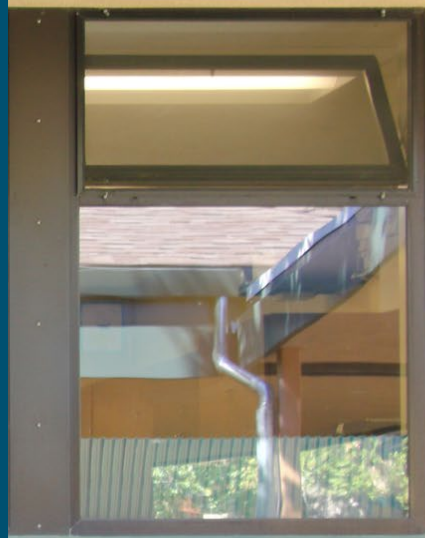# Back-to-School Readiness: A Comprehensive Checklist for Cash and Digital Meal Payments

As the new school year draws near, it's time to make sure every system and process is ready to welcome students back. Nutrition directors can help ensure a smooth transition back to full operations by giving their payment processes and tools a quick check-up.

LINQ's recent 2023 K-12 Nutrition Survey Report found that only 2/3 of respondents feel they do well at providing digital payment solutions in the lunchroom.

Digital meal payments can help register lines move faster, eliminate lost or misplaced money, and provide better security than cash payments.

Use this checklist to evaluate your operations and assess the true cost of trusting cash transactions.

Ensure smooth meal transactions and payments.

If you're still processing cash transactions:

Ensure point-of-sale (POS) stations each have the appropriate equipment, including a locking cash drawer.

Provide a cash bank for each till station if giving cash change.

Inspect bank bags and double-check that each school has enough to handle cash transport and bank deposits.

Check that each POS station has counterfeit detecting equipment, whether pens or light detector.

For digital transactions:

Ensure each POS station has a tablet or device for processing payments (no drawer needed unless also accepting cash payments).

Consider an information card to hand students if only giving change in digital currency (added to their meal account).

Revisit funds auditing protocol and simplify if possible.

If you're still processing cash transactions:

Plan adequate time for staff members to count cash and settle drawers at the end of meal services.

Ensure current protocol for cash handling meets compliance guidelines and district policies.

Estimate frequency of bank deposits needed to stay under any cash-on-hand limits and minimize burden on employees.

For digital transactions:

Familiarize staff with procedures for giving change in digital meal account currency if still accepting cash payments.

Remove bank deposit runs, cash transport and storage procedures, and till counting from your task lists if going cashless this year.

Plan to make data-driven decisions

If you're still processing cash transactions:

Keep accurate sales records in order to meet reporting compliance and gather valuable data for meal planning and ordering.

Walk employees through sales record keeping in detail to ensure everyone knows the proper procedure.

Expect to audit sales record keeping procedures throughout the school year to ensure protocol is followed by everyone.

For digital transactions:

Ensure that correct menu and item options are updated in your system to enable automated sales records.

Inform administrators, district leaders, and stakeholders that you can pull real-time reports upon request to drive informed decisions.

Request that your technology provider ensures complete integration between front-of-house (FOH) and back-of-house (BOH) systems to update inventory automatically as sales are made.

Get our guide to simplifying meal and school fee payments with a single digital solution.

GET THE GUIDE ↗

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL TOOLKIT

4 Reasons to Choose Digital School Fee Management

Learn why more K-12 districts are turning to digital fees and payments