

## Lesson 2: **Decision-Making Process**

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### **Objectives**

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At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify trends that impact foodservice operations and foodservice directors' decisions to centralize food production.
2. Discuss factors that would influence school foodservice directors (or other foodservice managers) to centralize food production.
3. Apply the basic decision-making model for making a decision about whether or not to centralize food production.
4. Describe options for consolidating food production.
5. Discuss research that has been done related to satisfaction and food quality when changing foodservice systems.

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### **Student Reading Assignment**

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*A Guide to Centralized Foodservice Systems, Chapter 2*

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### **Presentation Outline**

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Estimated time: This classroom presentation will require about 50 minutes. Depending on the use of learning activities, two or three class sessions would be required.

- I. Trends that might impact decisions to modify a foodservice system
- II. Factors in school foodservice influencing decisions to centralize food production
  - A. Growth
  - B. Quality/consistency
  - C. Financial savings
  - D. Facility limitations

- E. Labor availability
- III. Decision-making process
  - A. Generic decision-making model
  - B. Options for centralizing food production
  - C. Criteria for accomplishing goals
  - D. Applying the decision-making model

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### Suggested Learning Activities

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1. Ask students to review current trade publications to determine trends impacting the foodservice industry and identify the ones that would lead a foodservice director to centralize food production. Have a class discussion on trends with students sharing articles they found. (Estimated time: 1 hour)
2. Use the case study presented on p. 23 in *A Guide to Centralized Foodservice Systems* to apply the decision-making model (or use a local example if you have one). Have students discuss each step in the decision-making process. Students could develop the criteria that they would use to evaluate the alternatives. (Estimated time: 30 minutes)
3. Have students review Figure 2.3, Options for consolidating food production (p. 24). Divide students into groups to discuss advantages, disadvantages, and operations for the different options for consolidating food production. Depending on the size and dynamics of the class, two groups could be used (regional kitchens and central kitchens) or five groups (regional kitchen limited, regional kitchen full, central kitchen cook/chill, central kitchen bulk, central kitchen pre-plate). Provide each group with large flip charts or transparencies for recording their discussion and have each group share results of their discussion with the class. (Estimated time: 1 hour)
4. Plan a field trip to a regional or central kitchen so that students can see how they operate. If you have access to central kitchens that use different delivery systems (bulk hot, bulk cold, pre-plate), field trips to those operations could be planned. (Estimated time: 1-2 hours per field trip)

Based on the field trip(s), discuss factors that would have influenced the decision of the foodservice director to select the system. (Estimated time: 30 minutes to 1 hour)

5. Show slides of various centralized foodservice systems (provided with lesson plan). There are examples of bulk cook/chill and pre-plate operations. Discuss advantages and disadvantages of the different types of food delivery systems. (Estimated time: 1 hour)

6. Have students research equipment needs for cook/chill and pre-plate systems. They could use a variety of resources for their research, such as the Internet, trade publications, interviews with directors, and interviews with equipment manufacturers. Students would share results of their research with the class. (Estimated time: 2-3 hours out of class, 1 hour in class)
7. Assign students a topic (such as decision-making process, satisfaction with foodservice system, food quality) for which they will review the research literature. They could write a report, develop an oral presentation, or both. (Estimated time: 20 minutes per student in class)

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## Examination Questions

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### **Multiple Choice**

1. There are many options for centralizing food production. According to a recent ASFSA study, the largest percent of school districts use which of the following types of food delivery?
  - A. Pre-pack or pre-plate
  - B. Cook/chill
  - C. Bulk, hot
  - D. Bulk, cold
  
2. Which of the following factors would influence a school foodservice director's decision to centralize food production?
  - A. Adequate kitchen space is available at all schools
  - B. Schools are well equipped
  - C. Student numbers in the school district are not projected to change
  - D. Labor is limited
  
3. The first step in the decision-making process is:
  - A. identify alternatives.
  - B. identify and define the problem.
  - C. review the mission of the organization.
  - D. determine objectives.
  
4. Employee attitude is one factor that foodservice directors must consider when making decisions about a new foodservice system. Research by Kim and Shanklin (1999a) in a district that converted to cook/chill indicated that:
  - A. employees had initial discomfort with the change but that discomfort decreased after they became accustomed to the new system.
  - B. employees were enthusiastic about the change in system.
  - C. employees had initial discomfort with the change in systems and that discomfort never lessened.
  - D. employees were so uncomfortable with the change that turnover increased dramatically.

5. In evaluating food quality in a new cook/chill foodservice system in a school district, Green (1997) found that:
- A. food quality improved after the new system was implemented.
  - B. existing standardized recipes could be used in the new system.
  - C. recipes required restandardization for the new system.
  - D. there were many standardized recipes available for cook/chill systems.

