

Lincoln Elementary School

Dr. Matthew E. McFarland Sr.
Principal

June 27, 2018

Important Dates

June:

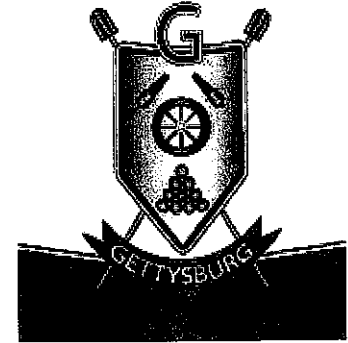
- ✓ 18th to August 3rd – Summer Food Service Program open @ Lincoln; 11:45-12:45

July:

- ✓ 9th to 27th – Summer School @ Lincoln; 8:15-1:45
- ✓ 12th – PTO Meeting @ Lincoln Café; 6:30pm
- ✓ 23rd(week of) – Back to School Teacher Letters and Information Mailed to Students and Families

August:

- ✓ 15th – Kindergarten T-Shirt Delivery
- ✓ 20th – Kindergarten Orientation 6:00pm
 - Sailing New Seas (Orientation – Students Grades 1-5 New to Lincoln) 5:00pm
- ✓ 22nd – 1st Day of School



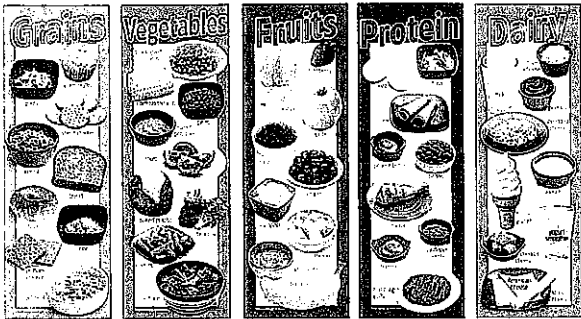
Important Announcements/Reminders

- ✓ Thank you very much for making my first year at Lincoln my most enjoyable year in education. I look forward to working with our communities and families for many years to come.
- ✓ Please consider attending our PTO meeting July 12th at 6:30. We would love you to help us make Lincoln the best place for our kids for the 2018-2019 school year!
- ✓ Please congratulate our Lincoln retirees
 - Mrs. Karen Arentz – Kitchen Manager
 - Mr. Neil Sollenberger – 4th Grade Teacher
 - Mrs. Christina Swinn – 1st Grade Teacher
- ✓ Please welcome our new Lincoln Staff Members
 - Mrs. Angela Suehr – Learning Support Teacher
 - Mrs. Jamie Thomson – 4th Grade Teacher
 - Mrs. Andrea Sneeringer – Reading Specialist (Returning)
- ✓ Staff members serving in new positions
 - Mrs. Ginette Prendergast – Kitchen Manager
 - Mrs. Kate Davis – 1st Grade Teacher
- ✓ Food Service prices for the 2018-2019 school year



- Breakfast - \$1.15
- Lunch - \$2.25

(Image compliments of: <https://www.learningzoneexpress.com/food-groups-poster-set.html>)



Recess before Lunch @ Lincoln for the 2018-2019 School Year

The arrival of summer brings about many different things. Summer brings us sun, warm weather, a few storms, and longer days to enjoy some much needed time with family and friends. As a Principal, I enjoy all of these things. However, one thing summer provides me with is a time to more thoroughly reflect on the previous school year. During this process, I think about what we did well, what we could improve upon, and what I can do as our principal to create a better environment for our students to learn and grow.

One change that will affect the 2018-2019 school year will be moving recess before lunch. Next year all students will go to recess and then proceed to the cafeteria to eat their lunch prior to returning to their afternoon activities. This was a big change to consider and put in place. However, considering all of the current research involving the benefits of students going to recess prior to eating lunch, it is a change that we will experiment with for the betterment of our students. When recess is before lunch, research shows that students:

- ✓ Waste less food
- ✓ Consume more nutrients needed for successful and appropriate development
- ✓ Experience a decreased number of health room visits
- ✓ Are better prepared to return to the classroom and learn
- ✓ Experience an increased amount of on-task time in the classroom
- ✓ Are less likely to engage in behaviors that may result in disciplinary referral

(Hamilton County Coordinated School Health Committee)

I have attached additional resources about schools moving to recess before lunch if you are interested in reading more about our change. If you have any further questions about this or any other changes please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Enjoy your summer.

