

Our Cafeteria Project Guidebook



Publications by FoodCorps and those within its
online resources are copyrighted by FoodCorps or
the third-party authors, and all rights are reserved.
Copyright © 2025 FoodCorps, Inc.

Acknowledgments

The FoodCorps community, including FoodCorps members, alumni, staff, students, resource experts, and our valued partners—including sites, schools, school nutrition staff, and school staff—has made this resource possible. Inspiration for some sections of this guide was drawn from Shelburne Farms’ *Healthy Neighborhoods, Healthy Kids*. We truly appreciate the input, guidance, and feedback from our network, which ensures we provide high-quality, relevant resources for connecting kids to healthy food in school. And we would like to give special thanks to the following contributors to this resource: Erin Taylor, Sarah Lane, Alekya Prathivadi, and Laura Seyfer, FoodCorps alumni who contributed as content advisors; (tbd) collective; Sarah Nealon, FoodCorps alumna and writer; the Laurel Elementary School community in Oakland, California; Scout Leonard, FoodCorps member; the FoodCorps Programs team; and Lucy Flores and Erica Curry from FoodCorps’ Program Design team.

We also want to express deep gratitude to our funding partners for supporting FoodCorps’ mission. We want to give special thanks to sweetgreen, a valued partner in reimagining school cafeterias as places of health, education, and community.

Table of Contents

Our Cafeteria Project Program Overview	6
Process Overview.....	7
Parameters to Lead Our Cafeteria Project	7
Project Overview Chart.....	8
Timeline Options for Implementing the Program	9
Approaches For When to Lead the Program in School.....	11
Project-Based Learning	13
What is Project-Based Learning?	13
Project-Based Learning and FoodCorps Program	13
Roger Hart’s Ladder	14
PBL Resources	15
Our Cafeteria Project Planning	16
General Tips and Project-Based Learning Best Practices	16
Seed Ideas	18
How to Engage and Choose Students to Participate	20
Our Cafeteria Project Application	21
FoodCorps Member Tips for Leading OCP	23
Classroom Management Tips	24
Preparation Phase.....	25
Our Cafeteria Project Roles Chart	28
Research Phase: Setting the Stage.....	29
Schoolwide Kickoff!	29
Our Cafeteria Project Begins!	30
Me in the Cafeteria	33
Research Phase: Cafeteria Mapping	38
Sensory Mapping: Getting the Lay of the Land	39
Sharing Sensory Maps	45
Research Phase: Cafeteria Exploration	48
Cafeteria Field Trips	49
Cafeterias in the Media	52
Project Announcement	55
Research Phase: Preparing for Idea Collection	56
Cafeteria Club Idea Generation	57
Cafeteria Club Prepares for Supporting Classroom	60
Brainstorming Activities	

Ideas Phase: Schoolwide Idea Collection.....	64
Brainstorming Ideas Classroom Activity (Grades K–1)	65
Brainstorming Ideas Classroom Activity (Grades 2–5)	68
Narrow Results from Idea Collection to Top Three	71
Ideas Phase: Narrowing Ideas and Presenting Proposal	74
Vetting The Top Three Ideas	75
Ideas Phase: Prepare for Meeting with Adult Stakeholders	78
Session One: Prepare for the Proposal	79
Session Two: Practice for the Proposal	81
Presenting the Proposal	85
Ideas Phase: Voting Week.....	86
Prepare for Voting Week	87
Voting Process	87
FoodCorps Member Timeline For Voting Day Process	87
Morning Announcements Suggestions	87
Classroom Teacher Directions	88
Our Cafeteria Project Voting Ballot	88
Project Implementation and Completion Phase: Getting Started!	90
Check in with Stakeholders about Winning Idea	90
Checking in and Refining the Project Idea	91
The Four Ts: Initial Planning	94
Check in with Stakeholders about Project Implementation	100
Project Implementation and Completion Phase:	101
<i>Ongoing Project Planning</i>	
Project Implementation and Completion Phase: <i>Project Completion</i>	102
Planning a Celebration	103
Getting the Word Out	104
Wrapping Up	104
Project Completion Reflection	105

Our Cafeteria Program Overview

Students often feel like they have little voice in or choice over the cafeteria environment and their experience during mealtimes. During the development of this program, students, school food staff, teachers, administrators, and other school stakeholders provided input and ideas to answer the question, “How can we improve our school cafeteria?” Key themes that emerged were that there is great value in *student-led and designed experiences* and that it is important to *involve student voice in critical decisions* and support *student choice*. Stakeholders agreed that to truly improve the school cafeteria it was key that *students have responsibility over their environment and experience*. OCP emerged out of this input.

OCP uses a project-based learning (PBL) framework to outline a process for students to lead discussions and decisions within a school and with school leaders on how to improve the cafeteria environment and mealtime experience. (See more about PBL on p. 13.) This program outlines a process for the FoodCorps member to support students as they problem solve, develop a vision for change, and collaborate with school leaders and their peers on the process to enact the change they envision.

Process Overview

Parameters to Lead Our Cafeteria Project

Please consider the following before launching the program:

- Ideally a FoodCorps member will partner with **a small group of students in grades three through five**. This core group of students will use a PBL framework to lead the discussions and decisions with the entire school body centered around improving the cafeteria environment. If only one FoodCorps member is running the group, the group should be five to ten students—ideally no more than ten and no less than five. If you run the group with a classroom teacher, you can split a classroom into two groups or more to co-lead groups with the teacher.
- The FoodCorps member and small group of **students should be able to meet regularly, at least once a week**. It may work well for the group to form as an after-school program or as part of a pre-established club, like a student council that meets during the school day. See Approaches for When to Lead the Program in School on page 11.
- **You can run the program in the fall and winter or extend through the spring and take the entire school year**. There are various considerations to discuss when deciding which approach you will take. See Different Timelines for Implementing the Program on page 9 for more. No matter what approach is taken, ensure that the FoodCorps member is able to work with the same group of students within this time frame in a consistent, ongoing way.
- Students in the group should **show an interest in a cafeteria-focused project**. If it's a newly formed group, draw students who are already interested in this topic. If it's a preexisting club, ensure that this topic is of enough interest that students will be excited to focus on it for the length of the project.
- The group will need to have **access to the school cafeteria** for program activities.
- It will be important for the group to **meet with cafeteria staff and school administrators** to partner on decision-making and discuss their goals for working with the entire school to create change in the cafeteria.

Project Overview Chart

The chart below provides an overview of the steps involved in leading Our Cafeteria Project.

PREPARATION PHASE (before or early in the school year)		
During this phase the FoodCorps member meets with school leaders to discuss the project, roles, and timeline and to gather key information to guide the project. The member may also plan a schoolwide project kickoff event like an assembly or cafeteria carnival.		
RESEARCH PHASE		
Steps	Activities	
1. Setting the Stage	Our Cafeteria Project Begins!	Me in the Cafeteria (two sessions)
2. Cafeteria Mapping	Sensory Mapping: Getting the Lay of the Land (three sessions)	Sharing Sensory Maps
3. Cafeteria Explorations	Cafeteria Field Trip (two sessions)*	Cafeterias in the Media*
4. Preparing for Idea Collection	Cafeteria Club Idea Generation	Cafeteria Club Prepares for Supporting Classroom Brainstorming Activities
IDEAS PHASE		
Steps	Activities	
1. Schoolwide Idea Collection	Brainstorming Ideas Classroom Activity (K-1)	Brainstorming Ideas Classroom Activity (2-5)
2. FoodCorps Member Organizes Top 3 Student Ideas	Narrow Results from Idea Collections to Top 3	
3. Narrowing Ideas and Preparing Proposal	Vetting the Top 3 Ideas	Prepare and Practice For the Proposal (two sessions)
4. Presenting Proposal	Present to Stakeholders!	
5. Voting Week	Vetting the Top 3 Ideas	Prepare and Practice for the Proposal (two sessions)
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION & COMPLETION PHASE		
Steps	Activities	
1. Getting Started	Checking In and Refining the Project Idea (Reconnect with stakeholders)	Four Ts: Initial Planning (two sessions) (Reconnect with stakeholders)
2. Ongoing Project Planning	Sessions to Plan the Project and Check In with Stakeholders	
3. Project Completion	Planning a Celebration	Getting the Word Out
4. Wrapping Up	Project Completion Reflection	

*Activities with an asterisk are not key to leading the program. If you need to shorten the program, consider dropping these activities first.

Timeline Options for Implementing the Program

Running the Program for an Entire Year

Benefits

- More time to complete the program
- More opportunities for potential fundraising (if needed) to implement the project
- More opportunities to engage the entire school and staff

Drawbacks

- Students may lose interest; will be important to keep up momentum
- Competing school priorities throughout the year, especially in the spring for fifth graders if they are moving on to a new school the following year

Tip: This approach may work best with a teacher who has partnered with you to co-lead the program—that way it can be integrated into a classroom flow throughout the year.

Running the Program Fall to Winter

Benefits

- Potential for students to remain more engaged in the process
- Clear definition about what needs to be accomplished before winter break
- May provide a buffer to implement the chosen final project, in case it will take time to pull this together

Drawbacks

- Less time to lead each activity; you may need to decide to eliminate a few activities
- Less time to implement the final project

Tip: If you decide to use this timeline, ensure that schoolwide voting happens before winter break, which will allow for a clean and clear restart to the program in the new year.

Idea to Consider

FoodCorps members who have previously led OCP in schools have recommended that there is potential for the program to have the greatest impact if the school adopts the program as a long-term or multiyear effort. They have expressed that after schoolwide buy-in for the program is established, it will be easier to implement future projects and run Cafeteria Clubs the following year. Consider presenting this idea to school stakeholders, perhaps as something to reflect on after the program is run for the first time. Reflect on what worked well and what can be changed or built on in the future if OCP is led for multiple years!

Approaches for When to Lead the Program in School

After-School Club

Considerations

- Allows intimate time with the group to focus on the project
- Allows the potential to partner with a preexisting club or after-school programming coordinator
- Makes it challenging to run several of the activities that need to happen while the cafeteria is in use (Cafeteria Mapping) and work with students (Voting Week) without arranging special time during the school day
- Prevents some students from participating

During Lunch Time

Considerations

- Requires that students give up their time to socialize and relax; once they join the program, they may decide they miss this personal time, and it could affect retention
- Requires finding a quiet space for students to meet during lunch; ensure you can find this space and not rely solely on meeting in the cafeteria, which can be distracting
- Requires adapting activities to fit into the time frame of a short lunch period

In the Classroom: Partnering with a Teacher

Considerations

- Project-based learning (like OCP) is ideally run integrated into class time, which allows a teacher to support the process in many ways
- Benefits of working with a teacher include the following:
 - The teacher knows student dynamics and can help with classroom/group management.
 - It will be beneficial for students to have OCP integrated into other classroom learning and activities, and problem-solving experiences. This allows for deep learning and more opportunities for reflection.

- There is ideally more time to run activities if they are embedded in the school day.
- The teacher can help you raise program awareness throughout the school.
- You will be working with a larger group of students. Ideally you will split the class into several small groups for you and the classroom teacher to lead activities.
- You should hold separate planning time with the classroom teacher to ensure you are on the same page about project goals and progress.
- You will need to ensure your schedule will align with the classroom schedule.

Project-Based Learning

What is Project-Based Learning?

PBL comes from a tradition of pedagogy that asserts that students learn best by experiencing and solving real-world problems. According to researchers (Barron and Darling-Hammond 2008; Thomas 2000), PBL involves the following:

- Students learning knowledge to tackle realistic problems as they would be solved in the real world
- Increased student control over personal learning
- Teachers serving as coaches and facilitators of inquiry and reflection
- Students working in pairs or groups

The PBL framework focuses on giving students a driving question to work as a team to answer. Students create a solution or artifact and then present their work and gained knowledge that has resulted from the project. According to Edutopia, this teaching method engages students in “creating, questioning, and revising knowledge, while developing their skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, reasoning, synthesis, and resilience” (as cited in Barron and Darling-Hammond 2008).

Project-Based Learning and FoodCorps Program

PBL provides an ideal framework for a FoodCorps member to raise student voice and choice while accomplishing cafeteria-focused environment change. Instead of focusing on a predetermined cafeteria-change project, using a PBL framework provides an opportunity for students to voice their interests, concerns, or issues relating to the school cafeteria. In this way, students have a deeper investment in seeing change in their cafeteria, and as a result, the likelihood of significant change increases.

PBL reinforces FoodCorps’ goals relating to student social and emotional development. Research shows that structured student collaboration in PBL improves collaboration skills, as well as friendships across a variety of groups, including school cliques (Johnson and Johnson 2009; Slavin 1996). Focusing on small-

group work, PBL enables members to be creative about how and when to engage students. Because FoodCorps members are likely to have a nontraditional educator dynamic with students, they are well-positioned for success with a PBL model. Using PBL, members can guide students through inquiry and research for various avenues for securing school input about the cafeteria. OCP is anchored in the experience of one driving question: How can we improve our school cafeteria? This is an ideal springboard for student inquiry and investment using a PBL framework.

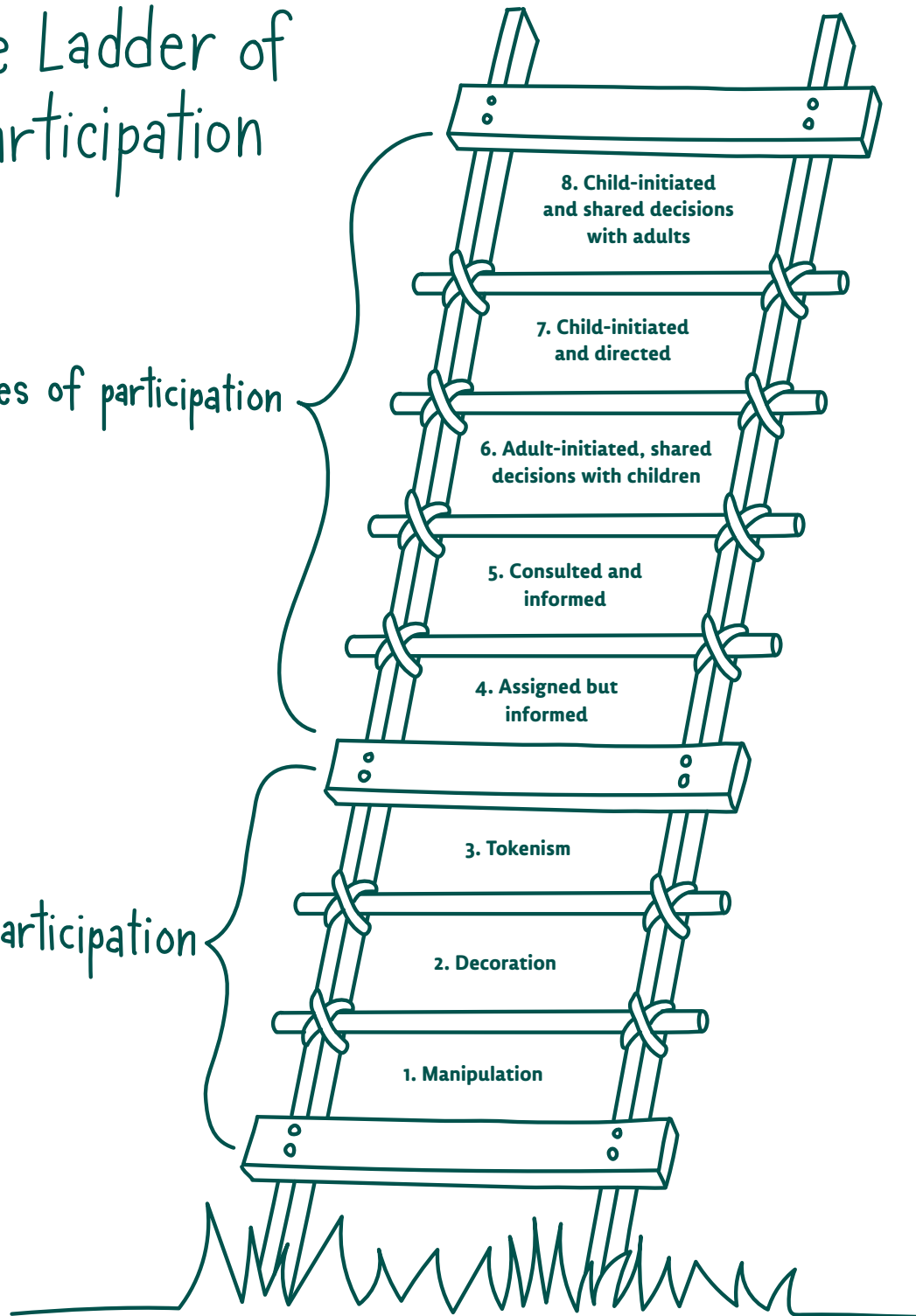
Roger Hart's Ladder

Roger Hart is a child-rights academic and co-director of the Children's Environments Research Group. Hart has collaborated with numerous countries and organizations, including the United Nations Children's Fund for which he authored an article titled "Children's Participation, From Tokenism to Citizenship" (1992). This article and subsequent work references a tool called the "Ladder of Youth Participation" (see adaptation below). This ladder shows various degrees of decision-making between young people and adults. *This ladder may be a useful reference for the FoodCorps member, school leaders, and students while embarking on OCP.* OCP provides a general guiding framework for group decision-making; however, it will be up to the group to determine which form of decision-making makes the most sense throughout the project. Please refer to Hart's article for more details about how this ladder can be used as a tool to reflect on approaches to engage students and raise voice and choice during PBL.

