

Let's Go! Guide to Success

A guide to assessing your school cafeteria,
goal setting, and recognition.

SCHOOL NUTRITION

MaineHealth

LET'S GO!

5-2-1-0

Program Year Overview

Congratulations on becoming a proud partner working with Let's Go! to enhance the cafeteria environment to support students and staff to develop healthy habits and increase students' readiness to learn. The Let's Go! program can be woven into your existing structure and support you to build and sustain a healthy school environment.

Follow these steps each year:

Assess and Plan

- Complete the Strategies for Success Assessment (pages 4-8)
- Develop or revise your goals where you see opportunity to enhance or improve

Promote Messages & Partnership

- Ensure [Let's Go! posters & signage](#) are in good condition and hung in key locations
- Send [Message to Families](#) via email or hard copy at the start of each school year

Take Action

- Review the tools and resources available at [LetsGo.org](#)
- Participate in [Let's Go! trainings](#) to discover new ways to enhance your program

Collaborate Across the District

- Participate in or establish a district wellness team to build consistency
- Connect with other departments and students to share and leverage resources for mutual projects

Sustain

- Ensure district wellness policy complies with state and federal mandates.
- Gather with other school nutrition professionals to form or join a workgroup

Complete the Annual Survey in the spring

Highlight Success

- Gather photos and videos of your accomplishments to share with families

Strategy Categories

The Let's Go! School Nutrition Strategies nudge students to select healthier options, help improve the perception of school meals, and help support the nutritional quality of food served.

School Nutrition Strategy Categories

- Developing the School Meals Menu
- Promoting the School Meals Program
- Boosting Reimbursable Meals
- Serving a Healthy School Breakfast
- Serving a Healthy School Lunch

Recognition Overview

Each year, Let's Go! recognizes school cafeterias that are implementing the School Nutrition Strategies and that have policies to support healthy eating and active living.

- Recognition is awarded each year.
- Cafeterias must complete the Annual Survey in the spring to be eligible.
- Recognition levels are tiered.

Bronze	20 – 29 Strategies
Silver	30-29 Strategies
Gold	40 – 50 Strategies AND have a School Nutrition Department staff member actively participate on the district wellness committee

Recognized Sites are publicly acknowledged in the following ways:

- [Listed as a Site of Distinction on the Let's Go! website](#)
- [Promoted on Let's Go! social media](#)
- Provided a Let's Go! certificate of recognition

Developing the School Meals Menu

As it relates to the development of the school meals menus, including breakfast and lunch, please indicate the strategies below your school cafeteria is currently implementing.

- Students are involved in the development of creative and descriptive names for menu items.
- Creative, descriptive names are used for featured items on the monthly menu.
- The menu has at least one made from scratch item per week for breakfast and/or lunch.
- Students and staff provide documented feedback to inform menu development at least twice per school year. For example: informal polls “raise your hand if you like...”, student/staff advisory groups, survey, or suggestion box, etc.
- Indicate the type and frequency of taste tests that will be offered at your school cafeteria for all students.

	At Least Weekly	At Least Monthly	At Least Quarterly	At Least Annually	Never
Fruits					
Vegetables					
Beans/Legumes					
Entrées					

Tips for Success!

- [Explore professional development opportunities](#)
- [Discover ways to engage and collaborate with students](#)
- [Survey your students](#)
- [Conduct Taste Tests](#)

Promoting the School Meals Program

As it relates to the development of the school meals menus, including breakfast and lunch, please indicate the strategies below your school cafeteria is currently implementing.

- Current and/or upcoming menus are promoted to your school community in at least three different ways each month.
- Information about the benefits of school meals is shared with parents/caregivers at least three times per school year.
- Information about the benefits of school meals is shared with teachers and administration at least annually.
- Information about completing a school benefits application is shared with parents/caregivers at least once per school year.
- Information about how students buy school meals is shared with parents/caregivers at least once per school year.
- A menu board with creative, descriptive names for daily featured meal option is located in the main office.
- Social media is utilized to promote the school meals program by posting at least once a month. (For example: Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram)
- Students and staff have the opportunity to volunteer in the cafeteria.
- The daily menu is included in morning announcements.
- Indicate the frequency of local meats, produce, or other products that will be utilized in the school meals menu (including breakfast and lunch).

	At Least Weekly	At Least Monthly	At Least Quarterly	At Least Annually	Never
Produce					
Meat					
Seafood					
Other products					

Tips for Success!

- [Distribute ready-to-go promotional materials to school staff and families](#)
- [Explore local procurement strategies and resources](#)

Boosting Reimbursable Meals

As it relates to boosting reimbursable meals for breakfast and/or lunch, please select the strategies below that your school cafeteria is currently doing.

