.
	A monthly menu is visible and readable within the school building.

2. Hosting events that get students and their families excited about healthy eating can reinforce healthy eating habits. The Wellness Champion, School Dining Manager and Aramark Area Manager can work together to plan and promote such events. This can include: School garden tours and garden tastings Take your parent to breakfast or lunch day (adult meal prices apply) Cafeteria-wide themed days Providing rewards such as being able to sit at a special table in the lunchroom	4. Adults modeling healthy lifestyles can be most impactful for students. This can include: Food service staff promoting fruit and vegetable consumption. For example, there can be a place in the cafeteria that identifies favorite healthy foods of teachers or staff and students may be more inclined to select them. Teachers and administrators dine in the lunchroom with students. Special guests, parents and community members are invited to share lunch with student three to four times a year. Inviting parents to come to school to dine with their children and other students is a great way to encourage students to try new
3. Involving students in opportunities to promote good	foods. And/or the school can plan for a "celebrity appearance" and have a special guest, such as
nutrition can be done by: Creating a buddy system that pairs older and younger students is a great way to have the younger students select more fruits and vegetables.	a chef to do demonstrations during lunch. The Wellness Champion, School Dining Manager and Aramark Area Manager can work together to plan and promote such events.
Student groups are involved in the development of creative and descriptive names for menu items.	
Student groups are involved in creation of artwork promoting menu items.	
Student groups are involved in modeling healthful eating behaviors to others (i.e. mentors, high school students eating in the middle school lunchroom occasionally etc.).	
Student surveys are used to inform menu development, dining space décor and promotional ideas.	
 Students, teachers and/or administrators announce daily meal deals or targeted items in daily 	
announcements.	

Next Steps

Thanks for completing the School Meal Checklist. Next steps include: Share findings with your school Wellness Team and other parents. Create and implement an action plan. The results from the checklist will help identify areas of need or priority at the school. The Wellness Team should use this	Concerns + Feedback If you have any queries about the meals CPS provides or other aspects of the service, please do not hesitate to contact Nutrition Support Services at
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