

Smarter Lunchroom Movement - Michigan Starter Guide

Michigan Department of Education Team Nutrition

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement (SLM) aims to equip school lunchrooms with evidence-based tools that improve child eating behaviors and thus improve the health of children. Any school may participate by using the following guide to implement SLM concepts.

Getting Started with SLM

Participate in Online Training

Complete the free Cornell Smarter Lunchrooms Online Training, which consists of three modules, comprehensive activities, illustrative videos, optional readings, and assessments. The course is 2 hours in length and is eligible for School Nutrition Association continuing education credits.

Training Module: <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/training>

Complete the Self-Assessment Scorecard

The self-assessment scorecard is intended to help evaluate the cafeteria, congratulate yourself for things done well, and identify opportunities for improvement. Use the scorecard to conduct a self-evaluation, checking the items already complete and taking note of those that are not (3).

Scorecard: http://smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/lunchroom_self-assessmt_score_card.final_4-3-14.pdf

Develop a Plan

Plan development can help you stay organized and on-schedule throughout SLM implementation. The below sample plan may be tailored to meet your school's needs as you move through the process.

- Select 5-10 changes to implement based on the self-assessment. Target high-priority areas, noting others that should be addressed in future evaluations.
- Take photos of the specific areas that will be targeted prior to making any changes. Photos are useful for assessing progress and evaluating outcomes. The SLM photo checklist provides specific recommendations for effectively documenting your changes.
Photo Checklist: http://smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/photo_checklist.pdf
- Gather, create, or order all materials, including signs, name cards, menu bowls, and/or decorations.
- Determine when each change will be made and who will be responsible. Record the timeline on a calendar. Changes may be made all at once or one at a time. Simple changes might occur on evenings or weekends, while larger projects might be better suited for school breaks.
Sample Timeline: http://smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/slm_action_plan_timeline.pdf
- Recruit volunteers to help implement the changes (i.e. parents, school staff, teachers, students).
- Draft an informal plan to help others visualize the changes. The plan should be used during implementation to ensure changes are made correctly
- Host a meeting or training for cafeteria staff and volunteers. Explain the changes that will be made and provide the opportunity for others to offer suggestions or ask questions.
Sample staff training materials: <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/resource/workshops-lunchroom-staff>
- Implement changes according to your calendar
- Photograph *after* images of each change and pair these with the *before* images for future evaluation.

Implement the Plan

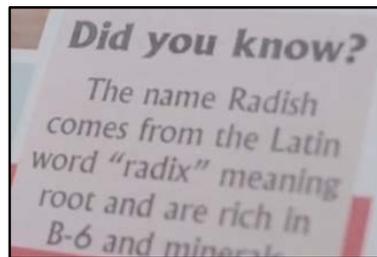
The implementation phase focuses on carrying out the 5-10 changes selected for your Smarter Lunchroom. Reference the following recommendations that have proven effective in schools across Michigan. Be sure to view Michigan Smarter Lunchroom Moves videos – google “Michigan Team Nutrition Youtube” then click “[Smarter Lunchroom Moves.](#)”



Grab & Go Meals ensure busy teenagers receive the important nutrients they need for success.



Attractive fruit displays containing individually packaged and cut fruit encourage consumption.



Fun facts help kids understand the importance of healthful food.



Signage in the cafeteria and at the register remind students to select all the required food components.



Salad bars positioned in the *middle* of the cafeteria are a proven strategy to increase vegetable consumption.



Mascots create *positive eating environments*, helping kids feel more comfortable and excited to eat.

Evaluate Outcomes

Consider how the Smarter Lunchroom improvements impacted things such as the number of reimbursable meals, sales of targeted meals, total revenue, student satisfaction, or plate waste. Utilize your production and sale records, waste observations, or surveys to assess improvements. Complete the Smarter Lunchroom Self-Assessment annually, identifying and implementing additional improvements.

Sample Instructional Guides for Evaluation: <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/resource/instructional-guides>

Additional Resources

Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs <http://smarterlunchrooms.org>

Checklists & Forms: <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/resource/trainers-materials-smarter-lunchrooms-makeover-manual-checklists-and-forms>

Real Michigan Smarter Lunchrooms: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLaqD6X6pQgmKGBgknhuaKn_L_e3dbWhn4