Yours in education,


Dr. Matthew E. McFarland Sr.

Principal
Lincoln Elementary School
Gettysburg Area School District
"Make Every Minute Matter"

Benefits of Recess Before Lunch

Fact Sheet

Creating a Healthier Classroom

Why recess before lunch?

“When students go to recess before lunch they do not rush through lunch and tend to eat a more well-balanced meal including more foods containing vitamins, such as milk, vegetables, and fruits”

(The National Food Service Management Institute).

“Complete nutrition is related to overall health and improved test scores at schools”

(Vancouver Coastal Health Promoting Wellness: Ensuring Care)

When recess is before lunch, research shows that students:

- waste less food (as much as from 27% to 40%)
- consume more calcium and protein as much as 35%
- have decreased number of nurse visits for headaches and stomachaches after recess
- are calmer and ready to get to work immediately instead of needing cool-down time
- have an increase in classroom time on-task
- have decreased discipline referrals
- need less supervision in cafeteria
- have fewer accidents during lunch break
- litter less on school ground and inside the school



HAMILTON COUNTY
COORDINATED SCHOOL
HEALTH COMMITTEE

Recess Before Lunch

Testimonials

"I believe switching to having our recess before lunch rather than after has reduced the number of incidents that had been occurring before we made the switch. Students eat more of their lunch because they've been running around playing ball, climbing on the jungle gym, swinging, etc. so they have a better appetite, which means they're getting more nutrients into their growing bodies. Students of course learn better when they have fuel in their systems.

Although students only get 15 minutes of recess, they are more motivated to behave in class in the mornings, turn in their homework, etc. because they know teachers can take that 15 minutes away as a consequence. It is a lot easier to hold a student back for 15 mins. and they miss recess than try to manage that after lunch has ended (we can't hold them back from eating lunch). We still have some challenges, especially on the days when recess is held indoors, but overall I think it has had a great impact on our students and our school environment".

Laurie Smith, 4th Grade Teacher, Cincinnati Public Schools

"We wouldn't change our schedule. Allowing the students to play before we eat eliminates students not eating because they want more play time. It's also increased our participation in lunch".

Jackie Rowedder, Principal, Academy of World Languages, Cincinnati

"Our Principal made this decision after food service suggested it. We think it is only positive. The children don't hurry (or skip) lunch just to get to recess. They blow off some steam before settling down to eat. One drawback is they have to wear their coats into the lunchroom in the winter. I don't know why anyone would be opposed, really."

Nurse, Academy of World Languages, Cincinnati

"K-2 does recess before lunch. (sometimes after lunch also). They have a separate playground near the classrooms so actually this is something the teachers came up with themselves. They have reported better results with instructional time-more focus."

Nurse, Midway Elementary School, Cincinnati Public Schools

"Our school began recess before lunch this year. I really think that it is working nicely. From a health perspective, I believe that eating lunch and then running around the schoolyard can lead to upset stomachs. From an academic perspective, I like the calmer way that students return to the room after lunch. Before, when I was picking them up from recess, everyone was still hyper and often were upset over any conflicts that occurred at recess. It could take up to 15 minutes to settle down and/or solve problems that occurred on the playground. It is much easier to transition back into learning with the children coming back to the classroom from lunch instead of recess."

Cheryl Adams, 3rd Grade Teacher, Lockland Elementary, Lockland Local Schools

"At the beginning of this school year, our school switched to a Recess Before Lunch program. It has seemed to be a positive move for our students, staff, and students. I have noticed a decrease in the number of disciplinary situations we have at recess. The students line up after recess in an efficient manner, as the quiet groups get to go through the lunch line first! We have noticed an increase in the amount of food and milk consumed during the lunch period. And most importantly, our teachers find that the students are more calm, and ready to get back into the academics after eating lunch."

Michele Kipp, Principal, Lockland Elementary, Lockland Local Schools

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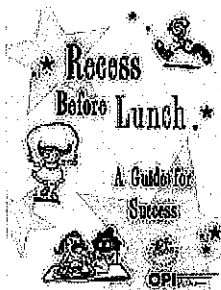
Connecting educators to what works

Home » Administrators » Recess Before Lunch Can Mean Happier, Healthier Kids

Recess *Before* Lunch Can Mean Happier, Healthier Kids

SHARE ARTICLE

Recess follows lunch almost as predictably as four follows three, because it always has been that way. Principals who have put recess first, though, have noticed children eat more and behave better after lunch. Included: Ideas for making the change to recess before lunch.



