

Appendix I

CN-OPS II Year 4 Pretest Report

Child Nutrition Program Operations Study II (CN-OPS-II) Year 4 Pre-Test Report

August 31, 2018

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INTRODUCTION

In August 2018, Mathematica Policy Research (under subcontract to 2M Research) fielded pre-test versions of draft surveys for the State Agency and School Food Authority (SFA) Director Year 4 Child Nutrition Program Operations Study II (CN-OPS-II). The pre-test survey instruments included newly developed questions and questions that were heavily edited from the previous Special Nutrition Program Operations Study (SN-OPS) surveys and CN-OPS-II Years 1, 2, and 3 surveys. Two State Child Nutrition (CN) directors and five SFA directors from three States participated in the pre-test.

Mathematica conducted pre-tests with two State CN directors, in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, and five SFA directors, in North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. These respondents were selected to participate on the basis of their availability to participate within the pre-test timeframe. Mathematica emailed hard-copy versions of the instruments to confirmed respondents and scheduled debriefing appointments. Participants printed the surveys, filled them out by hand, and returned scanned copies of the completed surveys by email. Mathematica survey staff conducted debriefing interviews with each pre-test respondent to solicit feedback. Debriefing interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes but lasted 50 minutes and 1 hour and 20 minutes for State CN Directors and between 18 minutes and 45 minutes for SFA Directors. The interviews focused on asking respondents to identify any questions and sections that were unclear and recommend changes to the wording of questions.

This report summarizes key findings from the pre-tests and the revisions that Mathematica made to the CN-OPS-II Year 4 State Agency and SFA Director Surveys as a result of these findings.

1. State Agency Director Pre-test Survey Findings

a. Discussion of burden

The two pre-test respondents provided feedback on new survey items in Sections 2 (Subsidies, Resources, and Funding) and 3 (Buy American), and the full set of questions in Sections 1 (School Nutrition Service Administration, formerly Food Service Administration), and 5 (Professional Standards), which both included a large portion of newly developed or heavily revised questions. The focus of the pre-test of the State Agency Director Survey was to obtain feedback on the quality of the survey items, rather than precise timing estimates. Although neither respondent was able to time herself completing the survey, neither reported concerns about the survey being overly time-consuming or burdensome. Based on timings of items from previous years and feedback from the respondents, we estimate the total State Agency Director Survey will take about two hours (40 minutes to gather the necessary data to answer the questions and 80 minutes to respond to the questions). This estimated burden is consistent with what is planned for the State Agency Director Survey.

b. Discussion of item improvements

Table 1 summarizes the pre-test respondents' feedback and the changes we made to the survey to address the respondents' concerns. Using this feedback, we inserted additional instructions and revised questions to clarify wording, primarily in Sections 1 and 5. Additionally, we made several minor wording changes throughout the survey in response to suggestions from the pre-test respondents. For instance, we replaced "food services" with "school nutrition

services” throughout the survey at the suggestion of one pre-test respondent. Below we discuss the most substantive changes made to the survey.

We added several response options throughout the survey based on feedback from the pre-test respondents. In 1.12 and 1.15, which ask about the top challenges that charter schools and Residential Childcare Institutions (RCCIs), respectively, experience with Child Nutrition program administration, we added the response options, “lack of vendors that can comply with school nutrition requirements,” “meeting different nutrition standards for separate Child Nutrition programs (for example, NSLP and CACFP),” “challenging to comply with procurement regulations,” and modified the response option, “lack of staff to manage the meal service” to read “lack of qualified staff or dedicated staff positions to manage the meal service.” In 1.12, which asks about charter schools, we added the response option, “low student participation that discourages school program participation.” In 1.15, which asks specifically about RCCIs, we added the response option “Operating Child Nutrition programs in a non-school setting.” These additional response options will better capture common challenges.

