



School Wide Food Based Challenges

Wellness challenges are a great way to unite all the members of your school community around the common goal of improving the school food environment. Most of the ideas can be easily tailored to meet the needs and interest of a K-12 audience and staff. Have fun and let your creativity run wild. If these don't appeal, there are tons of ideas on-line as well.

- ➔ **H2O to Go:** Proper hydration is vital to maintaining energy, focus and a good digestion but it can be a challenge – particularly if your school does not have easy access to clean, cold water. For those who do, have classes(rooms) keep track of how many ounces your group can drink each week. For elementary students, this may be easiest to track via water drops with a child's name. For middle and high school students a graph display may be more appropriate. If there is money in the budget, a winning class could be gifted with portable water bottles – remember to reach out to explore sponsorship opportunities. Likewise, if clean water is not available, see if there is a business that would like to sponsor water dispensers for your school.
- ➔ **Sugar Showdown:** Help your class keep track of sugar intake but asking students to record how much sugar they are consuming each day. Remember the grams to teaspoon conversion – 4 grams of sugar = 1 teaspoon. Using a big, clean container and substituting salt for sugar (to reduce tasting temptations) have your glass measure how much sugar they are consuming each week. The class with the smallest amount can win a healthy sweet treat. You might consider also merging all the classes into 1 giant container and comparing the total with average weekly/monthly consumption to provide a powerful demonstration of how much sugar we typically eat.
- ➔ **Breakfast of Champions:** Breakfast still is the most important meal of the day and too many kids don't (or don't get to) eat one. Many schools now offer a free breakfast. Encourage breakfast consumption by keeping track of how many students are eating breakfast. Use a piece of (paper) toast to record numbers and ask students to reflect on (and share) how they feel when they have fueled themselves at the start of the day. This is a great challenge for the staff as well, who can serve as great role models for healthy breakfast habits.
- ➔ **Some Chard Over the Rainbow:** Probably best for K-6. Cut out or find paper shapes of fruit on-line and have students keep track of their fruit and vegetable consumption. Create classroom rainbows by creating like-colored fruit arcs on classroom bulletin board. Can be used for school-wide consumption as well. Remember fruits and veggies eaten at lunch count, too!
- ➔ **Waste Not Want Not:** 40% of all food in America ends up in the trashcan. We can help cut down on food waste and the lunchroom is a great place to start. You will need to purchase (or borrow) a scale and some heavy duty trash bags. Keep track of how much food your students throw out after lunch. Here is an opportunity to get the buy-in of your school's custodial staff. If your school does not have a composting program, see if you can start one. There are lots of resources on-line and most cities now have composting programs or partners.