The Ladder of Participation

Degrees of participation

Nonparticipation



CREDIT: Hart's (1992) ladder of young people's participation

PBL Resources

Buck Institute For Education, "PBL Works," www.pblworks.org

Edutopia, www.edutopia.org

Education Reimagined, education-reimagined.org

Healthy Neighborhoods, Healthy Kids (2015), Published by Shelburne Farms' Sustainable Schools Project

The Center For Appreciative Inquiry, <https://www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/>

Our Cafeteria Project Planning

General Tips and Project-Based Learning Best Practices

As referenced in the Overview Chart (see p. 8), OCP provides a detailed framework for FoodCorps members to work with a student group and engage the entire school to accomplish cafeteria-focused environment change. The following are tips to consider while leading OCP:

Understand parameters early (budget, time constraints).

Do the groundwork to understand what is truly possible for a project to create change in the cafeteria. Build buy-in, and connect with key school decision makers and cafeteria staff before you begin working with students. Develop a clear budget to guide what is possible, and learn about time parameters to work with the school and make cafeteria-focused change before you begin.

Use appreciative inquiry.

Although the project is focused on making change in the cafeteria, there is always something that is working right, and there are people who care about how things currently operate. Be sure to acknowledge the “positive core” of the cafeteria, and build the emphasis on improving the good that is already happening and people who are already invested.

Engage volunteers.

Spread the word early about the project. Explore resources to support your goals in addition to money. Consider how families and community members might get involved to provide supplies, volunteer time, and shine a light on your goals.

Reflect on your role.

Your role working with students for the OCP will be different than how you may regularly interact with kids in the school. You will be working with a small group of students for a long time. Students will be key decision makers, along with adults. This shift in roles may cause discomfort. Reflect on how you can truly promote student voices and set the group up for success.

Provide scaffolding for students.

Part of setting students up for success is providing scaffolding for their experiences that ensures they are best prepared to achieve their goals. Much of this scaffolding is integrated into the OCP process. However, take time at various junctures throughout the project to ensure you've done your homework to understand possible barriers students may face, and strategize how to provide support as they navigate the experience. If researching or reasoning a critical piece of information is beyond students' problem-solving skills, you should present this information to the group, rather than have them struggle to learn it.

Model active listening with students and assign roles.

Working in groups, students often fail to listen to one another's ideas and may attempt to split group work into individualized, noninteractive tasks. Truly effective collaboration requires the attention of everyone, which you can support by carefully describing and modeling what active listening, joint attention, and coordinated activity look like. Refer to your group agreements to reinforce the importance of these skills. Also consider how to assign students specific roles such as a timekeeper, reporter, etc.

Plan for more time than you think you'll need.

Buffer in more than enough time to complete the project with students. Veteran teachers using PBL recommend setting the number of days expected to achieve a milestone, then building in a 20 percent overrun.

Be flexible and realistic.

Understand that things might not always go according to plan. If something fails, take time with students to discuss and reflect on what happened. Use this as an opportunity for the team to brainstorm solutions.

Reflect on learning throughout the process.

Offer opportunities for the group to reflect on what has gone well and what has been challenging at multiple junctures throughout the project. Reflection is a key component to learning and will increase the likelihood of a successful project.

Communicate frequently with stakeholders.

OCP provides opportunities throughout the framework to check in with stakeholders; however, we encourage you to do this often and in addition to what is prompted. The more voices and perspectives are represented throughout the project, the more likely the project will have success and live on!

Share Your Story!

Be sure to celebrate your successes with the small student group as well as with all students and school and community members. Remember to honor everyone who was involved, and give shout-outs to contributors who may otherwise go unappreciated. (See Press Release Templates on p. 104.)

Some of the previous content was adapted from "Project-Based Learning Research Review: Avoiding Pitfalls," by Vanessa Vega, Edutopia, December 3, 2012.

Seed Ideas

The following are ideas developed by stakeholders who brainstormed ways to improve a school cafeteria during the development of this program. These can be useful as “seed ideas” to help review what could be possible with school decision makers, staff, and students. Remember that the goal of OCP is for students to develop their own ideas. However, it can be helpful to provide examples while building buy-in for the project. If you need ideas, draw from the list below.

How to Improve a School Cafeteria Sample Ideas

Look Better

- Art
- Improving cafeteria cleanliness
- Twinkle lights or diffusers
- Mosaic
- Mural
- Posters
- Plants (indoor herb garden)
- Student artwork
- Table layout

More Freedom/Rules

- Choose music
- Free-sit Fridays
- Choose "themed" days

Sound Better

- Sound tiles
- Music
(classical, bird/nature sounds)
- Quiet tables

More Fun

- Fancy Fridays (flowers, tablecloths, place mats, decorations)
- Invite principal/teacher to lunch
- Parent/family lunch
- Photo booth
- Rename café/cafeteria
- Ring a bell for “thanks”
- Table tents
- Themed table groups
- Watch movies/cartoons

Feel Better (Physical/Emotional)

- Signs to keep the space clean and prevent bullying
- Sharing basket to reduce food waste and share excess food with others
- Recycling station
- Different types of tables (round vs. square)

How to Engage and Choose Students to Participate

As previously mentioned, students in the group should show an interest in a cafeteria-focused project. The club should be something they are authentically interested in joining. If it's a newly formed group, draw students who are already interested in this topic. If it's a preexisting club, ensure that this topic is of enough interest that students will be excited to focus on it for the length of the project. Here are two avenues to draw student interest and consider as you form the group.

Nominations

Previous groups have been formed through a nomination process. People who nominate club members could be a teacher, student peers, or other school staff. Be sure to check with the school staff and administrators to determine the most appropriate nomination avenue. You can ask people to submit nominations through online (via email or Google Forms) verbal recommendation or via a nomination template you provide. Be sure to include an overview of the project, parameters for joining, and a due date for the nomination forms.

Apply to the Club

Previous clubs have asked students to apply to participate in the project. This approach allows students to personally demonstrate their investment and why they'd like to engage with the project as a leadership development opportunity. FoodCorps members have had school staff (like the school counselor) help with reviewing applications to consider the group dynamic as a whole and provide context about students who have applied. See the following sample application that a FoodCorps member has used!

Our Cafeteria Project Application

Do you love the cafeteria? Do you have ideas of how to make it even better? Apply for the Cafeteria Club! This year, up to _____ students will have the chance to work with _____ to think of an idea to create change within the school cafeteria. Ideas might be to make the cafeteria look better, sound better, feel better, or be more fun!

The Cafeteria Club will meet with _____ during the school day every _____ from _____. During these meetings, you will work as a team to think of ideas that will help make the cafeteria an even better space for you.

If you think you would be a good fit in the Cafeteria Club, complete the application on the bottom of this form. If you are more comfortable speaking than writing, you may ask to have an interview with _____ instead.

Students who are selected must be good at working in teams, passionate about making change, interested in developing leadership skills, and committed to seeing this project through.

Applications are due _____. I hope to hear from you soon!

Our Cafeteria Project Application

Name: _____

Grade: _____

Do you enjoy working on a team? (circle one) YES NO

In three to four sentences, explain why you would like to join the Cafeteria Club:

In two to three sentences, explain what you do when someone disagrees with you:

If you were a fruit or a vegetable, what would you be and why?

Return this form to your teacher for _____ to collect.
club leader name

Thank you!

FoodCorps Member Tips for Leading OCP

The following are tips that FoodCorps members who led the pilot of OCP have suggested:

- Develop your own schedule and timeline for how you'd like to see the club unfold. Map out a timeline for what activities will take place which week. Share this with school leaders, so they can be responsive and provide input.
- Remember that it's OK to break up activities to be adaptive to the school schedule. Make the project work for your situation.
- Consider how you will "catch kids up" if they miss a meeting or two due to sickness, snow days, etc. (e.g., have a meeting with kids during morning breakfast).
- Build the necessary amount of time into your plan. FoodCorps members report that, on average, it took two to four hours a week to run OCP.
- Use OCP to bridge classroom and cafeteria time. Dovetail the project with FoodCorps lessons like "Cafeteria Role Models," and build deeper connections with nutrition services staff through schoolwide taste tests while you are leading the project.
- Think of a fun name for your group of students. Ideas include "Cafeteria Leadership Team," "Cafeteria Club," "Cafeteria Crew," or an acronym like "COWS" (cafeteria organizers with schools).
- Consider (if you can) meeting with your group twice a week rather than once, to build momentum faster and complete the project earlier in the school year for fifth graders to enjoy the results before they graduate.
- Develop a "Cafeteria Expert" certificate to mark progress in the club. Hand these out when kids need momentum.
- Provide kids with clipboards and "Cafeteria Club" lanyards to look professional during the project.
- Develop your own routine for your club, including opportunities to check in each day. For example, you can do a "thermometer check" during closing to see how the group feels. Reflection opportunities are key!

Biggest challenges FoodCorps members report while running OCP include the following:

- Feeling too rushed on activities
- Having too little time with students
- Finding the right location to hold the club
- Identifying the best time to run the club when all students are available

- Seeing students drop out of the club for a variety of reasons

Biggest successes FoodCorps members report while running OCP include the following:

- School staff and school community becoming more engaged and excited
- Student's confidence and leadership abilities growing
- Students adapting and rising to the occasion
- Students becoming engaged and building relationships with one another—the Cafeteria Club bond!
- FoodCorps members building deeper relationships with students

Classroom Management Tips

As your group begins to bond, remember to consider how to support students with short attention spans:

- Make the student with a short attention span a “helper” with specific tasks for the club. Be sure to rotate this duty regularly.
- Read the room, and consider how to pair high-energy students with students who might be good partners.
- Provide sensory objects to keep hands busy during activities (e.g., play dough).
- Integrate energizers into club time. Be sure to get students up and about frequently (see the *FoodCorps Program Guide* for energizer ideas).

See Reframing Classroom Management (p. 55) of the FoodCorps Program Guide for more tips!

Preparation Phase

The following should happen over two to three weeks before the school year starts or as early as possible in the school year.

✓ **Build OCP into Your Member Action Plan.**

Before launching the project, ensure you have a detailed conversation with your site supervisor about how leading OCP will be integrated into your action plan. Review your Member Action Plan and consider how leading this program with students will help you meet the collective goals you and your school have set forth. Review the "Parameters to Lead This Project" on page 9 and the "Project Overview Chart" on page 10 to ensure the amount of time and other requirements to run the project are achievable.

✓ **Consider How to Establish Regular Meetings with the Cafeteria Club.**

What your regular meetings look like will vary depending on your unique situation—whether you're meeting after school or during the day, how often you're with your student group, and the length of time you have with them. For example, if you're integrating this project into after-school programming, and you'll have your group of students for two-and-a-half hours at a time, you'll likely want to combine a couple different activities (taking time for brain breaks and movement opportunities, of course). On the other end of the spectrum, you may be utilizing the student council group at your school, and perhaps the only time for them to meet is on Fridays for a half hour. In that case, you may want to break up some of the activities over multiple meetings with your group.

Each activity will take between thirty to ninety minutes, and most can be expanded or contracted depending on the needs of your group. You will want to discuss these details with school administrators before launching the project.

✓ **Talk with the School Principal and School Nutrition Staff.**

It is key that school administration, school nutrition staff, and the school leadership team is aware of, supportive of, and ready to be involved with OCP to achieve success with the program. It will be important to connect in person, discuss specific roles and responsibilities, and address any questions or concerns before getting started. You will also want to gain input on a kickoff event, like a cafeteria carnival or assembly early in the school year to generate interest in the project.

✓ **Review the following sections of this guide with these stakeholders:**

- Parameters to Lead Our Cafeteria Project (p. 7)
- Project Overview Chart (p. 8)
- What is Project-Based Learning? (p. 13)
- OCP Project Planning (pp. 16–24)
- OCP Roles (p. 28)
- Seed Ideas (p. 18)

Discuss the following questions with key school leaders:

- This project centers on the key question of “How can we improve our school cafeteria?” Does this question and the OCP process to answer this question seem appealing and exciting? Why or why not?
- What role do you envision playing in this project?
- Does the timeline for OCP work for the school?
- Is there money in the school budget to support this project?
- Are there other avenues through community partnerships that might help fund the project?
- What is the best method to convene the small group of students? Through an existing student group or after-school club?
- When is the best time for the group to meet regularly?
- Is the school supportive of PBL? Are there any questions or concerns about providing opportunities for student leadership and choice through this approach?

Our Cafeteria Project Roles

FoodCorps member is responsible for

- leading the small student group that meets regularly to facilitate the project,
- checking in with school leadership team regularly to ensure open communication and avenues for feedback throughout the project, and
- gaining permission to make changes to the school cafeteria before they happen.

School Leadership Team (principal, school nutrition staff, teachers) is responsible for

- providing input throughout the project and supporting the process, specifically at the following key junctures during the Ideas Phase: Schoolwide Idea Collection, Presenting the Proposal and Voting Week;
- identifying key staff and community members who should provide input throughout the process;
- providing feedback about the proposal after student presentation and constructive feedback along the way;
- connecting with the FoodCorps member about implementation plans before launching this phase;
- designating a specific space in the school (hallway is ideal) for the student group to share ideas, voting results, and updates about the project; and
- allowing students and/or the FoodCorps member to share schoolwide announcements and updates throughout the project process.

Teachers are responsible for

- allowing a select number of students to actively participate in the small leadership group that leads OCP;
- allowing the FoodCorps member to lead classroom activities in a select number of grade K–1 and 2–5 classes to gain input about the project during the Ideas Phase: Schoolwide Idea Collection; and
- facilitating your classroom vote during Voting Week by distributing a ballot to students to

vote for their favorite project idea.

Custodial staff is responsible for

- participating in check-ins with the FoodCorps member and student leadership team to ensure project plans are feasible and not disruptive to school maintenance plans.

Student Project Leadership Team (Cafeteria Club) is responsible for

- participating in regular weekly meetings to lead OCP;
- adhering to the Group Agreements set by the team;
- committing to actively participate and engage in OCP process;
- acting as lead representatives for the entire school body; and
- providing feedback to the FoodCorps member and other adults, as necessary.

Use the template below to encourage school staff and administrators to attend an initial meeting to discuss the project.

Hello!

My name is _____, and I'm a FoodCorps member at _____ school this year. I am working with the school staff and administration to launch **Our Cafeteria Project** this fall. **Your input before we launch this project would be very valuable.** You are invited to meet with our planning group on _____ (date) at _____ (time) in _____ (location) to share your ideas and learn more.

Our Cafeteria Project Overview

OCP centers around the central question of “How can we improve our school cafeteria?” The project uses a project-based learning framework to outline a process for students to lead discussions and decisions within a school and with school leaders on how to improve the cafeteria environment and mealtime experience. During the project, FoodCorps member(s) facilitates a small group of student leaders in grades 3–5 to meet regularly throughout the year to examine what students currently like about their cafeteria and what they would change. This group of students facilitates activities with the greater student body to generate ideas for a project centered on making change in the cafeteria. Projects could range from a mural in the cafeteria to “free-sit Fridays,” but students will develop them. Adult stakeholders and decision makers are consulted throughout the project, yet the project emphasizes involving student voice in critical decisions and supporting student choice. The program culminates with the student group and school working collaboratively to make the cafeteria project a reality, then celebrating the process and goals they achieved.

Our Cafeteria Project Roles Chart

Please reference the chart below for an overview of various roles throughout the phases of the project.

Who → Preparation Phase → Research Phase → Ideas Phase → Project Implementation & Completion Phase	
FOODCORPS MEMBER	Meet with stakeholders to gather key information and prepare for project.
STAKEHOLDERS (Principal, nutrition services, janitorial staff, decision makers in the school)	Meet with FoodCorps member to provide key information and prepare for project. Tasks include discussing budget, time for students to regularly meet, and timeline.
CAFETERIA CLUB	"Initiate" ahead of "Ongoing"
STUDENT BODY	View bulletin board creation
CLASSROOM TEACHERS	Meet with FoodCorps Member to help facilitate regular time to meet with Cafeteria Club throughout the year.
WIDER COMMUNITY	Connect with FoodCorps Member to provide ideas and resources for the project.
	Set ongoing meetings with stakeholders throughout the project, facilitate the Cafeteria Club, and work with teachers to set up classroom activities and school-wide vote. This is the primary "glue" for the project.
	Interviewed by Cafeteria Club
	Connect with FoodCorps Member during process of narrowing down voting results. Ensure final ideas are feasible (time/resources) ahead of student proposal/presentation.
	View Cafeteria Club project proposal/presentation. Provide feedback.
	Provide ongoing input and support as the project is implemented. Participate in celebration upon project completion.
	Initiate ongoing activities during each phase to research for the project, gather input from the school, narrow down ideas chosen by the school, present the project proposal to stakeholders, and implement the project.
	Submit ideas during classroom activity
	Vote on winning idea
	Help on a work day such as painting!
	Support students to participate in project implementation. TBD depending on project.
	Each classroom allows time for students to vote on the project. Teacher provides context for the vote and submits completed ballots to FoodCorps member.
	Support students to participate in project implementation. TBD depending on project.
	Volunteer time and resources to implement project (paint for murals, plants, electronics, etc.)
	If relevant, view Cafeteria Club project proposal/presentation.
	Support project kick-off event, if relevant. Support research, if relevant (such as an architect helping students brainstorm ideas).

Research Phase: Setting the Stage

Schoolwide Kickoff!

Early on in the project, consider engaging the entire school with a schoolwide event or assembly. This will allow for the school stakeholders to learn about OCP from the beginning of the project and generate interest and excitement. Ideas include the following:

- Consider **inviting a guest speaker**, such as a local architect or interior designer, to come and share the aspects of design they contemplate in a new plan.
- Have Cafeteria Club members **create a cafeteria carnival** that includes simple homemade games they devise. It would take a lot of planning up front, but it would be a way to have fun in the cafeteria and appreciate the space as it currently is, which is an important tone to set at the beginning of the project.
- Hold a **schoolwide assembly** where Cafeteria Club members introduce the project along with other key school stakeholders, like nutrition services, the principal, or janitorial staff.