We reorganized Section 2 (Subsidies, Resources, and Funding) after pre-test respondents expressed some confusion about question 2.11 (formerly 2.1), which asks about State budget cuts for Child Nutrition operations. Both respondents reported that their States do not have a budget for Child Nutrition operations, separate from the Federal funding they receive. We moved the questions about State provided subsidies and State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds to the beginning of the section, before questions about State budgets. We added a question (2.10) that asks if the State has a budget for Child Nutrition that is in addition to Federal funding and included the clarification, “This question is about your State’s CN budget that is in addition to Federal funding, such as additional per meal reimbursements, State grants, and in-kind

contributions like office space and computer access.” The survey then asks whether the State enacted budget cuts in the last few years that have affected Child Nutrition operations. By organizing the section this way, respondents are able to report on the most common aspects of funding first, and then, if applicable, report on the impact of State budget cuts on Child Nutrition operations.

We compared two procedures to determine how to best administer questions 5.1 and 5.2, which ask about training and technical assistance provided to SFAs by the State agency. In the original draft of the questions, from the Year 1 survey, the items are set up as grids in which respondents report whether training or technical assistance was provided for each topic in one question (5.1) and then indicate who provided the training or technical assistance for each topic in another grid (5.2). In an effort to determine whether respondents prefer answering one question for all training and technical assistance topics before moving on to the next question or responding to all questions about a specific topic before moving on to the next topic, we drafted separate questions in the pre-test version of the instrument. In this version, respondents were asked questions 5.1 and 5.2 about each training and technical assistance topic separately before moving on to the next topic.

Respondents were asked for their thoughts on the question format during the debrief calls. One respondent reported that completing the survey this way caused fatigue and indicated that she would prefer that all the topics be listed for one question at once, similar to the way the question was originally formatted. The other respondent indicated that the new format with separate questions helped her to think about each topic more carefully, but also indicated that she thought the survey would take longer to complete this way. Increasing the time needed to complete the survey may produce more item nonresponse or only partially completed surveys if

fatigued or frustrated respondents opt to exit and not return to answer remaining questions.

Based on this feedback, we plan to keep questions 5.1 and 5.2 in a grid format to reduce burden on respondents and to maintain consistency with the Year 1 survey.

Table 1. State CN Director Survey Pre-test Feedback

Final Survey Question #	Respondent comments	Survey revisions
General	One respondent recommended using the term “school nutrition services” instead of “food services.”	We changed the term “food services” to “school nutrition services” throughout the survey.
1.1-1.3	Both respondents were unsure whether to include charter schools in their counts of schools.	We added “including charter schools” to the question stems to clarify that respondents should include charter schools in their counts.
1.4-1.10	One respondent pointed out that public charter schools were only specified in 1.11.	We added “public” to the stems in 1.4-1.10 to specify that respondents should be thinking about the public charter schools in their States.
1.11	One respondent commented that the main way the State agency encourages charter school participation is by coordinating with another State agency that oversees charter schools.	We added the response option “Working with State agency that oversees charter schools to conduct outreach.”
1.12, 1.15 (formerly 1.14)	One respondent added that charter schools experience a lack of vendors that can comply with meal pattern and food safety requirements.	We added the response option, “Lack of vendors that can comply with school nutrition requirements.”
1.12, 1.15 (formerly 1.14)	One respondent suggested adding other response options for low student participation and procurement.	We added the response option “Challenging to comply with procurement regulations” to both questions and “Low student participation that discourages school program participation” to 1.12.
1.12, 1.15 (formerly 1.14)	Both respondents clarified that charter schools experience challenges with a lack of staff to manage the meal service because there is a lack of qualified or dedicated staff.	We modified the response option from “lack of staff to manage the meal service” to “Lack of qualified staff or dedicated staff positions to manage the meal service.”
1.12, 1.15 (formerly 1.14)	One respondent suggested that charter schools may lack understanding of the scope and complexity of the school nutrition programs.	We added the response option “Lack of understanding of scope and complexity of Child Nutrition program” to this question and the related item about RCCIs.
1.15, 1.12 (formerly 1.18)	One respondent noted that meeting different nutrition standards for breakfast/lunch and dinner/snacks is a challenge that residential child care institutions (RCCIs) experience.	We added the response option “Meeting different nutrition standards for separate Child Nutrition programs (for example, NSLP and CACFP)” to this survey item and a related survey item about challenges in charter schools.
1.15 (formerly 1.18)	One respondent commented that one of the biggest challenges with RCCIs is that they do not operate in schools.	We added the response option, “Operating Child Nutrition programs in a non-school setting.”
1.17 (formerly 1.23)	One respondent expressed confusion about this question, noting that they do not collect meal count data, except as part of the claims for reimbursement.	We replaced “meal count data” with “meal reimbursement claims data” in questions 1.23-1.26.