**Short Answer**

1. List five trends that would impact a foodservice director's decision to centralize food production.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. \_\_\_\_\_

2. List three factors related to finances (or instructor could substitute facility limitations or food safety and quality control) that would influence a school foodservice director's decision to centralize food production.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Discussion**

1. You are the foodservice director in a school district that is growing rapidly and building some new schools. Costs for building kitchens in new buildings (both for space and equipment) are high, and the superintendent asked you if there are ways to reduce costs. She has asked you to prepare a proposal on how the problem can be addressed.
  - A. One option to consider is consolidating food production. What are options that you would consider in consolidating food production, using the model discussed in class?
  - B. Use the decision-making model to describe the process you would use for making a decision about how to address this problem.
  - C. What information would you need to make a recommendation to the superintendent?
  - D. What criteria would you use to make a decision?
  - E. What would your recommendation be and why?
2. What trends in school foodservice might lead a district school foodservice director to consider centralizing food production?

## Answers to Examination Questions

Multiple Choice 1-C, 2-D, 3-B, 4-A, 5-C

### Short Answer

1. List five trends that would impact a foodservice director's decision to centralize food production.
  - A. Growth in school district**
  - B. Labor shortages**
  - C. Change in labor availability—more diversity, less work ethic, training challenges**
  - D. Need for more food choices**
  - E. More students eating at school**
  
2. List three factors related to finances (or instructor could substitute facility limitations or food safety and quality control) that would influence a school foodservice director's decision to centralize food production.
  - A. Labor costs**
  - B. Limited money to build new kitchens**
  - C. Less equipment required at satellites**

**Other factors include purchasing power, cost of space at schools, lower utility costs, overall cost savings**

### Discussion

1. You are the foodservice director in a school district that is growing rapidly and building some new schools. Costs for building kitchens in new buildings (both for space and equipment) are high, and the superintendent asked you if there are ways to reduce costs. She has asked you to prepare a proposal on how the problem can be addressed.
  - A. One option to consider is consolidating food production. What are options that you would consider in consolidating food production, using the model discussed in class?

**Regional kitchen or a central kitchen. A regional kitchen could consolidate only one function such as bakery or could provide all foods for another school. A central kitchen can prepare foods for distribution in bulk or pre-plate. Bulk foods can be distributed hot or chilled (as is the case with a cook/chill system). Some districts start with regional kitchens and move to centralized kitchens.**

- B. Use the decision-making model to describe the process you would use for making a decision about how to address this problem.

**Discuss the following steps of the decision-making process:**

- 1. Identify and define problem**
- 2. Identify alternatives**
- 3. Evaluate alternatives**
- 4. Select best alternative**
- 5. Implement alternative**
- 6. Evaluate**

- C. What information would you need to make a recommendation to the superintendent?

**Information would be needed about feasibility including cost, staffing, food quality, etc. Discuss various sources of information, including research.**

- D. What criteria would you use to make a decision?

**Cost, source of funds, food quality, labor implications, community reaction**

- E. What would your recommendation be and why?

**Answer may vary for each student. Students should provide a good rationale for why they made their decision.**

3. What trends in school foodservice might lead a district school foodservice director to consider centralizing food production?

Students might discuss some of the following trends:

- A. Growth in school district**
- B. Labor shortages**
- C. Change in labor availability—more diversity, less work ethic, training challenges**
- D. Need for more food choices**
- E. More students eating at school**

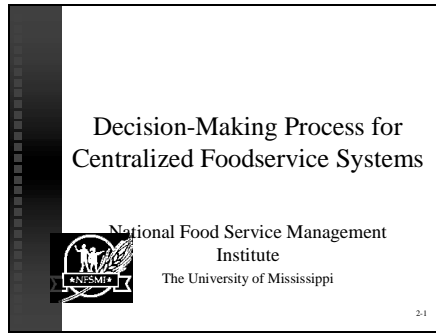


## **Examination Items by Objective**

- Objective 1 Short answer question 1 and Discussion question 2
- Objective 2 Multiple choice question 2, Short answer question 2
- Objective 3 Multiple choice question 3, Discussion question 1B, D, E
- Objective 4 Multiple choice question 1, Discussion question 1A
- Objective 5 Multiple choice questions 4, 5, Discussion question 1C, E

## Lesson 2 Slide Notes

Slide 1



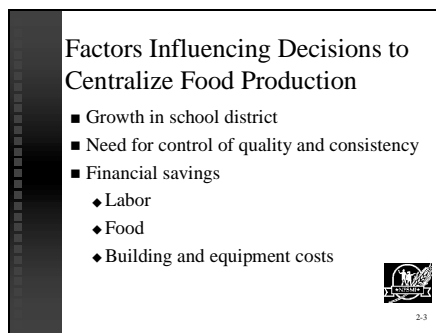
**Note:** These slides were developed to accompany Chapter 2, Decision-Making Process in Selecting a New Foodservice System.

Slide 2



There are many trends that impact the way food is produced and served in schools that may necessitate changes in the foodservice system to meet current demands.  
Refer to pp. 19-20.

Slide 3




There are many factors that foodservice directors have identified that influenced their decisions to centralize food production. Some of those factors are listed. Discuss why these factors would support centralizing food production.  
Refer to pp. 21-22.

Slide 4

Factors, cont.

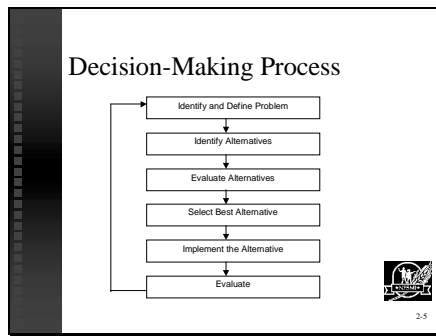
- Facility limitations
- Labor availability



2-4

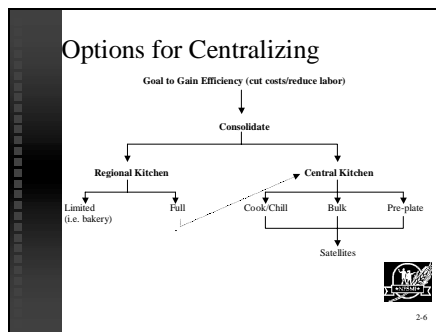
Continued from slide 4.

Slide 5



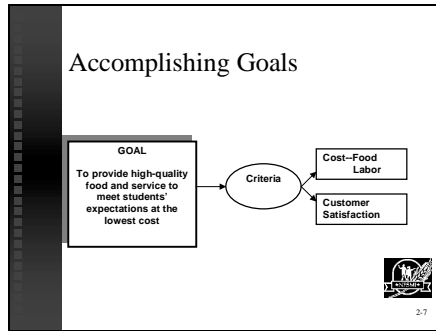
A generic/basic decision-making process would be used to determine if centralizing food production would be a good decision for a school district. Each step would need to be taken in the process of making a good decision. Refer to pp. 23-26.

Slide 6



The goal of centralizing food production is to gain efficiencies—by cutting costs and reducing labor needs. There are two types of centralization: regional kitchens or central kitchens. Sometimes school districts have started the centralization process by using regional kitchens and then progressing to a central kitchen. Refer to p. 24.

Slide 7



In making a decision about centralizing food production, it is important to keep the goal of the foodservice operation in mind. Criteria to determine if the goal has been reached include costs (both food and labor) and customer satisfaction (evaluated by use of surveys, participation trends, etc.). Refer to pp. 25-26.

Slide 8

Case Study

The Springvale School District, located adjacent to a major metropolitan area, has experienced major growth over the past three years and is expected to continue to grow for at least the next 5-8 years. It is expected that several new schools will be built in the next 5 years to meet the needs of the district. What decisions do you make as the district foodservice director?

2-8

Have students discuss the decisions that would be made for this school district. The process is presented on pp. 23-26. The next few slides will be used to walk students through the decision-making process.

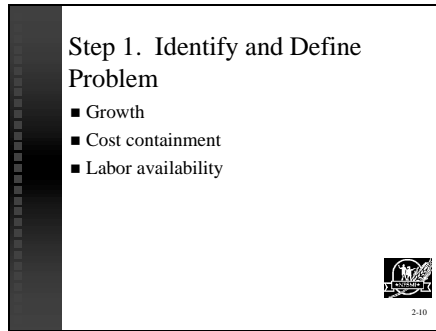
Slide 9

Step 1. Identify and Define Problem

2-9


Ask students to identify and define the problem.

Slide 10



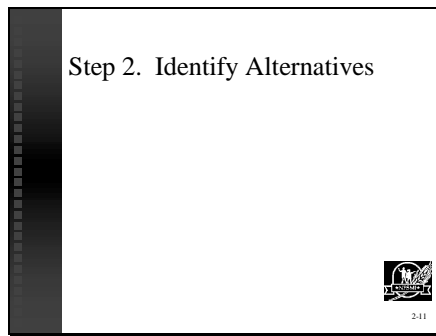
Step 1. Identify and Define Problem

- Growth
- Cost containment
- Labor availability


  
2-10

The three major factors contribute to the problem in this school district: growth, need for cost containment, and the availability of labor. Refer to p. 23.

