

Administration NSMP Talking Points

Use the below talking points when speaking to or composing communication with your school district's administration about a conversion to Nutrient Standard Menu Planning.

1. The Foodservice Department believes the best way to address childhood health concerns and support our Wellness Policy is to convert our menu planning system to Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP), also called NuMenus.

2. NSMP was developed by the USDA and requires schools to plan menus based on actual nutrients in each individual food item served. NuMenus are planned using USDA approved computer software to help meet the required level of calories, nutrients and Dietary Guidelines for specific age groups.

3. There are many benefits to implementing NSMP:

Improved nutrient value of school meals – NSMP requires a nutrient analysis of each weekly menu. When the menu does not meet USDA's established Nutrient Standards, modifications must be made so the Standards are met.

Menu planning flexibility – With NSMP, ALL foods count toward meeting nutrition requirements. Food Based Menu Planning requires specific minimum quantities of certain foods.

Immediate nutrition feedback – The nutrient analysis provides immediate feedback on compliance with nutrition goals. This can be used for marketing balanced school meals as well as planning them.

Reduced meal costs – Because NSMP does not require specific amounts of certain foods, schools have found that meals are less expensive and often with less waste.

System for sharing recipes and menus with schools in district – The USDA approved NSMP software products include recipe databases in electronic format. Central school food service staff may share these with staff in all schools and parents.

Consistency in food preparation – Each menu item entered into the NSMP system is in the form of a recipe. When following the recipes, there is greater consistency in food items served.

Information for diabetic students and others with nutrition related medical conditions – Nutrient analysis will provide important information for students planning their meals.

Enhanced image of school food service program within the school community – The community will be impressed with the amount of information available, with using software to conduct a nutrient analysis of the school meals and the ability to assure that meals served are nutritious.

Decreased time on the back end – Menu planning is much faster and more efficient since the menu item has already been entered. Menu days can be duplicated and rearranged from month to month and entering new menu items is a quick process.

Converting to and implementing NSMP requires some initial investments:

Expense – Suitable computer hardware and USDA-approved software must be purchased, supported and maintained. However, most schools already have the hardware to meet the software requirements.

Increased time and training on the front end – Increased time to input nutrient information or recipes not in the database. Increased training for the staff to learn the new system. Districts have noted decreased menu planning time on the back-end once the initial time investment is made.

4. The benefits and advantages of using the new system make the investment of time and resources well worth it. We would like the opportunity to meet and further discuss converting to the Nutrient Standard Menu Planning System.

“[Administration and Parents were] very happy with it. [NSMP] makes the food service look more professional. Parents say ‘This is the school lunch I used to get.’”

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