Final Survey Question #	Respondent comments	Survey revisions
1.20-1.22 (formerly 1.26)	Both respondents expressed confusion with this question, which asks whether the State Agency collects data on various school meal program operations at the school or SFA level, and they were unsure why it was being asked.	We added an introduction to frame the topic and separated the single grid into three separate questions so respondents can think about the three topics separately.
1.27, 1.28	Both respondents indicated that these open-ended questions are difficult to answer because they are vague and States oftentimes try to limit the data they collect from SFAs.	We removed these open-ended questions because previous questions already address the research question.
2.10 (formerly 2.1)	Both respondents indicated that their States do not have a budget for Child Nutrition operations.	We added a filter question, 2.10, to ask if the State has a budget for Child Nutrition that is in addition to Federal funding. We also added the note, "This question is about your State's CN budget that is in addition to the Federal funding, such as additional per meal reimbursements, State grants, and in-kind contributions like office space and computer access."
2.11 (formerly 2.1)	One respondent said they were thinking of the last two to three years when probed for how they defined "recent years."	We changed "recent years" to "the last two years" to give respondents a specific time frame.
2.12 (formerly 2.2)	One respondent indicated that it was unclear whether this question was about strategies applied at the State-level or at both the State-level and SFA-level.	We modified response options to clarify that they were State-level strategies. We changed "Reduce operating days or hours" to "Direct SFAs to reduce program operating days or hours" and changed "Reduce non-Federal meal subsidies: to "Reduce State-provided meal subsidies."
2.13 (formerly 2.3)	One respondent suggested adding a "Not applicable" response option.	We added a "Not applicable" response option.
3.1	Both respondents expressed some confusion with this question because their State policies are the Federal Buy American policy.	We modified the question stem to clarify that "State policies may be identical to the Federal policy or may include Federal and/or State-specific policy components." As a result, the next survey question (3.2) will capture the components described in the State's policy regardless of whether the State policy is the same as the Federal policy.
5.1	Both respondents expressed some confusion about the professional standards topics listed and requested examples or further clarification.	We added an introduction to explain the topics and will link to the Professional Standards Learning Objectives in the survey.
5.1, 5.2, 5.3	One respondent noted that it is rare for a State to support Child Nutrition administration because there are SAE funds for this purpose.	This item was modified from Year 1 to include "or fund" in the question stem and read "For each of the following topic areas, did your State agency provide or fund (or does it plan to provide or fund) any training or technical assistance to SFAs in the 2018-19 school year?" The new wording was meant to help States report on trainings even if not provided by the State Agency. We removed "or fund" from the question stem and added the instruction, "Please include training or technical assistance offered by your State agency and non-State agency providers."

