

## Healthy food and farm to school marketing self assessment

The purpose of this assessment is provide K-12 school food professionals with a tool to measure how much healthy food marketing is currently in place in the school cafeteria setting, assess features of ongoing marketing, and to identify future opportunities for healthy food marketing to students. This assessment may be completed by a food service director, school administrator, or in collaboration with community coalition members, Wellness Committee members, students, teachers, and others working to improve the school food environment and consumption of healthy school meals. This assessment may be completed through observation and through discussion with other healthy school food stakeholders.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School name and district:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grades served:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student enrollment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Choose one that best describes your school:**

Public

Charter

Private/Independent

Other

**Name of individual leading assessment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Names and titles of others completing assessment:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

*This assessment is part of the publication "Marketing Healthy Foods in Wisconsin K-12 Schools," originally published in 2014 by The Food Trust. See that document for full credits and more information about the marketing techniques discussed in the assessment.*



## **Section 1: Conventional marketing**

*Conventional marketing refers to traditional cafeteria posters, flyers, and point of sale materials.*

### **Posters and other large signs**

1. Total number of posters:  
 0       1-3       4-8       10 or more  
Number of posters in the dining space (indicate number): \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of posters in the serving line (indicate number): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Posters are graphically interesting and brightly colored with minimal text:  
 Yes  
 No  
 Not sure
3. Posters are age appropriate with respect to graphics and reading/comprehension level:  
 Yes  
 No  
 Not sure
4. Posters are visible and readable from all points in the dining and serving spaces of the cafeteria/in high-traffic areas:  
 Yes  
 No
5. Posters are hung at heights appropriate for audiences (about 58" for high school students/adults; about 48" for younger students):  
 Yes  
 No
6. Posters display healthy fruits and vegetables (and other healthy foods) with images:  
 Yes  
 No
7. Posters reflect the culture of the school and student body:  
 Yes  
 No  
 Not sure
8. Student input or student groups are considered with respect to posters/artwork:  
 Yes  
 No
9. Menu boards are clearly visible, legible, and promote healthy meal items of the day:  
 Yes  
 No  
 Not currently using menu board

10. Menu boards feature information about the next day's healthy meal offerings:  
 Yes  
 No  
 Not currently using menu board
11. Posters are rotated in the dining and service areas throughout the school year:  
 Yes  
If yes, how often?  
 Once per year  
 Every quarter  
 More than 4 times per school year  
 No
12. Posters featuring Wisconsin farmers, locally grown foods, or other farm to school themes are used in the cafeteria and dining area:  
 Yes  
If yes, how often?  
 Once per year  
 Every quarter  
 More than 4 times per school year  
 No

**Point of sale (POS) materials**

1. POS materials identify the healthy food items clearly:  
 Yes  
 No
2. POS materials are positioned at eye-level for students  
 Yes  
 No
3. POS materials are colorful:  
 Yes  
 No
4. POS materials are age-appropriate:  
 Yes  
 No  
 Not sure
5. POS materials rotate daily/weekly as needed to accurately reflect healthy food options available:  
 Yes  
 No



6. Total POS materials in use (indicate number here and for each, below): \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of POS materials dedicated to promoting fruits and vegetables: \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of POS materials dedicated to promoting whole grains: \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of POS materials dedicated to promoting low-fat or non-fat dairy: \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of POS materials dedicated to promoting the school meal (entrees, sides, milk or water): \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of POS materials dedicated to promoting a à la carte items (entrees, sides, beverages, snacks): \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of POS materials dedicated to promoting farm to school, harvest of the month or locally sourced food items: \_\_\_\_\_

Tally your score

# of “Yes” responses: \_\_\_\_\_

# of “No” responses: \_\_\_\_\_

Interpret your score: Conventional marketing methods are often the easiest methods to deploy, as posters, signs, and point-of-sale materials may be donated by vendors, nutrition associations or councils, are available through USDA and other health agencies and organization.

