

AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION (ADP)

DESCRIPTION: The ADP is the average number of student reimbursable meals served in a school nutrition (SN) program on a daily basis.

WHY CALCULATE: Calculating and monitoring ADP monthly can assist SN professionals in forecasting and in decision making, such as determining labor requirements, food purchasing, and non-food purchasing projections, which strengthens a program's resources through cost control. The ADP data allows SN professionals to establish participation goals and to create objectives for meeting those goals. When collected over several years, ADP data assists with identifying trends and projecting future needs. Further, the ADP can be used to assess the popularity of menu options, evaluate productivity, and gauge customer satisfaction.

HOW OFTEN TO CALCULATE: Daily, weekly, monthly, or as often as needed.

HOW TO CALCULATE: The ADP can be calculated by dividing the number of student meals served during the month by the operating days in the month. Typically, participation is determined separately for breakfast, lunch, and other meal services offered. The formulas for calculating ADP for lunch and breakfast are as follows:

$$\text{ADP Breakfast} = \frac{\text{Number of Student Breakfasts Served in a Month}}{\text{Number of Operating Days in Month}}$$

$$\text{ADP Lunch} = \frac{\text{Number of Student Lunches Served in a Month}}{\text{Number of Operating Days in Month}}$$

SAMPLE CALCULATIONS (ADP): A school served 11,000 reimbursable student breakfasts during the month of October, with 21 operating days.

$$\text{ADP Breakfast} = \frac{(11,000)}{21} = 523.8 \text{ or } 524$$

The school also served 24,000 reimbursable student lunches.

$$\text{ADP Lunch} = \frac{(24,000)}{21} = 1,142.9 \text{ or } 1,143$$

This school had an ADP of 524 for breakfast, and 1,143 for lunch for the month.

In addition to determining the ADP numbers, it is helpful to know the ratio of students eating a school meal to the average number of students attending the school. This ratio is called the **ADP Rate**. The formulas for calculating breakfast and lunch ADP rate are as follows:

$$\text{ADP Rate Breakfast} = \frac{\text{Breakfast ADP}}{\text{Average Daily Attendance}}$$

$$\text{ADP Rate Lunch} = \frac{\text{Lunch ADP}}{\text{Average Daily Attendance}}$$

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) calculates ADP rates based on **Average Daily Attendance** rather than enrollment. Calculating ADP in this manner is considered fairer to schools, as the calculation does not include students who are absent or do not eat lunch or breakfast. To calculate average daily attendance, obtain the average daily attendance number from the school and subtract the number of students who do not have access to the meal service.

For the reporting period of October, an average of 2,200 students attended school in the district on a daily basis. (The information was obtained from the school district office.) However, 100 students did not have access to lunch because they were half-day kindergarten students.

An average of 524 students ate breakfast on a daily basis. This information is from the example used to calculate MEQs ($11,000 \div 21$ [operating days for the month] = 524). An average of 1,143 students ate the reimbursable lunch ($24,000 \div 21$ [operating days for the month] = 1,143).

ADP rates for October were calculated as follows:

$$\text{ADP Rate Breakfast} = \frac{524}{(2,200-100)} = 0.249 \text{ or } 25\%$$

$$\text{ADP Rate Lunch} = \frac{1,143}{(2,200-100)} = 0.544 \text{ or } 54\%$$

WHERE TO CAPTURE DATA: Meal count data is usually captured electronically or manually at the point-of-sale system utilized by SN programs. Daily attendance comes electronically from the student information system, the school office, or from the registrar.

HOW TO USE: The ADP can be used as a major forecasting tool to:

- Prevent waste in excess labor hours and overproduction of food;
- Monitor participation trends over time;
- Monitor customer satisfaction and address customer concerns;
- Identify opportunities for increasing meal participation;
- Determine labor needs and assignments;
- Create food production schedules;
- Evaluate menu items; and
- Measure program growth.

INDUSTRY STANDARDS*:

- ADP for elementary school breakfast = 35%
- ADP for elementary school lunch = 75%
- ADP for middle school breakfast = 35%
- ADP for middle school lunch = 75%
- ADP for high school breakfast = 25%
- ADP for high school lunch = 65%

*Based on HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Standards.



FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE: Student participation in the school meals program may vary depending on controllable and non-controllable variables, such as:

Controllable

- Student acceptance
- Speed of service/wait time
- Menu options/recipes
- Friendliness of staff

Non-Controllable

- The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price meals
- Rural versus urban location
- Age/grade of students served
- Weather
- Time of the year

Potential to Influence

- Type of production system (i.e., conventional vs. satellite)
- Atmosphere
- Locations and number of service areas
- School activities
- Closed versus open campuses
- School district regulations
- Administrative support
- Bus schedules
- Nutrition education
- Adult role models
- Number of families applying for free and reduced price meals

REFERENCES

- Institute of Child Nutrition. (2015). *Financial management: A course for school nutrition directors* (2nd ed.). University, MS: Author.
- Institute of Child Nutrition. (2015). *ICN financial management information system* (2nd ed.). University, MS: Author.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. (2012). *HealthierUS school challenge frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/faq.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. (2014). *HealthierUS school challenge: Smarter lunchrooms*. Retrieved from http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/2014hussc_criteria.pdf
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Memo SP 43-2011 National Average Daily Attendance Factor for Coordinated Review Effort; and Title 7, *Code of Federal Regulations*, sections 210.2 and 210.8(a)(3).