

LEARNING LAB

Aim for consistent messaging between the classroom and the cafeteria. Here are some examples of cafeteria activities that can be complemented by the classroom. Connect with your School Nutrition Director to see if they're interested in one of them!

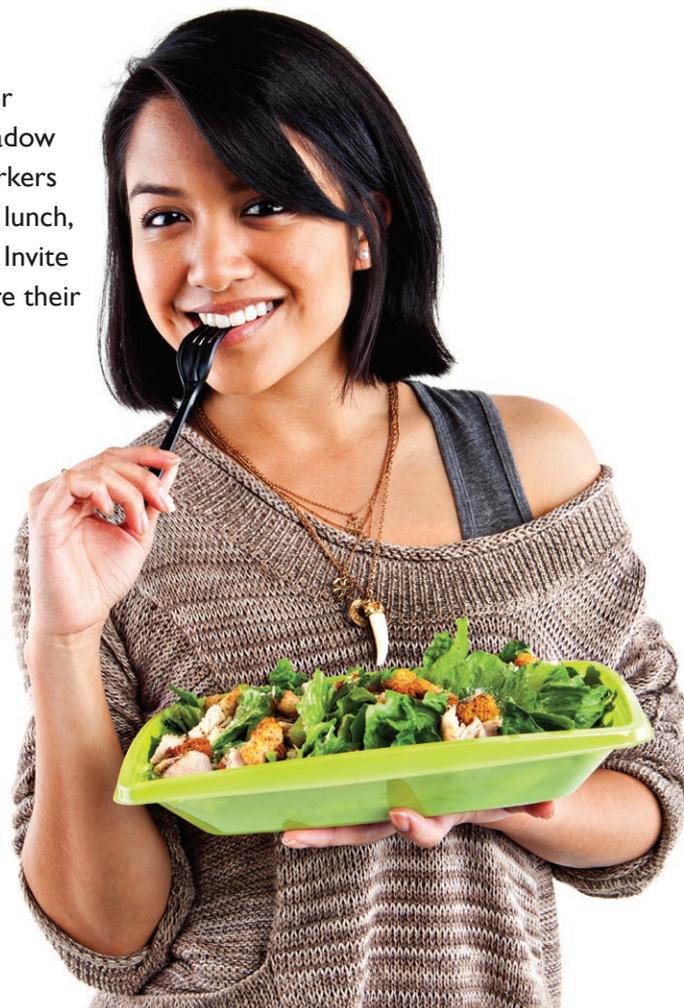
Go Foods, Slow Foods, Whoa Foods

The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute suggests the Go, Slow, Whoa foods system as a way to think about food. Go foods are lowest in fat and sugar, relatively low in calories, and great to eat anytime. Slow foods are higher in fat, added sugar, and calories. These should only be eaten sometimes. Whoa foods are highest in fat, added sugar, and high in calories. These should only be eaten once in a while and in small portions. Consider color-coding a la carte foods in the cafeteria according to the Go/Slow/Whoa system to guide students towards the healthiest choices. Include students by involving them in the conversations about how to label each item, and then having them come do the labeling with color-coded stickers. You may also want to track the sales of labeled foods and/or survey students about how they feel about the new labels. Learn more about the Go/Slow/Whoa categories at http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/go_slow_whoa.html.

Lunch and Learn

Provide an opportunity for interested students to shadow or interview cafeteria workers during a study hall, during lunch, or before or after school. Invite them to learn about where their food is made, how menu development works, and other behind-the-scenes actions that take place.

continued



Maine Harvest Lunch

The Maine Harvest Lunch is a day in September where schools throughout the state of Maine celebrate the bounty of Maine’s harvest by featuring local foods on the school menu. This is a distinctive opportunity for positive interaction and collaboration with the School Nutrition Program. Pulling off the Maine Harvest Lunch requires commitment and dedication from the entire school. It requires extra effort, money, and enthusiasm from the School Nutrition staff, and support from the rest of the school can go a long way. Check in with your School Nutrition Director to see if your school is participating this year. There is an easy-to-use curriculum designed to tie the Maine Harvest Lunch ideals into the classroom. To find out more about the Maine Harvest Lunch and to order the free curriculum, visit www.mofga.org.

Embracing School Spirit

Provide a copy of the school calendars (both academic and extracurricular) to the head cafeteria worker at your school. Ask them to pick a few events and provide a “featured dish” on the day of with a relevant descriptive title. For example, during finals week, serve “Test-Ready Tacos” or “Brain-Boosting Beef Burger,” or on the day of a big sports game provide “Championship-Bound Chicken and Veggie Boats.” (Note: the cafeteria does NOT need to serve a new or unusual dish—simply changing the name to make it more festive or relevant is all you need!).