The first activity, **Our Cafeteria Project Begins!**, provides a way for the Cafeteria Club to come together as a group and establish group agreements. Depending on how well these students know one another, you might also choose to do some icebreaker activities. The second activity, **Me in the Cafeteria**, has students reflecting on their own experience and interviewing others to begin to get a sense of the perception of the cafeteria in the school community.

Our Cafeteria Project Begins!

45
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why is the cafeteria space worth our time?

OVERVIEW

Students will consider why the cafeteria is an important part of their school experience, review a road map of the project they're embarking upon, and establish group agreements.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to reflect on the role the cafeteria currently plays in their lives.
- ✓ Students will be able to establish group agreements.

SKILLS

Consensus building

PREPARATION

- › Invite key school stakeholders to participate in this activity to meet students and become familiar with the program.
- › Place chart paper around the room to collect students' answers to questions.
- › Make photocopies or set up a projector to display the Student Road Map.

SAMPLE GROUP AGREEMENTS

- Take turns speaking.
- Use a talking piece.
- Wait until someone finishes before talking.
- Ask questions to others in the group.
- Encourage *everyone* to share their opinion.
- Be open-minded.
- Be kind.

MATERIALS

- Chart paper
- Student Road Map Poster

STUDENT ROAD MAP OF OUR CAFETERIA PROJECT

Step 1 LEARNING ABOUT THE CAFETERIA	Our group forms and becomes experts on the cafeteria environment.
Step 2 COLLECTING IDEAS FROM THE SCHOOL	We share what we've learned and collect ideas from students throughout the school about a change they want to see in the cafeteria.
Step 3 VOTING ON IDEAS	We present the top three ideas to adults in the building. Then the school votes on the top three ideas!
Step 4 THE IDEA BECOMES A PROJECT!	We decide how to make the idea a reality! We plan and make the project happen!
Step 5 REVEAL and CELEBRATE	We share with the school and community the completion of the project!

ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Introduce school leadership stakeholders if they have joined the group. Ask students to go around and share: *Besides the food, what is your favorite part of lunchtime in the cafeteria?* Then ask, *If you had a magic wand, what would you change or make appear in the cafeteria?* Go around again, having students answer this question: *Why do you think we've created a group focused on the cafeteria at school? Why is the cafeteria important?* Record student responses on chart paper or the classroom board. **(5 min.)**

2. Explain the Project: Explain to students that this group will be working together for most of the year on helping the school identify a project to make eating in the cafeteria an (even more) enjoyable experience. Explain that they'll play an important role of guiding the other students in the school into coming up with ideas to improve the cafeteria experience. **(3 min.)**

3. Establishing Group Agreements: Ask students what agreements they'd like as a group to feel safe, heard, included, and comfortable. Truly allow for students to determine the agreements for their group. For example, if students want to figure out a way to take turns speaking, you might suggest a talking piece, but if they don't go for the idea, don't push it. If interrupting and management becomes an issue down the line, you can have a check-in meeting where you reassess whether agreements are working. **(10–15 min.)**

4. Making the Agreement: Record the agreements on a poster or chart paper, and have each student sign the bottom, showing they agree to adhere to what they've decided will make the group run best. **(5 min.)**

5. Asking Questions: Display (or pass out) the Student Road Map, and go over it as a group, having students take turns reading. Once you've read through the document, have students turn and talk to a neighbor to answer the questions, "What do I still have questions about?" and "What am I most excited about?" Once students have had time to share with partners, share as a group. **(15 min.)**

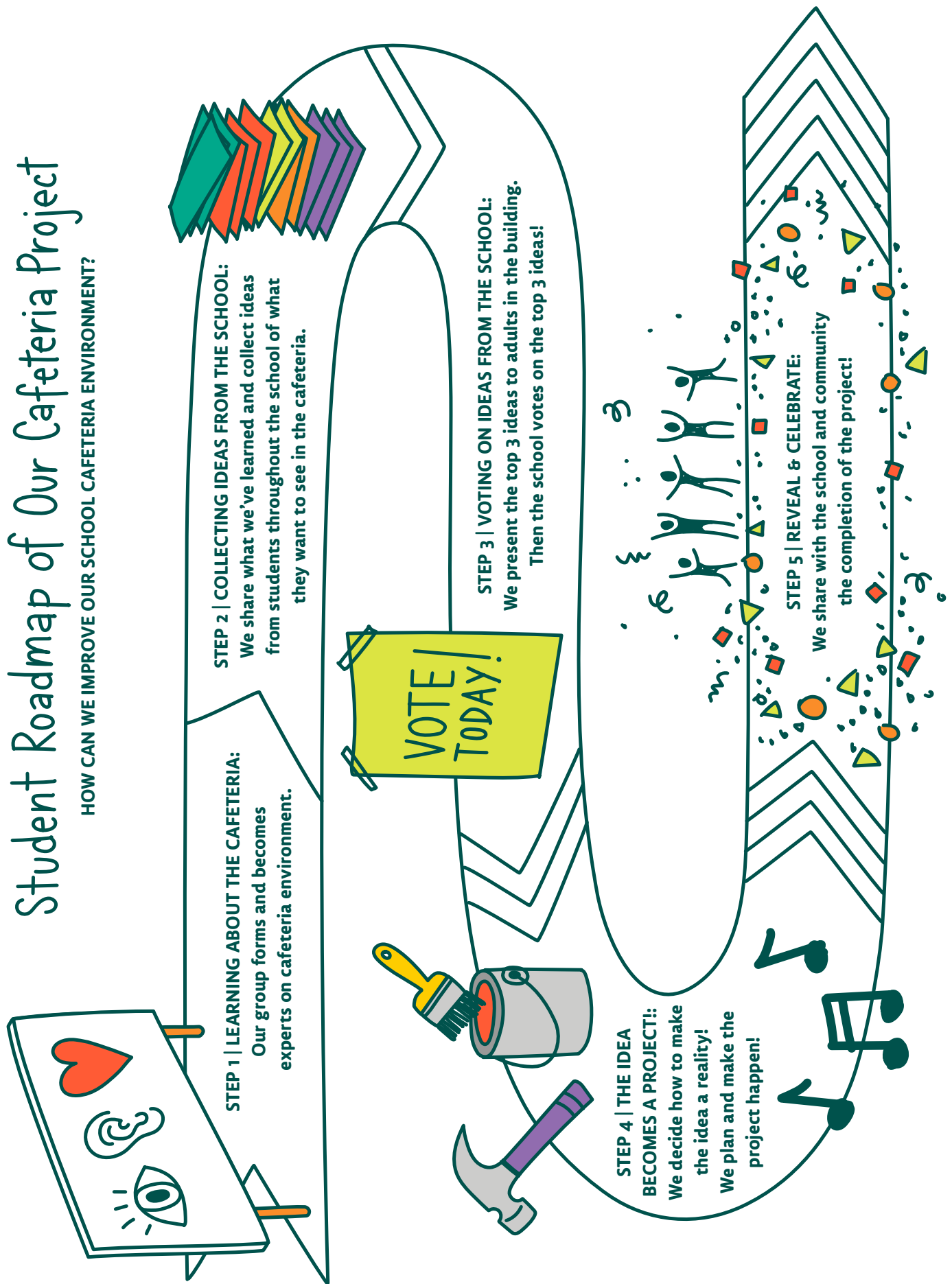
REFLECTION (5 min.)

- *What questions do you still have about Our Cafeteria Project?*
- *How do you feel about the role you'll play in shaping a change that'll be made to the cafeteria this year?*
- *Why is the cafeteria worth us spending time on?*

Extension: Take an initial informal tour of the cafeteria, and have students share their thoughts and impressions. What do they like about the space? What do they wish were different?

Student Roadmap of Our Cafeteria Project

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR SCHOOL CAFETERIA ENVIRONMENT?



Me in the Cafeteria

60–90
MIN.

(two sessions)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How do I feel when I'm in the cafeteria?

What is my experience in the cafeteria?

OVERVIEW

Students will interview each other about their experience in the cafeteria. They will then select someone from the school community to interview. (NOTE: You may want to continue step 7, preparing interview questions for adults in the school community, in a separate session.)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to reflect on their own experience in the cafeteria.
- ✓ Students will be able to craft open-ended interview questions.

SKILLS

Interviewing, listening, note-taking

CONCEPTS

Open-ended questions, follow-up questions

PREPARATION

- Prepare a list of people from the school community who students can interview about the cafeteria.
- Display the Types of Questions chart.

SAMPLE OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY INTERVIEWEES

- Custodial staff
- Cafeteria staff
- Lunch monitors
- Classroom teachers
- Principal
- Guidance counselor
- Physical Education or other specials teacher
- Students in a younger grade

MATERIALS

- Me in the Cafeteria interview questions
- Clipboards (if you have them) or stiff cardboard
- Pencils
- Classroom board or chart paper

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS			
Example	Yes/No (Avoid these, or use them with follow-up questions.)	Open-Ended	Follow-Up
	Do you like lunchtime?	What do you like about lunchtime?	Why? Why is that important to you? How does _____ make you feel?

SESSION I ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Explain to students that they'll be interviewing each other to learn how the group feels in the cafeteria at lunchtime. Explain that these interviews will also serve as practice for interviewing people in the school community. **(2 min.)**

2. Practicing: Say, *To practice interviewing, I'm going to give you all a chance to interview me. Take a moment to write down a question you'd like to ask me.* Then while having students ask questions, be sure to act like a difficult interviewee (i.e., give one-word answers, and don't elaborate unless they ask an open-ended or follow-up question). **(10 min.)**

3. What Makes a Good Interview: Ask students how the interview went and whether they were able to find out a lot about you. Ask, *What makes a good interview?* Take students responses, and then introduce the concepts of open-ended and follow-up questions if they don't. Say, *If your question for me was a yes/no, rewrite it to be an open-ended question, or add a follow-up question.* Then give them a couple minutes to write

additional questions at the bottom of the Me in the Cafeteria Interview Questions Worksheet. **(10 min.)**

4. Explain the Activity: Say, *Now it's time you interview each other.* Explain that once they're in their pairs they'll be taking turns answering the questions and that you'll have a timer set so they know when to switch. Say, *You'll be sharing about your partner with the group, so make sure to ask if there's anything they wouldn't like you to share, and be sure to take good notes.* **(5 min.)**

5. Interviewing: Have students pair off and allow them to find a space where you can still see and hear them in the room but where they'll be most comfortable. Set a timer (for 10 minutes or however long you feel your students can focus for) and circulate throughout the room, supporting students in staying on task. **(20 min.)**

6. Sharing: Have students come back to the group and each share about what they learned about the other person. Ask, *Which questions got the best responses?* **(10–15 min.)**

7. Preparing Questions: Discuss with students interviewing adults in the building. Ask, *What do you want to learn about their experience during lunchtime and feelings about the cafeteria?* Make a list of general questions together that students can use. Before ending the session, make sure each student has committed to and written down who they're going to interview, trying to have a diversity of representation of different roles in the school as best you can. **(10 min.)**

8. Interviewing Adults: Tell students to try to find their interviewee the next day at school, and ask them to set aside some time during your next session to be interviewed. Note: If you meet during the school day, you can split this activity into two sessions and have students interview adults in the building in the second session; however, if you're meeting after school, this will have to be homework, of sorts. It'll be helpful to brainstorm with students good times for them to try to meet with staff. Be sure to have a due date for follow-up. For example, you might set the expectation that students should have their interview done by your next meeting time. Remind them to take good notes, explaining how you'll use good quotes you hear in a presentation to the school in a few weeks.

REFLECTION (5 min.)

- *How did it feel to share about your peer instead of about yourself in the circle?*
- *How did it feel to have to ask, listen, and record answers to the questions during the interview? What are some tips you'd give for how to balance these tasks?*
- *How do you feel about interviewing the school staff?*
- *How will you do your best to be a good interviewer? What techniques will you use?*

VARIATIONS

Watching a Professional Interview: Consider showing students a professional interview of someone such as Malala Yousafzai, the youngest Nobel laureate, which you can find on the internet.

Large-Scale Survey: Have students collectively create a survey that they administer to a large group of people in the building. Students can help put them in staff mailboxes. Because they'll be answering the same questions, you could have students try to tabulate the responses and create a graph or pie chart.

Me in the Cafeteria Interview

Directions: Take notes on your partner's responses.

1. What do you like about lunchtime?

2. What is your favorite thing about lunchtime? (Follow-up: Why?)

3. Where do you sit at lunchtime? (Follow-up: How do you feel about that spot?)

4. What do you like about the cafeteria?

5. What is one thing you would want to change about the cafeteria?

6. How do you feel when you're in the cafeteria? (Happy, nervous, excited, overwhelmed?) If you could change something about the cafeteria to make you feel differently, what would it be?

7. How can we make the cafeteria a more welcoming place for everyone?

8. If you could change a rule you follow in the cafeteria, what would it be and why?

9. Imagine a place where you enjoy eating. How is it different from the cafeteria? What parts of that place that you like would you want to have in our cafeteria?

Write any other questions to ask your partner below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Interview an Adult

Directions: Write questions for your interview with school staff. Remember, these are for cafeteria staff, teachers, lunch monitors, the principal, the guidance counselor, or someone else in the school community. You can reuse some of the questions from the Me in the Cafeteria Interview activity.

1. What do you like about the cafeteria?

2. How do you feel when you're in the cafeteria?

3. What is one thing you wish were different about the cafeteria?

4. Your question: _____

5. Your question: _____

Research Phase: Cafeteria Mapping

The next four sessions are a way for students to become experts on the sensory impact of their cafeteria environment through the technique of zonal mapping. In the first activity, **Sensory Mapping: Getting the Lay of the Land**, students will spend two sessions observing the cafeteria during an active lunch period and create maps of how the cafeteria looks, sounds, and feels. They will then share their findings with one another and finally determine what findings they want to share with the whole school. Remember that this activity includes three separate sessions, so consider the timing for each session. During the final activity, **Sharing Sensory Maps**, they'll create a large synthesized map on a prominently located bulletin board in the school for the rest of the school community to learn from. Consider strategies to have the rest of the student body and school staff interact with this map display.

Sensory Mapping: Getting the Lay of the Land

NOTE: The “Making Maps” portion of this activity must be done in the cafeteria during lunch service, but the introduction and the discussion and sharing findings could happen during your normally scheduled session, if time is a constraining factor.

100–135
MIN.

(two to three sessions, including two lunch periods)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What does it look like, sound like, and feel like to be in our school’s cafeteria?

OVERVIEW

In three sessions, students will work in teams to develop zonal maps focusing on how the cafeteria looks, sounds, and feels. These maps will be developed and synthesized to share this information with the rest of the school.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will learn about using zonal maps to better understand their environment
- ✓ Students will understand how their senses inform their experience of a place

SKILLS

Observation, recording, mapping

CONCEPT

Zone

MATERIALS

- Cafeteria Mapping Worksheets
- Clipboards
- Playground Zonal Map Example
- Pencils
- Step stools (optional)
- Tablets (optional)

PREPARATION

- › Draw a map of the cafeteria, adding key features such as doors and kitchen, but leave other details out for students to fill.
- › Photocopy Cafeteria Mapping Worksheets.
- › If you have access to technology, during visual mapmaking you might have students take photographs to later help flesh out their map. Likewise, sound mapmakers can use an audio recording app to record sounds or even measure decibel, and then transfer the data from the app onto their worksheet later. Finally, the feel mapmakers might choose to audio record some of the responses when surveying students.
- › If your school uses Zones of Regulation, the feel mapmakers can use the graphic as a visual tool when surveying students in the cafeteria.

SESSION I ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Ask students, *Which of our five senses do you think is the most important while you’re having lunch in the cafeteria?* Take responses and discuss that although taste is a big part of the eating experience, so too are how you feel, what you see, and what you hear. Say, *As you know, your other senses can strongly influence your eating experience. In the next couple meetings, you’re going to focus on observing the sights, sounds, and feel of the cafeteria through a mapping activity.* Explain that what they observe will then help them think about the benefits of

making certain changes in the cafeteria for their project. **(3 min.)**

2. Explain the Activity: Show students the Playground Zonal Map Example. Explain that today, as a group, they'll create a zonal map of how the cafeteria looks. Say, *A zone is an area that is different from others in a particular way (e.g., the time zones of the United States)*. Explain that, as visual mapmakers, they will focus on the appearance of the cafeteria, including how tables and chairs are arranged and what's on the walls. They'll draw bubbles or circles to show different zones of how the cafeteria looks. Explain that during your next session, you'll have a couple teams of students split into different parts of the cafeteria to create "sound" maps and "feel" maps. (Include the extension maps if students are interested.) **(10 min.)**

3. Whole-Group Visual Zonal Mapping: In the cafeteria, circle up together, and point something out that you plan to add to your zonal map. Model by saying, for example, *I see this wall looks really pretty because it has a mural, so I'm going to draw a big bubble and write "colorful," but over here in this corner, there's nothing on the walls and really nothing else going on, so I'm going to write "empty."* Emphasize the importance of developing clear and detailed drawings so others can interpret your map. **(15 min.)**

SESSION II ACTION STEPS

1. Explain the Activity: Ask students to reflect on their visual zonal mapping experience. Explain that today they'll continue to map the cafeteria using other senses. The sound mapmakers will be responsible for depicting sounds they hear in the cafeteria. If you have access to technology, they can record the sounds on a smartphone or tablet.

