

[REDACTED]

December 6, 2019

****note that this is my ROUGH DRAFT and includes notes for me to come back to - things to add - might seem random to you but is not to me! thanks! -lydia

ps. I know it needs a lot of work. :)

Define and analyze the problem (Review: Week 4)

More than 30 million children trek through school cafeteria lines daily in the United States - however these students don't look forward to their lunch hour for the food. In fact, homemade lunches are becoming popular again as these cafeteria-goers turn their noses up at bland, inedible food that is made for them in their school cafeterias. This is a specific issue in which the government has maybe become too involved in the education policy and qualifications of the food being served at schools around the country. With demanding guidelines for everything that is to be served to the students since the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act*, we have seen a serious decline in the amount of money being brought in by school cafeterias.

The specific problem that exists today is the quality of health that this food is bringing to the children that are eating it on a regular basis. It is sometimes more economical for students to have lunch provided for them by the school, rather than be made it daily by their parents. Not only does this leave more time for the parents to do other things, but opens the children up to bonding experiences with their peers.

Looking at the differences in American school lunches compared to somewhere like France, we see a stark difference not only in the quality of food being eaten by the students, but also in the quality of experience of “lunch” overall. “Students often have less than 20 minutes to eat this before returning to class, while French children may have as long as two hours to eat and socialize.” (Murphy, NYTimes)

Construct policy alternatives (*Review: Week 5*)

This being said, perhaps the specific education policy that needs to be revised by the government is not only that of what is being served to our students, but also the time and method in which they are allowed to enjoy that meal. Allowing more time for lunch and socialization might result in more focused students both in and out of the classroom. We would be able to teach our students the importance of savoring a good meal, completely changing the way Americans currently enjoy their food, which is and always has been... quick and dirty.

There are of course positives and negatives to both of these solutions... however constructing policy alternatives is important especially when dealing with an issue that will affect generations for years to come. A change must be made in regards to the quality of both the meals and experiences of lunch.

Assess the alternatives

Develop evaluative criteria (Review: Week 6)

This issue affects everyone. From the students eating the food, to the parents of those students. It also can have impact on the teachers that might eat these meals occasionally for themselves, the schools in terms of funding, the food programs in terms of support, and the list goes on. That being said, it does affect everyone differently across the country as well. Something to take into consideration is the fact that in different areas, there are different things that people eat on a regular basis. An article on Washington Post talks about the issue of school lunches across America, and shows how schools are coping with this issue and doing their best to offer healthier options for the students and others that eat the lunches.

The problem originated in 1946, when President Harry Truman signed the National School Lunch Act into law which provided free lunches for low-income students. Cafeterias became increasingly popular when jobs began opening in cafeteria lunch rooms, as well as the factories that would create and provide the food to these facilities that provided lunch. The issues that began with the creation of the school lunch program are the same issues that remain today, and that is the true nourishment of the youth that is eating these lunches.

2010 Guidelines include:

- Meals must meet both minimum and maximum calorie requirements for the age group to which they are being served, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards.
- Bread products must be at least 50 percent whole grain.
- Fruits and vegetables must be served every day; green, leafy vegetables must be served once a week.
- Regular and flavored milk must be nonfat or 1 percent.
- Foods cannot contain any trans fats that are not naturally occurring.
- School districts must create a local wellness policy.

Taxing and spending comes into play when the schools are deciding what they will purchase for students to actually serve them lunches. Again, there is a large list of foods that they have USDA approved by the FNS, and there are regulations of whole grains, and leafy greens, etc... however it is possible that some schools might spend more on the potato vegetable option rather than the kale vegetable option simply because they can get more potatoes with their budget, than they can get kale. This is determined by the individual schools budget that is allocated for school lunches, as well as what is readily available in their areas. Still, there could be some looking over of where the money for school lunches is actually being spent, and that might help to mitigate the nutritional issue that we are seeing in some of these schools across the country.

The last instrument I'm going to talk about is education. This is the most important instrument that this policy could take on, in my opinion. Without education, schools are nothing. So why is it that we don't educate our students on the foods that should be put into their bodies. It's rare that schools will talk about what the actual nutritional content of foods are, and students therefore go for the "feel good, yummy" options, such as pizza, tater tots, etc. The thing is, there are always options for students. They just have to have the education to know what would make them feel best. If students understood what they put into their bodies completely affects how they are as students, and who they are as people, likely there would be a different general choice of food that would be made.

Draw conclusion
