



New Look
of
School Milk

Dollars and Cents Biz Guide

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required school divisions to develop and implement local school wellness policies. Wellness policy development is up to local authorities, but the law requires four areas be included. One area is nutrition standards which includes offering nutritious foods and emphasizes *Food Groups to Encourage*, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and milk products, as outlined in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Schools can encourage milk consumption by providing access to dairy and through adoption of the *New Look of School Milk* (NLSM) program. To determine if adopting NLSM increases overall costs to the school meal program, an online, user-friendly financial calculator tool, developed by the Mid East Dairy Council, is available. It can be found at www.NutritionExplorations.org/sfs/schoolmilk_calculator.asp. If there are no additional costs, then the NLSM could be adopted and implemented. However, if overall costs are increased, there are several options that can be considered.

Adopt in Phases

The School Milk Pilot Test showed the largest increases in milk consumption and lunch participation were in secondary schools. One option is to consider phasing in NLSM, beginning with middle and high schools. Participation and federal reimbursement dollar increases often compensate for increased costs in secondary schools.

Adjust Meal Price(s)

Increasing lunch, and possibly breakfast, meal prices by five cents can add additional revenue to offset the cost increase.

Commodity Allocations

The current year's federal commodity dollar allocations are based on previous year's total lunches served. The School Milk Pilot results showed increased participation which could result in higher allocated dollars and reduced food costs the year following NLSM implementation.

Adjust A La Carte Prices

There is generally flexibility to adjust prices charged for a la carte food items sold. Selecting the top sellers and increasing the price by only \$.05 can generate revenue, but the prices charged should be in line with what the customer is paying at other business and eating establishments.

Additional Considerations

- With increases in lunch and breakfast participation, labor becomes more efficient.
- Recycling could provide an opportunity to generate additional revenue and reduce waste hauling costs.
- The success of the NLSM adoption will attract very positive media attention for the school meal program and school district overall.