Provide examples for what kind of areas their zonal map might include (e.g., "lots of talking," or "very quiet"). The "feel" mapmakers will observe and survey how people feel in the cafeteria. They'll be using colored dots to represent students' responses, but they might be able to see bigger trends and use zones as well. **(5 min.)**

2. Getting into Teams: Assign students to groups and pass out their respective worksheet. Have each team read aloud the questions to consider at the top of their worksheet. Explain that they can pair up with a buddy in their group or work independently. Remind students to develop clear and detailed maps because they will be sharing them with one another and using them to create a larger map to share with the school. **(5 min.)**

3. Making Zonal Maps: Once you're in the cafeteria, support students by asking probing questions if they seem stuck or confused and by helping them develop detailed maps. **(15 min.)**

EXTENSIONS

Smell Mapping: This group should have a keen sense of smell and interest in olfactory impact of a space! Their zonal map might include spaces that say "smells like tasty food," "smells funky," or "smells like cleaning supplies."

Movement Mapping: This group can record movement around the cafeteria, considering where there are traffic jams or spaces that don't get used. If the cafeteria doesn't have steps, a stage, or another way for the movement mapmakers to get more of a bird's eye vantage point, find a couple step stools for this team to use. Students should consider whether there are different paths or ways to route people and ways to take advantage of underutilized space.

SESSION III ACTION STEPS

Preparation: On the board or chart paper, create three columns and write, I observed . . . , I like . . . , and I wish . . . at the top of each.

I observed . . .	I like . . .	I wish . . .

1. Introduction: Back in the classroom or other meeting space, ask for students' general experience of the activity. *(5 min.)*

2. Individual reflection: Have students fill out the chart above before meeting with their teams. *(5–10 min.)*

3. Team sharing: Have groups of students who worked on each area gather and share their findings with each other. Have them discuss their observations and issues they discovered related to their area of focus. *(10 min.)*

4. Brainstorming changes and solutions: Provide students with the sentence stem, We observed _____ and think _____, and then have them brainstorm possible solutions. *(15 min.)*

5. Sharing findings (whole group): Have a representative from each team share with the whole

group their overall impression, and then a favorite solution to an issue they found. *(10 min.)*

REFLECTION *(5 min.)*

- What were you most surprised to learn by doing this activity?
- What was one aspect of the cafeteria that you or your team really enjoyed? How can we strengthen it?
- Of the problems and solutions we brainstormed, which are you most interested in focusing on?
- What is something you observed that confirmed a feeling you've had before in the cafeteria?

Brainstorming Solutions Sentence Stems

A change that would help would be to . . .

A solution to what we saw would be to . . .

A way to improve _____ would be to . . .

Most people seem to enjoy _____. A way to have more of this would be to . . .

CAFETERIA MAPPING ACTIVITY

SOUND

Date:

Time:

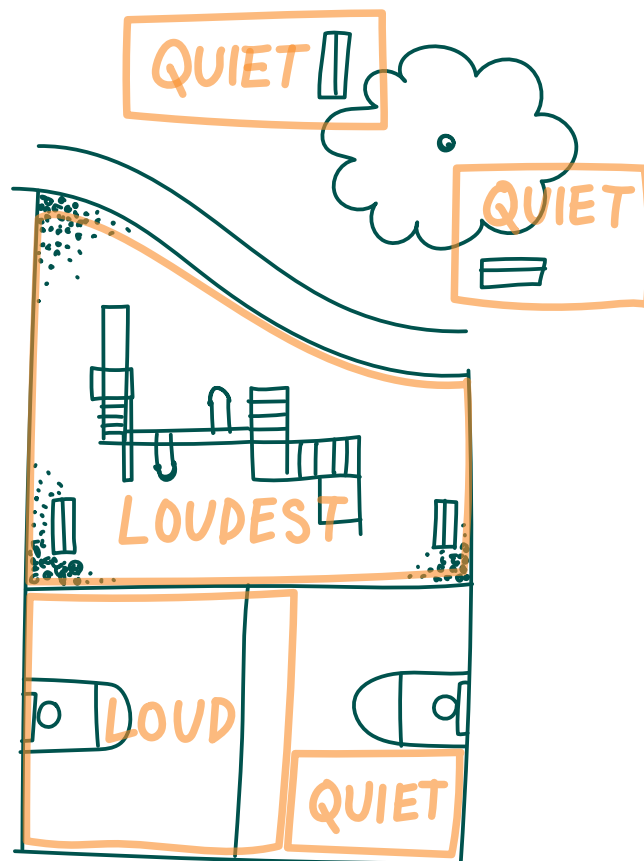
Grades/Classes Present at Lunchtime:

Which part of the cafeteria is loudest?

Which part is quietest?

What's making all the noise?

Sample:



Observations:

CAFETERIA MAPPING ACTIVITY

LOOK

Date:

Time:

Grades/Classes Present at Lunchtime:

How is the cafeteria decorated?

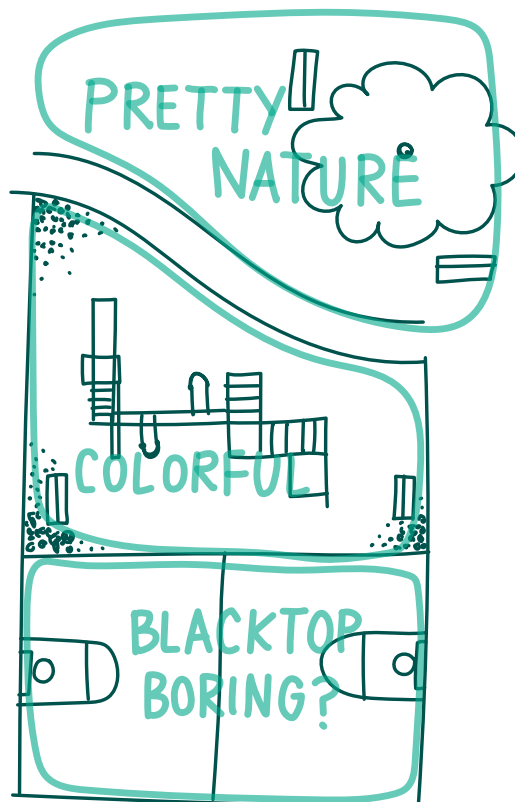
Are there places of interest that catch your eye?

Are there places of peace for your eyes to relax?

What colors are in the cafeteria?

What message about food does the cafeteria appearance convey?

Sample:



Observations:

CAFETERIA MAPPING ACTIVITY

FEEL

Date:

Time:

Grades/Classes Present at Lunchtime:

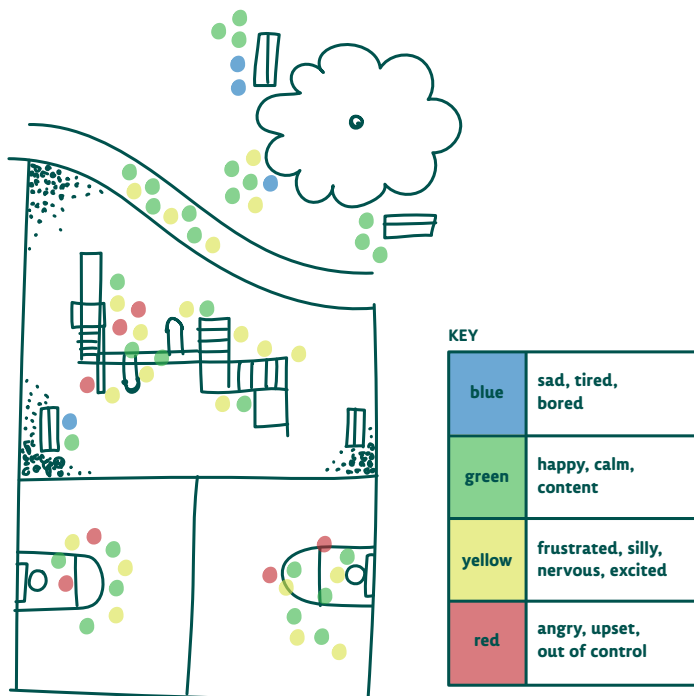
What is the mood in the cafeteria? (silly, chaotic, calm, quiet, boring)

When you look around, what do students' faces look like?

What do adults' faces look like?

Directions: Have a blue, green, yellow, and red colored pencil. Go around the cafeteria to different students. Ask, *How do you feel when you're in the cafeteria for lunch?* Make a dot in the color that matches how they feel. Record or write down anything surprising or interesting you hear them say.

Sample:



I observed _____ .

I noticed _____ .

A student told me _____ .

An adult told me _____ .

Sharing Sensory Maps

60
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can we share what we learned about the cafeteria with the rest of the school?

How can we show what the cafeteria looks like, sounds like, and feels like?

How can we improve the cafeteria environment?

OVERVIEW

Students will create a map synthesizing their findings from the sensory mapping activity. This map, ultimately displayed on a prominent bulletin board, will be meant to convey information to the rest of the school.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to synthesize their findings from the sensory mapping activity.
- ✓ Students will be able to display the data in a meaningful way.

SKILLS

Mapmaking

CONCEPTS

Five senses, sensory experience

MATERIALS

- Butcher paper, premeasured to fit bulletin board (see Preparation below for details)
- Sample Sensory Map
- Students' Cafeteria Mapping Worksheets
- Materials for creating map:

- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Scissors
- Construction paper

PREPARATION

- › Coordinate with principal or other school staff to have a designated Our Cafeteria Project bulletin board (or empty wall space) located somewhere central in school where many students, parents, and staff will see it.
- › Premeasure your piece of butcher paper (or pieces of printer paper taped together) to fit the bulletin board or designated wall space. Leave room for flyers or other information you'll want to share throughout the project.
- › Photocopy Sample Synthesized Sensory Map to share as a model with students.
- › Display Sample Sentence Starters for Team Summaries.

SAMPLE SENTENCE STARTERS FOR TEAM SUMMARIES

- We learned . . .
- We discovered . . .
- We observed . . .
- We were surprised to find . . .
- It seems students could benefit from . . .
- It seems it would be helpful to school staff if . . .
- A possible solution we saw is . . .

ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Explain that now they'll put all their maps together to display to the school how the cafeteria looks, sounds, and feels. *(2 min.)*

2. Brainstorming: Give students space to talk through how they envision all the data being combined into one map, recording their ideas as they discuss. *(5 min.)*

3. Reviewing Model: Show students the Sample Sensory Map, and explain how different colors represent each sense that they studied. Explain that they'll be using their worksheets from the mapping activities to add to the group map and to also write a summary on their team's particular sense. In other words, the final map should include bullet points summarizing findings on sight, feel, and sound. *(10 min.)*

4. Mapmaking: Ask for a volunteer to create the main skeleton of the map, copying from the visual mappings the group did together during the first session. Meanwhile, have the rest of the group get back into their original teams to write their summaries. *(30–40 min.)*

REFLECTION *(5 min.)*

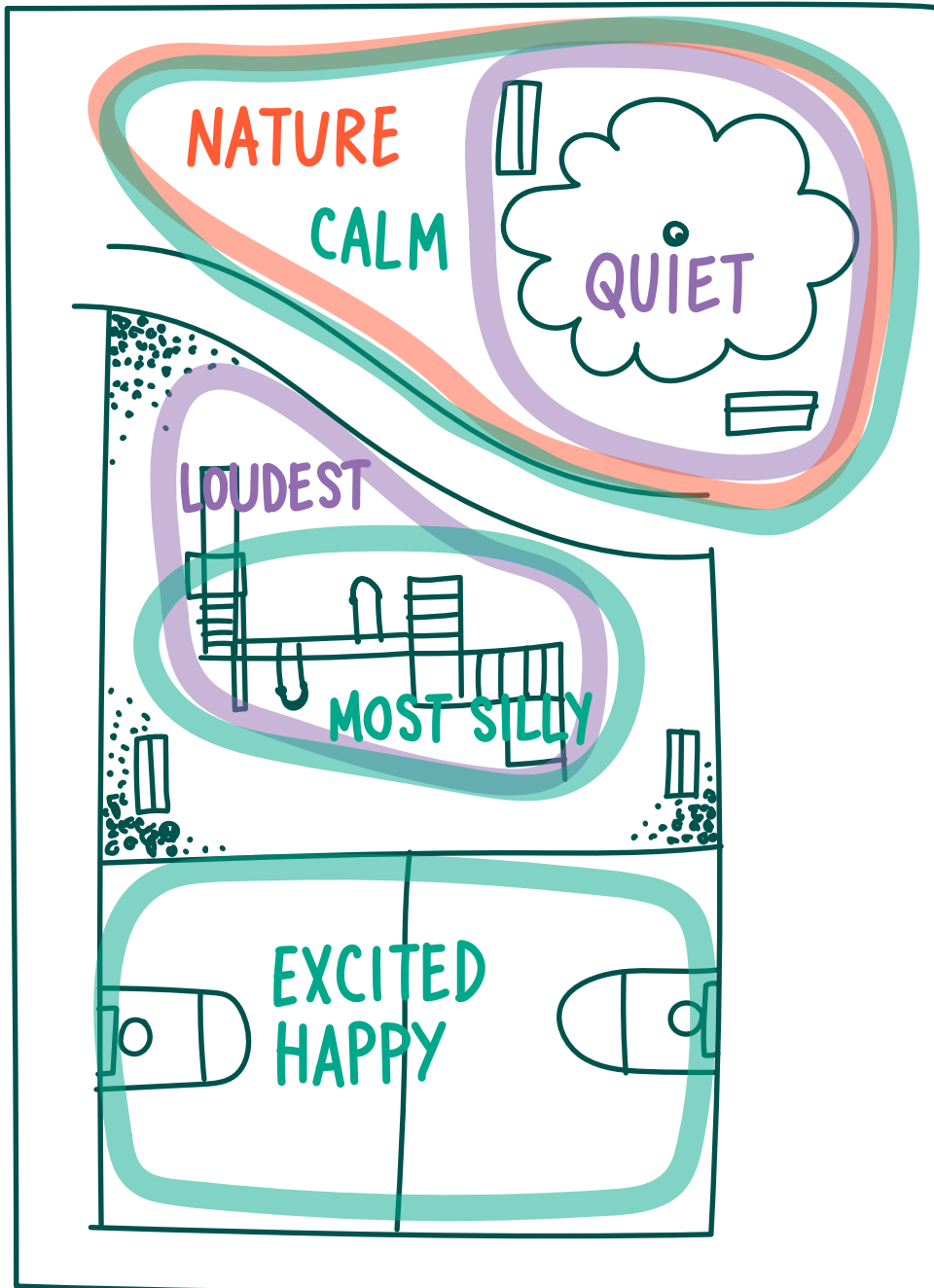
- *What was the most challenging part of putting our maps and data all together?*
- *What do you see now that the information is all together that you didn't see when you were focused on just your one sense?*
- *How do you think people in the school will feel to see this map we've created?*
- *Are there any specific observations we want to highlight for people to give feedback on?*

EXTENSION

Creating an Interactive Component: Set up a station beside the bulletin board where other school community members could add their own perspectives, such as a suggestion box, Post-its they could add to the map with questions and comments, or a blank piece of chart paper with a prompting question.

SYNTHESIZED SENSORY ZONAL MAP

The Playground Sensory Map



Sound SUMMARY

- brown
- purple
- blue

Sample Sound Map



Look SUMMARY

- brown
- purple
- blue

Sample Look Map



Feel SUMMARY

- brown
- purple
- blue

Sample Feel Map



Research Phase: Cafeteria Exploration

Now that students have gotten to know their own cafeteria well through mapping and hearing from others about their experience in the space, the next couple of activities expand students' scope of analysis through studying cafeterias beyond their own. In the first activity, **Cafeteria Field Trips**, students take a virtual field trip, viewing another school in the country and getting to have an informal discussion with students at that school. There are many variations and adaptations for how to achieve the essential goal of giving students a window into another school cafeteria. The second activity, **Cafeterias in the Media**, has students considering how cafeterias are depicted in media, providing alternate settings to help students compare and contrast their own cafeteria. Note that both of the activities in this section are listed as "optional." This means that though these activities can help enrich the experience of students participating in OCP, they are not a necessary step to complete the program.

Cafeteria Field Trips

(two sessions)

115
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How do we determine what an ideal cafeteria environment is?

What does it feel like to be in another school's cafeteria?

OVERVIEW

Students will take a virtual “field trip” to another school’s cafeteria lunchtime to explore how another school’s cafeteria environment looks and feels.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to assess another school’s cafeteria environment.
- ✓ Students will be able to compare and contrast their school environment with another.

SKILLS

Compare and contrast

MATERIALS

- Smartphone or tablet with video recording technology
- Projector
- Classroom board
- Talking stick or stuffed animal for taking turns

PREPARATION

- › Coordinate with another educator or FoodCorps member to provide a video tour to students during an active lunch period.
- › Plan a specific time that you’ll call in to the other school to answer questions about what they saw in the video. Or coordinate a cafeteria description letter swap opportunity.
- › Draw a variation on a KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) chart on the board with the headings, Want to Know, Learned, Still Want to Know.
- › Ensure access to technology including a smartphone or tablet, projector, and classroom board.
- › Arrange extra time for students to edit the video, if needed.

SAMPLE FEATURES OF THE CAFETERIA TO HIGHLIGHT

- How students wait in line to get food
- How walls are decorated
- How tables and chairs are arranged
- How loud or quiet the lunch period is
- How students clean up their spots
- Whether there’s a composting system/ no-thank-you table

Want to Know	Learned	Still Want to Know

SESSION I ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Explain to students that they'll be going on a virtual field trip to see another school's cafeteria, and that they'll also be preparing a video for students at that school to view. **(2 min.)**

2. Preparing: Ask students, *What parts of our cafeteria should we film when we make our video?* Create a checklist of features to film in the cafeteria. For each feature they name, ask them why they think it's important to include in the video. Make a plan of how you'll create the film. Who will shoot it? Who will narrate or be a presenter in it? Who will edit it? Plan a specific day that you'll record the video. It makes sense for it to be during the students' lunch period. Be sure to hold extra time for the students to edit the video, if needed. **(15 min.)**

School Day Task

Make sure to be there to support students during the day of filming, but let them be in charge. Ensure they have enough time to film, and encourage taking time to practice using the technology before using it.