Final Survey Question #	Respondent comments	Survey revisions
5.2	One respondent indicated that “office staff” in response option 2 could be interpreted as clerical staff.	We revised response option 2 to read “State Child Nutrition Agency staff.”
5.2	Both respondents recommended adding a response option to account for education contractors and subject matter experts who might provide the training.	We added the response option, “Education contractor or subject matter expert.”
5.3	One respondent suggested clarifying how “In-person” is different from “Local meetings” or “Conferences.”	We reordered the response options, revised existing response option “Online course” to say “Online course or E-module,” and changed “In-person” to “Other in-person format.”
5.5-5.10 (formerly 1.14-1.16 and 1.20-1.22)	One respondent suggested that these questions about challenges charter schools and RCCIs face in meeting professional standards would be more appropriate in Section 5 because they ask about professional standards.	We moved these questions to Section 5.
5.5, 5.8, 5.11 (formerly 1.15, 1.21, 5.5)	Both respondents noted several other challenges, including inadequate resources to compensate staff for CE time, a lack of dedicated school nutrition staff, and for RCCIs and charter schools, frequent use of community volunteers. One respondent noted that staff frequently have multiple duties and are unable to be away from school to attend professional training.	We added item c, “Non-SFA personnel and/or volunteers do not attend training.” We revised item b from “Low attendance at trainings (for example SFA personnel lack time or buy-in)” to “SFA personnel lack time to attend training.” We modified item h to include “trainings, travel, or hourly wage may be cost-prohibitive.”
5.6, 5.9, 5.12 (formerly 1.16, 1.22, 5.6)	One respondent clarified that it is a challenge to both recruit and compensate qualified applicants that meet the professional standards hiring requirements.	We changed “find” in items a, b, and c to “recruit or hire.”
5.7, 5.10 (formerly 1.14, 1.20)	One respondent suggested that charter schools may lack understanding of the professional standards and the scope and complexity of the school nutrition programs.	We added the response option “Schools do not understand or prioritize professional standards” and “RCCIs do not understand or prioritize professional standards.”
5.7, 5.10 (formerly 1.16, 1.22)	One respondent reported that charter schools often have trouble recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff who meet standards.	We replaced the original response options “Cannot afford to hire individuals who meet standards” and “Applicants do not meet professional standards” with “Unable to retain personnel who meet standards.” We removed the response options “Training to meet standards is not accessible or too expensive” and “School nutrition service staff have other responsibilities” because these are now captured in 5.5 and 5.8.
5.11 (formerly 5.5)	Both respondents suggested including the USDA definition of rural SFAs.	We added the USDA definition of rural SFAs to the stem.
5.19 (formerly 5.13)	One respondent expressed confusion about whether this question was asking about State CN directors or local CN directors as well.	We revised the question stem to clarify that the question is about requirements for State CN directors.

2. SFA Director Pre-test Survey Findings

a. Discussion of burden

Average completion times for individual sections and the total pre-test survey are presented in Table 2. The pre-test survey included 6 sections (compared to 8 sections in the full SFA Director Survey). Each pre-test survey section included only newly developed or previously developed items that had been heavily revised; therefore, the pre-test survey did not test or time the SFA Director Survey in its entirety.

Respondents were asked to record completion times for three of the 6 sections pre-tested, including Sections 5 (Meal Pattern Requirements), 7 (Training and Professional Standards), and 8 (Financial Management). They recorded completion times for these three sections because a large portion of the items in these sections was new or revised. Pre-test survey completion times for these three sections were compared to expected completion times based on the assumption that simple survey items take 15 seconds to complete and complex items take one minute to complete. To limit the burden of the pre-test, respondents were not asked to record individual section completion times for pre-tested items in Sections 1 (School Participation), 3 (Meal Prices and Meal Counting), and 4 (Eligibility Determination and Verification). Therefore, Table 3 includes only calculated expected completion times for pre-tested survey Sections 1, 3, and 4.

Completion times varied among SFA respondents, which may be attributed to several factors. First, the SFAs' characteristics and operations affect the number and types of responses completed. Further, SFA directors varied with respect to the amount of time they spent documenting issues they experienced with the survey, such as challenging items to answer, and with their efficiency at following survey instructions and skip logic on a hard copy instrument. As noted in Table 2, the total pre-test survey time is overestimated for SFA respondent 2 (SFA2) because the respondent did not print out the survey to complete it. Instead, the participant

completed the survey on the computer in a Word document not formatted for responses.

Additionally, SFA4 noted that she was frequently interrupted while taking the survey and so

SFA4 survey section completion times are excluded from the table.

Table 2. SFA Director Pre-test Survey Section Completion Times

Section	SFA1	SFA2 ^a	SFA3	SFA4 ^b	SFA5	Average time	Expected pre-test completion ^c
Section 1: School Participation	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 minutes
Section 3: Meal Prices and Meal Counting	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 minutes
Section 4: Eligibility Determination and Verification	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 minutes
Section 5: Meal Pattern Requirements	6 minutes	15 minutes	8 minutes	-	7 minutes	9 minutes	12 minutes
Section 7: Training and Professional Standards	4 minutes	5 minutes	3 minutes	-	4 minutes	4 minutes	7 minutes
Section 8: Financial Management	2 minutes	3 minutes	2 minutes	-	3 minutes	3 minutes	3 minutes
Total pre-test survey time ^d	23 minutes	38 minutes	23 minutes	Estimated 30-40 minutes	24 minutes	29 minutes	37 minutes

^a SFA respondent 2 completed the survey on the computer in a Word document not formatted for responses.

^b SFA respondent 4 was frequently interrupted while taking the survey.

