

Building Visibility Series

Outlining empowering strategies to promote school meals, improve student and family perceptions, and build meaningful partnerships in your school nutrition community!

Incorporate Student Voices in Your Menus

Let's Build On This Topic...

Incorporating a **student-centered menu design** is a unique and effective way to boost meal participation and build student trust. By actively involving students in the menu planning process, schools can better **align meal offerings** with students' tastes and preferences, encouraging more of them to partake in school meals. Below are some examples on how to incorporate student voices in your menus!

Taste Tests	Hold taste-tests of new menu items. This hands-on involvement can lead to more enthusiastic participation in school meal programs and contribute to a more dynamic and inclusive school food culture.
Student Advisory Groups	Invite students to join advisory groups to provide feedback and ideas on school menus. This participation empowers students to influence the dining experience and can lead to increased satisfaction and participation in school meal programs.
Cultural Relevancy	For some students, school meals frequently fail to represent personal connections, resulting in decreased participation. Student-centered menus take into account their cultural diversity guaranteeing authentic representation on their plates.
Capture Feedback	Student feedback channels are important in ensuring their opinions are taken seriously. Establishing multiple avenues for students to share their thoughts can lead to more tailored and appealing menu options.

Strategies to Put it All Together...

Here are our suggested strategies to build visibility and develop a well-recognized program! Utilize these resources to **promote effective advocacy within your school community and its infrastructure.**

- **Host Taste Tests:** Think about organizing taste tests during lunch hours or as special events. You might even invite local chefs or culinary students to enhance the experience and make it more interactive.
- **Feedback Channels:** Implement regular surveys or suggestion boxes that allow students to anonymously share their ideas and preferences. Additionally, hosting focus groups can offer deeper insights into student needs and desires, enabling you to fine-tune meal offerings more effectively.
- **Dietary Inclusion:** Collecting input ensures that food allergies, religious requirements (such as halal or kosher), and diverse regional preferences are all taken into account.

upLIFT
LEARN. INSPIRE. FEED. TEACH.

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.