Pen-Pal Variation

Have students write to Cafeteria Pen Pal (i.e., a student at a school where there is another FoodCorps member). Have the letter describe what their cafeteria is like, and explain what they like and don't like about their cafeteria

environment and experience. If you're using email, the letters could include photos students take of their cafeteria. You can also integrate the pen pal writing into the video activity by having some students focus on the video and other students write letters.

SESSION II ACTION STEPS

3. Preparing Questions: Ask students what they want to know about another school's cafeteria. List those questions in the W (Want to know) column of the chart on the board. **(5 min.)**

4. Watching the "Field Trip" Video or Reading

Letters: After viewing the video or reading the letters from the other school, ask students, *What did you learn about their cafeteria experience?* Add their responses to the L (Learned) column. **(15 min.)**

5. Preparing New Questions: Ask, *Now that we've taken our virtual field trip, what do you still want to know? What new questions do you have?* Add these questions to the "Still want to know" column. **(5 min.)**

6. Calling into Your Buddy School: Call into your buddy school at the predetermined time, using FaceTime or Skype on your computer and projecting the screen for students to see. Have the member and students introduce themselves, then ask questions that arose for students after watching each Virtual Field Trip video or reading

letters from students at the buddy school. **(15 min.)**

7. Discussion: Once you end the call, ask students for their impression. Ask, *In what ways is their school similar to ours? In what ways is it different? Is there anything you heard or saw about in their cafeteria that you wish could be part of ours?*
(5 min.)

REFLECTION **(5 min.)**

- *How did it feel to share our cafeteria with students from a school in a different part of the country?*
- *How did it feel to see another school's cafeteria that you've never been to?*
- *What was most surprising about seeing this other school?*
- *What were you not surprised to see about this other school?*

In-Real-Life Variation: Arrange to take a real field trip to another school's cafeteria in your district.

Slideshow Variation: Instead of video, you can have students photograph the different features of the school they'd like to highlight and then create a slideshow to share with your buddy school.

Cafeterias in the Media

45
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do television and movies depict school cafeterias?

OVERVIEW

Students will consider how school cafeterias are depicted in popular TV shows and movies and compare and contrast their own school cafeteria to what they view. They'll use this comparison to further determine what an ideal school cafeteria environment is like.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to evaluate whether the media's depictions of cafeterias is realistic.
- ✓ Students will be able to compare and contrast their cafeteria experience with those depicted in the media.

SKILLS

Compare and contrast

MATERIALS

- Computer and projector
- Cafeteria Compilation slideshow (see preparation below)
- Viewing Worksheet
- Classroom board

PREPARATION

- Create a Cafeteria Compilation slideshow with various clips of school cafeterias (in movies or TV shows appropriate for your age group). You might consult with a couple students beforehand to get ideas for shows they are familiar with.
- Draw a large empty Venn diagram on the board, labeled Our School Cafeteria over one circle and Other Cafeterias over the other.

ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Explain to students that to continue thinking about the school cafeteria environment, they're going to study how television shows and movies depict school cafeterias. Ask, *If you'd never been in a school cafeteria before, what would be your impression of what they're like, based on what you might've seen on TV, in books, or in movies?* Briefly discuss student responses. **(5 min.)**

2. Appreciating Our Cafeteria: Ask students, *What are all the things you like about our school cafeteria?* Have each student share something unique that they appreciate about the cafeteria or their lunchtime experience. Discuss these and how it's important to keep these things in mind as they watch the clips. **(5–10 min.)**

3. Viewing: Pass out the viewing sheet to students, explaining that they should take notes about what they like and don't like about the other cafeterias they see as they watch the videos. **(15 min.)**

4. Discussion: Create a Venn diagram with students to generate a discussion about how their cafeteria compares to these depictions. Discuss how their reflections are informed by their own cafeteria sensory maps or cafeteria field trip or pen pal experiences. **(10 min.)**

REFLECTION (5 min.)

- *What did you notice overall about how school cafeterias are shown in television and movies?*
- *Does it seem realistic and true to your own experience?*
- *How does watching these clips help you determine what your ideal school cafeteria would be?*
- *What aspects of the cafeteria are you more grateful for after watching these clips?*
- *What aspects of the cafeteria do you wish were different?*

Lunchtime-Around-the-World Variation

Find clips of what school cafeteria environments are like in various countries around the world. (YouTube has resources for the Japanese and French lunchtime experience.) Students will then compare and contrast their experience with those of other countries. See the FoodCorps lesson Mealtimes around the World for more ideas.

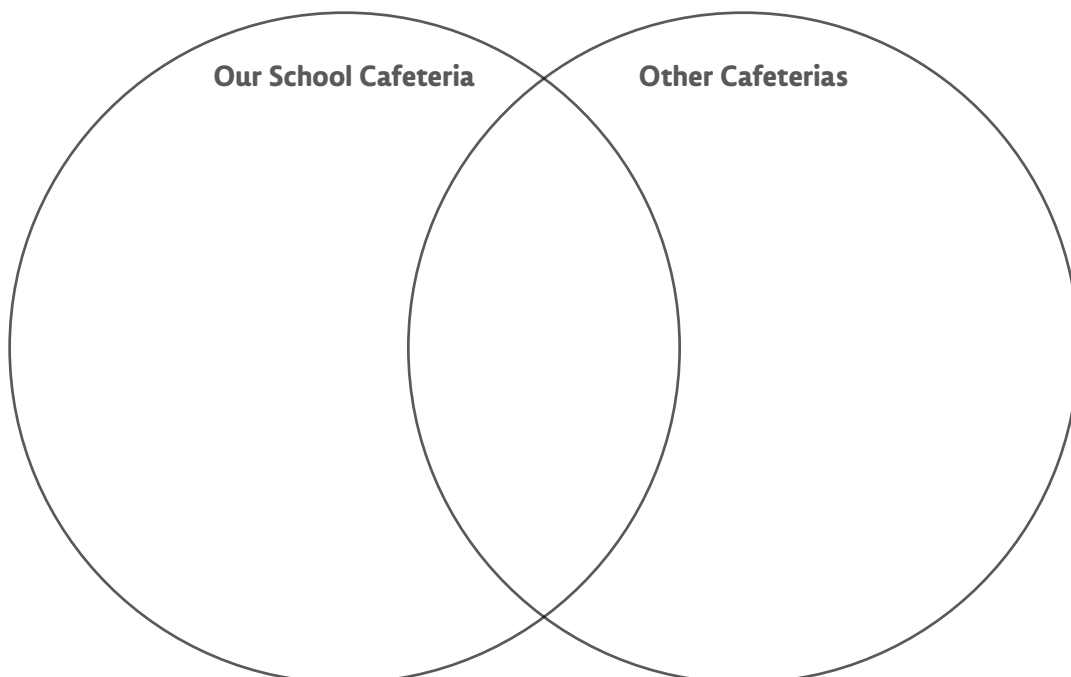
Name: _____ Date: _____

Viewing Sheet

Directions: As you watch the clips, write down things you like and dislike about the cafeterias you see. Consider the similarities and differences with our school cafeteria environment.

TV Show or Movie	What I Like	What I Dislike
Clip#1:		
Clip#2:		
Clip#3:		
Clip#4:		

Directions: Create a Venn diagram of the similarities between our school cafeteria and others we watched today.



Project Announcement

The next phase of the project will involve collecting project ideas from the rest of the school through classroom activities. See Seed Ideas on page 18 to get a feel for what ideas may arise.

The Cafeteria Club can continue spreading the word and encouraging students and the rest of the school community to check out their bulletin board (and provide feedback if you've set up a way to collect that).

Spread the word about this next phase of the project by making a schoolwide announcement such as the example below. This could be included in the school newsletter, said over the loudspeaker as a morning announcement, or announced during a PTA/PTO meeting. Encourage and support students from your Cafeteria Club to make the announcement.

Schoolwide announcement

A Cafeteria Club formed this year that's been working on creating a change to make the cafeteria environment more enjoyable for all students. We've studied our cafeteria through mapmaking and interviewed a bunch of people in our school community. Some interesting things we've found are _____. We're excited to work with nutrition services and administration on this project. Some classes may be asked to participate in a classroom activity. Teachers, please reach out if you'd like to be a participating classroom.

Flyer for teachers

Dear Teachers,

We, the Cafeteria Club, would love the opportunity to do an activity with your classroom. We're gathering ideas from students in the school about what change they'd love to see in the cafeteria to make it a more enjoyable environment. We would need about 45 minutes of classroom time to take students through the activity. If you're interested, please be in touch with our FoodCorps member about a time and date.

We know class time is valuable, and we appreciate your consideration in helping raise student voice.

Thank you!

Research Phase: Preparing for Idea Collection

An upcoming step in the program will be for students schoolwide to generate ideas for changes to make in the cafeteria. (See section Schoolwide Idea Collection on p. 64 for more information.) The following two activities help the Cafeteria Club prepare for helping facilitate these activities with their peers. The first activity, **Cafeteria Club Idea Generation**, guides students through the same experience they'll be leading their peers through in classrooms. The next activity, **Cafeteria Club Prepares for Supporting Classroom Brainstorming Activities**, provides scaffolding for students to prepare for their role as co-facilitators with you.

Cafeteria Club Idea Generation

70
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we make the cafeteria environment and experience more enjoyable for students?

OVERVIEW

Cafeteria Club students will brainstorm ideas for how to improve the cafeteria, which is a variation on the classroom activity that'll be implemented in classrooms throughout the school.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

✓ Students will be able to reflect on what makes a good mealtime environment/experience.

SKILLS

Brainstorming

MATERIALS

- Chart paper
- Painter's tape, if needed, to secure paper to walls
- 5 packs of Post-its of various colors (or index cards with tape)
- My Favorite Place to Eat Worksheet

PREPARATION

- Prepare a sample My Favorite Place to Eat Worksheet.
- Hang five pieces of chart paper around the room, labeling each with the categories look better, sound better, feel better, more fun, and more choices. Be sure to use the color coding

indicated below, so students will know where to place Post-its when the time comes.

ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Explain to the group that you'll be surveying the various classrooms in the school (at least one per grade) to hear from students about changes they'd like to see in the cafeteria environment or mealtime experience. Explain that today they'll go through the process other students will experience and that they'll get to help lead. **(5 min.)**

2. Favorite Place to Eat: Ask students to close their eyes and imagine their favorite meal. Say, *Once you can imagine that meal, think of your favorite place to eat it. It could be a restaurant or a friend or family member's home. Setting aside what's on your plate, imagine the space where you're eating. Are you inside or outside? What sounds do you hear? Is it loud or quiet? What is on the walls? Is there sunlight or lamps?* Keep asking these questions, prompting students to consider the aspects they'll be considering for the cafeteria. **(5 min.)**

3. Drawing Favorite Places to Eat: Ask students to open their eyes and explain that they're going to draw the environment and experience at their favorite place to eat. Say, *Environment is how the place looks, sounds, and feels physically, like are the chairs comfortable, or what's the temperature in the room. The experience is how the place feels emotionally or on the inside. For example, are you nervous, overwhelmed, or happy?* Pass out My Favorite Place to Eat worksheets to each student,

and have them draw their favorite place, labeling the various features. If you have time, have each student share about their favorite place to eat and various features they included in the drawing.

(10 min.)

4. Generating Cafeteria Ideas: Explain that they will now brainstorm ideas to improve the cafeteria environment/experience. Say, *With your favorite place that you just drew in mind, think of ideas that would make the cafeteria your favorite place to eat.* Explain, *Although food is a super important part of the cafeteria experience, we won't be including ideas for making changes to the food today.* Pass out one color of the Post-its, and explain the idea category that corresponds to that color, giving examples. For example, say, *On your yellow Post-its, put your ideas for how the cafeteria could feel better. This could be feeling on the inside, like your own feelings like happy or calm. Or it could be feeling on the outside, like how comfortable your chair is or the temperature in the room. These are going to be very different for each person. What might make one person calm or comfortable in the cafeteria is a meditation moment where everyone is quiet. But what might make someone else more comfortable is getting to talk as loudly as they want!* Explain to students that they should put one idea on each Post-it. Set a timer, and give the students two minutes to work on each category before moving onto the next. **(15 min.)**

- **LOOK BETTER/Blue:** What would make the cafeteria look better? For example, you might want colorful artwork on the walls or different lighting or plants.
- **SOUND BETTER/Green:** What would make the cafeteria sound better? For example, panels on the wall to absorb sound, soft music playing, or a rule to use a level-two voice.
- **FEEL BETTER/Yellow:** What would make

the cafeteria feel better?

- **Emotionally:** Inviting families to lunch on Fridays
- **Physically:** The temperature or more comfortable chairs
- **MORE FUN/Orange:** What would make the cafeteria more fun? For example, word games or puzzles you can play at your table when you're done.
- **MORE CHOICES/Red:** What would give you more choices in the cafeteria? For example, being able to sit with friends or being able to go back to the salad bar.

5. Gallery Walk: Give students a couple minutes to post their ideas onto the corresponding chart paper around the room. Then have students go around reading their peers' ideas and starring ones they agree with and writing commentary and questions on the chart paper beside the ideas.

(10 min.)

6. Discussion: Allow time for students to discuss what they observed during the gallery walk. Include questions like, "What was your favorite idea that wasn't yours that you read today? Did you notice any themes?" Ask students which parts of this activity younger students might need help with. **(10 min.)**

REFLECTION (5 min.)

- *What did you enjoy about this activity?*
- *How do you feel that the previous cafeteria exploration activities we've done over the past few weeks informed or prepared you to come up with ideas today?*

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Favorite Place to Eat Worksheet

DIRECTIONS: Using lots of details, draw your favorite place to eat! Label the different parts of the space, for example, “big windows.”

Cafeteria Club Prepares for Supporting Classroom Brainstorming Activities

65
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we support other students in brainstorming ideas for cafeteria improvements?

OVERVIEW

After participating in the brainstorm activity, the student group will prepare to help facilitate these schoolwide classroom activities for their peers. They'll create visual aids to support student brainstorming and plan for what role they can play when visiting classrooms.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to create visual materials to facilitate schoolwide classroom sessions.
- ✓ Students will be able to prepare their role in supporting classroom sessions.

MATERIALS

- Student Prep Sheet for Classroom Visits
- Schoolwide classroom visits calendar
- Copies of the Classroom Visits Plan for K–1 and 2–5
- Magazines and/or computer with printer (for students making collages or a slideshow as visual aids)
- Colored pencils or markers

PREPARATION

- › Make sure you've scheduled the classroom visits in advance of this session.
- › Have a calendar of classroom visits to share with students so you can assign students to play supporting roles at each classroom visit.
- › Make photocopies of Student Prep Sheet for Classroom Visits for each student.
- › Photocopy classroom visit plans to share with students.

Tips for Speaking in Front of the Classroom

- Project your voice so everyone can hear.
- Speak calmly (not too fast!).
- Stand tall and confident!
- Look at the audience.

Student Sample Roles During Grade K–1 and 2–5 Classroom Activities

Give introduction: Introduce yourselves. Explain the Cafeteria Club and what you’ve been working on. Explain that you’re in their classroom to get their ideas for a cafeteria project. Go over what they’ll do during the activity.

Create visual examples: Students will need help thinking of different places to eat. Your job is to collect pictures of different kinds of places where we eat. Create a collage or slideshow of the various places. Think about some of the interesting features you learned during our time studying other cafeterias.

Share visual examples: During the lesson, display the visual examples and give a quick explanation. Point out to students all the different places we eat.

Label K–1 worksheets: In a kindergarten or first-grade class, students will need help labeling their pictures. Walk around and ask each student to tell you what place their drawing is of. Then ask them to explain each thing they drew. Your job is to label everything they tell.

Pass out materials: You will pass out worksheets to all students at the right time. In second through fifth-grade classes, you’ll also pass out index cards to students, one of each color.

Give wrap-up: Thank students for all their ideas. Thank teachers for letting us use their time. Explain that you will be doing this same activity with one classroom in each grade. Then the Cafeteria Club will review ideas, and the whole school will vote on the top three ideas. Explain that the Cafeteria Club will work on a project to make the winning idea happen!

ACTION STEPS

1. Create Visual Materials: Have students create materials they think would be helpful for leading these sessions with other classrooms. **(20–30 min.)**

These could include the following:

- Polishing their own Favorite Places to Eat drawings, making sure to include labels explaining important features
- Collages of magazine cutouts of various spaces with labels of important features. (e.g., lots of natural light, round tables)
- If you have access to the technology (and know the classrooms you'll be visiting have a computer and projector), students can create a slideshow of interior spaces or various places to eat and/or images of inspiring cafeteria spaces.

2. Prepare for Classroom Sessions: Show students the lesson plan for classroom visits and, using the Students Prep Sheet for Classroom Visits Worksheet, have students plan their roles. Be sure to have students check in with their classroom teachers to get the dates and times they'd help out approved. **(15–20 min.)**

3. Practicing for Classroom Sessions: Once students have a script or plan for how they'll help facilitate, have them practice in front of each other, doing at least two run-throughs. **(15 min.)**

REFLECTION *(5 min.)*

- *Why do you think it's important for you all to be part of the classroom visits?*
- *What do you think will be most challenging about the classroom visits?*
- *How can we best prepare for those challenges?*

STUDENT PREP SHEET FOR CLASSROOM VISITS

I'm going to _____ classroom on _____
(day of week)(date)
at _____ during _____ .
(time)(this part of our class schedule)

- ☐ I discussed this with my classroom teacher.
- ☐ I have a plan for making up any assignments I miss.

