

# Engaging Students in Menu Development

Schools and school food providers are encouraged to engage students and the school community in menu development. Engagement is an ongoing and interactive process. Students of all ages can be engaged in enhancing the school food environment.

Providing students with the opportunity to participate in planning healthy school menus can help you to create a menu that will be enjoyed by the school population.



## Why Engage Students?

- Enhances school engagement and peer connectedness;
- Increases student motivation and self-confidence;
- Increases knowledge and awareness of healthy eating and promotes healthier lifestyles;
- Increases student interest in the foods and beverages available at school;
- Supports social connections and encourages empowerment; and,
- Has positive effects on the school environment and school climate.

## How to Engage Students?




- Engage students early and often in age appropriate and meaningful ways;
- Include students on the School Food Guidelines (SFG) implementation committee;
- Promote the SFG and new menus in school announcements, newsletters and social media;
- Work with school food providers to involve students in menu development; and,
- Create a panel of students to conduct taste testing of new menu items.

## Tips for Taste Tests

- Have a small group of student leaders conduct the taste test;
- Pass out an evaluation sheet for students to complete;
- Provide incentives to students who participate in the taste tests. Incentives can include stickers, bookmarks, pencils, extra class activity time, lunch with the principal, or a donated prize; and
- Have student leaders compile results to see what menu items scored the best and work with school food providers to add these new items to their menus.

# Taste Test Form

Circle the number that best answers each question. 1 is the worst and 5 is the best.

Menu Item					
How does the food look?	1	2	3	4	5
How does the food taste?	1	2	3	4	5
How does the food smell?	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the food overall?	1	2	3	4	5
Would you order this item if it was on your school menu?	1	2	3	4	5

Do you have any ideas for your school menu?

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Thank you