

Top Stories in This Newsletter



District of the Month:
Bay City ISD



Process Improvement:
Food Flow



Thinking Skills:
Creativity



Training:
Custom Per Site



Warm wishes to All!

Great customer experiences for our students generate repeat business. We are clearly seeing that trend as more students are choosing our food over other choices over and over again. While we see growth in repeat customers, we are also serving a greater number of first-time students. Our reviews are high this past year by industry standards. Students like the variety of foods, its quality, and responsive staff. In a year when many food service operations saw a decline in customer satisfaction due to disappointing products and lack of variety, we are proud to have maintained our high standards. Being flexible, getting 'the basics' right, and improving the student

experience has never been more challenging. Seeing students vote with each tray has validated all our hard work.

Let's reflect on this and the things that are so important in life. Appreciate the opportunities that present themselves in the coming months. Always believe in yourself and there will be nothing impossible in life for you. Together we will take food service to new heights.

*Let's continue to grow and shine,
Alfred Walker
President*

Bay City ISD District of the Month



District of the month is Bay City ISD. Ms. Mildred Hawkins, Food Service Director for Bay City ISD, and her team are doing an outstanding job of running their food service program and returning back to full service, pre-Covid style. Way to go, Bay City ISD Food Service Operations!



People often opt to do things on their own because it seems faster and more efficient. When we choose to take the solo route—sometimes, the fastest route—we might miss the route that goes on for miles; the route that takes us to places we never could have imagined. We need people—because one is too small a number to achieve more. Slow down and work together. Source: J. Maxwell, March 2022

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT: Food Flow

There are eight stages in the flow of food through your school food service program from purchasing and receiving to serving the food. Every time we serve foods to our students, we must make sure we have addressed each stage along the way every time, without fail. Let's explore each stage.

1. Purchasing and receiving. Food and supply purchases are a huge part of the food service budget. Each manager must ensure all procurement is from approved, reputable suppliers. These type of suppliers will be able to provide inspection reports and must meet all local, state and federal laws. You should also limit the number of suppliers used. This simplifies the ordering process and will avoid delivery minimums or excess ordering. Fewer suppliers can mean financial benefits with volume purchasing.

2. Storage. There are four main types of food storage to mix-and-match in your supply: dry staples, freeze dried, dehydrated and canned. *Dry staples* are the base necessities -- flour, sugar, rice, beans, coffee, pancake mix, or even instant potato flakes. These can be stored for thirty years and more. They are usually heavy and can be purchased in bulk. *Freeze dried* are prepared by freezing the food, placing it in a vacuum chamber, and then drying off any excess moisture. They are arguably the most expensive food storage option yet healthy, tasty, and very light and compact, requiring only hot water to rehydrate. They can last as long as twenty years. *Dehydrated food* has many of the same characteristics as freeze dried, include being lightweight and long lasting. It is an expensive option, like powdered milk and eggs, less bulky than freeze dried items, and doesn't spoil easily. These foods can also last up to twenty years if stored properly. If a home dried food, it should be eaten within a year. *Canned foods* are readily available and easy to use and rotate out. They often require no water, heat, or preparation. They are heavy, not as portable, and have a minimum shelf life of at least three years although they can last much longer. Canned food is a durable and cheap type of storage.

3. Preparation (including defrosting). There are three safe methods to thaw frozen foods. *In The Refrigerator:* Plan ahead as some items can take an entire day to thaw. *In Cold Water:* A faster way to thaw compared to in the refrigerator. *In The Microwave:* Remove any plastic or outer wrapping on the package. When serving frozen fruits for dessert, serve them while there are still a few ice crystals in the fruit. This helps compensate for the mushy texture frozen fruits have when thawed. Most frozen vegetables should be cooked without thawing first. Meat, fish and poultry can be cooked from the frozen or thawed stage. *Butter, eggs, milk, cheese and cream* – Place the frozen product in the refrigerator to thaw. Most cooked or prepared foods do not have to be thawed before heating. Precooked breads, cakes and cookies can be thawed at room temperature.

4. Cooking is about ensuring foods reach their ideal internal temperature regardless of the method chosen. Methods used in schools include broiling, baking, blanching, braising,



grilling, microwaving, poaching, roasting, sautéing or stir-frying, searing, simmering, steaming, and stewing are different ways to cook using heat. Frying is not used in preparing foods for our students. Microwaving is another option which can lead to hot and cold spots. To minimize this, you need a rotating base which physically stops the cooking process and turns the food occasionally. Its important to check the internal temperature at three different sites and use containers that are microwave safe.

5. Cooling. Food should be cooled from 60°C (140°F) to 4°C (40°F) within 4 to 6 hours. It can take a long time for large quantities of food to cool to appropriate temperatures. Ways to reduce cooling times include placing pots of food in an ice water bath, dividing large quantities of food into smaller containers, stirring frequently, slice or divide large cuts of meat into smaller pieces, or place in the refrigerator open and once it cools to 4°C(40°F) cover the container.