Classroom Teacher's Name _____

Classroom Teacher's Signature _____

Lesson Step (Note: Some steps vary between K–1 and 2–5 grade activities.)	My Role / What I Will Say or Do
Step 1 Introduction	
Step 2 Modeling / Prompting	
Step 3 Drawing Favorite Places	
Step 4 Cafeteria Ideas	
Step 5 Wrap Up and Thank Teacher	

Ideas Phase: Schoolwide Idea Collection

The next step in the process is to visit classrooms to lead the **Brainstorming Ideas Classroom Activity** in partnership with students from your club. Note that there are two activities to lead in classrooms based on the grade level, one for grades K-1 (p. 65) and one for grades 2-5 (p. 68). Your goal should be to have at least one classroom from each grade. To recruit these classrooms, try sending out an email, getting recommendations from the principal for who to ask, or surveying the Cafeteria Club students' classrooms. Ideally, you already have relationships established with certain teachers, and you can make a direct ask of them. Be sure to give them pertinent details such as the time frame to be completed by and the length of time for the activity.

After you collect ideas from students, you will follow the steps outlined in **Narrow Results from Idea Collection to Top Three**. This exercise is easiest done without students.

Gathering Schoolwide Input

- Activities are estimated to take 35–40 minutes and are composed of students' reflecting on favorite places to eat and transferring those features to brainstorming changes to their school cafeteria.
- For both activities, remember to emphasize to students that we won't be including ideas for making changes to the food but will focus on making improvements related to how the cafeteria looks, sounds, and feels.
- The goal is to have one class per grade or as many as feasible; consider doing this activity with classrooms with whom you've already been working and have a regularly scheduled meeting time to alleviate some coordinating.
- If you are unable to lead activities in the classroom, schoolwide idea collection can happen by collecting ideas from students during lunch. Your Cafeteria Club can create fun posters and use the "sticky note" method to collect ideas with the posters on the cafeteria walls and do the drawing activity with younger students and collect ideas through conversations.
- No matter how you collect ideas, your Cafeteria Club members can generate idea collection excitement by making a schoolwide announcement during these days.
- The more classes you have participating, the longer it will take to interpret results, so be sure to account for that.

Brainstorming Ideas

Classroom Activity (GRADES K–1)

35
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we ensure the cafeteria environment is enjoyable for all students?

OVERVIEW

In this activity, students explore their feelings about their favorite place to eat and articulate their ideas to improve the cafeteria.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to reflect on what makes a good mealtime environment/experience.
- ✓ Students will be able to suggest ideas for improving the cafeteria environment and mealtime experience.

SKILLS

Brainstorming

MATERIALS

- My Cafeteria Worksheet
- Sample My Cafeteria Worksheet
- Sample pictures of places to eat (e.g., a picnic in the park, restaurant, or home)
- Pencils and crayons
- Chart paper (> 3 sheets) and a marker

PREPARATION

- Prepare your Cafeteria Club student group to help lead this activity. They should be the ones

to introduce the project in Action Step 1, provide examples and visuals at key steps, pass out and collect various materials, and express thanks and next steps for the project in Action Step 6.

- Meet with classroom teacher to review activity, and ensure pencils and crayons will be available.
- Print out copies of My Cafeteria Worksheet (one for each student).
- Make a sample My Cafeteria Worksheet with your own response to serve as a model for students. Even better, have your club students create sample worksheets to share with younger students.
- Print out sample pictures of places to eat. Ideally, have your club students gather these images.
- On chart paper, create two columns, one labeled “Where” and beside it “Why.”

ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Explain, *We’re here because we want to make the cafeteria a more enjoyable place to eat. We’re going to create a project where we make a change about one part of the cafeteria this year, but we want to hear from students, you!, about what change you’d like to see.* (The above script can serve as a template for the Cafeteria Club, but ideally have them write their own introduction to students to announce the project when they first arrive in classrooms. **(5 min.)**)

2. Model: Tell students that you’re now going

to think of your favorite places to eat. Say, for example, *My favorite place to eat is at my house because it has comfy chairs, and we like to play quiet music during mealtime.* Show students the drawing you made, and point out the different features that you like about eating there. Add your example, “at home,” to your prepared chart under “Where,” and under “Why,” write “music and comfortable chairs,” perhaps adding symbols like music notes and a picture of a chair. (Note: When the Cafeteria Club is helping run the activity, club members can share their favorite places to eat and why. If the Cafeteria Club has created drawings or collected images of various mealtime environments, have them share these here.) Share pictures of various places to eat to encourage expansive thinking. Be sure to provide students multiple examples, especially ones they might not immediately consider, such as, *A picnic, Why? Because it’s outside around lots of trees.* **(3 min.)**

3. Visualizing Favorite Places: Say, *Now it’s time for you to think of your favorite place to eat. It could be a restaurant or a friend or family member’s house. Leading students through a guided visualization, say, Close your eyes and imagine the place that feels the best to be. We’re not thinking of the food we eat there but how the place makes us feel. Keep your eyes closed and imagine that place. What’s on the walls? What are the tables and chairs like? Are there any windows? Are there any plants close by? Who are you sitting next to?* **(3 min.)**

4. Sharing Favorite Places: Tell students to open their eyes and think of reasons they like to be in that favorite place to eat. Say, *Remember we’re not thinking about food but about the environment of the place.* Explain, *The environment is a how a place looks, pointing at your eye and looking around the room, how it sounds, cupping your*

ear and showing that you’re listening, and how it feels, giving yourself a hug or putting your hands on your heart. Have three to five students share, popcorn style, their favorite places to eat, adding those places under the “Where” column and one to two words for “Why” they like it. **(10 min.)**

5. Generating Ideas: Explain that they will now think of ideas to improve the cafeteria environment/experience. Explain that the Cafeteria Club is very interested in their ideas and wants to try to make the cafeteria like their favorite place to eat. Ask students to think about their favorite places to eat that they mentioned in the opening of the lesson and say, *Think of ideas that would make the cafeteria your favorite place to eat. Think about the environment and the experience.* Pass out and review the My Cafeteria Worksheet, asking the students to create a drawing and/or write their idea(s). Explain, *Although food is a super important part of the cafeteria experience, we won’t be including ideas for making changes to the food today.* Then give students time to independently work on their drawings. Make sure to instruct classroom teachers and Cafeteria Club students to go around and help the students label each feature they include in their drawing, so it’s able to be included. **(10 min.)**

6. Sharing Ideas: If you have time, and your group is eager to share, have 5–10 students share, popcorn style, their favorite ideas with the class. Record ideas on chart paper for students to see. **(5 min.)**

7. Wrap-up: Thank students for all their ideas, and explain that you will be doing this same activity with a classroom in each grade. Explain that you’ll then review all the ideas and talk about them with the principal, other people in the school, and the

Cafeteria Club. Say, *Then you'll get to vote from the top three ideas which is your very favorite! Your teacher will have your voting ballot for you in a couple weeks!* Explain how Cafeteria Club will then help make the winning idea happen. (The above talking points can again serve as a template for the Cafeteria Club, who should ideally be speaking here.) **(5 min.)**

Brainstorming Ideas

Classroom Activity (GRADES 2-5)

40
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we make the cafeteria environment and experience more enjoyable for students?

OVERVIEW

In this activity, students explore their feelings about their favorite place to eat, articulate their ideas to improve the cafeteria, and vote on their favorite area of improvement. Note: Students will naturally want to discuss the food during this activity, which is fine, but our goal is to redirect them to thinking about aspects of the environment and experience.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

✓ Students will be able to reflect on what makes a good mealtime environment/experience.

MATERIALS

- Colored index cards (five distinct colors, one of each of the colored cards per student)
- My Favorite Place to Eat Worksheet
- Pencils, colored pencils, pens, markers
- Rubber bands and/or binder clips (to organize index cards at the end)
- Chart paper



PREPARATION

- Prepare your Cafeteria Club student group to help lead this activity. They should be the ones to introduce the project in Action Step 1, provide examples and visuals at key steps, pass out and collect various materials, and express thanks and next steps for the project in Action Step 6.
- On a piece of chart paper, create a visual aid for students that shows the color codes for each index card category (see example below).
- Meet with classroom teacher to review activity and ensure pencils and writing materials will be available.
- Print out copies of My Favorite Place to Eat Worksheet (one for each student).

ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Explain, *Your principal and school community are committed to making the cafeteria a more enjoyable place to eat. We're going to create a project where we make a change about one part of the cafeteria this year, but we want to hear from students, you!, about what change you'd like to see.* (Have the Cafeteria Club write their own introduction to students to announce the project when they first arrive to classrooms, but show this sample language to them as a jumping-off point.)

2. Prompting and Guided Visualization: Explain that to get started, we're going to think about places we eat besides the cafeteria. Have the Cafeteria Club share visuals of various places they've created, describing what makes each environment unique or pleasurable. Then ask students to close their eyes and imagine their favorite place to eat. Say, *Once you can imagine that place, think of your favorite place to eat it. It could be a restaurant or a friend or family member's house. Setting aside what's on your plate, imagine the space where you're eating. Are you inside or outside? What sounds do you hear? Is it loud or quiet? What is on the walls? Is there sunlight or lamps?* Keep asking these questions, prompting students to consider the aspects they'll be considering for the cafeteria. **(5 min.)**

3. Drawing Favorite Places to Eat: Ask students to open their eyes and explain that they're going to draw the environment and experience at their favorite place to eat. Say, *Environment is how the place looks, sounds, and feels physically, like are the chairs comfortable, or what's the temperature in the room. The experience is how the place feels emotionally or on the inside. For example, are you nervous, overwhelmed, or happy?* Pass out My

Favorite Place to Eat Worksheets to each student, and have them draw their favorite place, labeling the various features. If you have time and it feels appropriate for your group, have several students share about their favorite place to eat and various features. **(5 min.)**

4. Generating Cafeteria Ideas: Explain that they will now brainstorm ideas to improve the cafeteria environment/experience. Say, *With your favorite place that you just drew in mind, think of ideas that would make the cafeteria your favorite place to eat.* Explain, *Although food is a super important part of the cafeteria experience, we won't be including ideas for making changes to the food today.* Pass out one color of the index cards, and explain the idea category that corresponds to that color, referring to the chart with the color code and giving examples. (Have the Cafeteria Club pass out the materials and provide these examples. This is a place for them to share visuals as well.) For example, say, *On your yellow card, put your ideas for how the cafeteria could feel better. This could be feeling on the inside, like your own feelings or emotions like happy or calm. Or it could be feeling on the outside, like how comfortable your chair is or the temperature in the room. These are going to be very different for each person. What might make one person calm or comfortable in the cafeteria is a meditation moment where everyone is quiet. But what might make someone else more comfortable is getting to talk as loudly as they want!* Set a timer, and give the students two minutes to work on each category before moving to the next. **(15 min.)**

- LOOK BETTER/Blue: What would make the cafeteria look better? For example, you might want colorful artwork on the walls or different lighting or plants.
- SOUND BETTER/Green: What would

make the cafeteria sound better? For example, panels on the wall to absorb sound, soft music playing, or a rule to use a level-two voice.

- **FEEL BETTER/Yellow:** What would make the cafeteria feel better?
 - Emotionally: Inviting families to lunch on Fridays
 - Physically: The temperature or more comfortable chairs
- **MORE FUN/Orange:** What would make the cafeteria more fun? For example, word games or puzzles you can play at your table when you're done.
- **MORE CHOICES/Red:** What would give you more choices in the cafeteria? For example, being able to sit with friends, or being able to go back to the salad bar.

5. Sharing Ideas: If you have time, have students share their favorite idea with the class if they would like. Take six to ten ideas before moving on. **(5 min.)**

6. Voting for Favorite Idea: Say, *I'm sure you've come up with a bunch of awesome ideas, but if you could make just one change to the cafeteria, what would it be? Put a star next your favorite idea as a way of putting in your vote!* Be sure they understand this means one idea out of all five of your cards! Not one idea from each card. Ask the students to vote for their favorite idea by putting a star on it. Then collect all the index cards. Alternative: Have students vote with "heads down thumbs up" style. **(5 min.)**

7. Wrap-up: Thank students for all their ideas, and explain that you will be doing this same activity with one classroom in each grade and then reviewing all their ideas with the principal and the Cafeteria Club. Explain that the whole school will

vote on the top three ideas (ideas that got the most votes) on X date, and then the Cafeteria Club will help make that idea into a project! Say, *Your specific idea may not make it to the final voting, but the hope is that the final project is something that will benefit all students.* **(5 min.)**

VARIATION

Table Group Consensus Making: If you have extra time, add a step between Action Steps 3 and 4 in which table groups (or other group configurations) review their ideas with one another, coming to consensus about each category. Thus, each group of students would have five distinct ideas, one in each category. This is a way to whittle down the ideas during class time.

Rotating around the Room: Have each category be a station in the room, with chart paper displayed on the wall. With a timer set, students can rotate in table groups, moving clockwise each time the timer is up. At each station, students can write their ideas on Post-its and put them on the chart paper. If a student in the next rotation agrees with their idea, they can star it.

Narrow Results from Idea Collection to Top Three

OVERVIEW

Once you’ve collected ideas for all the classrooms, you’ll want to set aside a day for sorting and tallying all the index cards and worksheets.

MATERIALS

- Index cards collected from 2–5 classrooms
- Worksheets collected from K–1 classrooms
- Binder clips and/or rubber bands
- Scratch paper and pencil
- Chart paper and marker (for creating top five ideas to share with student group)

PREPARATION

- › Carry out the Brainstorming Ideas Classroom activity in at least one classroom per grade in the school.
- › Recruit at least one other volunteer to make the process go more smoothly.
- › Reserve an appropriate space with plenty of tables or surfaces ahead of time so you can spread out. A part of the library or an empty classroom would be ideal.

Color Category Key
<p>LOOK BETTER/Blue: What would make the cafeteria look better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For example, you might want colorful artwork on the walls or different lighting or plants <p>SOUND BETTER/Green: What would make the cafeteria sound better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For example, panels on the wall to absorb sound, soft music playing, or a rule to use a level-two voice <p>FEEL BETTER/Yellow: What would make the cafeteria feel better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotionally: Inviting families to lunch on Fridays• Physically: The temperature or more comfortable chairs <p>MORE FUN/Orange: What would make the cafeteria more fun?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For example, word games or puzzles you can play at your table when you’re done <p>MORE CHOICES/Red: What would give you more choices in the cafeteria?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For example, being able to sit with friends or being able to return to the salad bar

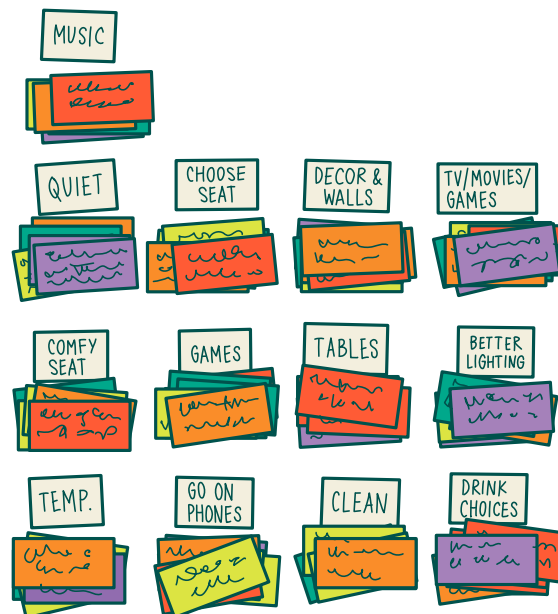
IDEA SORTING PROCESS

Step One: By Grade Level

1. SORT index cards into stacks by grade level (2–5).
2. SORT ideas by color categories within each grade, and discard cards focused solely on food and cards that are unintelligible.



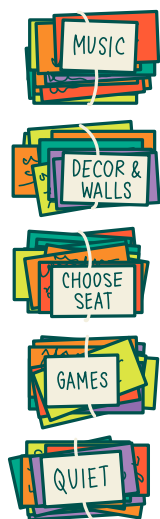
3. SORT color categories within each grade by idea area or theme (e.g., sort all idea cards that mention MUSIC into the same pile). Start with big themes and then look for small themes. Note: If an index card has multiple ideas on it, put these in a separate pile.
 - a. Big theme = lots of cards with the same idea
 - b. Small theme = some cards with the same idea
 - c. Misc. theme = few cards with the same idea
 - d. Multiple themes = more than one idea on a card



4. COMBINE idea area (theme) across color categories within each grade level (e.g., if music comes up under Feel Better and Sound Better, you can combine them).
5. TALLY the number of cards in each theme. Only tally the Big theme and Small theme piles, including all tallies from the Multiple idea pile.
6. PLACE the Multiple idea cards into one of the idea areas/themes that makes the most sense.
7. NOTICE trends within grade level and across the school.
8. (Optional) MARK cards by grade in case you'd like to refer to a card by grade later.

Step Two: Entire School

9. COMBINE idea areas/themes across grades and refine groupings if necessary.
10. TALLY the final number of ideas within each category to get a ranking for grades 2–5.



Our Cafeteria Project

TOP IDEAS

1. Music playing 95

- Can be used (in, during, on)
- between (in)

2. Decorations 95

- between (in, on, on)
- between (in)

3. Free seating 91

- in (in, on)
- at (in, on)

4. Games 56

- on (in, on)
- on (in)

5. Quiet 50

- on (in, on)
- on (in)

11. REVIEW K–1 classroom activity worksheets, and create a K–1 tally using the idea areas/themes from grades 2–5. If necessary, create new idea areas/themes.

