

# Handout

**Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)** - the most common measure of productivity in school nutrition

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Number of meals/meal equivalents}}{\text{Number of paid labor hours}}$$

### Staffing Guidelines for On-Site Production

| Number of Meals/Meal Equivalents <sup>1</sup> | MEALS PER LABOR HOUR (MPLH) FOR LOW AND HIGH PRODUCTIVITY |      |                                      |      |
|---|---|------|--------------------------------------|------|
|   | Conventional System MPLH <sup>2</sup>                     |      | Convenience System MPLH <sup>3</sup> |      |
|   | Low   | High | Low                                  | High |
| Up to 100                                     | 8   | 10   | 10                                   | 12   |
| 101-150                                       | 9   | 11   | 11                                   | 13   |
| 151-200                                       | 10-11   | 12   | 12                                   | 14   |
| 201-250                                       | 12  | 14   | 14                                   | 15   |
| 251-300                                       | 13  | 15   | 15                                   | 16   |
| 301-400                                       | 14  | 16   | 16                                   | 18   |
| 401-500                                       | 14  | 17   | 18                                   | 19   |
| 501-600                                       | 15  | 17   | 18                                   | 19   |
| 601-700                                       | 16  | 18   | 19                                   | 20   |
| 701-800                                       | 17  | 19   | 20                                   | 22   |
| 801 and up                                    | 18  | 20   | 21                                   | 23   |

<sup>1</sup> Meal equivalents (ME) include breakfast, snacks and a la carte sales. Lunch 1:1, Breakfast 3:2, Snack 3:1, A la carte ME = sales revenue divided by the amount of free lunch reimbursement plus the USDA food entitlement.

<sup>2</sup> Conventional system is preparation of some foods from raw ingredients on premises (using some bakery breads and prepared pizza and washing dishes)

<sup>3</sup> Convenience system is using maximum amount of processed foods (e.g. using all bakery breads, precooked chicken, ready to serve raw fruits and vegetables, pre-portioned condiments and washing only trays and using disposable dinnerware)

Source: Pannell-Martin 1999

### Determining Meal Equivalency

|   |   |                  |   |                              |
|---|---|------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Student breakfast meals served (3:2)        | x | .67              | = | Breakfast meal equivalents   |
| Student lunch meals served (1:1)            | x | 1                | = | Lunch meal equivalents       |
| Student snack meals served (3:1)            | x | .33              | = | Snack meal equivalents       |
| Non-program \$\$ (free reimb. + USDA value) | ÷ | \$3.07 + \$.3125 | = | Non-program meal equivalents |



Example:

### Pineapple Middle School (conventional system)

|                   | # of staff | # of hours/day | Total # of hours |
|-------------------|------------|----------------|------------------|
| Management        | 2          | 8              |                  |
| Production        | 3          | 6              |                  |
| Part-time         | 2          | 4              |                  |
| Cashier/Part-time | 2          | 3              |                  |
|                   |            |                |                  |

|                          | Meals & Sales | Equivalent | Meal equivalent |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|
| Student lunch            | 380           | 1:1        |                 |
| Student breakfast        | 315           | 3:2        |                 |
| Student a la carte Sales | \$ 125.00     | \$3.3825   |                 |
| Adult a la carte Sales   | \$ 75.00      | \$3.3825   |                 |
|                          |               |            |                 |

|                      |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Meals per labor hour | = | $\frac{\text{\# of meal equivalents}}{\text{Paid labor hours}}$ |
| (MPLH)               |   |   |

|      |  |   |  |
|------|--|---|--|
| MPLH |  | = |  |
|------|--|---|--|

What is Pineapple Middle School’s MPLH?  
 Are they hitting their MPLH benchmark?  
 If not, what are some changes they can make?