

FoodManagement

Survey: Kids Want Wider Ethnic Choices

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K-12 customers asked to design "ultimate" school cafeteria menu came up with a cross-cultural mix.

A poll of school-aged students by the Y-Pulse, LLC, youth marketing research group supports the notion that youngsters are knowledgeable about and want more ethnic choices in school cafeterias. That was the major conclusion of Y-Pulse's Dream Kitchen Survey, conducted through the whyville.net website, which asked participants about their notion of the ultimate school cafeteria.

“This is a generation that knows — and orders — menu items like baba ghanouj, tiramisu, pad thai and empanadas,” says Y-Pulse Co-founder Sharon Olson. “Through this survey, we learned that they are interested in having a broader variety of authentic ethnic foods as choices for school meals.”

Beyond citing specific dishes — wonton soup, Japanese sushi, hummus, quesadillas and calamari, to name a few — they would like to see menued in their dream kitchen, the respondents also said they would like to see a regular cross-cultural mix of items.

“One student requested that their cafeteria include four different sections devoted to authentic regional dishes, including Chinese, Italian, Mexican and traditional American,” says Tami Cline, another Y-Pulse co-founder who is also a former foodservice director.

“Another envisioned a ‘World Wonder’ cart that would rotate multicultural foods such as Swedish meatballs and Indian fare. These and many other answers show there is a strong exposure to global cuisines that can be successfully tapped in the school foodservice setting.”