12. CREATE a master schoolwide tally of grades K–5, combining the K–1 and 2–5 tallies.

13. REVIEW Misc. cards, and add to final idea areas/theme tally (optional).

14. CREATE 2–3 common subcategories within the top five idea areas/themes and TALLY (e.g., “calm music” and “popular music” within the Play Music category).

15. CREATE final summary document of top ten idea areas/themes with tallies, noting any relevant trends within and across different grade levels.

Ideas Phase: Narrowing Ideas and Presenting Proposal

The next activity, **Vetting the Top Three Ideas**, allows students to learn about the top five most popular ideas that were identified after collecting all ideas from the school. The group then uses an “idea scoring rubric” to determine what project is best for all students. It will be important to emphasize that the goal of OCP is to identify a project to make eating in the cafeteria an even more enjoyable experience for all students, not just the student leaders in the club. This framing will help orient the students around raising all student voices, not just their own.

Vetting The Top Three Ideas

45
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can we determine what project is best for all students?

How can you tell the story of many voices becoming one?

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students do a gallery walk of the school's cafeteria project ideas to get a sense of trends. They then learn the top five most popular ideas, and evaluate each using criteria based on maximum enjoyment and accessibility. As a group, they then narrow the five ideas down to three, using the scores generated.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

✓ *Students will be able to explain their rationale and reasoning for the top three ideas.*

✓ *Students will be able to evaluate project ideas using criteria.*

CONCEPTS

Stakeholders

Rationale

MATERIALS

- Clipboards
- Chart paper
- Painter's tape
- Idea Scoring Worksheet

PREPARATION

- › Narrow ideas to top five.
- › On chart paper (or slideshow if access to projector and screen) display the top five ideas with tallies beside each idea.
- › Post student index cards taped to chart paper and hang around the room for maximum visual impact. These can later be displayed in the hallway or cafeteria. (Alternatively have stacks of the index cards at different stations around the room.)
- › Photocopy Idea Scoring Worksheet for each student.

ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Briefly summarize for students the process of going to classrooms to gather ideas and the amount collected. Explain, *Your challenge today will be to now narrow the five down to three using certain criteria. (5 min.)*

2. Gallery Walk: Explain to students that every idea gathered from the school is represented here. Say, *Before you see what we've determined to be the five most popular ideas, we wanted to give you a chance to get a sense of the most popular responses. Your goal will be to see if you can notice any trends, like "It seems a lot of people want ____."* Pass out paper and clipboards, and have students walk around to answer the

following questions: *What are the top three trends you see (most popular ideas or categories of ideas)? What was the most interesting/exciting idea you saw?* Alternatively, have stacks of index cards in three to four piles around the room. Have a couple students at each stack sort through the index cards, and observe trends through this process. **(5–10 min.)**

3. Discussing Trends: Gather students back in a circle, and ask them to share their observations. **(5 min.)**

4. Present Top Five: Explain the process you underwent for whittling down responses from upwards of 500 to 5. Display the top five ideas for students, stating each and the amount of votes/mentions each got. **(5 min.)**

5. Explain Idea Scoring: Show the students the scoring chart paper with the top five ideas and review as a group, explaining, *These three statements are our goals for the cafeteria project. We want the cafeteria to reflect what students feel is fun and enjoyable, we want it to be a calm and stress-free eating experience for you, and we want the project to be something that every student in the school will benefit from. It's not worthwhile if only a small group of students would like or feel the change.* Answer any clarifying questions students might have, and check in to see if the group has common definitions of what “fun,” “enjoyable,” and “stress-free” means to each person. **(5 min.)**

6. Scoring Top Five Ideas: Use the worksheet to go through the top five ideas. Have a student volunteer read the idea aloud, and then say, *This idea will make the cafeteria a more exciting and fun place to be. Show me a thumbs up if you agree, Thumbs neutral if you're unsure, or thumbs down if you disagree.*

Allow for a minute of discussion if the group seems very divided, or there are strong differing opinions. Tally the score for the first idea, and then move on to the next, repeating the process. **(10 min.)**

7. Group Consensus and Rationale: Once each idea has been evaluated, explain to the group that the maximum score an idea can get is (1 x the number of students voting). Start by ranking the ideas to see which scored the highest. Eliminate the lowest scores and then have students discuss, coming to consensus if more than three ideas tied for highest scores. Write the top three ideas on chart paper. Have students begin to fill out the rationale section if you have time, otherwise move on to reflection, and pick it back up during the second session. **(15 min.)**

REFLECTION **(5 min.)**

- *How was the experience of seeing all the responses from students in the school?*
- *How do you feel now that we've narrowed down to the top three ideas we're going to present?*
- *How do these ideas relate to what we've observed about our cafeteria and seen in other cafeterias?*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Our Cafeteria Project

Idea Scoring Rubric

Directions: Rate the idea using the scoring rubric below.

Idea:

This idea will . . .	Thumbs Up	Neutral	Thumbs Down
make the cafeteria a more exciting and fun place to be.			
create a more calm and stress-free eating experience.			
be something every student can benefit from.			
be feasible for our group to accomplish.			

Score: _____

Ideas Phase: Prepare for Meeting with Adult Stakeholders

The next steps take place in three sessions. The first session, **Session One: Prepare for the Proposal**, focuses on developing a proposal to present to school leadership and stakeholders. Remember that, before leading these sessions with students, check in with the school principal (and others) about the top three projects to ensure they would approve of going further with any of those options. You will discuss the rationale for each idea using the provided template, and then the group will craft the proposal using the proposal script template. In the second session, **Session Two: Practice for the Proposal**, students will practice presenting their proposal, ideally in front of school staff who can provide feedback. You'll also discuss the basics of what makes a good presentation. The last session, **Presenting the Proposal**, allows students to present their findings and rationale for the top three ideas to the school principal and other staff before schoolwide voting on the final project idea!

Session One: Prepare for the Proposal

(two sessions)

120
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we prepare a proposal that accurately reflects the needs and interests of the entire school?

OVERVIEW

Students will prepare to meet with stakeholders to present their findings on their cafeteria research as well as their rationale for the top three ideas the school will vote on.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to synthesize their learning to share with others.
- ✓ Students will be able to justify each project idea based on their learning.

MATERIALS

- Our Cafeteria Project Ideas Proposal
- Stationery or note cards

PREPARATION

- › Before continuing with your student group, check in with the principal (and others) about the top three projects, ensuring that they would approve of going further with any of those options. Have the top 10 ideas on hand in case concerns arise with any of the top three, and you need to revisit other ideas.

- › Photocopy Our Cafeteria Project Ideas Proposal (for each student).
- › Write a sample invitation for students to use as a model when they are writing invitations for stakeholders.

SESSION I ACTION STEPS

1. Review: Have students review where they left off last session, evaluating and confirming the top three ideas. **(3 min.)**

2. Explain the Activity: Explain to students that they'll be presenting the top three ideas to stakeholders in the school. Explain that stakeholders are the people who would be affected by and involved in the project. Ask students to list who they think are the stakeholders. Explain that they'll be inviting those people to come together to hear their proposal. **(5 min.)**

3. Connecting Ideas to Cafeteria Explorations:

Go through each idea with students, discussing how the idea helps solve or improve something they observed during their time studying the cafeteria. Have a student be a notetaker, filling out the Our Cafeteria Project Ideas proposal. Alternatively, you can transcribe as they have the conversation, being sure to stay true to their words. Explain that these connections they came up with are the rationale, or reasons, behind doing the proposed projects. **(15 min.)**

4. Writing the Proposal Script: Walk through the proposal template with students, having them provide the words to fill in the blanks but offering prompts or reminders if they need more support. **(15 min.)**

5. Sending Invitations: Have students write invitations to stakeholders, inviting them to join for the proposal presentation. Post the relevant information they should include where students can see, including the date, location, and time frame. **(10 min.)**

REFLECTION (5 min.)

- *What would you want to know if you were a stakeholder?*
- *How do you think other students in the school will feel about voting on these top three ideas?*

Session Two: Practice for the Proposal

OVERVIEW

Devote a second meeting with students to have them add any finishing touches to the written proposal, and most important, getting them on their feet to practice presenting.

PREPARATION

- › Invite a couple teachers or other school staff to watch their run-throughs and provide constructive feedback.
- › Select a couple theater games you'll play with your students from the list below or others you're familiar with.

Theater Games and Exercises

Zip Zap Zowie: To practice eye contact and concentration; students stand in a circle and pass the energy around the circle by saying “zip” and making eye contact. The person on the receiving end then finds someone else across the circle to pass it to and says, “zap,” as they pass the energy. The next person who receives the energy says “zowie,” as they pass it to someone else and it repeats. Students can use eye contact, body language, and hand gestures to pass the energy along. You should move at a good pace, so it has a rhythmic feel. You can play where if people don't realize that they're on the receiving end, then the speaker is “out” because they didn't make their intention clear enough.

Floppy Fluffy Puppies: To practice projection; have students face a partner, and take turns reciting the lines “floppy fluffy puppies” (or some other fun phrase or tongue twister). Have them take a step back and recite it again, only louder. Have them continue taking turns but only stepping back once they can hear each other.

Box Breathing Technique: To help steady breath and alleviate jitters; students will take two breaths in and out, with each in and out breath the same length. Have students raise their pointer finger and draw a box in the air, one side of the box for each four count in or out. The first couple times you can count aloud for them, four seconds breathing in, four seconds breathing out, another four seconds breathing in, and a final four seconds breathing out to complete the box. Then have them practice on their own.

SESSION II ACTION STEPS

1. Warm-Up: Explain that today they're going to practice presenting their proposal. Say, *To warm up you're going to play some improvisational games! These are games that actors in the theater play to warm up their voices, practice speaking for an audience, and help them get over jitters.* Play a few rounds or a couple different games to help students be more comfortable presenting.

2. Review: Review with students the written proposal they prepared during your last meeting. Ask students whether they feel anything is missing and modify as needed.

3. Determine Roles: Have students designate roles (i.e., who will say what).

4. What Makes a Good Presentation: Discuss with students what makes a good presentation, hearing from them about the qualities they think are important. Make a list together, so you can refer to these after their run throughs.

5. Practice: Have students run through the presentation several times. Explain that they don't have to have it memorized, but they should practice until they feel comfortable and can speak their words fluently and confidently.

6. Preparing for Questions: Ask students for questions and concerns they believe the stakeholders might raise based on the project ideas. Make a list, and for each question or concern, have students practice providing an answer.

REFLECTION (5 min.)

- *How do you feel about the presentation on _____ day?*
- *What are some things you can do between now and then to feel more confident and prepared?*

OUR CAFETERIA PROJECT IDEAS PROPOSAL

Idea	Rationale
<p>1. _____</p>	<p>Does this project proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> make the cafeteria a more exciting and fun place? <input type="checkbox"/> make the cafeteria a more calm and stress-free area? <input type="checkbox"/> benefit the whole school? <p>When we studied the cafeteria, we discovered _____</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>This project idea would help _____</p> <p>_____.</p>
<p>2. _____</p>	<p>Does this project proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> make the cafeteria a more exciting and fun place? <input type="checkbox"/> make the cafeteria a more calm and stress-free area? <input type="checkbox"/> benefit the whole school? <p>When we studied the cafeteria, we discovered _____</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>This project idea would help _____</p> <p>_____.</p>
<p>3. _____</p>	<p>Does this project proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> make the cafeteria a more exciting and fun place? <input type="checkbox"/> make the cafeteria a more calm and stress-free area? <input type="checkbox"/> benefit the whole school? <p>When we studied the cafeteria, we discovered _____</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>This project idea would help _____</p> <p>_____.</p>

Directions: Use the following template to write the proposal you'll share in your meeting with stakeholders.

Proposal Script Template

Thank you for taking the time to hear our proposal.

[Introduce yourselves.]

We are the Cafeteria Club. We meet every _____ in room _____ to _____.

Our group studied the cafeteria over the past _____.

Our goal was to explore how to make the cafeteria a more exciting and fun place and a more calm and stress-free area and to develop a project that would create change that the whole school will benefit from.

We interviewed _____.

We studied other cafeterias and were inspired by _____.

We mapped the cafeteria and learned _____.

Overall, we found _____ (summarize positive things about the cafeteria).

We also learned _____ (summarize areas of improvement).

Then we surveyed _____ (number of) classrooms to learn what changes students want to see in the cafeteria.

There were _____ (number of) ideas shared.

Trends we noticed were _____.

The top _____ most popular were _____.

The idea to _____ is an important idea to have in the vote because _____. When we studied the cafeteria, we discovered _____, and this would help _____.

The second idea to _____ is an important idea to have in the vote because _____.

When we studied the cafeteria, we discovered _____, and this would help _____.

We chose _____ idea as the third one because _____.

Now we'll turn to you and ask for your thoughts. What questions or concerns do you have about these project ideas?

[Respond to questions.]

Thank you again for your time and for asking important questions.

Again, we meet in room _____ every _____. Please feel free to join us there to discuss this project further.

Presenting the Proposal

Present to Stakeholders!

Students will present their findings and rationale for the top three ideas. They'll have prepared for this day through the three sessions: Vetting the Top Three Ideas, Prepare for the Proposal, and Practice the Proposal.

Through those sessions, students should have sent an invitation to who they determined were the key stakeholders and prepared a proposal to present. Be sure to coordinate and follow up on your own with stakeholders to ensure the meeting is a success. Also gauge if there may be push back on some ideas before the meeting to prepare students' expectations accordingly. Do your best to set a time that works for all stakeholders to participate, which may be challenging with various schedules. If some stakeholders aren't able to attend the meeting, develop a strategy to engage them in an alternative manner.

Presentation Flow

Students will do the following:

1. Introduce themselves and the club.
2. Summarize their findings.
3. List the top three project ideas and the rationale for each.
4. Field questions from stakeholders.
5. Thank stakeholders, and invite them to follow up at a later meeting.

Stakeholder Response

The goal is that at this meeting the stakeholders are authentically listening to the students present and are providing feedback to the proposal. That said, at this juncture, because the FoodCorps member has been in good communication throughout the process, there shouldn't be unexpected pushback about the proposal. If there is concern or debate that arises for one (or more) of the ideas, it will be important for the FoodCorps member to have prepared for this and work with stakeholders and administrators to ensure that student's enthusiasm for the project isn't negatively affected. It's important that students are set up for success, and if separate adult dialogue and discussion needs to happen, it should be planned for ahead of time.

Ideas Phase: Voting Week

In the next phase you will focus on preparing for the school-wide voting week. This includes engaging students in creating anticipation for the big day by letting the school know what to expect, hanging posters, etc. It will also be important to determine how and where the voting will take place (in the cafeteria, classrooms, or other location), create school-wide announcements, and coordinate with teachers, if voting takes place in classrooms. This section also includes two sample voting ballots to use with younger and older students.

Prepare for Voting Week

Have students create posters helping build anticipation that can be hung up to a week before. Have the posters announce the three projects that will be voted on, how they will be voting, and on what day. See if students are willing and able to make the morning announcements.

Voting Process

Voting can happen in the classroom or cafeteria. If you are voting in the classroom, remember to communicate clearly with teachers (see sample letter) and develop a system for passing out ballots in the classroom and collecting ballots at the end of the day. If you are voting in the cafeteria, remember that though voting will happen more quickly, this process may be chaotic, and you may miss more students. One idea to prevent double voting: pass out stickers to students who have voted. This will also incentivize students to participate! In either case, students in the club can make voting boxes to be used in classrooms or the cafeteria.

FoodCorps Member Timeline For Voting Day Process

- ☐ Facilitate an announcement at the beginning of the week.
- ☐ Have students hang posters announcing the top three ideas between one week and two days before voting day.
- ☐ Facilitate a morning announcement the day before.
- ☐ Pass out ballots to each classroom on voting day.
- ☐ Collect ballots from each classroom by the end of voting day.
- ☐ Set aside three hours to tally votes.
- ☐ Facilitate announcement the next day, unless the results are ready earlier.

Morning Announcement Suggestions

Day before: Good morning. As you know, we'll be making an exciting new change in our cafeteria soon. We have gathered hundreds of ideas from all of you about how to make the cafeteria a more enjoyable place. Tomorrow is the day you get to vote on what cafeteria project you'd like to see happen this year! Be on the lookout for posters in the hallways for the three ideas you'll be voting on!

Day of: A reminder that today is the day you'll be voting in your classrooms for your favorite cafeteria project idea! You might have seen the posters announcing the three ideas. The first idea is _____, the second idea is _____, and the third idea is _____.

Day after: The winning idea for Our Cafeteria Project is _____! (Describe percentage this idea won by.) The goal/plan is . . .

Classroom Teacher Directions

Share the following letter with teachers in staff mailboxes and/or through email.

Dear Teachers,

Thank you so much for your part in helping us get input from all students about Our Cafeteria Project, an exciting opportunity for students to weigh in on what change they'd like to see in their cafeteria. The voting process should only take 5–10 minutes of your time. Feel free to fit it in where it makes the most sense for your schedule as long as it happens by the end of TODAY, _____.

- 1. Remind students that Our Cafeteria Project is an exciting opportunity to see a change in the cafeteria. Say, *The principal and the whole school community want the cafeteria to reflect you, the students who eat there every day. Students gave ideas for a project that would make the cafeteria a more enjoyable place to eat. Those ideas have been narrowed down to three, and right now, you'll get to vote on what project you want to see happen in the cafeteria!*
- 2. Remind students that we want to know what each of them wants individually, so they can't talk or look at someone else's vote!
- 3. Pass out a ballot to each student in the class. Give students a couple minutes to make their vote and then collect ballots.
- 4. Tell students the winning project idea will be announced the next day.
- 5. FoodCorps member _____ will collect ballots from your classroom by the end of the day.
- 6. If you have time, please feel free to tally votes, and leave a note with the winner on the top of your pile.