^c Expected completion times are calculated based on assuming single-response survey items take 15 seconds to complete, and multiple-response survey items take one minute to complete.

^d Total pre-test survey time refers to the time it took respondents to complete the pre-test survey in its entirety, which included noting feedback for the interviewers. SFA respondent 4 estimated that the survey would take 30 to 40 minutes without interruptions. To calculate the average total pre-test survey time, we used 35 minutes for SFA4.

New content that was pre-tested and timed took respondents 29 minutes, on average. Using our assumption that simple survey items take 15 seconds to complete and complex items take one minute to complete, we estimated the total pre-test survey would take respondents 37 minutes, on average. We expect that the difference between our estimated completion time and the average reported completion time is primarily because respondents did not answer all questions due to the skip logic (the calculated expected completion time does not account for

skipped items). This is particularly evident in Sections 5 and 7 (Meal Pattern Requirements and Training and Professional Standards, respectively), where the expected completion times were higher than the reported averages. Most respondents reported they do not provide accommodations to students with dietary preferences (5.41) and were not currently using or planning to use the USDA Child Nutrition Program's Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) (7.9) and so they skipped a number of related questions. Pre-test respondents also reported that they provided estimated percentages for items such as 1% flavored milk purchases and special orders for students with disabilities and conditions or dietary preferences, rather than look up the information, which would have reduced the time they spent completing the survey. With this consideration, we averaged the expected pre-test completion time and the average reported time to estimate that the pre-tested items will take respondents 32 minutes to complete, on average. Remaining SFA Survey content is expected to take 71 minutes to complete, on average, for a full instrument estimated completion time of 103 minutes. Factoring in an additional 15-20 minutes (or 17 minutes, on average) for SFA directors to review their responses, the total estimated time burden associated with the SFA Director Survey is 2 hours per respondent. If FNS would like to reduce the burden of the SFA Director Survey, the following options would result in substantial decreases:

- Removing items 5.1 to 5.6d on USDA Foods would reduce length by an estimated 7.5 minutes
- Removing items 5.24 to 5.30 about student demand for certain types of food and student acceptance strategies would reduce length by an estimated 7 minutes
- Removing items 7.1 to 7.6 about training and technical assistance would reduce length by 12 minutes

b. Discussion of item improvements

The details of respondent feedback and resulting instrument revisions are summarized in Table 3. Overall, pre-test respondents reported that the questions in most sections of the SFA

Director Pre-test Survey (Appendix B) were clearly worded and easy to answer. Pre-test respondents offered several recommendations for minor wording changes to question stems and response options as well as opportunities to filter respondents out of answering questions. Below, we discuss the most substantive changes made to the survey.

Because several respondents commented that the items in questions 3.11 and 3.12 were too numerous and were listed in a confusing order, we reordered the items based on descending order of reported frequency in Year 2. This will help respondents more easily identify which point of service methods schools in their SFAs use.¹ We also made some changes to the item wording. We modified c, “Portable Scanners or PIN Entry Pad” to include the clarification, “that are staff operated,” because respondents reported that they did not understand how this item was different from option b, “Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) that are student-entered.” This will help clarify that item c is asking about staff operated PINs or scanners, rather than student entered PINs. We also combined former items a and h to be the new item g, “Rosters, cashier lists, cash register tapes, or manual entry” because respondents reported that they consider manual entry to be the same as these other methods.

Some respondents reported confusion when responding to questions 3.11 and 3.12 about methods used to track the number of free, reduced price, and paid breakfasts and lunches served to students in non-cafeteria point of service methods. Respondents were unsure what constitutes a non-cafeteria point of service or said that they do not use them. We modified questions 3.11 and 3.12 to ask about methods for each cafeteria point of service. Then we created new questions, 3.11a and 3.12a, which ask respondents to select all the methods that schools use in

¹ These questions have a yes/no format to ensure respondents must still read through the entire list of methods instead of marking the first applicable method and moving to the next question without reading the remaining response options.

non-cafeteria points of service. The “select all that apply” format will streamline the respondent’s experience and provide a list of methods used among all non-cafeteria points of service. Furthermore, we added examples of non-cafeteria point of service methods (classroom, bus, or outdoors) to the question and included a “Not applicable- schools do not offer non-cafeteria points of service” response option. The new questions will help respondents think separately about non-cafeteria points of service methods, and the “Not applicable” response option will allow respondents to indicate that the schools in their SFA do not offer non-cafeteria points of service. We removed question 3.13 because respondents expressed confusion with the term “alternatives to the traditional cashier model” and reported that they did not understand how 3.13 differed from the previous set of questions. With questions 3.9 through 3.12, we are still able to answer the research question, “What alternatives to the traditional cashier model are used?” which question 3.13 was meant to address.

