



DANNON INSTITUTE®

Nutrition for Health



PROVIDING ECONOMICAL AND HEALTHY SCHOOL FOODS

Karen Weber-Cullen, DrPH, R.D. Associate Professor of Pediatrics-Nutrition Children's Nutrition Research Center Baylor College of Medicine

Susan Finn, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., FADA President and CEO American Council for Fitness & Nutrition Principal, Finnparks & Associates Columbus, Ohio

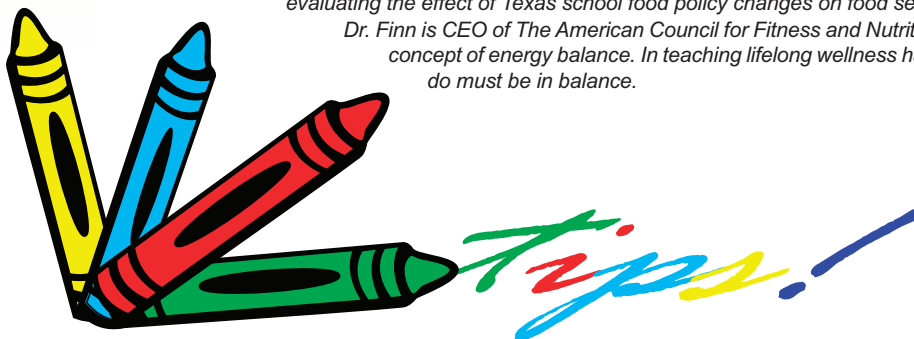
TIP SHEET

School food service departments must pay close attention to food costs, in order to meet their budgets. This is a significant concern, given the increase in food and transportation costs that occurred over the past several years. The following strategies may be helpful in controlling costs.

- Join a purchasing co-op. Combining bids with neighboring school districts to purchase larger quantities at lower prices helps to maximize your purchasing power.
Complete an annual procurement plan based on your menu to maximize the use of commodities, especially for the more expensive items.
Compare produce prices among various vendors. Contact local farmers about products they can supply at a reasonable price.
Make data-driven decisions. Data on student participation, student preferences, food cost, labor cost, equipment replacement cost, and training cost are needed to guide the operation in a strategic planning process.
Adopt a 2-3 week cycle menu.
Revamp cycle menus to serve less expensive, popular student choices more often.
Serve low-cost beans or other legumes more often as a meat alternate or vegetable choice.
Train staff to follow standardized recipes.
Ask employees to present new ideas and processes for daily tasks, and reward innovation.
Market your program as healthy, delicious and a good value to students, teachers, staff, and parents to boost participation.
Create new customers through catering!
The School Nutrition Association (http://www.schoolnutrition.org/) has great resources for Food Service Departments.

Dr. Cullen is an expert in health promotion and education, specifically school food policy and student food selection. She currently is evaluating the effect of Texas school food policy changes on food selection in Texas schools.

Dr. Finn is CEO of The American Council for Fitness and Nutrition, which is dedicated to teaching children the important concept of energy balance. In teaching lifelong wellness habits children must learn that what they eat and what they do must be in balance.





**DANNON INSTITUTE®**

*Nutrition for Health*



## PROVIDING ECONOMICAL AND HEALTHY SCHOOL FOODS

Karen Weber-Cullen, DrPH, R.D.  
Associate Professor of Pediatrics-Nutrition  
Children's Nutrition Research Center  
Baylor College of Medicine

Susan Finn, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., FADA  
President and CEO  
American Council for Fitness & Nutrition  
Principal, Finnpartners & Associates  
Columbus, Ohio

**T  
I  
P  
S  
H  
E  
E  
T**

*\* Adapted from the following resources:*

*Stallings, V. A., Sutor, C. W., & Taylor, C. L. (Eds.). (2009). School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children. Washington, D. C.: The National Academies Press.*

*Meeting the Challenge of Rising Food Costs for Healthier School Meals Available at:  
[http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/DGfactsheet\\_challenge.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/DGfactsheet_challenge.pdf)*

*National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) at [www.nfsmi.org](http://www.nfsmi.org)  
Provides:*

*-Training materials on Financial Management, First Choice: A Purchasing Systems Manual for School Food Service, Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Instructor Manual and Participant Workbook, Measuring Success with Standardized Recipes.  
Telecasts on effective financial management, cooperative purchasing, procurement and inventory control  
Fact sheets on research related to cost control, purchasing, and financial decision making.*

*Food and Nutrition Information Center Healthy Meals Resource System at <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov>  
Provides:*

*Purchasing and Procurement resource list and Menu Planning and Preparation resource list.  
Web site links to materials developed by State agencies, other government agencies, and food product associations.*



*The Dannon Institute is a separately incorporated, 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation dedicated to non-commercial activities. Launched in 1997, The Dannon Institute was established as an independent foundation to promote research, education and communication about the link between nutrition and good health. - The Dannon Institute | 100 Hillside Avenue, 3rd Fl, White Plains, NY 10603-2863 | Tel: 914-872-8543*

*Tips!*