Thank you again for your help in ensuring every student's voice is heard!

Our Cafeteria Project Voting Ballot

Create a voting ballot such as the example to the right.

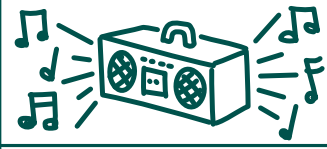


Directions: Put an X next to the Cafeteria Project you want!

Our Cafeteria Project Voting Ballot

DIRECTIONS: Put an X next to the Cafeteria Project you want!

Idea 1:	
Idea 2:	
Idea 3:	

For Younger Grades: Sketch an image that represents each idea (see example below). Alternatively, the teacher can present each idea and have students do a thumb vote with their heads down.

1.	music	
2.	free sit	
3.	art	

Project Implementation and Completion Phase: Getting Started!

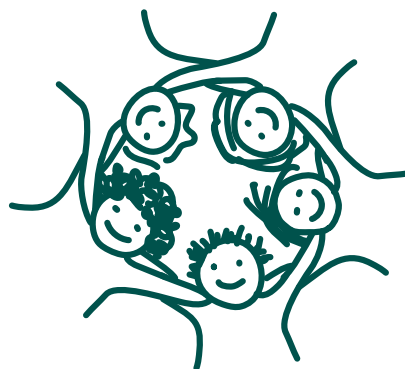
Check in with Stakeholders about Winning Idea

The next phase of the process will be students implementing the project around the winning idea!

Before you meet again with the Cafeteria Club, check in with the principal and other stakeholders to hear their thoughts on the winning project. They should have already given their approval of the top three ideas, so nothing should be a surprise; however, you'll want to have a sense of their concerns or preferences about how the winning idea is carried out and provide an opportunity to express these. You'll have to consider how you broach stakeholders' concerns or ideas with the Cafeteria Club. You can use the activity below to do this, or set aside a different time and strategy, depending on the stakeholder feedback.

The activities in the phase are **Checking in and Refining the Project Idea** where students can regroup and reflect on their work so far. The next activity, **The Four Ts: Initial Planning**, allows the group to discuss logistical and planning details using a framework focusing on Task, Team, Tools, and Time.

Finally, during **Check in with Stakeholders about Project Implementation**, you will share the Four Ts plan with stakeholders and use a chart to track feedback and input.



Checking In and Refining the Project Idea

60
MIN.

(total time for session 1 and 2)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we regroup as a team and reflect on our work so far?

OVERVIEW

This session asks you to take a moment to pause with your students and reflect on all that has transpired since the start of the project. Students will check in on group dynamics and then start to refine the winning project idea.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to express their feelings and beliefs about the project so far.
- ✓ Students will be able to troubleshoot concerns that arise in the group.
- ✓ Students will be able to define the project they'll be working on going forward.

SKILLS

Reflecting, perspective-taking

MATERIALS

- Group Agreements (from the start of the project)
- Questions for Refining the Project Idea

PREPARATION

- › Display the group agreements for all students to see.
- › Display Questions for Refining the Project Idea.

Questions for Refining the Project Idea

- What is the goal for this project?
- What will success look like when the project is finished?
- What's the hardest thing to figure out about this project?
- What are some of our ideas?
- What are the different ways this project could be accomplished or look like at the end?
- Which way of doing the project serves all students?
- Which way of doing the project would the stakeholders, such as the cafeteria staff, most appreciate?

SECTION II ACTION STEPS

1. Winning Idea Check-In: Ask students how they feel about the winning idea. You might consider framing this as a journal prompt to start, giving students time to quietly think before sharing with the group. Some prompting questions might be, *How are you feeling about the winning idea? What are you most excited about? What do you feel nervous about?* Then be sure to give everyone who wants to a chance to share and express themselves. **(5 min.)**

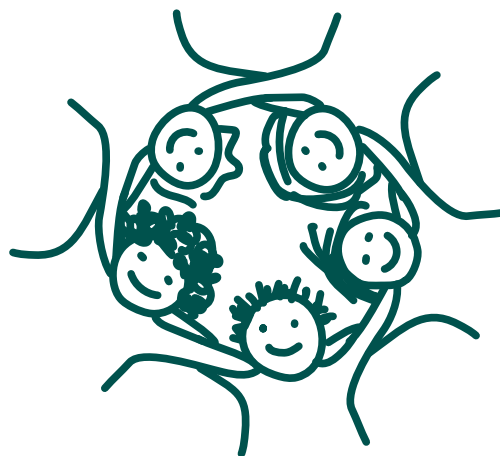
2. Group Norms Check-In: Use this session as an opportunity to check in about group dynamics and how everyone feels working together. Depending on your group, you might choose to create a survey to have students reflect through writing first. Ask students, *What do you feel are your strengths as a group? What works well with this group? What could the group work on?* This is a good time to review the group agreements established at the beginning of the project and see if any need to be added, refined, or simply renewed. **(10 min.)**

3. Giving Props: Have each student write or share something they appreciate about someone else in the group. You can do this verbally or by having students tape an index card on to their backs. Students then go around the room and have group members write props on the index card. This way, each student has an index card filled with compliments from their team. As the facilitator of the group, be sure to also share a prop with each student. **(10 min.)**

4. Imagining the Project Idea: Note: If bigger concerns come up during the group check-in, don't rush this step. Have a second session to dig into

the project, making sure your group gets to feeling cohesive and prepared for this next stage in the process. Ask students to close their eyes and say, *Imagine the project is finished. We've done all the work we need to do. Imagine being in the cafeteria during lunchtime. What do you see? How do you feel? What do you hear? How does the cafeteria feel different? How do you know we've been successful?* Have students open their eyes, and have each share something about what they envisioned. **(10 min.)**

5. Refining the Project Idea: Take notes, and see if their visions align. Say something like, *It seems like there are different ideas for how this project could go. Let's make a list of all our different ideas to see how we can get on the same page.* This step will look different, depending on the specificity and parameters on winning project. See Questions for Refining the Project. Students can rotate reading aloud and posing each of the questions to the group. **(15 min.)**



6. Questions for Stakeholders: Once students feel that the project is well defined, ask them, *What do you want to check in with our stakeholders about now that we know what our goals are for the project?* Have students make a list of questions. You

might have students assign themselves different stakeholders to check in with, rather than trying to reconvene the whole group again. **(5 min.)**

REFLECTION (5 min.)

- *How is this project important to you personally?*
- *What strengths do you feel you bring to the group?*
- *How will your strengths help as we start to work on the project idea?*
- *How can we involve other students and community members in the process of making the project happen?*

The Four Ts: Initial Planning

(two sessions)

60
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we begin with the end in mind?

OVERVIEW

Hooray! Your group has decided on a cafeteria project to implement. This activity session is designed to help guide your students through accounting for all the logistical and planning details to carry out their project. Plan to set aside two meetings with your students to get through the Four Ts Planning Worksheet. In the first session, students will focus on Task and Time. In the second session, students will focus on Team and Tools.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to create a timeline for the project.
- ✓ Students will be able to anticipate the needs for the project.
- ✓ Students will problem solve and determine solutions.

SKILLS

Project planning

CONCEPTS

Four Ts: task, time, team, and tools

MATERIALS

- Four Ts Project Planning Worksheet

PREPARATION

- Refer to the Preparation Phase of the project. Review all the information and parameters students will need to know to facilitate their planning.
 - Budget? Are there funds already allocated for the project?
 - Will you have students soliciting in-kind donations from local organizations? (Or will you make those requests yourself?)
 - Overall timeline? This activity will be practice for their planning a timeline, but they'll need major dates to plan around, such as the launch date.
- Have a list of local organizations for students to consider when discussing team and tools.

ACTION STEPS

1. Introduction: Explain to students that this will be the first planning session for getting the project off the ground. Explain the concept of the Four T's. Explain, *Today we'll focus on the first two Ts, tasks and timeline.* (And then devote the next session to team and tools.) **(5 min.)**

2. Thinking through Tasks and Timeline: Walk students through the prompts on the Four Ts Project Planning Worksheet. Fill out the plan as a whole group to guide students in thinking through considerations they may overlook. **(20 min.)**

3. Check Action Items: Go around and ask each student what task they're responsible for before the next meeting. Make a list of questions to bring to the stakeholders. **(5 min.)**

REFLECTION *(5 min.)*

- *What are you feeling confident about?*
- *What obstacles or challenges do you anticipate?*
- *What are you excited about?*

EXTENSION

Invite community members to share their relevant expertise with the Cafeteria Club. This could benefit them in thinking through execution of the project (e.g., local interior designers, artists, contractors, or whomever makes the most sense).

Four Ts Project Planning Worksheet

Task and Time (sample)

What are the tasks, big and small, that need to happen to complete the project?

Sample Project: Mural

Task	When? <i>(time)</i>	By whom? <i>(complete after team chart is filled out)</i>
Decide on a theme	Next club meeting on Monday	Gather input from classrooms
Sketch a draft	Club meeting in two weeks	Cafeteria Club team members
Get approval		
Decide on a painting day		
Recruit volunteers		
Buy paint and supplies		
Clean and prep the wall		
Coordinate with key staff, such as janitorial and facilities		

Task and Time

Our Cafeteria Project: _____

Task	When? <i>(time)</i>	By whom? <i>(complete after team chart is filled out)</i>

Team

Who are the people to involve in the project?

How do we want the rest of the school to be involved?

Who do we need help from?

Who do we need approval from?

Who do we want to get the word out to?

Who?	How can they help?	How will we get in touch?

Tools

What materials will we need to complete the project?

What can we borrow?

What will we need to buy?

Supplies	From where?	Cost?
Example: paint and paintbrushes	Miller Paint	Ask for a donation?

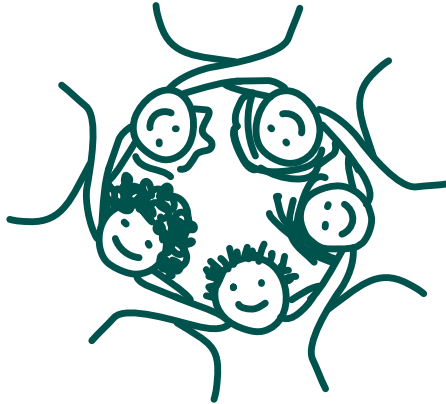
Sample Donation Request Script

Share this with students to support them in asking for in-kind donations at local businesses. They might make phone calls during club time or go in person with an adult caregiver out of school time. During club time, have students practice with one another, so they feel more comfortable.

Hello, I'm calling from _____ Elementary School. I'm part of a group of students at my school who are working on a project to make a change in our cafeteria. Our project is _____, and we could use _____. We were hoping you'd consider donating _____ to help make our project happen. Thank you so much for your consideration and help to make a difference at our school.



Check in with Stakeholders about Project Implementation



Have students from the Cafeteria Club share their Four Ts plan with stakeholders. Students might have to adjust their plan, given feedback from stakeholders, but they also receive great ideas and resources for how to troubleshoot.

Now would also be a time, if needed and appropriate for your project, to coordinate with adults in the school community about how they might help support the project (e.g., schedule a work party).

Type of Project	Considerations with Stakeholders
Policy Change Examples: Seating arrangement Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which adults does the change directly affect?• What are the parameters for the change?• Who will have to manage/enforce the change?
Physical Change Examples: Photo booth Mural Plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will the money be raised to make the change?• What materials/resources/connections do we already have at our disposal?• When will the installation/painting happen?• Who will do the work?

Project Implementation and Completion Phase: Ongoing Project Planning

From here on out, have weekly Cafeteria Club meetings (or however frequently is appropriate for your project) that are focused on making the project happen!

Use the following flow . . .

- Check in
- Work time
- Checking new action items
- Reflection

Meanwhile, continue to check in with the principal and other stakeholders, keeping them abreast of the progress and evolution of your original plan.

Project Implementation and Completion Phase: Project Completion

It's now time to celebrate all your hard work and share it with the school and community! Consider the nature of the project. If it's a physical change, it likely makes sense to have an unveiling reception. If it's a policy change, perhaps it's as simple as making an announcement during lunchtime, hanging posters, and having a mini celebration with the Cafeteria Club and stakeholders. The **Planning a Celebration** activity outlines prompts for the club to determine how to celebrate their achievements and includes a sample press release. The **Project Completion and Reflection** session provides reflection questions for students to consider their learning and self-growth and to reflect on the impact on the school community.

Consider the following to celebrate and spread the word:

- Have a ribbon cutting!
- Invite community members and local organizations who contributed to the project.
- Get the word out to homes and families through flyers and the school newsletter.
- Invite families of students in the Cafeteria Club to come to a special reception to celebrate their achievements. You can have the students write special invitations for them.
- Consider creating awards or certificates for students in the Cafeteria Club.

Planning a Celebration

30
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we celebrate all our hard work and share the completion of the project with our community?

OVERVIEW

Students determine how they'll celebrate the completion of their cafeteria project.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

✓ Students will be able to determine how to celebrate their achievements.

SKILLS

Planning

MATERIALS

- Poster paper
- Materials for flyers

PREPARATION

› Coordinate with the principal and other relevant school staff for the best day to celebrate the project and/or launch the policy change.

ACTION STEPS

1. Intro: Ask students, *What's the best way to celebrate the completion of our project?* Consider the nature of the project. If it's a physical change, it likely makes sense to have an unveiling reception. If it's a policy change, perhaps it's as simple as making an announcement during lunchtime

and having a mini celebration as a group. **(5 min.)**

2. Discuss: Ask, *Who is our audience? Who do we want to know about our achievement?* Discuss how the different groups of people need and want to know different things (e.g., students, families, teachers and other school staff, the larger community, the news!) Brainstorm a list of people to invite to a reception or unveiling. Ask, *How will we get the word out?* Consider the different audiences and how to inform each group. You might need a translator or interpreter of languages spoken in the community to help! **(5 min.)**

3. Work Period: Once details are decided upon, have students create flyers and posters either announcing a reception or announcing the day the new policy change will begin. **(15 min., extend to another session as needed)**

4. Check Action Items: Go around and ask each student what task they're responsible for before the next meeting. **(5 min.)**

REFLECTION (5 min.)

- *What are you most proud to share with the community?*
- *What do you hope will be the reaction to the project?*
- *What are you most nervous about?*

Getting the Word Out

Remember to spread the word in the community, and share all the hard work of the student group and school through the media. Here's a template you can use:

Sample Press Release Template

Date:

Contact: (name/phone)

What: A student-designed mural painting in collaboration with local artist at Heather Elementary School

Who: Fourth and fifth grade council of students who helped vet project ideas gathered from the entire school

When: On _____ students will be unveiling the mural they designed in partnership with local artist

Where: In the school's cafeteria

Details: Students at Heather Elementary School have been working on re-envisioning their cafeteria and mealtime experience through Our Cafeteria Project. Our Cafeteria Project is a process for students to lead the discussions and decisions within the school and with school leaders on how to improve the cafeteria environment and mealtime experience. Students worked with their FoodCorps member and school community to **(FoodCorps member and students to fill in with more information about the project here)**.

Wrapping Up

In addition to a celebration with the larger school community of the outcome of the project, it's important to provide students closure through the opportunity to reflect on their process.

Project Completion Reflection

(depending on activities selected)

30–60
MIN.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we reflect on our accomplishments and experiences through Our Cafeteria Project?

OVERVIEW

This session suggests different ways for students to reflect on the process they've undertaken. Ideally, you'll provide students an opportunity to not only synthesize their learning and reflect on the impact of the project but also celebrate the process and share appreciations of one another.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to reflect on their learning and self-growth during the project.
- ✓ Students will be able to reflect on the success of the project and its impact on the school community.

MATERIALS

- Sample Reflection Questions
- String of Compliments
 - Yarn
- How-to or Impact Video
 - Recording device such as a tablet or smartphone

PREPARATION

- › Pick several of the following activities, or devise your own that will help students fulfill the learning objectives.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- 1. Me in the Cafeteria Interviews:** To bring the project back full circle to one of their first activities, have students interview each other about the experience of working on this project and their impression of the cafeteria now.
- 2. String of Compliments:** Have students think of praise for one another. As the facilitator, hold a ball of yarn and throw it underhand to a student, giving them a compliment. Then that student holds onto a part of the yarn as they throw the ball to someone for whom they have a compliment. Keep tossing the ball of yarn around the circle until you're either out of compliments or in a big tangle!
- 3. How-To Video:** Now that students are the experts in making changes in the cafeteria, have them create an instructional video that could be shared with FoodCorps members and other students across the nation.
- 4. Impact Video:** Have students interview staff, administrators, and other students throughout the school to hear their impressions of Our Cafeteria Project and how the experience affected their school.

Sample Reflection Questions

Use these sample questions as whole-group discussion prompts, journal writing prompts, or sample questions for students interviewing each other.

Project

- Our initial goals were to make a change that all students would benefit from and to make the cafeteria environment a more enjoyable place. How do you think we met those goals?
- Our goal for the winning project was _____. Do you think we met that goal? Why or why not?
- How do you think the change we made will affect the cafeteria?
- What would I do differently if I were to approach this same problem again?
- What was your favorite part of Our Cafeteria Project?
- What surprised you the most about this experience?
- What advice would you give another school if it were to reimagine its cafeteria like we did?

Learning

- What were the most interesting things I learned during this project? About the problem? About myself? About my school?
- What's something I've learned that I could apply to another situation in my life, school, or community?

Teamwork

- What worked well within the group?
- What were the challenges of working as a team? How did we resolve these challenges?
- How can I use those strategies when I have a challenge in future work on a team?

Myself

- When was I most proud during this project? Why?
- When was I most frustrated? Why? How did I shift or change my mood?
- What are some of the strengths I brought to this project?

