

## **APPENDIX C**

### **RESEARCH ISSUES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

## Appendix C

**Table C-1. Option Year 1 Research Issues and Questions for State Child Nutrition Director survey**

Issue	Question
<p><b>Section A: Policies</b> School Wellness Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How many states have model school wellness policies for SFAs to use in developing local wellness policies that meet the Federal requirements? Are any local wellness policies stricter than the Federal requirements?</li> <li>▪ How many states have a state-wide priority for establishing healthy school environments and implementing local wellness policies?</li> <li>▪ How many states have developed a communication plan to ensure consistent communication and updates around local school wellness policy requirements?</li> <li>▪ How many states established a method of accountability so that LEAs/districts follow through with local school wellness policy implementation?</li> <li>▪ How many states provide technical assistance to LEAs/districts on local school wellness policies?</li> <li>▪ What partnerships do states have to help deliver consistent messages, provide resources, and support local school wellness policies?</li> <li>▪ What standards and guidelines have states provided to implement local school wellness policies?</li> <li>▪ What methods do states use for reporting on school nutrition environment and making information available to the public?</li> <li>▪ Has the development of a local school wellness policy impacted nutrition quality, physical activity, and other school based activities in promoting student wellness?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Section B: Resources and Finances</b> State subsidies to SFAs</p> <p>Budget issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Does the state provide financial resources for school meals to SFAs in the form of per-meal subsidies? What was the total amount given?</li> <li>▪ Does the state provide support for any other aspects of the school food service operation?</li> <li>▪ Do states have adequate staffing resources for monitoring?</li> <li>▪ Have states been able to fully-use Federal funds provided to administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP)? What challenges have impeded state's ability to fully-use Federal funds? What actions impacted states' ability to fully-use Federal funds?</li> <li>▪ Are states using contracted staff for certain functions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Section C: Operational Procedures</b> Provision 2/3 Food service management companies Charter schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How many SFAs and schools are operating under each provision?</li> <li>▪ How many SFAs/schools are using Food Service Management Companies (FSMCs)? How many of these are national, regional, or local companies?</li> <li>▪ How many charter schools are participating in the SBP and/or NSLP?</li> <li>▪ For purposes of school food operations, are charter schools treated as a separate SFA, as part of an existing SFA, or a combination of both? Does this vary by state?</li> </ul>

Issue	Question
USDA Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do states allow SFAs to order from the full list of USDA foods? How do states obtain feedback from SFAs regarding which USDA Foods to offer?</li> <li>▪ How do SFAs submit their requests for specific quantities of USDA Foods?</li> <li>▪ How often can SFAs order USDA Foods?</li> </ul>
Reallocation of unused entitlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do states reallocate unused entitlement at the end of the School Year?</li> </ul>
<b>Section D: Training and Technical Assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What specific topic areas do state agencies include in training and technical assistance programs? How frequently is training provided?</li> <li>▪ How do state agencies provide training and technical assistance?</li> <li>▪ Has the level of training changed over the last 3 years? If so, why?</li> <li>▪ Have the topics changed over the last year? If so, what topics have been added or deleted?</li> <li>▪ Who receives training and technical assistance?</li> </ul>

**Table C-2. Option Year 1 Research Issues and Questions for SFA Survey**

Issue	Question
<b>Section 1: School Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How many schools participate in SBP and/or NSLP? How many schools participate in the Afterschool Snack Program or the At-Risk Supper Program?</li> <li>▪ What percent of SFAs with schools participating in SBP are eligible for severe need reimbursement? What percent participate in NSLP as high need?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 2: Student Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What percent of students participate in SBP and NSLP?</li> <li>▪ What percent of students do not have access to the SBP and NSLP?</li> <li>▪ What was the average daily attendance for students?</li> <li>▪ How many school breakfasts and lunches were claimed at full price, reduced price and free over the past three years?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 3: Food Service Operations</b> Competitive Foods  Water  Special Assistance Alternatives  Foster Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What percent of SFAs sell competitive foods?</li> <li>▪ When and where (e.g., a la carte lines, snack bars, food carts, school stores, vending machines) are competitive foods sold?</li> <li>▪ What are typical competitive foods that are offered?</li> <li>▪ How do students pay for competitive foods? How do students pay for reimbursable meals? What percent of students pay for lunch electronically?</li> <li>▪ Is free potable water available where school meals are served? What are the sources?</li> <li>▪ If tap water is available for drinking, is it tested for contaminants?</li> <li>▪ How many schools are operating under Special Assistance Alternatives for NSLP and SBP? What is the likelihood that schools will elect the Community Eligibility Option (CEO) when the option becomes available?</li> <li>▪ What percent of SFAs operate a universal free breakfast program?</li> <li>▪ What percent of SFAs utilize food service management companies?</li> <li>▪ Is there a formal process for communicating about foster care children? How do SFAs identify foster care children?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 4: Local School Wellness Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has the LEA established a local wellness policy for all schools?</li> <li>▪ Who is involved in the development of the local wellness policy?</li> <li>▪ Who is involved in periodic review and updating of the local wellness policy?</li> <li>▪ Has the local wellness policy been revised within the last year?</li> <li>▪ What elements are included in the wellness policy?</li> <li>▪ Who is involved in the implementation of the local wellness policy?</li> <li>▪ Does the local wellness policy address which USDA Foods can be ordered? If so, which foods?</li> <li>▪ Has an assessment been conducted of the local wellness policy within the last year?</li> <li>▪ Who is designated in the district to ensure that each school complies with the local wellness policy?</li> <li>▪ Does the LEA inform the public about the content and implementation of the local wellness policy? How is this information provided to the public?</li> <li>▪ Does the LEA inform the public whether each school is complying with the local wellness policy? How is this information provided to the public?</li> </ul>