The Montana Team Nutrition Program developed guidelines for schools interested in switching lunch and recess. Click here to read [Recess Before Lunch Policy: Kids Play and then Eat!](#) [pdf format]

For centuries, recess has followed lunch with the consistency and predictability of one season following another. Lunch-recess is part of the natural order of the education universe, with recess secure in its place.

More administrators, though, are starting to challenge that static schedule. Some principals who moved recess *before* lunch discovered that not only do students eat more and waste less food, but behavior improved and teachers gained instructional time.

"We've been doing it for three years, and it has made all the difference in the world, especially in the afternoon classes," said Kim Anderson, principal of Central School, a grade 5 to 8 school in Whitefish, Montana. "They used to come in [from recess] hot, sweaty, and fired up. It would take teachers five or six minutes to get them back to a teachable mode. We've reclaimed five to ten minutes of instruction time every day."

SCHEDULE BENEFITS EVERYONE

Two elementary schools that switched recess and lunch also reported healthier, happier students. Post-recess ailments were among the reasons North Ranch Elementary School in Scottsdale, Arizona, changed its schedule. "We got the idea [of recess before lunch] from the school nurse who had been to a conference," said principal Dr. Sarah Hartley. "It gets very hot here, and the kids were eating and then playing in the heat. The nurse was

reporting a lot of headaches and stomachaches after lunch."

Four years after North Ranch began serving lunch after recess, the change seems to agree with everyone.

"The teachers love it," Hartley told Education World. "They don't feel like they have to cool down the children after lunch. In the past it could take 15 minutes to settle the kids down after recess. So we found a lot of academic time. We also saw a drop in the number of referrals to the nurse, and the cafeteria reported more kids eating and less food being thrown away."

North Ranch was the first elementary school in its district to make the change; now 16 out of 31 elementary schools have switched.

Forest Glen International Elementary School, a K-5 school in Indianapolis, Indiana, moved lunch after recess to encourage children to eat more and eat more leisurely, said principal Gina Borgioli-Yoder. The school piloted the change last year with kindergarteners and first graders.

"Little kids tend to nibble and dump," Borgioli-Yoder told Education World. "When they play first, they tend to eat more. They play and get their energy out and then settle down. The kids really like it."

STUDENTS ARE MORE FULL, MORE RELAXED

Entrenched as it is in the school culture, the lunch-recess sequence never made much sense from a health standpoint. Few adults eat a meal and then immediately exercise, because they know what could happen.

The lure of going out to play also causes some students to rush through or skip their lunches, which can lead to stomachaches or restless, hungry children later in the day.

Katie Bark, a dietician who is a member of the Montana Team Nutrition Program, said her group has been researching the affects of holding recess before lunch for several years. The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture; one of the directives from the USDA is for schools to develop a healthy nutritional environment.

The team developed some guidelines for schools interested in changing their schedules, called Recess Before Lunch Policy: Kids Play and then Eat!

Resources

[Recess Before Lunch](#)

[Tips on Changing Recess Before Lunch \[pdf\]](#)

[Recess Before Lunch Brochure \[pdf\]](#)

"We devised a pilot project and worked in four different elementary schools in the spring of 2002-2003," Bark told Education World. Baseline studies showed that when recess was held before lunch, plate waste -- the amount of discarded food -- went way down and milk consumption went way up.

The team also noted that when students come in from the playground, the noise level in the cafeteria is high. Then they settle down. "And if they had a dispute on the playground, they tend to forget about it when they get to class."

Still, changing a tradition as deeply rooted as lunch-recess can take time. "This was a huge change for these schools to do," Bark said. "We're trying to learn from these schools. Then we want to develop a guide for success."

PART OF OVERALL CHANGE

One of the schools in the Montana study, Central Middle School, experienced dramatic shifts in student behavior after changing its schedule. Moving lunch after recess was part of an effort to create a more healthful environment in the school. Snack and soda machines were eliminated, lunch menus changed, and microwaves and hot water dispensers installed to give students more options for lunch.

The changes began after Anderson noticed how much food was being discarded daily. "Many students were spending less than five minutes eating lunch because they wanted to go out. At best they were gobbling -- but they were not eating nearly what they brought," he told Education World. "They were going to their afternoon classes not properly fueled.

