

Smarter Lunchroom Evaluations in Snohomish County

Promoting Fruit & Vegetable Consumption in Elementary Schools

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Introduction

A majority of students in Snohomish County are not consuming the recommended amounts of fruit and vegetables (F&V). Schools have the ability to influence the amount of F&V consumed by children.

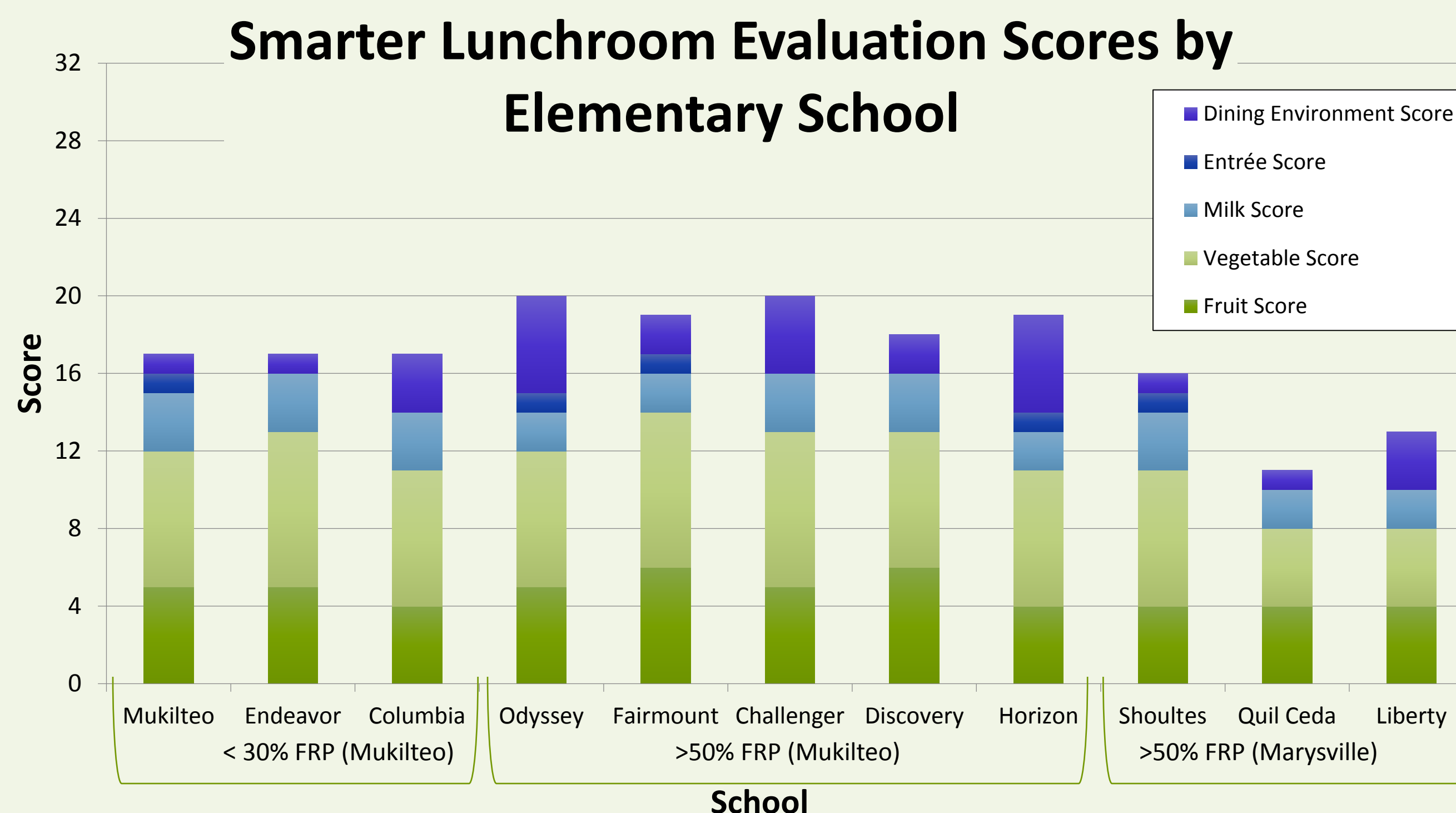
Smarter Lunchroom strategies use behavioral economics to persuade students to *choose* and *consume* healthy food. Implementing Smarter Lunchroom strategies will support student nutrition and health status.

Goals

- Perform Smarter Lunchroom evaluations in elementary schools with > 50% free and reduced price enrollment (FRP) or < 30% FRP
- Identify opportunities to modify the lunchroom environment to increase student consumption of F&V
- Present findings and recommendations to food service directors

Methods

- The Smarter Lunchroom Evaluation Scorecard created at Cornell University was pared down to fit the elementary school setting
- The revised tool included 32 questions relating to fruit, vegetable, milk and entrée promotion as well as the overall dining environment
- Eleven evaluations were conducted in schools with >50% FRP and < 30% FRP in Mukilteo and Marysville School Districts
- Scores, out of 32 possible points, were compared between schools, districts and % FRP



Recommendations

1. Display fruit near registers in an appealing way and offer fruit to *all* students
2. Conduct coloring and naming contests for fruit, vegetables and menu items
3. Display contest pictures in the lunchroom
4. Recruit students to write the daily menu and creative names on a large menu board in the lunchroom
5. Add corresponding food labels with creative names (x-ray vision carrots) to serving areas
6. Place white milk in front of or on top of chocolate milk
7. Provide pre-sliced apples

Results

Higher scores indicate greater compliance with Smarter Lunchroom principles

- F&V appeared colorful and fresh in all schools
- *Some* schools had great posters promoting nutrition in the lunchroom
- Most schools did not have fruit available near checkout registers
- Daily F&V options were not identified or promoted in the lunchroom or serving area
- Daily menus were not easily visible in the lunchroom
- Chocolate milk was often placed in front of white milk
- Numerous whole, uneaten apples were discarded into compost bins

There were differences in scores between school districts

- Some Mukilteo elementary schools had creative F&V signs however, the signs did not match the F&V available
- No schools in the Marysville School District had creative names or signs for F&V

Schools with < 30% FRP had *slightly* lower scores than schools with > 50% FRP

Overall, there was a lack of promotion of fruit and vegetables in the elementary lunchrooms



Acknowledgements

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