Some respondents reported difficulty responding to questions 5.31 and 5.32, noting that the wording and the request to report amounts as a percentage of dollars was confusing. We changed the questions to first ask about how much total milk in dollars was purchased and then ask how much 1% flavored milk in dollars was purchased in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. Although this increases the number of questions in the survey, framing the questions in this way will reduce the burden for SFA respondents because they will no longer have to calculate the percentages of 1% flavored milk purchased. One respondent indicated that they would not be able to report on total milk purchases in SY 2018-19 until July 2019. We changed these questions to ask for milk purchases “to date in SY 2018-19.” Note, dollar amounts reported mid-school year may lead to analysis challenges because the full 2017-18 school year of milk purchases will be compared to a partial 2018-19 school year of milk purchases. That is, the

calculated percentage of 1% milk purchases in the second school year may be overestimated or underestimated if SFAs stagger or vary the size of 1% milk purchases throughout the year.

Several respondents reported that they do not offer accommodations for students with dietary preferences and expressed some confusion about having to answer questions about these accommodations in 5.33 through 5.42 (now 5.36-5.45). In response, we reorganized these questions to first ask whether the SFA has any schools that accommodate students with disabilities or conditions, including food allergies, or other dietary preferences (5.36). If SFAs respond “no”, they now skip all the questions that ask about accommodations. If they do have schools that make accommodations, they first go through all the questions about accommodations for students with disabilities or conditions (5.37-5.40). They then receive a question about which dietary preferences they accommodate (5.41) and, if any are selected, are asked about accommodations for students with dietary preferences (5.42-5.45). This organization will reduce burden and potential confusion by filtering respondents out of questions that are not applicable to schools in their SFA. Moreover, respondents will be prompted to think first about accommodations for students with disabilities and conditions and then about accommodations for students with dietary preferences.

Table 3. SFA Director Survey pre-test feedback

Final Survey Question #	Respondent comments	Survey revisions
General	Participants suggested including a list of the resources they may need, like their latest milk invoice and paid meal pricing, at the beginning of the survey so they do not have to frequently pause to look up information while completing the survey.	As in previous years, we will include details on the resources respondents may want to gather before beginning the survey in the Frequently Asked Questions document provided to respondents.
1.3	SFA1 suggested adding a filter question because some SFAs may not operate any Child Nutrition programs other than SBP and NSLP.	We added question 1.3 as a filter question to gauge if the SFA participates in any Child Nutrition programs in addition to NSLP and SBP.

Final Survey Question #	Respondent comments	Survey revisions
1.6 (formerly 1.3), 1.4	SFA1 was confused about how to answer this question because their schools have a catering contract for CACFP, but they are not the sponsor.	We added “regardless of whether your SFA is the sponsor” to the beginning of question 1.4 to clarify that respondents should be thinking specifically about school participation in CACFP.
1.14 (formerly 1.13)	SFA1 suggested adding a filter question because some SFAs may not operate any Child Nutrition programs other than SBP and NSLP.	We removed “if your SFA participates in one or more Child Nutrition programs in addition to NSLP and SBP” from the question stem in 1.14 because respondents will only receive this question if they participate in other Child Nutrition programs. The question now reads “What are the major administrative challenges that your SFA encounters in participating in any child nutrition programs other than the NSLP and SBP?” We also deleted the “Not Applicable” response option due to new skip logic from 1.3.
3.4	SFA4 noted that they do not offer adult meals, only a la carte items.	We added a “not applicable” option and included an instructions: “If reimbursable breakfasts or lunches are not served to adults or adults purchase reimbursable meal components a la carte, please check the appropriate box.”
3.5, 3.5a, 3.6	SFA2 noted in the debrief call that they misread the question about Paid Lunch Equity exemption and incorrectly marked no.	We added the new question 3.5, “Does your SFA’s paid meal pricing comply with the Paid Lunch Equity provision?” and simplified the response options in new question 3.5a (formerly 3.5) so the response options are simply “Yes”, “No”, and “Don’t know.” We also revised response options 1 and 2 in 3.6 for clarity and removed the response option, “Paid lunch pricing already complied with provision,” because respondents will skip this item if they respond “yes” to 3.5.
3.9, 3.10	SFA1 and SFA2 said that point of service methods are how they count students but the question asks about how they are serving meals and suggested removing “point of” from the term. SFA2 reported that they did not understand the difference between Grab ‘N’ Go and kiosk or cart.	We removed “point of” so that the question asks about service methods. We moved the “meal delivery to the classroom” item from item b to c and edited the new item b to read “Kiosk or cart (not for Grab ‘N’ Go)”.

