

School Nutrition

Solutions & Strategies for K-12 Foodservice

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TECHNOLOGY

Gadgets Galore

What would a state-of-the-art school kitchen look like? Operators surely have their own ideas, but kids do, too, as evidenced by the responses to Y-Pulse, LLC's Dream Kitchen survey via the whyville.net community. While Y-Pulse co-founder Sharon Olson notes that some of the responses are not currently technologically possible, "the answers...show that students are technologically savvy and big thinkers about the role automation plays in their lives," she reports. Some suggestions, on the other hand, may be possible down the road.

Among the comments from students, responses involving robots running the kitchen were popular. "Automatic serving machines would serve perfect portions. After being a regular customer in this 'dream kitchen,' the technology would recognize your favorite and least favorite foods," envisioned one respondent.

Other responses suggested students' wishes for more automated features, such as beverage dispensers, ice cream machines and pizza toppers. "This is a generation that wants to be able to pick what they want, and [they] expect to do it with automatic equipment," Y-Pulse co-founder Tami Cline, PhD, SNS, explains, citing the link between these preferences and students' interest in choice.

While some of the answers can be considered more fantasy than reality, she adds, "the answers give you a glimpse into the minds of tomorrow's consumers, who will not only order from foodservice operators but some of whom will end up managing such operations."

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