

Section 4: Implementation of Mississippi Cycles II

Many school districts in the state have used Mississippi Cycles. This section provides basic information for the implementation of **MSC II**. **MSC II** follows the same design as Mississippi Cycles.

What is Phased Implementation?

The basic steps of phased implementation are included for districts who have not offered choices in menus for schools. It allows a phase-in time to train employees on production and service techniques involved in offering choices. Phased implementation has the following steps with the goals of fully implementing **MSC II**. Adapt the following plan for the **MSC II** menu system selected.

Steps of phased implementation:

For the first four weeks or one complete turn of the cycle:

- TM One entree
- TM One vegetable
- TM Two fruits
- TM One bread
- TM One dessert, if indicated
- TM Variety of milk

In the second four weeks, prepare daily:

- TM One entree (selection may be different from the entree chosen the first time.)
- TM One chef salad entree/crackers
- TM Two vegetables
- TM Two fruits
- TM One bread
- TM One dessert, if indicated
- TM Variety of fluid milk

In the third fourth-week period, prepare daily:

- TM Two entrees
- TM One chef salad entree
- TM Three vegetables
- TM Two fruits and a fruit juice
- TM Two breads
- TM One dessert, if indicated
- TM Variety of fluid milk

Forecasting

Forecasting is **anticipating or predicting production quantities** prior to service so that the proper amount of food can be prepared. In menus with only one item in each meal component (a menu without choices), forecasting is simply predicting your participation or the total number of servings to prepare.

If you are currently using offer-versus-serve and/or offering choices on the menu, you know forecasting is a little more complicated. Not only do you have to predict participation, but you also have to anticipate how many servings to prepare for each item on the menu. For example, if you offer a chef salad, burrito, and grilled chicken sandwich as entree choices, you will need to forecast all three items. When you add the total number of servings forecasted, the answer should equal the total number of students who eat lunch. The goal is to have all choices available on the line throughout the serving period with as little leftovers as possible at the end of the day. Even without choice, offer-versus-serve means you have to predict how many students will choose each meal component.

- . Participation = 500
- . Preparation of all choices = 500
- . Each child needs a choice, not just the first through the line!

How do you do it? A crystal ball? Or do you just prepare enough of all three entrees to feed everyone? So if you serve 500 students, you prepare 500 servings of everything? The first

method is very risky, and the second will lead to excess waste and increased food cost. The total of choices should be slightly greater than the actual number of students served.

Forecasting is the foodservice term used to predict the number of portions of an item to be prepared for service.

Production Records

The best forecast is based on the Required Planning and Production Record. This is the same record you keep as part of your CNP requirements (the red book) and is also necessary for forecasting. The use of historical records for predicting production amounts is based on the fact that human behavior repeats itself.

What was popular the last few times those three entrees were on the menu will, most likely, be popular again three weeks later-- unless something out of the ordinary occurs that day like a blizzard. Chances are the same number of students will choose each item on the menu, even though your favorite student, Alan, may not choose the same item each time-- and that's what matters.

Moving Average

You can forecast fairly accurately by using a moving average of past production quantities. A moving average is calculated the same way you would calculate any average, by adding figures and then dividing this answer by the number of figures added. For information on *using moving averages to forecast, refer to Pieces of the Puzzle: What Managers Know and Do, pages 13-29, 2002, MDE-CNP.*

Service Line Setup

Develop a service line set-up for each day of the new menu cycle. Use the form provided by your School Food Service Administrator. If possible, plan to use full-size counter pans for popular, fast-moving items and hold less popular items in half-size pans or even thirds. Remember that proper sanitary food handling requires that hot food be held at a temperature no lower than 135°F. These items must be held directly in the hot wells, not stacked on top of each other.

Once you have determined the best layout for the service line each day, count the number of different sized counter pans needed on the heaviest production day of the cycle. Always plan for two more back up pans in the same size to be in the kitchen, ready for "just-in-time" preparation to the line.

Add portion control utensil information to this form, put it in protective sheeting and post it on the day of service as a quick reference for foodservice staff.

Introducing Choices

Students who are not accustomed to making food choices on a serving line will need some orientation to the process. Phased implementation will help introduce choices by starting with fruit and milk choices the first three weeks.

Involve teachers in discussing the new serving procedures. Have them discuss the menu with the students and ask them to think about which fruit they want to eat before coming to the cafeteria. On the first day of serving choices, remind aides and teachers to

*Decide to Succeed,
An Orientation for New
Managers, Pages 97 - 104,
1995, MDE - CNP*

*Pieces of the Puzzle:
What Managers Know and
Do, Pages 185-188, 2002,
MDE - CNP*

Prepare daily layouts of the 4 week cycle for posting near the service line.

be patient with elementary children. Once they get the “hang of it”, they will go through the line as fast as before.

Secondary students, in particular, will welcome the opportunity to choose from more menu offerings. They are a more worldly audience. You may want to station a host or hostess in the serving line area the first few days you begin choices to help students progress through the line.