Final Survey Question #	Respondent comments	Survey revisions
3.11, 3.11a, 3.12, 3.12a	SFA1 checked methods that they used when normal methods were down, in addition to those they regularly use. Several respondents thought the response items were too numerous and were listed in a confusing order. SFA2 reported that former c and d (PINs and PIN entry pads) were the same thing. SFA3 and SFA5 were unsure what non-cafeteria POS were and suggested adding examples.	We clarified the question by asking which methods schools “regularly” use for tracking. We changed the order of the response options based on respondent comments and the prevalence of responses from Year 2, listing the most prevalent methods first. We added the clarification “that are staff operated” to item c, Portable Scanners or Pin Entry Pads. We combined former items a and h to be item g, “Rosters, cashier lists, cash register tapes, or manual entry.” We moved the question about non-cafeteria POS methods to be a separate question, which asks respondents to select only the methods used, rather than responding “Yes” or “No” to whether schools use each item. We added examples of non-cafeteria POS methods to the question and included a “Not applicable- schools do not offer non-cafeteria points of service” response option.
Formerly 3.13	Respondents reported that they did not understand the term “alternatives to the traditional cashier model” and did not understand how 3.13 differed from the previous set of questions.	We recommend omitting this question because we capture alternatives to the traditional cashier model in questions 3.9 – 3.12.
4.1	SFA1 was not familiar with Provisions 2 or 3.	We added definitions for Provision 2, Provision 3, and the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) from SNMCS-II.
4.6 (formerly 4.6 and 4.7)	SFA3 suggested that question 4.6 was unnecessary because all SFAs should answer yes to this question. SFA1 suggested adding examples such as household letter and district webpage. SFA4 suggested adding “all call” to response option 3.	We recommend omitting question 4.6. In the new question 4.6, we added examples to response options 1, 3, and 4, removed response option 5, and included a “not applicable” category.
4.11 (formerly 4.12)	SFA1 reported that the question was confusing because they thought SFAs were not allowed to start verification before October 1st.	We added “no longer” to the beginning of the question stem to clarify the verification process requirement change.
4.15 (formerly 4.16)	SFA1 was confused by this question because their direct certification process is automated by the State.	We added “or State” to the question so that respondents select “Yes” if their SFA or State uses the direct certification process.
4.16 (formerly 4.17)	SFA1 listed Medicaid in the other response option.	We added instructions that “we will ask about Medicaid in the next question.”
4.20 (formerly 4.21)	SFA4 was confused about how to answer this question because they conduct direct certification and offer online applications at the same time.	We added the instructions, “If these processes are conducted at the same time, please select No” to clarify which option to choose if direct certification is conducted at the same time household applications are available.
5.28j	SFA4 checked the FFVP response option but noted that her SFA used this strategy in past years, not the school year in question.	We added “in SY 2018-19” to the FFVP response option to reiterate that respondents should only be thinking about activities in the current school year.

