Increasing Participation in Child Nutrition

Alabama State Department of Education

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“Food is Essential to life, therefore make it good.” - S. Truett Cathy
**THE FOUR P’S OF PARTICIPATION**

**PEOPLE**
There is no greater resource than people and children are the greatest.

**PACING**
Fast is not the goal, quality is, but with quality comes speed.

**PLACES**
Nutritionally speaking, students desire places that are engaging, inviting, and safe.

**PROMOTION**
If you truly want customers, you must compete for them.
The “People” of Participation

- Partners
  - Build Relationships
- Teachers
  - Learning Support
- Staff
  - Resource
- Students
  - Engage & Ask
  - Learn
  - Support
- Thought Leaders
  - Properly Train
  - Highly Value

THE “PACING” OF PARTICIPATION

SERVING
Optimize serving time so that students move in a continuous flow. Consistently deliver food and other resources using the “Just in Time” method.

EATING
Work with school and district leaders to ensure students have nutritionally proper times to eat. Maximize spacing and seating so students are comfortable.

PLANNING
Menu planning helps to pace the inventory, work, and delivery of high-quality food.

REPORTING
Automate administrative functions, document work processes, utilize key performance reports to drive improvement and align goals.
The “Places” of Participation

**Update**
Provide a facelift to cafeteria spaces such as painting, seating, flooring, etc.

**Upgrade**
Develop plans to modernize cafeteria space through renovations to include technology and configurable spaces.

**Outside the Cafeteria**
Collaborate with school and district leaders on events and spaces that include school lunches hosted on campus but outside the cafeteria.

**In the Classroom**
Promote the opportunities gained by students eating in a space they are already comfortable. Provide cleanup support by funding additional staff.

**Travel**
Work with teachers and school leaders to serve "to go" items for students beyond just lunch such as breakfast, snack, or afterschool meals.
Recruit guests to have breakfast and lunch. Build a team of people that promote the good news.

Go beyond the well-known event days. Use themes, competitions, and rewards.

Ensure the cafeteria is visually appealing to children. Use photos, murals, quotes, etc.

Embrace and use social media to target students and promote your program.

Maintain the entrance and exit areas in a way that welcomes students and visitors to enjoy their time.

Use creative ways to spice and texture foods for higher quality while retaining nutrition requirements.

Maintain a focus on how food is presented for serving and eating.
Connecting the Strategies for Increasing Participation

**People**
Form focus groups, establish a strategic team, rotate members, communicate ideas and plans.

**Places**
Strive to make the places your program is utilized both, physically and mentally, pleasing. Focus on high-quality visuals. Always seek a yes to the question, “Is this the place I want to eat?”

**Pacing**
The U.S. Navy SEALs utilize the quote, “Slow is Smooth and Smooth is Fast” don’t run yourself to death. Pace yourself for success.

**Promotion**
Serve as your biggest advocate, others will join you. Positivity is contagious and wildly different than the current norm.
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