Issue	Question
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have any individual schools implemented stricter local school wellness policies than Federal, state, or district-level rules or regulations?</li> <li>▪ Has the district used any materials in the USDA Foods Toolkit to promote nutritious school meals to parents and administrators?</li> <li>▪ How do schools make information about food safety inspections available to the public?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Section 5: New Meal Pattern Requirements</b></p> <p>General Implementation</p> <p>Nutrient Requirements</p> <p>Purchasing Changes</p> <p>Implementation Assistance and Promotion</p> <p>Certification</p> <p>Student Perception of Meal Patterns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How challenging was it to initially implement the meal patterns? How challenging has it been to continue to implement the meal patterns?</li> <li>▪ Has plate waste changed as a result of the new patterns? What are the reasons for the change?</li> <li>▪ What proportion of SFAs do scratch cooking? Has this changed?</li> <li>▪ What proportion of SFAs have implemented the new breakfast requirements? How challenging has it been to meet these requirements?</li> <li>▪ What proportion of SFAs use either USDA Foods or DoD Fresh for additional fruit and vegetable purchases?</li> <li>▪ What changes have taken place in serving fruit and vegetable product, grain and whole grain, and meat/meat alternate because of the new meal patterns?</li> <li>▪ What percent of SFAs report challenges in meeting the minimum or not exceeding the maximum required calorie requirements?</li> <li>▪ What proportion of SFAs review labels for trans-fat? Have SFAs changed how they review labels? If so, how?</li> <li>▪ Have SFAs changed the foods served to meet trans-fat requirements?</li> <li>▪ What proportion of SFAs faced challenges in meeting the saturated fat requirements?</li> <li>▪ What is the current average daily sodium content served? In unknown, what practices will be used to reduce the sodium levels?</li> <li>▪ What strategies are used by SFAs to ensure correct meals and portion sizes are served to students in each grade level? Are servers trained in portion control?</li> <li>▪ What adjustments have SFAs made to meet student requests for additional food? What are the sources of funding?</li> <li>▪ Are material changes in purchasing from food distributors required due to the new meal patterns? Which products have SFAs had difficulty purchasing?</li> <li>▪ Have types and amounts of USDA foods ordered changed to meet new requirements?</li> <li>▪ How many SFAs use the USDA sharing website?</li> <li>▪ What methods do SFAs use to promote the new school meals to students and their families? What percent use technical assistance?</li> <li>▪ What percent of SFAs/schools have submitted certification materials for the additional 6 cents per lunch reimbursement? How many have been certified? How many are receiving? Which option?</li> <li>▪ How many SFAs believe students are eating more fruits and vegetables as a result of the new meal patterns? Which vegetables are least liked?</li> </ul>

