

Foodservice equipment & supplies®

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School Foodservice Design Trends

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Flexibility remains one key characteristic all foodservice operators want designed into their facility these days. This seems to be driven by a greater need to respond to changing menu trends. And nowhere is this more evident than in the non-commercial segment.

Traditional feeders that we once labeled institutional, namely hospitals and colleges and universities, now function more like their commercial peers when it comes to their desire to keep menus fresh and current. Add another player to this growing roster: school foodservice directors.

At the School Nutrition Association's annual conference, which took place a few weeks ago in Philadelphia, Y-Pulse, a research firm that specializes in the college and school foodservice segments, facilitated a panel discussion among 10 school foodservice directors. As part of this discussion, entitled "The Dream Kitchen Survey," these foodservice directors, who feed more than 500,000 children across the United States, outlined several areas that impact them when it comes to cafeteria design and maintaining student appeal.



(Pictured on the right are the roundtable participants. Standing: Tami Cline, Betty Theide, Linda Dieleman, Patricia Courteau, Clela Long, Dorothy Taylor, Diane Schweitzer. Seated: Sharon Olson, Beth Rice, Kathleen Gleindmeier, Rachel Angulo, Mary Kate Harrison.)

One key area of discussion was how their dream kitchen would be flexible enough to respond to menu trends of today and in the future. Following is a summary of the panel's insight on how menu trends affect their equipment purchases today:

- Breakfast in the classroom – requires more mobility designed for classroom delivery.
- Grab 'n go programs – require equipment that holds temperature without degrading quality on hot and cold items.
- Non-service to speed delivery – grab 'n go and reimbursable vending allows more students to be served without the aid of a service employee.
- Changing cooking methods – schools continue to evolve their cooking styles to meet demand. Operators talked of the evolution from scratch cooking to heat and serve and back again.
- Healthy vending and kiosks – equipment that integrates into cafeteria design to assure speed of service when staff are not available.
- Increasing milk consumption – facilities are not typically designed by architects who understand the limitations of coolers to serve high volume fast.
- Less frying and more combi-cooking – characterizes significant equipment shifts to accommodate more healthful menu offerings.

Posted by Joseph Carbonara on August 5, 2008 | Comments (0)