"Many just were eating chips, a candy bar, and a soda before going out, and the sugar and fat would hit their systems about 90 minutes after lunch."

When students had the chance to eat more slowly and more thoughtfully, they brought more food and ate more, and disciplinary actions decreased by 60 percent over a three-year period. "Students are less restless, more attentive, and we have fewer outbursts in the afternoon," Anderson said. Over that same three-year period, the school also reduced the amount of plate waste by 50 percent.

Other benefits included:

- Lunchroom discipline problems dropped from 183 per year, prior to the lunch program changes, to only 36 in the first eight months of the 2002-03 school year.
- After-lunch referrals to the principal's office (for classroom and other behavior problems) also decreased. They went from 96 referrals (in 2001-02) to just 22 referrals in the first eight months of the 2002-03 school year.
- Teachers reported increased attentiveness in their classes after lunch; they gained about 10 minutes of instructional time per class.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE DIRTY HANDS?

The primary adjustment needed if lunch and recess are switched is building in time for students to wash their hands before eating. But the principals with whom Education World spoke said that hand-washing fit smoothly into the schedule.

At Central and North Ranch, dispensers with hand sanitizing liquid were installed, so students can clean their hands as they enter the cafeteria. "We've also noticed a decrease in the number of colds," since installing the hand sanitizers, according to Anderson. Often a company will donate the dispensers, he added. The proceeds from a vending machine that dispenses healthy snacks pays for the sanitizing liquid at Central.

NOTE: Some U.S. schools and districts have banned the use of alcohol-based sanitizers because of the risk of alcohol poisoning in children. In addition, there is research indicating that washing your hands with soap and water is more effective than using hand sanitizers, and in some cases, hand sanitizers may increase the amount of bacteria on the hands, rather than reducing it.

Forest Glen Elementary added five minutes to each lunch session so students could use the restrooms and wash their hands before lunch.

"You do have to think about hand-washing if you are going to switch," Borgioli-Yoder said. "You have to build in hand-washing time, and stress that it is important."

Another issue North Ranch staff members had to resolve was how to get homemade lunches to the cafeteria when students went directly outside, since they did not want lunches broiling in the Arizona heat while children played. Each class now has a bucket in which all the lunches are placed every morning. The bucket goes out in the hall, and a custodian transports all the buckets to the cafeteria and leaves each bucket by a table.

Students debit cards used for buying lunch also are left on a table, so pupils can collect them as they come in from recess.

SO WHY NOT PLAY AND THEN EAT?

Even with evidence of the benefits of scheduling recess first, most schools still follow the traditional schedule. Those who have done it are eager to convince others.

"We recommend it to lots of people," Anderson said.

"We answer lots of e-mails about it," Dr. Hartley added, saying that her school has numerous visitors every year who observe the school's schedule. But like all long-time traditions, changing this one will take time.

"It's just like we still have a school calendar based on an agrarian society -- it just always has been done this way," said Dr. Hartley. "Change is different; it created a lot of curiosity. We had to adjust several ways of thinking."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Recess

See Education World's School Issues Glossary for other articles about recess.

1
Nutrition

2
Operations

3
Administration
Healthy Food
Environment
3230

4
Communications &
Marketing

to *your credit*

Making the grade in your profession

Revisiting Recess Before Lunch

By Dayle Hayes, MS, RD

How making the case for a switch in school schedules can improve learning environments.



Sometimes called “Play, Then Eat” or “Play Before Lunch,” the Recess Before Lunch (RBL) model is a change in the traditional scheduling order of lunchtime and recess. RBL allows students to go to recess first, and then to eat lunch. The benefits for student health and achievement are compelling and well-documented in schools that have adopted this approach. But, while simple in theory, RBL is often met with resistance. Such a policy change requires careful planning, effective communication and a strong commitment from school administrators and teachers to ensure its success.

It's been more than a decade since *School Nutrition* featured in-depth coverage on RBL. Inspired by the recent publication of an updated edition of *Recess Before Lunch: A Guide for Success* (see the box on page 178), *SN* decided a return to this topic was long overdue.

EARNING ENDORSEMENT In the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child education model developed jointly by the U.S. Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC) and ACSD (formerly the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development)—and being adopted by many states and individual school districts across the country—RBL is a recommended element. This is due to the multiple connections found between school success, nutrition and physical activity.