Issue	Question
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How many SFAs report student, parent and community member acceptance of new meal pattern requirements?</li> <li>▪ For high schools with off campus lunch policies, are more students staying on campus for lunch since new meal patterns?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 6: Meal Prices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the average price charged for full-price, reduced-price, and adult breakfasts and lunches for the current school year? Over the past 3 years?</li> <li>▪ What are the patterns of price change in the NSLP and SBP? How often do SFAs change meal prices? What is the typical size of the price increase?</li> <li>▪ What factors influence school breakfast and lunch prices?</li> <li>▪ How many SFAs increased prices in response to paid lunch equity provision? How many offset increase with non-Federal funds? What were the sources of those funds? Would prices have increased regardless of equity provision?</li> <li>▪ How many SFAs have increased a la carte prices over the past year? For what types of foods have prices increased? How much have prices increased?</li> <li>▪ What record keeping systems do SFAs use for a la carte sales and non-program food costs?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 7: Revenues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What were the total dollar receipts of the school food service program from cash receipts from sale of reimbursable meals from Federal, state and local reimbursements? À la carte sales? Other revenue sources?</li> <li>▪ How are state/local revenues provided (e.g., on a per-meal basis)? Are state revenues used to support any other aspects of the school food service program?</li> <li>▪ How do revenues generated by full-price and reduced-price meals (prices charged plus meal reimbursement) compare to the Federal subsidy for free meals?</li> <li>▪ What percent of SFA revenues come from USDA subsidies? From à la carte sales? From other sources?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 8: Expenditures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are SFAs operating on a non-profit basis? How do total SFA revenues compare to total expenditures? What percent of expenditures are salaries, benefits, foods, etc?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 9: Food Service Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Did any schools receive equipment assistance during Fiscal Year 2009 through FY 2011?</li> <li>▪ What focus areas did the equipment assistance address?</li> <li>▪ What types of equipment were purchased?</li> <li>▪ Did the grant funding meet the needs of the schools to improve its foodservice operations?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 10: Farm to School Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What percent of SFAs have schools that participated in or plan to participate in Farm to School activities? When did LEAs start implementing Farm to School activities?</li> <li>▪ Who plans the activities?</li> <li>▪ Do LEAs have policies that support Farm to School activities?</li> <li>▪ How many districts have evaluated Farm to School activities? What was the focus of the evaluation?</li> <li>▪ How many districts/schools have received external grant funding specifically for Farm to School activities? How were funds used? How much was used during SY 2011-12?</li> </ul>
<b>Section 11: Training and Technical Assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What proportion of SFAs received training or technical assistance?</li> <li>▪ In what topic areas was training and technical assistance provided to SFA staff? Who</li> </ul>

Issue	Question
	<p>provided? How useful was it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Who received training or technical assistance during the current School Year?</li> <li>▪ What additional training and technical assistance is needed?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Section 12: SFA Food Service Staff Background</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the minimum educational requirements for a School Food Service Manager?</li> <li>▪ What are the minimum educational requirements for a non-supervisory School Food Service staff member?</li> <li>▪ What percent of school food service staff are limited English proficient?</li> </ul>

**Table C-3. Option Year 1 Research Issues and Questions for On-Site Visits**

Issue	Question	Source			
		Food Service Manager Interview	Cafeteria Observation Guide	Other Food Source Checklist	Vending Machine Checklist
<b>Food Service Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Where and when do students eat school meals?</li> <li>▪ What are the characteristics and condition of school cafeteria facilities (space per student, furnishings, lighting, competing uses, waste disposal, cleanliness, etc)? What alternative locations are used for feeding students school meals (e.g., classrooms)?</li> <li>▪ Do schools display information that instructs students about reimbursable meals, healthier food options, and Offer versus Serve?</li> <li>▪ What is the average amount of time provided to students for breakfast and lunch?</li> <li>▪ How are students served meals (i.e., number of lines, wait time, self-service, placement of fruits/vegetables)? Are reimbursable and non-reimbursable meals serve in separate lines? Are trays available?</li> <li>▪ What are the conditions (i.e., movement, noise) during breakfast and lunch? Is there adequate staffing and supervision during meal service? Adequate time to eat?</li> <li>▪ Are “trading” tables available to students?</li> <li>▪ Do SFAs seek feedback from students? How do SFAs decide what to implement?</li> </ul>	X	X X		
<b>Competitive Foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When and where (e.g., a la carte lines, snack bars, food carts, school stores, vending machines) are competitive foods sold?</li> <li>▪ What are typical competitive foods that are offered? What are the sources (a la carte, food cart, snack bar, school store, vending, other)?</li> <li>▪ Have SFAs/schools made changes in availability of competitive foods over the past 2 years? In which areas? What changes were made? Why were changes made?</li> <li>▪ Who makes decisions about competitive foods? Have parents provided input? How do parents provide input?</li> </ul>	X  X  X		X	X
<b>Meals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is free potable water available where school meals are served? What are the sources?</li> <li>▪ Is reimbursable meal appealing?</li> <li>▪ What percent of students buy lunch?</li> <li>▪ Are microwaves available? What is the level of usage during lunch?</li> </ul>		X X X X		

Issue	Question	Source			
		Food Service Manager Interview	Cafeteria Observation Guide	Other Food Source Checklist	Vending Machine Checklist
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many students brought versus purchase lunch?</li> </ul>		X		
<b>Plate Waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has plate waste changed since implementing the new meal pattern requirements? What are the reasons for the change in plate waste? How much food is tossed into waste disposal containers?</li> <li>Do students properly dispose of their food waste?</li> </ul>	X	X		
<b>Health and Food Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What food safety measures are followed during food service (e.g., hairnets, gloves, food temperature, etc)?</li> <li>How are milk products stored during food service? What types of milk are available?</li> <li>Do students self-serve any portion of their meal? Which items? Are self-serve stations appropriate height? Do self-serve stations have sneeze guards?</li> <li>What clean-up is done after meals?</li> <li>Are hand-washing stations and supplies available to students?</li> </ul>	X	X		