- If your food service operation does not currently utilize posters, POS materials, or menu boards, decision makers are encouraged to display at least 3 posters, 1 up-to-date menu board, and POS materials for the school meal components, at a minimum.
- If total “Yes” responses was tallied at 5 or below, consider how the school might take more advantage of materials, space, student input/school culture, and create an action plan to secure additional marketing tools, a calendar for rotation of materials, and methods for collecting customer response.
- If the school is not currently featuring any farm to school posters or POS signs, partnering with a local organization, agency, farmers, suppliers, or with students to secure or create signage may be a next step.

## **Section 2: Nontraditional marketing**

1. Floors—cafeteria currently using floor decal(s) in the dining area:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      If yes, how many \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ No
2. Ceilings and windows—cafeteria currently using ceiling or window “danglers” to market menu items and match POS signs:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      If yes, how many \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ No



4. White milk is positioned in front of sweetened milk(s) on the serving line:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
5. Salad bars are highly accessible in a high traffic area:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
6. Salad bar utensils are the appropriate size for a given age group:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
7. Food service professionals serving on the line gently prompt students through offers of healthy fruits and vegetables:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
8. Creative, age-appropriate meal component names are used to describe healthy foods on the serving line:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
9. The serving line has adequate lighting to highlight healthy foods:  
 Always  
 Never
10. Healthy “Grab and Go” meals are clearly highlighted for ease of choice on the serving line:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
11. Farm to school, harvest of the month or locally sourced food items are clearly identified with signs on the serving line:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never

Tally your score

# of “Always” responses: \_\_\_\_\_

# of “Sometimes” responses: \_\_\_\_\_

# of “Never” responses: \_\_\_\_\_

Interpret your score:

- Clearly identifying foods on the cafeteria line should be a priority for any food service operation seeking to increase consumption of school meals, and especially healthy fruits and vegetables. Making the healthy choice the easy choice should be the goal of school food service operations.
- Try new methods for arrangements of healthy choices, troubleshoot any cooked foods that do not appear fresh, and work with facilities on lighting or other infrastructure challenges.
- Scores ranging from 4-7 “Always” responses should aim to include one to two more strategies, beginning with a review of the easiest changes to make to the service area.
- Scores ranging from 1-3 “Always” responses should aim to increase their “Always” responses to at least 5, beginning with the easiest methods to alter the cafeteria line to highlight the healthiest options of the day.
- Scores ranging from 4-7 “Sometimes” responses should aim to increase 2 of these strategies to “Always.”

### **Presentation of food**

1. Food service professionals utilize batch cooking techniques to offer freshly cooked vegetables at each meal service (Definition: Batch cooking, sometimes called cooking to the line or just-in-time preparation, means preparing food in small batches as needed throughout the serving period in order to preserve food quality and prevent waste due to leftovers):  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
2. Hot and cold serving vessels containing fruits and vegetables on the serving line are kept looking full:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
3. Cooked vegetables and fruits maintain bright, crisp appearance and fresh, inviting aromas on the serving line:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never

Tally your score

# of “Always” responses: \_\_\_\_\_

# of “Sometimes” responses: \_\_\_\_\_

# of “Never” responses: \_\_\_\_\_



Interpret your score:

- If zero “Always” responses were recorded, food service staff may start by maintaining fuller-looking bowls of fresh fruit, for example, or trays of steamed broccoli. New serving vessels may be a good investment (e.g., an attractive fruit bowl vs. a stainless steel prep bowl).
- Training for food service staff with respect to batch cooking is a worthwhile investment that can result in increased food acceptance, meal participation and consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables. For batch cooking training resources, visit: [www.nfsmi.org](http://www.nfsmi.org)
- For any “Sometimes” responses, work to make these practices “Always.”

#### **Section 4: Other promotions**

##### **Contests**

Does the cafeteria engage in any contests related to the promotion of healthy school meal components?

\_\_\_ Yes

If yes, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ No

##### **Events**

1. Does the cafeteria coordinate taste tests of new, healthy menu items?

\_\_\_ Yes

If yes, how often? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, which meal components are usually featured (fruits, vegetables, dairy, grains, proteins)? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, are students surveyed on their like/dislike of the taste-test item or receive an ‘award’ for completing the taste test (awards may be stickers, pencils, or other small tokens of appreciation for participating).

