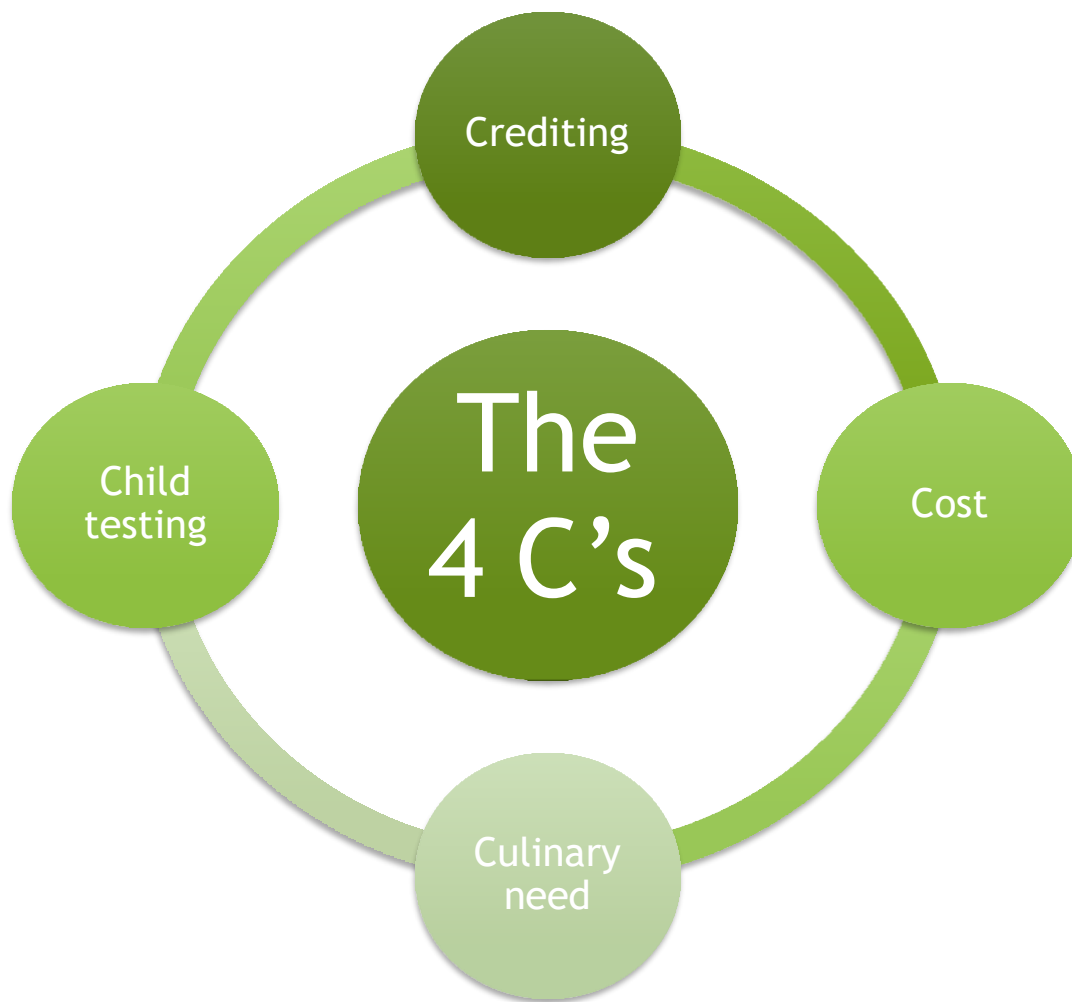


School Recipe Testing Framework



Schools follow a framework for testing new recipes and foods. Before testing recipes with student's, it needs to pass the first three steps: crediting, cost, and culinary need.

Make sure the recipe containing all the meal components and equivalences listed for each food group. This makes the recipe easier to plug into the weekly meal plan and identify if the recipe is a good fit.

Cost is next. If price is excessive then stop right there. Think of a fruit. A school district normally pays approximately \$0.25 - \$0.50 for a ½ cup serving. In that case, maybe \$0.60 would be an acceptable price but if at \$0.90 or higher then not a fit for schools. Also, a recipe ingredient isn't easily obtainable or already something used in a school kitchen, the recipe will most likely be discarded.

Next is what need does this solve for the school? Will it help to increase ADP (average daily participation) and/or increase nutritional impact? Is it a food that students will enjoy and are familiar with?

Once the need is determined, it's time to move to the recipe development phase to test the product directly with students. This step will ultimately determine if a recipe will be on the school menu.

What to Consider Before Approaching a School

Before calling or visiting a school, look online for the school districts nutrition website. Download and learn their menus. Follow them on social media and see what impacts their district. Learn their means of meal distribution:

- ▶ On Site
- ▶ Bulk satellite
- ▶ Tray pack satellite

Learn about their procurement, whether they are a self bid or part of a cooperative.

Ask for an appointment with the district director. Never cold call a school; directors are busy all day and the call will never make it to the director. Email is best to schedule an appointment.

Bring solutions, not products. Those solutions can be based on cost, seasonality, likeability, or dietary need. When beginning the visit, bring school pantry based recipes. These are recipes with ingredients that are most likely already in their kitchens. This way the school operators can try out a recipe without being discouraged by the lack of ingredients. This then brings up cost issues to bringing new ingredients in and purchasing/procurement complications.

Ask what the school operators what they want to improve. Is it cost, purchasing issues, logistics, recipe trends, likeability, flavor, etc. Remember to visualize the question “what is in it for the school operator?” “What is in it for the students/customers?” If a new product can not answer these questions, it is not worth a worth a visit.