But before we dive deep into *those* connections, it's important to note that recess and lunch are also considered important parts of America's current

Earn 1 CEU
in the
designated
Key area
and Key
Topic Code
noted above



food waste conversations. USDA has recognized that schools have a special role in “reducing, recovering and recycling food waste” and specifically has recommended RBL (and extended lunch periods) as key strategies for reducing food waste in schools. This subject is a worthwhile discussion for you and your team. Start by checking out “Trash Talk,” the “To Your Credit” article in *SN*’s April 2017 issue.

To return to the value of RBL from a wellness and achievement perspective, it’s important to remember that nutrition and physical activity go hand-in-hand in helping children to be fit, healthy and ready to learn. As most school nutrition professionals already understand and appreciate the benefits of balanced school meals, we will start our exploration of RBL by concentrating on the benefits of *active* recess.

PRIORITIZING PLAY Although recess has been a hallmark of elementary school schedules for more than a century, some schools have started phasing it out in recent years, to make way for other academic priorities. This controversial move necessitates the need to remind educators and other stakeholders of the important value of recess.

Planned periods of physical activity and play at school (aka recess), have impressive and well-documented benefits. According to CDC’s definition, effective recess is monitored by adults and allows children to engage with their peers in activities they choose. Regularly scheduled recess is a win-win for students and educators because it provides a wide variety of health, educational and social benefits including:

- » increased levels of physical fitness;

- » improved memory, attention and concentration;

- » reduced disruptive behaviors and more time on-task in the classroom; and

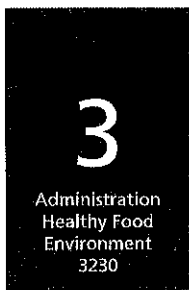
- » improved social development (e.g. learning how to share and negotiate).

Regular recess during the school day also contributes to the 60 minutes of daily physical activity recommended for youth today. Based on the strength of research connecting activity to learning, health experts and educators are joining forces to help all students be more active. For example, the Tennessee Departments of Education and Health have joined together to provide online resources for schools, families and communities at its Active Students, Active Learners website, www.tn.gov/education/active-academics.html.

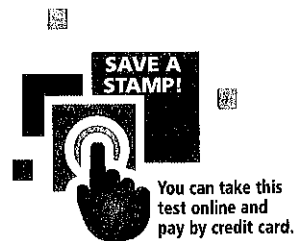
IN 2003, the Montana Team Nutrition Program published *Recess Before Lunch: A Guide for Success*. During the 15 years since publication of that first edition, the *Guide* has been used across the country and around the globe. It has served as the basis for toolkits and programs developed by numerous states, individual communities (such as Vancouver, Canada) and government agencies (including the U.S. Department of Defense’s Healthy Base Initiative

project to reduce the prevalence of obesity at military installations worldwide).

In 2018, after years of working with Montana schools to establish RBL scheduling, the authors revised the *RBL Guide*, incorporating many best practice applications. It is now available nationally to help other schools and districts work to implement an RBL policy at elementary and middle school levels. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/MontanaRBLGuide-SNmag> to download your own copy.



the test



SWITCH IT UP Active recesses and balanced school meals are good for students in numerous ways. But by flipping the conventional scheduling order of meal followed by playtime to recess *before* lunch, many schools have multiplied the benefits of both recess and school meals. Benefits fall into four main categories and most have been confirmed in a number of research studies published over the past decade.

Improved consumption of school lunch. Studies have shown that children waste less food, drink more milk and eat more fruits and vegetables when they have recess first. The decrease in food and milk waste has been significant in some studies and less dramatic in others.

Improved lunchroom environment. Since students are not rushing to get outside, the atmosphere in the lunchroom/cafeteria/dining area is more relaxed, and thus more conducive to eating slowly. Children are generally calmer, quieter and more able to socialize, as well as to eat their meals.

Improved classroom behavior after lunch. Teachers report that students are more settled when they return to their classrooms and better able to focus. Educators report better learning readiness, perhaps most surprising, they also report small, but important, *increases* in teaching time (even 5 to 10 minutes can make a difference).

Improved behavior overall. Anecdotally, many administrators report fewer disciplinary problems in dining areas and hallways. Some also report that there are fewer conflicts on the playground and that fewer children get sick as they are no longer playing hard right after eating quickly.

As experienced school leaders know, RBL works best when both recess and meal service are carefully planned, especially to ensure that sufficient time is scheduled for both. Are you inspired to take the steps for readying your school or district for the RBL approach? If so, consider the following strategies as your blueprint for implementation.

