What does a school kitchen need?

Schools across the country are serving healthy meals, but many could do so more effectively with updated equipment and infrastructure. Without the right tools, districts rely on workarounds that are expensive, inefficient, and unsustainable. Investing in kitchens and cafeterias could help schools better serve nutritious foods and beverages in a way that’s appealing to kids.

88% of districts need at least one piece of kitchen equipment. The items most in demand are:

1. Utility carts to transport items within a kitchen or cafeteria. Without enough carts, food service personnel carry items by hand in multiple trips that waste valuable time.
2. Serving utensils to determine appropriate portion sizes. Without them, servings are sometimes measured inaccurately.
3. Large-capacity food processors to prepare many different foods, including fruits and vegetables. Without bulk processors, school cooks must cut and mix foods by hand, or prepare recipes in smaller, less-efficient batches.
4. Knife sets with cutting boards to prepare fresh food. Without enough of the right knives, preparation takes more time and poses safety risks for food service staff.
5. Industrial scales to weigh bulk ingredients. Without large-capacity scales, ingredients are weighed in smaller batches, which is time-consuming, inefficient, and leaves room for error.

55% of districts need kitchen infrastructure changes. The top challenges are:

1. Physical space: Additional room for storage, preparation, or serving.
2. Electrical capacity: Increased amps and voltage and more outlets.
3. Plumbing: Modified water supply or relocation of sinks and drains.
4. Ventilation: Exhaust hoods or fire suppression systems.
5. Remodeling: Facility compliance with local health code standards.

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