- Cafeteria staff politely prompt students who do not have a full reimbursable meal to select the missing item(s).
- Reimbursable meals are featured combo meals and labeled with creative names.
- At least one entrée is identified as the featured entrée-of-the-day, AND is labeled with a creative name next to the point of selection, AND is the first entrée offered.
- A reimbursable combo meal is offered as a grab-and-go meal.
- The combo meal of the day or featured entrée is displayed on a sample tray or photograph before the point of selection.
- Signs shows students how to make a reimbursable meal on any service line. For example: “Choose 3 of 4 items to build a complete breakfast” or “Add a milk, fruit and carrots with your pizza for the Power Pizza Meal Deal!”, etc.
- Students must ask cafeteria staff for à la carte snack items AND/OR use cash to purchase à la carte snack items if available.
- Share tables are available for unused items such as whole fresh fruit, unopened milk or juice, or other packaged items.

Tips for Success!

- [Modify process to allow students to pre-order meals](#)
- [View a Let's Go! Culinary Training](#)
- [Utilize Let's Go! cafeteria signage](#)

Serving a Healthy School Breakfast

As it relates school breakfast, please select the strategies below that your school cafeteria is currently doing. If you do not serve breakfast, please indicate and proceed to the next section.

- The school cafeteria does not serve breakfast

Fruits & Vegetables

- Vegetables are offered at breakfast as part of an entrée item or served as a side dish.
- At least two kinds of fruit, not including juice, are offered.
- Fresh fruit is offered at least three days per week.
- Sliced or cut fruit is offered.
- A variety of mixed whole fruits are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets instead of stainless steel pans.

Dairy

- Yogurt served contains no more than 15 grams of sugar per 4 oz. serving OR less than 31 grams of sugar per 8 oz. serving.
- Flavored milk is not offered at breakfast.

Other

- All cold cereal options contain less than 7 grams of added sugar per serving.
- All pre-packaged breakfast foods contain less than 35% of the weight in total sugar.
- Students are offered an alternative breakfast option (i.e. breakfast in the classroom, breakfast after the bell, grab and go alternatives, etc.)

Tips for Success!

- [Discover new recipes with a School Breakfast Let's Go! Culinary Training](#)
- [Explore best practices for school breakfast](#)

Serving a Healthy School Lunch

As it relates school lunch, please select the strategies below that your school cafeteria is currently doing.

Vegetables

- At least two kinds of vegetables are offered.
- Vegetables are offered on all service lines.
- Raw vegetables are cut and paired with a low-fat dip such as ranch, hummus, or salsa when offered.
- A serving of vegetables is incorporated into an entrée item at least once a month. For example: beef and broccoli bowl, spaghetti with garden vegetable sauce.
- At least one vegetable is identified as the featured vegetable-of-the-day and is labeled with a creative name at the point of selection.
- Pre-packaged salads or salad bar are available to all students and/or in high traffic areas.
- Pre-packaged salads or salad bar choices are labeled with creative, descriptive names.
- Self-serve salad bar tongs, scoops, and containers are larger for vegetables and smaller for non-produce items, croutons, and dressing.
- Self-serve spices and seasonings are available for students to add flavor to vegetables.

Fruit

- At least two kinds of fruit, not including juice, are offered.
- Sliced or cut fruit is offered.
- Fruit is offered in at least two locations on all service lines, one of which is right before each point of sale.
- At least one fruit is identified as the featured fruit-of-the-day and is labeled with a creative name at the point of selection.
- A variety of mixed whole fruits are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets instead of stainless steel pans.

Dairy

- White milk is organized and represents at least 1/2 of all milk in each designated milk cooler.
- White milk is displayed in front of other beverages, including flavored milk, in all coolers.
- 1% or non-fat white milk is identified as the featured milk and is labeled with a creative, descriptive name.

Tip for Success!

- [Discover new recipes with a Let's Go! Culinary Training](#)
- [Display Let's Go! milk posters](#)

School Nutrition Goals Sample

Based on your assessment and the Let's Go! Goals for School Nutrition below, identify what you would like to focus on this program year.

- Create environments where the healthy choice is the easy choice for all children.
- Improve the nutritional quality of foods and beverages available in Let's Go! settings.
- Support School Nutrition Programs to improve students' and families' perception of them.

What is your Goal?		
By March 1, provide at least one professional development opportunity to all staff on menu planning to meet USDA guidelines and increase participation.		
Tasks:	Who will complete?	By when?
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine needs for improving menus (lower sodium, more convenience items, etc.)	SND and staff Students	October 1
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify facilitator(s) who can deliver training	SND Let's Go! Coordinator	November 1
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine training logistics (date, time, length of training, location, specific content, etc.)	SND Let's Go! Coordinator	November 15
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold training and begin offering new menu ideas with targeted marketing	SND and staff	January 4

What is your Goal?		
By September 30, promote and participate in the Maine Harvest Lunch Week in all school district cafeterias.		
Tasks:	Who will complete?	By when?
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan menu by identifying items to offer and which local ingredients will be needed	School Nutrition team Local farmer Let's Go! Coordinator	August 12
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact the local farmer or farmers for availability and distribution timeline	SND	August 12
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify content for educational materials specifically for this week	SND Let's Go! Coordinator	September 8
<input type="checkbox"/> Promote the event to the school community prior to and during that week (Teacher workshops, etc.)	SND Let's Go! Coordinator	2 nd week of September

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