

Eastern Illinois University

From the Selected Works of Melanie Burns

Spring 2000

School Foodservice Director's Perceived Compliance with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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Research

Development of a Three-Week Cycle Menu for Louisiana Schools. Brener, M., Cross, E.W., & Smith, C., Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The purpose of this study was to develop a three-week, non-selective cycle lunch menu for use by the Louisiana schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The cycle menu was developed, along with a menu evaluation form. The menu evaluation form was sent to 110 school food authorities in Louisiana. Participants were asked to rate various menu attributes on a one to five Likert-type scale. Forty-four percent of the evaluations were returned. Alterations to the menus were made based on the average menu scores and written comments. Respondents were grouped into five geographic locations to determine whether a significant difference in response existed among participants in these locations. Respondents also were grouped into four categories based on enrollment, to determine any significant differences in response.

No significant difference was found between the geographic locations or enrollment categories. Final menus underwent nutrient analysis to determine if the menus met the eight nutrient standards set forth by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The amounts of calories, protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, and saturated fat exceeded the standard for each menu week. Total fat met the standard for one week, but exceeded the standard for the other two weeks. A manual, including recipes, was developed to train the seven schools that volunteered to test the menus. The results suggest that the menus will be useful to all Louisiana schools participating in the NSLP. Total fat and saturated fat must be decreased prior to menu distribution. Future studies could examine the possibility of lowering the meat/meat alternate portion size guidelines that schools are required to meet, due to the fact that protein levels were consistently very high.

School Foodservice Directors' Knowledge Of A Perceived Compliance With The Dietary Guidelines For Americans. Burns, M.T., Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois.

The purpose of this exploratory research was to determine school foodservice direc-

tor's perceived compliance, including any perceived limitations, with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA) and knowledge of the DGAs. Data collection occurred in two phases with questionnaires (one written, one verbal) utilized. First, a self-report questionnaire was mailed to the 25 directors listed in the region's office of Education Directory. Nineteen (76 percent) returned the questionnaire, which was developed to assess perceptions of district compliance with the DGAs and of limitations to compliance.

The 17 of 19 directors indicating interest in participating in the second phase of data collection were called two months later and all completed a 15-question telephone survey assessing knowledge of the DGAs.

Results indicate that directors perceive they are complying with most of the DGAs, except those related to consuming more whole grains and fewer high-sugar foods. The perceived higher costs of lower fat, lower sodium, and fresh foods as well as poor student acceptance of modified foods were the two most frequently cited limitations to compliance. Results of the knowledge test (75 percent average score) indicated that directors are fairly knowledgeable about the DGAs. However, more nutrition education is warranted to address topics such as computerized nutrient analysis and incorporating commodity foods into modified recipes.

Productivity Indices For School Foodservice Operations. Cater, J.B., Cross, E.W., & Conklin, M.T., National Food Service Management Institute, Hattiesburg, Miss.

The purpose of this project was to determine the productivity index perceived by school foodservice experts to be the most appropriate for use in school foodservice operations. Approximately 70 state-level child nutrition program directors, school business officials, district school foodservice directors, and academics were asked to designate a productivity index that can withstand the test of variability of school foodservice operations, is accurate, and is consistent enough to be used for comparison nationwide.

The first index presented was the standard Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH), calculated by dividing the number of meals and meal equivalents by the total number of paid labor hours. The second was the Servings Per

Labor Hour (SPLH), achieved by dividing the total number of food servings produced by the total labor hours. The last index was Revenue Per Dollar Expense (RPDE). To obtain this index, the revenue for the period is divided by the sum of productive labor cost and cost of goods used for the period. Several respondents stated that the Revenue Per Dollar Expense index is the most effective overall measure for productivity and costs in school foodservice operations and best accounts for costs and production of convenience foods. However, the majority of respondents selected the MPLH. Although varying methods of determining meal equivalents may raise some questions using the MPLH index. Participants still felt it is the most effective of the three productivity measure for determining staffing and labor hours.

Evaluating The Financial Self-Sufficiency Of School Foodservice Operations. March, L., & Gould, R., Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

The impact of participation and financial factors on meal programs' financial self-sufficiency were evaluated in Kansas public schools. Computer-aided selection using probability proportional to size techniques drew 150 of the 304 public school districts participating in federal school meal programs, using a cross-sectional survey of audited state program data report forms. Districts' audited monthly reimbursement claim forms for the years 1997-1998 were used to analyze financial data, including district size, participation rates, revenues, program costs, and transfers from district general funds.

A pilot study was conducted using data from 126 districts selected from the 1996-1997 school year. Fifty percent of the districts achieved or exceeded a break-even or cash flow surplus. Districts overall experienced an average annual loss of 10 percent. Lunch participation was 63 percent and breakfast participation was 10 percent. The greatest levels of participation came from students receiving free lunch (78 percent) and breakfast (27 percent). The amount of federal funds transfer, total indirect costs, and total direct costs were predictors of meal program financial self-sufficiency using a preliminary regression model. A final