

Prevent a Back-to-School Headache!

Before you leave the kitchen for the summer, consider this: “What are some of your recurring issues you encounter every Fall, upon Back-to-School?”

If you take some time to consider and plan for these items, you might just be preventing a future headache! *NOTE: This list may be used as a starting point, it is not a conclusive list, add other tasks as you see fit.*

- Inventory
 - Check expiration dates – if food products expire before school next year, can you use it before school is out, or donate it to a local food pantry and/or a non-profit?
 - If USDA foods are donated, keep records of food donated and quantities.
 - If there is food that is being kept over the summer months, make sure that it is thoroughly packaged to prevent rodents from feasting on your food.
- Deep clean all storage areas, coolers/freezers, and workstations.
- Unplug appropriate equipment & cover unused equipment with bakery bags to prevent from dust that settles (such as stand mixers)
- Get on the schedule for maintenance staff to do checks of the kitchen.
 - If equipment must stay plugged in – have them check and test this equipment.
 - Coolers/freezers – have them clean condenser coils, do any routine checking for preventative maintenance.
 - Take temperatures of all coolers and freezers weekly or at least monthly.
 - Ensure equipment has preventative maintenance schedule...it helps to save money so that equipment stays in prime shape, save time and future headaches. Check your equipment manuals to find the recommended maintenance schedule or set your own a you work with maintenance staff.
- If you host an in-service for your staff, think about topics now, so that you are not rushed in planning.
- Does your Point of Sale (or other technology) need an upgrade or update? If so, talk with IT, to have them get food service on the list of items needing to be checked during the summer.
 - Start testing your equipment a few weeks before school starts to ensure that your Point-of-Sale equipment is ready for back-to-school.
- What other departments in the school do you collaborate with? Are there any planning needs that should be discussed to have a smooth return to school?
 - Such as Free & Reduced-Price Meal Applications, to ensure that your POS is ready to go!
 - Ensuring that your students have Lunch Money in their account
- Staffing – what positions need recruiting for? What positions need modifying or potentially combine positions to make a full-time position?