Final Survey Question #	Respondent comments	Survey revisions
5.31-5.34 (formerly 5.31-5.32)	SFA1 noted that they will not have information on the amount of 1% flavored milk purchased in SY 2018-19 until July 2019. Respondents differed in their answers on which units would be easiest to report and expressed some confusion about giving percentages of specific units. When probed, multiple respondents indicated it would be easier to report on the total amount of milk purchased and total amount of 1% flavored milk purchased in a specific unit. SFA5 suggested emphasizing the years because they initially thought these questions were the same.	We changed the questions to first ask about how much total milk was purchased, in dollars, and then ask how much 1% flavored milk was purchased, in dollars, in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. New question 5.31 asks respondents about total milk purchased in SY 2017-18. New question 5.32 asks respondents about total 1% flavored milk purchased in SY 2017-18. New question 5.33 asks respondents about total milk purchased to date in SY 2018-19. New question 5.34 asks respondents about total 1% flavored milk purchased to date in SY 2018-19.
5.35-5.44 (formerly 5.33-5.42)	Most respondents reported that they do not offer accommodations for students with dietary preferences and expressed some confusion about having to answer questions about them.	We reorganized these questions to first ask whether the SFA has any schools that accommodate students with disabilities or conditions or other dietary preferences, including food allergies, followed by questions about dietary preferences. We added skip logic to 5.35 so respondents will skip all questions about accommodations if the SFA does not provide them to students.
5.38, 5.43 (formerly 5.39, 5.40)	SFA2 was not sure if the question is referring to activities conducted by only food service staff or the SFA as a whole. SFA3 said that getting the required documentation from the physician through the school nurse or parent requires the most resources.	We eliminated "or food service staff" which is consistent with other items in this section. We added "work with parents or school personnel to obtain required documentation from the physician" as response option 1 for 5.38. We removed the "not applicable" response option since respondents that do not offer accommodations will skip the question.
5.40 (formerly 5.34)	SFA2 suggested adding "individual" before students because they initially misinterpreted the question to include vegetarian planning. SFA1 said that the gluten-free category can be interpreted as preferential or allergy-related.	We added instructions that the next set of questions ask about how SFAs accommodate students with dietary preferences in SY 2018-19. We clarified the meaning of dietary preferences by specifying "individual" students and adding instructions to exclude options offered to all students on the regular menu. We added "excluding allergies and medical conditions" to 5.33c.
7.1, 7.2, 7.4	We modified these questions based on feedback to questions 5.1-5.3 in the State Agency Director pre-test.	We added an introduction to explain the topics and will link to the Professional Standards Learning Objectives in the survey. We reordered the items to more closely align with those in the State Agency Director Survey.
7.5, 7.6 (formerly 7.7 and 7.8)	SFA1 said that these questions may be hard to responsibly answer because they ask about staff opinions.	We added "don't know" response options.

Final Survey Question #	Respondent comments	Survey revisions
7.9 (formerly 7.11)	SFA2 and SFA5 were not familiar with the FNS tracking tool in original 7.11a; both referred to using a USDA tracking tool. SFA4 said that a lot of SFAs use Excel spreadsheets to track training.	We replaced “The FNS Professional Standards Training Tracking Tool 2.0” with “The USDA Child Nutrition Program’s Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT)” in 7.11a. We replaced FNS to USDA in 7.11-7.13. In 7.9, we also added a new option for “SNA Developed Professional Standards Online Training Tracking Tool”. We edited 7.11c to read “Computer- or Excel-based tracking tool other than USDA PSTTT and SNA online training tool”.
7.20, 7.18, 7.19 (formerly 7.5, 7.6)	Respondents expressed some confusion at these questions and were unsure what was meant by “State-recognized certificate.”	We added “This could include a School Nutrition Association (SNA) Certificate or other State-recognized certificate” to the question. We moved former questions 7.5 and 7.6 to now 7.18 and 7.19 to be in the same set as other questions that ask about SFA director credentials and experience to better frame the questions for respondents.
8.11	SFA1 listed “nightly notifications: email and call parents” in the other response category. Respondents were confused by 8.11e. Respondents noted that 8.11f varies by grade and suggested examples to include.	We reordered response options. We added response options “notify households of negative balances” and “encourage households to apply for free or reduced price meals”. We added “events” and “prom” as examples of using administrative actions. We added the example of retroactively approving the student. We removed the response option “no effort made” because SFAs that make no effort to recover money for unpaid meal charges will select “no” to all items.
8.12	SFA1 suggested adding a “none” category because they did not consider her SFA successful in recovering funds.	We changed directions to “below” since response options are below, not above, the question. We added response option “none of these steps were successful”.