Slide 11

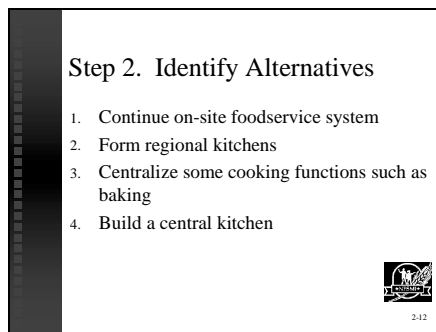


Step 2. Identify Alternatives

  
2-11


Ask students to identify alternatives that might be considered by the Springvale School District foodservice director.

Slide 12



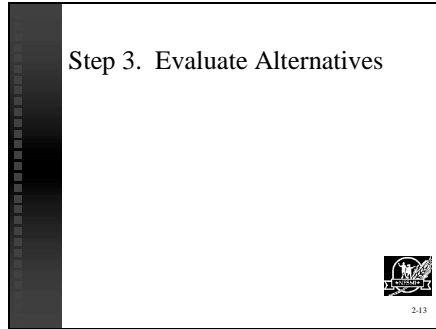
Step 2. Identify Alternatives

1. Continue on-site foodservice system
2. Form regional kitchens
3. Centralize some cooking functions such as baking
4. Build a central kitchen

  
2-12

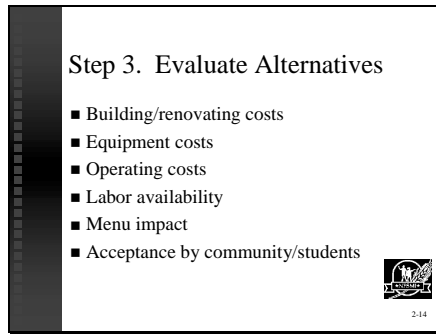
There are four main alternatives that might be considered. Refer to pp. 23-24.

Slide 13



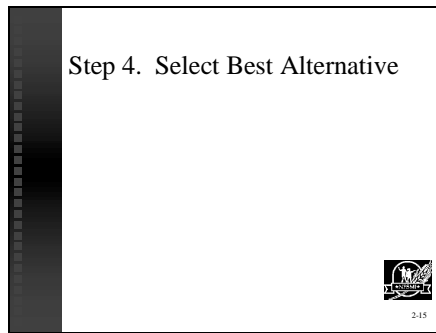
Ask students to evaluate the four alternatives identified.

Slide 14



Several criteria would be used in evaluating the four alternatives. Discuss the alternatives based on these criteria. Refer to p. 25.

Slide 15




Ask students what they think might be the best alternative. What data would they need to make the decision?

Slide 16

Step 4. Select Best Alternative

- Consider issues identified in Step 1
- Consider needs of the district
- Develop and review feasibility study
- Criteria-based decision




2-16

In order to select the best alternative, consideration would be given to the issues/problem, needs of the district, and results of a feasibility study. Additional data would be needed to select the best alternative. Stress the need to make the decision based on identified criteria. Refer to p. 25.

Slide 17

Step 5. Implement Alternative




2-17

What plans would be needed to implement the alternative? What other considerations should be made?

Slide 18

Step 5. Implement Alternative

- Develop plans and implement:
  - ◆ Menu
  - ◆ Re-standardized recipes
  - ◆ Policies
  - ◆ Standard operating procedures
  - ◆ HACCP program




2-18

The menu may need to be changed if the foodservice system is changed. Recipes would need to be re-standardized if the system changed. It also is important to have written policies and standard operating procedures and a comprehensive HACCP program. Refer to p. 26.

Slide 19

Step 5. Implement Alternative, cont.

- Involve employees
- Train employees




2-19

Employees will be a key factor in implementing the selected alternative. If employees are involved in the decision-making process, they may be more accepting of the decision. Also, they would have important input in making a good decision. If a change in foodservice systems is selected, employee training will be critical to the success of the new system.

Slide 20

Step 6. Evaluate




2-20

Ask students how they would evaluate the decision.

Slide 21

Step 6. Evaluate

- Use criteria developed to select system, such as:
  - ◆ Food quality
    - ◆ Customer satisfaction
    - ◆ Food safety
  - ◆ Financial performance
    - ◆ Labor cost
    - ◆ Food cost



2-21

Evaluation would be based on criteria related to the mission and objectives of the district school foodservice operation. Here are a few criteria that might be used. Can you think of other criteria?  
Refer to p. 26.