

# Technomic releases K-12 report highlighting key themes and challenges faced by operators within the foodservice segment

*With pandemic recovery complete, K-12 foodservice has returned to more normal levels of growth*

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, May 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From changes in legislation to labor shortages to shifting student preferences, K-12 foodservice is an evolving segment. With



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*Kathryn Fenner*

the end of pandemic-era waivers and allowances that made meals free for all students, K-12 operators have begun experiencing lower levels of participation in their programs beginning in 2023, resulting in the need to examine ways in which to boost usage.

To bring students back into the fold, Technomic found that operators must improve food quality and innovate with enhanced flavors. But operators face many challenges,

including strict budgets, inflation and availability of supplier inventory, as well as nutritional guidelines that place restrictions on added sugars, sodium levels and more. This Technomic study explores what operators should do to improve participation while considering these requirements.

"Operators can meet nutrition guidelines, however, the real challenge lies with serving items that meet those guidelines and that students will still want to eat," says Kathryn Fenner, principal at Technomic. "Gauging students' reactions to new items is an important step in an operator's decision to add an item to their menu."

Some other key findings from this report include:

- Total lunch participation was 28.5 million in 2023, down from 29.7 million in 2018 (pre-pandemic)
- 96% of operators note that food and/or beverage product prices have increased
- More than 65% of operators agree that students are opting for less-expensive food options, purchasing food at school less often and bringing food from home more often

- Among operators, the most concerning menu and nutrition factors are offering more fresh fruits/veggies, meeting lowered sodium targets and using more plant-based alternatives

Uncover opportunities and explore expert recommendations to win with the K-12 Foodservice Multi Client Study. This strategic deep dive explores industry, consumer and operator trends and challenges impacting the K-12 segment, along with historic and forecasted market sizing.

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#### About Technomic

Technomic Inc., an Informa company, was founded as a management consulting firm in 1966. Since then, Technomic's services have grown to encompass cloud-based B2B research tools, consumer and menu trend tracking and other leading strategic research and analytic capabilities, to prioritize and size business opportunities. Our clients include food manufacturers and distributors, restaurants, retailers and multiple other business verticals aligned with the food industry that are looking to make informed decisions to support their business growth. Visit Technomic at [www.technomic.com](http://www.technomic.com).

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