Go to: www.schoolnutrition.org/OnlinePDAs

"Revisiting Recess Before Lunch"

Completion of this test, with a passing score, will count as 1 Continuing Education Unit (CEU) in Key Area 3, Administration, Code 3230

(Please Print)

Name: _____

SNA Member Number: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

1. Recess Before Lunch is sometimes called

- Play, Then Eat
- Herd Them In
- Swing and Slide Into Lunch
- None of the above

2. School Nutrition covered the RBL approach extensively in its February 2017 edition.

- True
- False

3. RBL is a recommended element of the Whole School, Whole ____, Whole Child education model.

- Grain
- World
- Community
- None of the above

4. Regularly scheduled active recess leads to ____ among students.

- increased levels of physical fitness
- improved social development
- reduced disruptive behaviors in the classroom
- All of the above

5. The RBL approach can lead to improved consumption of fruits and vegetables in the school meal.

- True
- False

6. Stakeholders should commit to the RBL schedule for at least ____ before determining its overall success or failure.

- one week
- one month
- one semester
- one year

7. Parents should be advised that RBL is not as effective for students who bring lunch from home.

- True
- False

8. CDC recommends that elementary students get a minimum of 20 minutes ____ each school day.

- total activity
- recess time
- handwashing time
- all of the above

9. Hand sanitizers are preferred to hand-washing for cleaning hands after recess.

- True
- False

10. Students in ____ grade levels may be able to accept an RBL change more easily than others.

- 6-7
- 2-3
- 4-5
- K-2

TEST COMPLETION & SUBMISSION DETAILS

To earn 1 Continuing Education Credit (CEU) toward SNA's Certificate/Credentialing programs for this professional development article (PDA) test, you must achieve a passing score and the issue date (**June/July 2018**) must not be older than five (5) years from your Certificate/Credentialing period. A maximum of three (3) PDAs per year is allowable for SNA's Certificate in School Nutrition program. There is no maximum of passing PDAs for those with the SNS Credential, submitted within the three-year period.

To pay by check: Mail this completed form before your expiration date. Include \$11 (SNA Members) or \$17 (non-members) for processing to: SNA, Attn: PDA, PO Box 759297, Baltimore, MD 21275-9297. Do not send cash!

To pay by credit card: Pay for and take the test online at www.schoolnutrition.org/OnlinePDAs. Processing fees for tests completed online are \$9 (SNA Members) or \$15 (non-members).

Due to administrative costs, refunds will not be made for any reason.

< Previous Next >

Search ...



Major League Baseball, apple pie, and having recess after lunch...three undisputable staples of American society. But have you ever had cherry pie? Man, it is so good! And so is *change*.

> Alternative Diets
Pt. 2: Gluten
Free

> SFSP Check In

> Allergens: Part
One –Nothin' to
Sneeze At

> Know Before
You Go: ANC

Sometimes “re-inventing the wheel” can seem like an insurmountable task, but implementing a system in which students eat lunch *after* recess might be easier than you thought. With proper planning, cost-benefit analysis and flexibility, the future of health standards can reside right in your very school district.

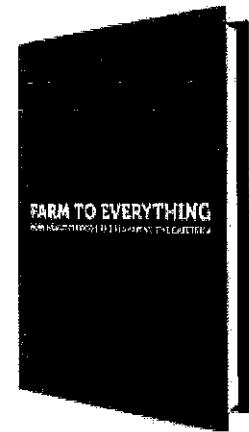
If you’re interested in increasing participation in your school nutrition program, decreasing the disciplinary action required for your student body, and maintaining a higher level of health and safety standards – you have come to the right place. Presenting a reasonable argument for modifying a deep-rooted tradition will be challenging, but using the following tips and illustrating the value of this change will make the transition to lunch after recess a seamless conversion. So, let’s dive right in and eat some cherry pie.

Why change?

Undoubtedly the first question one might ask in this situation would be why? Why change? Traditions are typically deeply-rooted for a reason, but sometimes from the outside looking in, your perspective can be different. Luckily, you don’t just have to take my word for it. The proof is in the precedent. Many school districts across the nation have already begun scheduling lunch after recess, and it has been a huge success. There are endless accounts of the benefits

2018

> Farm to
Everything –
The Domino
Effect



> Blog
> Event
> Fun
> General

that have been seen with this re-structuring, but let's begin with the most important ones: the kids.

