

Health in Education

July 8, 2014 — Nutrition education has become a tool that has empowered young consumers to make their own healthy choices.

Y-Pulse, a division of Olson Communications based in Chicago, was formed 10 years ago to conduct surveys, interviews and roundtable discussions to reveal the evolution of foodservice trends in the education segment.

“In K-12 schools, lunch has become a learning lab empowering young consumers with the knowledge they need to make mindful nutritious choices,” the company says. “Ninety-six percent of school foodservice directors consider teaching nutrition education to be an important part of their job.” Foodservice directors on college and university campuses are experimenting with new foods, concepts and delivery systems.



The company recently released its “Top-10 Foodservice Trends on Campus” report. The highlights from each trend are:

- More fruits, vegetables and healthy fats are on the menu and millennial consumers are even looking for fresh and health snacks.
- Successful wellness programs at colleges and universities take a holistic approach, including health services, athletics, recreational sports, counseling and residential life in addition to foodservice.
- On-site cooking is returning to school kitchens with new techniques for fresh ingredients rather than turning to processed ingredients.
- Foodservice directors at the college level are using social media to connect with their customers by promoting foodservice venues and handling customer feedback in real-time.
- Dining areas are being designed to encourage social interaction among students.
- Barriers between food preparation and foodservice are coming down to connect customers with the dining experience and allow them to see their meal being prepared.
- Parents are being invited to school for lunch or dinner where tips on healthy eating is offered to the whole family.
- Students expect to see ethnic foods on the menu regardless of their ethnic background. Latin, Mediterranean and Asian flavors have been the top three cuisines for years.
- College students are looking for a simple ingredient statement, a company known for ethical practices and sustainability when purchasing food and beverages.