**FOUR STEPS to a Successful Discussion**

1. **Decide on the format.**
   Some schools have one-time discussions on a specific topic. Others have on-going advisory groups or ask a FACS or other class to offer feedback and ideas.

2. **Recruit.**
   Ask for volunteers using your menu, student survey, school newsletter, video, or website and ask teachers, the school nurse, principal, wellness committee members and parents for help.

3. **Structure the conversation.**
   Decide on the topic(s) and a few questions ahead of time. Consider structuring the discussion with a simple survey.

4. **Follow up.**
   Keep the conversation going and let students know that their opinions matter.

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“Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success.” Henry Ford

The concept of a discussion group is simple. Your students are your customers. Listening to them and sharing information demonstrates excellent customer service. There are many ways to use a discussion group:

1. **Receive detailed feedback about a specific topic** such as menu selections, serving line, or the dining environment.

2. **Offer taste tests** of a few foods in the same category such as pizza, vegetables or legume salads.

3. **Recruit “Lunch Ambassadors”** to spread the word about your program to their peers using word-of-mouth, student news and social media.

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**GREAT IDEA**

Many schools use surveys to measure customer satisfaction. An annual student survey for food service can meet two important goals:

- Get valuable input about customer likes and dislikes
- Recruit members for a discussion group

The most useful questions highlight important topics in a simple format. Use a scoring range of 1—3, yes or no, or multiple choice. For example:

- On a scale of 1—3 (1=poor and 3=good) rate the variety of food. Ask similar questions about specific foods, staff helpfulness, etc.
- We need student input! Will you join a student group to share your ideas with us? Yes/No

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**GREAT RESOURCE**