According to a study by Preventive Medicine "... waiting until after recess to feed kids increases per-child fruit and veggie consumption by 54% and prompts 45% more students to eat any fruits or vegetables at all."

- > Inventory
- > News
- > Nutrition
- > Operations
- > Podcast
- > Policy
- > State Agency
- > Technology
- > Uncategorized

What happens when you combine a Snickers bar, a bag of Doritos and then 95 degree heat, in that order? Stomachaches, headaches, drowsiness – simply put... nothing good. School nurses in districts who observe recess before lunch report that they are significantly less busy, and that is exactly how they like it. So, what makes the difference? When kids are active for an extended period of time and eat post-recess, they will naturally want to consume more wholesome meals leading to a better diet and less food-related illnesses. Additionally, when students eat more, there is going to

Select Month

be less food waste. This means not only are they getting closer to reaching the nutritional standards we long for them to attain, but also your hard work and preparation isn't being tossed in the garbage can.

Another contributing factor to less waste is students will no longer be itching to get outside and play with their peers while they are eating. Having recess before lunch prevents angst that can come from wanting to rush out of the cafeteria doors and instead encourages them to consume more food. This will also decrease lethargic tendencies later in the day as they will avoid nutritional deficiency that can come with not eating a proper meal.



Many districts have also reported a drastic decline in the amount of disciplinary action that is required during lunch, and after lunch. When you allow kids to extinguish their fiery energy out in the playground, it prevents discord and misbehavior in controlled settings like the cafeteria or the classroom. One

Montana school district that observes recess before lunch claims that their need for discipline has “decreased by 60 percent over a three-year period.”

We love our kids, but what about us?

As school nutrition professionals, the one thing you care about most is the kids you show up to provide nourishing meals for each day. As we all know, however, there are many contributing factors that come into play when implementing change. Your faculty, parents and superiors all want to know what this is going to mean for them.

For your staff, they can expect one of the most important things to increase in the classroom with this change: attention. When students come straight to class after recess, they are wired – and not exactly ready to learn why the alphabet can be used in math. But having lunch after recess creates a buffer between the time of increased heart rates and the time needed for a rested, focused mind.

Some school districts say they have gained up to an additional 10 minutes of

*academic time because
the students are simply
calmer .*

One of the biggest resistors to a kid's lifestyle changing can be their parents. Inherently, people don't like change, especially parents when it comes to changes that affect their children. If you choose to implement recess before lunch, it will be important to manage parent concerns respectfully and confidently. For example: you might expect a backlash with regards to kids being active on an empty stomach. This can allow you an opportunity to promote participation in your breakfast program and offer additional incentives to the change, like mid-day snacks. Other tips that could ease the minds of parents and superiors would be suggesting a one-year pilot program to test out the idea, just to see how it performs. If the value is realized, then denying the implementation seems less likely.

Finally, the challenge of proving that value to your superiors isn't as hard as you might think. The cost-benefit analysis of this strategy clearly depicts a low cost, high benefit model. The only expense you might inherit is the price required to produce more food. But,

as you know, the reason behind that cost is the benefit of increased student participation in your school nutrition program, and increased revenue is something almost any board member can support.

If that is the question, then what is the answer?

The answer to the question posed in the title of this blog might seem a bit clearer now, but before that answer is conclusive, understanding the finer details is important. As previously mentioned, changing a tradition is difficult and requires value proposition. But to plan for success, one also needs to plan for failure. Having a plan of action to account for as many shortcomings and issues that can come with this change is necessary.

Some districts have come across a few scenarios like dealing with handling homemade lunches, dirty hands and food, debit cards getting left in the cafeteria, etc. Schools have combatted these issues with strategies such as having a 'lunch basket' that contains all the homemade lunches for each classroom ready for the students to receive after recess. Additional adjustments included installing hand-sanitizing stations in and around the cafeteria, which can also

help reduce the spread of bacteria amongst the student body.

To wrap up, challenges always present themselves with change. They go hand-in-hand, kind of like the traditional concept of recess after lunch. But some of the most successful ventures can flourish by breaking the mold and accepting a new way of thinking.

Contrary to popular belief, it is okay to watch basketball, eat a cherry pie, and even have recess before lunch.

By Michael Grillo | February 5th, 2018 | Categories: **Blog, Fun** | Tags: child nutrition, pros and cons, school nutrition | 1 Comment

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