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_ No

2. Does the cafeteria have any special events (e.g., bring a parent to lunch day/staff and student day/farm to school day):

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No

### **Promotions/incentives**

Discount coupons are offered on healthy new food items (low-fat dairy, fruits, vegetables, whole grain items, etc.):

Yes

No

Tally your score

# of “Yes” responses: \_\_\_\_\_

# of “No” responses: \_\_\_\_\_

Interpret your score:

- Designing, organizing, and running promotions will require time and commitment from school food service staff and other school teachers or administrators. However, these promotions may result in increased meal participation and/or increased consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables, and contribute to the meal program’s brand.
- If the score included any “Yes” responses, evaluate the successes and challenges associated with the given promotion or incentive to determine if repeating the effort will result in success.
- If the score did not include any “Yes” responses, begin by learning about strategies for developing incentives and promotions at the USDA’s website featuring promotional strategies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/marketing-ideas>

### **Section 5: Customer service**

1. Students and other customers are greeted with a smile upon entering the cafeteria:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
2. Students and other customers are greeted with a smile while waiting in the service line:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
3. Cafeteria staff positively engage students, (e.g., “This recipe is a favorite! You may really like it!” or “That basketball game last night was great—you did so well.”):  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never



4. Cafeteria staff can readily identify ingredients in all meal offerings:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
5. Cafeteria staff are informed about which products on the lunch line are locally sourced:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
6. Cafeteria staff log food complaints and other criticism and review quality standards and operations:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
7. Cafeteria staff log praise or compliments on certain food offerings:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
8. Cafeteria staff thank students upon payment:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never

Tally your score

- # of "Always" responses: \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of "Sometimes" responses: \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of "Never" responses: \_\_\_\_\_

Interpret your score:

- Scores of 5 or more "Always" may consider additional training or re-trainings to reinforce customer service principles. Schools may also consider direct student feedback on their interactions with cafeteria staff to identify areas for improvement via survey or focus group.
- Scores of 5 "Always" or below may consider training cafeteria staff internally, or through the use of tools from the National Food Service Management Institute:  
<http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=67>
- Scores of 1-5 "Sometimes" may consider moving the best of these practices into the "Always" category.

## **Section 6: Farm to school considerations**

This section is intended for schools engaged in local food purchasing as part of a farm to school program.

1. Local farm name and locations are featured on POS materials:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
2. Farmer profiles are featured in signage on the serving line:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
3. Farm to school posters comprise some of the marketing tools being used:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never

4. Taste testing features locally grown or produced foods:  
 Yes      If yes, how often? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, which meal components are usually featured (fruits, vegetables, dairy, grains, proteins)? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, are students surveyed on their like/dislike of the taste-test item or do they receive an 'award' for completing the taste test (awards may be stickers, pencils, or other small tokens of appreciation for participating):

- Yes  
 No
- No

5. Food service professionals engage students on the serving line about which foods on offer were grown or produced locally:  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never
6. Farm to school items are highlighted on the menu.  
 Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never



7. Farm to school items are highlighted in the school newsletter/family information packets/district website.

\_\_\_ Always

\_\_\_ Sometimes

\_\_\_ Never

Tally your score

# of “Always/Yes” responses: \_\_\_

# of “Sometimes” responses: \_\_\_

# of “Never/No” responses: \_\_\_

Interpret your score:

- Farm to school cafeteria marketing is an essential component to any farm to school program. Connecting students to farmer faces and farm places helps build a farm to school program brand, teaches students about the origins of their meal components, and reinforces other educational farm to school efforts underway in the school (agriculture and nutrition education, gardening programs, etc.).
- If “Always/Yes” responses were fewer than three, but food service already scores highly with respect to conventional marketing tactics, incorporate farm to school themes into existing marketing tools—this may be a simple “farm to school” or “I’m local!” sticker on POS cards, or may include posters from department of agriculture featuring farms, farm products or farmers.
- For “Sometimes” responses, consider moving these practices into the “Always” category.

Additional overall comments and observations: