Measuring School Breakfast Success

Once you get your new or expanded breakfast program up and running, it is important that you are able to measure progress with implementation as you move forward. Beyond the basic and immediate concerns of whether or not your program's revenues are covering the associated costs, you will need to be able to demonstrate to various school and community stakeholders that your school's investment in breakfast is providing benefits to students. As such, before you serve even a single breakfast, it is highly advisable that you identify the metrics by which you will measure the success of your program, and ensure that you have the means to collect any data you need. This kit includes an **Evaluating Successful Breakfast Outcomes** worksheet for use in identifying questions/answers that can best help you to determine the overall success of your efforts. You can edit this worksheet to include only the outcomes you wish to measure.

Identifying Useful Performance Metrics

Provided below is a brief list of potential data sources that you are likely to have access to (or would be able to generate) and some examples of performance metrics that you may be able to derive from them.

Counting and Claiming/Cafeteria data

- School Breakfast Program participation rates
    - Target increase in number of breakfasts served overall
    - Target increase in number of breakfasts served by category (F/RP/Paid)
    - Target percentage increase in breakfast participation
    - Participation trends
- Plate waste from breakfast service, measured by component or by total pounds of waste or pounds per participant

Eligibility Data

- Number of children eligible for free/reduced-price breakfasts
    - Rate or number of Applications/Certifications since implementation of new or expanded breakfast service

Financial Data

- Overall Revenues

- o From sales
- o From Federal/state/local reimbursement
- o From grants and other awards
- Overall Costs
  - o From food
  - o From labor
  - o From facilities/utilities
  - o From transportation (if applicable)
- Examination of revenues/costs to determine program profitability or sustainability

Survey Data (optional, but recommended)

- Student satisfaction with breakfast program
  - o Service delivery method
  - o Serving times
  - o Menu choices
- Teacher satisfaction with breakfast program (if applicable)
  - o Service delivery method
  - o Convenience of menu items/waste removal efficiency
  - o Serving times
  - o Time consumed during breakfast service
- Parent satisfaction with breakfast program
  - o Willingness to send children to breakfast program
  - o Satisfaction with menu choices/nutrition content
  - o Satisfaction with program convenience/service delivery method

Academic/Testing Data

- Grade awards correlated with breakfast consumption
- Standardized testing scores correlated with breakfast consumption
- Pre/post examination of nutrition education offerings in classrooms or in school curricula

School/Attendance Data

- Percentage or total change in number of morning nurse's office visits
- Student health examination data related to weight/nutrition
- Percentage or total change in number of morning disciplinary incidents
  - o In classrooms
  - o On the playground

- - Referred to dean or principal's office
- Total or percentage change in student tardiness
- Total or percentage change in student absence

Adjusting for Problem Areas

Has your performance review turned up any trouble spots or areas of concern? If you assemble data on a frequent, periodic basis, it might be best to implement smaller adjustments or tabulate one or more additional reports to establish whether or not the perceived deficiencies are longer term trends. However, if your data collection is less frequent or the problems are serious and immediate, then consider making larger adjustments more promptly.

If you find that you need to make changes to your breakfast program, consider returning to the various sections of this toolkit and retracing your steps based on the specific data you receive. You may need to re-examine business practices in order to bring costs and revenues in line. You may need to re-visit your menu planning. Your chosen service delivery method might be less accessible or convenient than initial assessments had suggested. Or, you may simply need to take a few extra steps to promote your program and get the word out. In addition to hard data (like reimbursement claims), strongly consider supplementing your information with student, parent, and faculty surveys---these will give you a deeper indication of how well your program is being received, and it will help you to maintain a pulse on the preferences of your customer base.