6. Hot and cold holding. For *hot holding* maintain the temperature of hazardous food above 60°C (140°F). You should check the internal temperature of the food using a metal stem probe thermometer every two (2) hours. Never cook or reheat food in hot holding equipment. For *cold holding* keep the food cold in refrigerated display units or on ice. The internal temperature of the food should be maintained at 4°C (40°F) or less.

7. Reheating. Reheat cold hazardous food to original cooking temperature either quickly on or in the stove or in the microwave. Never reheat slowly over several hours. Once fully reheated then place the food in hot holding units.

8. Serving. Prevent cross-contamination by ensuring servers take appropriate personal hygiene measures, hand washing and no direct contact with food. Ensure that only clean and sanitized utensils are used. If serving plated meals make sure not to stack them directly on the food, instead use a cover. Ensure service areas are kept clean and use regular pest control services. If transporting foods, ensure vehicles are clean and foods are held at proper hot or cold holding temperatures.

Summary

Our students are smart, and those with a cell phone on them will snap a pic and share if it looks awesome and creative. Oh, when it looks questionable or horrible that pic will go viral! Remember you have to get it right every day so they keep coming back.

Resources:

Cooking Foods with Dry Heat. <https://www.unlockfood.ca/>
Lesson 4 Food Flow: Keeping Food Safe from Gate to Plate.
www.uidaho.edu

THINKING SKILL: Creativity – Getting Your Mojo Back

When was the last time you had a creative pursuit? Too long? Let's try to get those creative juices going.

Creativity involves using your imagination or creating original ideas. Creativity allows us to view and solve problems more openly and with innovation. Creativity opens the mind. It broadens our perspectives and can help us overcome challenges.

It feels good to be in your "flow state," a term coined by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the 70s. It is defined as having a blissful feeling of being so immersed in a creative pursuit that the world drops away. There is so much literature on the many ways creativity benefits your health. For example, a 2016 Drexel University study found that making art lowers stress hormones. Creative flow releases feel-good chemicals like dopamine and endorphins and it also can reduce depression symptoms. Playing a musical instrument while in the fluid state of the creative zone can help you solve a problem, work through



hard feelings, and find inspirations.

It's time to make something for the joy of it. In the kitchen, let's work together to make something for the joy of our students. Think of creativity as a pilot light that's always on and channel your inner child. Like with children playing, they often do so in very original ways. As we grow into adulthood, this playful curiosity is sometimes lost.

For creative thinking we need to tap into our childlike mental state. Find something you enjoy doing. It can be anything. Play a silly game with friends. Sing a song you make up along the way. In the kitchen, talk among your teammates of creative ways to present food, create new menu items, and fun ways to engage students as they go through the line to get their meal. Who cares if you are good at your idea! Keep the ideas flowing. This is not the time to silence the inner critic by saying "I'm not judging. I'm just producing stuff right now and I'm going to worry about judging it later."

Are you stuck? To get those creative juices flowing begin by experimenting. Personally, you could paint a picture, take a jewelry making class, or start a home garden. In the school kitchen can you arrange the fruit in a cute design, add seasonal décor to the display, or introduce a new dish? Find out what lights you up.



Ok, so let's get started where you are in the kitchen by playing with food. Consider these ideas as starters:

1. Buy one new piece of seasonal produce.
2. Pull three things out of the pantry, refrigerator, or freezer and see if you can find a way to make them work together for a meal.
3. Buy a new spice.
4. Style and photograph an entire grouping of monochromatic food.

Remember this is not the time to judge or kill an idea. As a team you can work on ways to make the idea work – at least try to make it work before you say no.

Resources:

J. Dunn. "What Lights You Up?" March 2022. Health.com

J. Carson. Why Is Creativity Important and What Does It Contribute?

National Youth Council of Ireland. <https://www.youth.ie/home/>

S. Overhiser. Playing With Your Food: Tips for Creativity in the Kitchen.

<https://www.acouplecooks.com/>

Little Bellies. Ta Dah! <https://littlebellies.com/>

Our Newest Addition...Chef Ryan Bedell, Director of Operations

My culinary journey started at age 4 in the kitchens of my aunt and



grandmother. I started my formal culinary journey at age 18 at Waffle House and then Maggianos Little Italy. After completing culinary school, I moved to the kitchen as sous chef and then executive sous chef within two years. Soon afterwards, I became executive chef and managing partner for years overseeing training and helping other operations. I have led teams feeding athletes around the country through Maggianos for 16 years. At

Maggianos, I was also a culinary developer creating innovative menus and dishes. In my spare time, I have a passion for music--creating music with my group and training my kids in sports and other activities. I especially enjoy a nice evening with my wife, Justice Bedell of 17 years. I take pleasure in watching my daughter make music and share her make up and scar wax talents with the world. I also relish my time with my sister and her children. I believe in having a fun time while we have it and treating people the way I would like to be treated.

FOOD SERVICE...HARD AT WORK!



Figure 1. Clyde ISD Food Service



Figure 2. Cheeseburger Quesadilla



Figure 3. Clyde ISD Food Line



Figure 4. Cityscape Storage – Per Fire Code

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