Introducing New Foods

MsC II was designed to serve foods popular with Mississippi students, but it also was designed to introduce students to new foods that round out a meal and make it more nutritious. Do not be discouraged if students choose less of these items than the more familiar items--that’s human nature. You need to develop a method to introduce new items to students. Among the strategies you could use are:

Taste testing. Give bite-sized samples of new items to students as they wait in line. Talk to students and solicit their feedback. This will not cost anymore than leftovers, you will get a lot of goodwill from the gesture, and you just might convince some students to select the new item as they go through the line.

Supply new menu items to classrooms. Work with teachers to integrate new menu items into social studies, health, and science discussions. Talk about the nutrient content and the ethnic origin of the food. Refer to *Pyramid Pursuit* for ideas on introducing new foods to elementary students in classrooms.

Research shows that children need to be exposed to new foods several times before they like it. Don't give up on new items until you have given the items a chance to "catch on".

Be sure the new items are among the most attractively served on the menu. Remember that children (and adults) eat with their eyes. If it looks good, it has a chance of tasting good.

Maintaining Food Quality

More items on the menu mean more attention to detail in producing and serving food at its peak of freshness. The following are issues to consider when supervising food production.

Cooking Just-In-Time

Just-in-time cooking is important anytime, but it is even more important when more items are on the serving line in half-size or third-size counter pans. Small quantities of food tend to either cool or dry-out quickly. Prepare enough food so that it remains on the serving line no more than 15 minutes. Change the pan size to hold this amount of food at a depth that will maintain heat effectively. Check serving temperatures with a thermometer at least every 2 hours. Hot food needs to be 135°F to meet health department standards. Hot food items really should be served even warmer to allow for cooling while students find seats in the dining room.

Stocking the Service Line

Consider using a back-up person to stock the service line. This means reassigning a person in the serving area to be the individual who gets food from the kitchen when necessary. This person should not be the person serving

the hot food, but rather someone who can watch the hot food as she/he does another task like stocking items on the cold table. A study showed that the use of a back-up person could shorten the amount of time it takes a student to go through the service line by 50% because the line did not stop for replenishing food.

Merchandising on the Service Line

Use the hot and cold service line set-up forms to create a visually appealing assortment of menu items.

- ™ Consider the logical flow of items on the plate or tray as you design the set-up. Also think about pleasing color combinations. See examples in the *School Recipe Portfolio*.
- ™ The *School Recipe Portfolio* also gives excellent examples of garnishing counter pans of food. You would be surprised how effective a simple garnish can be, and students will notice.
- ™ Remember to consider the viewpoint of the child. An elementary student's eye level is much lower than an adult.

Troubleshooting

The following are answers to frequently asked questions related to implementing **MSC II**.

Leftovers

What do you do with leftovers?

Prevent excessive leftovers by preparing foods for "just-in-time" service. Keeping good production records and constantly refining your forecast equation will also help.

Package, label, and freeze leftovers to serve the next time the item is on the menu. Be

sure to reduce your forecast by the number of servings left over. Take care to follow sanitary food handling techniques in preparing items for freezing and thawing for service.

Running Out of Food

What do you do when one of the menu choices runs out before the meal period is over?

Too many leftover portions increase food costs and running out of choices decreases student satisfaction of meal service. Also, in most schools, the same students are served at the end of the line. If at all possible, all food choices should be available for them. The foodservice manager should monitor foods served to ensure that this occurs. Following are some steps for the foodservice manager to use:

First, know the number of pans or trays prepared for service.

Second, during meal service, check the amount of pans or trays served during meal service time. If students are taking more of a food item than planned, make adjustments. If a food item is almost depleted early in the serving period, place another item on the line as soon as possible. This will extend the amount of the original choice--possibly until the end of the serving period. You might have servings of this item in the freezer that could be thawed and served in time for service on the line.

Third, if you run out of a menu item 10 minutes before the meal period is over, make a note on your production records for use in forecasting. Don't prepare an alternative unless there is no item in this meal category

available for students or your school district policy requires another food item.

You can also check the **MSC II Customizing Chart** for an alternative that is similar in nutrient content. This might be an item readily available in your freezer.

Beginning and Ending of the School Year, Holidays, and Special Functions

Can MSCII be changed to prepare food for special occasions? Special circumstances may arise that make it difficult to follow the **MSC II** menu. You can first look at the **MSC II Customizing Chart** to see if alternate items can be used for your special occasion such as a class field trip. If so, use them to maintain nutrient goals. Holidays involving a total meal, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, only happen twice during the school year, and nutrient goals can be relaxed during this time. Other holidays like Valentine's Day or Easter may be accommodated by using the **MSC II Customizing Chart**, or by adding a special dessert that is not considered part of the meal pattern. When opening and closing the school year, it may be necessary to use items to reduce inventory and changing **MSC II** is permitted.

Specialty Lines and Bars

Can I Still Operate My Sandwich Line with MSC II? Yes, you can still use your specialty lines and bars, but you would have to supply your own nutrient analysis for these menus.

Slowing the Service Line

Will choices in MSC II slow my service line? Introducing choices may slow your lines at first. SFS Administrators with

experience serving choices state that by the second week students have learned what is expected and line movement will be back to normal.

Phased implementation will allow you to work with students and teachers to make a slow and smooth transition to choices on the line.