Description of the tool:
Intended for schools already having a meal or food service programme in place, this tool will help the appropriate school staff, including service providers, to improve their services and assure effective implementation.

The information in this tool was adapted by UNESCO in collaboration with Health and Human Development Programs at Education Development Center, Inc. from the following publication:


The text of the document is available on CDC’s website at: http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/shi/Default.aspx

Description of the document:
The School Health Index is a self-assessment and planning tool drawn up to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a school's health promotion policies and programmes, to develop an action plan for improving student health, and to involve teachers, parents, students and the community in improving school policies and programmes.

This information supports Core Component #4 of the FRESH framework for effective school health: **school health services**. It will have a greater impact if it is reinforced by activities in the other three components of the framework.
1. Organize a team to perform this task. Suggested members of the team:

   - School food/meal service manager
   - School food/meal service staff member(s)
   - School nurse or other person(s) responsible for school health services (if available)
   - Health education teacher(s) (if available)
   - Other teacher(s)
   - Parent(s)
   - Student(s)

2. Make a photocopy of the Questionnaire (pages 3-7) for each team member and make at least one photocopy of the Score Card (page 2) and the Planning Questions (pages 9-10).

3. Give each team member a copy of the Questionnaire. Use the copies of the Score Card and Planning Questions to record the team’s work. Keep the originals of these documents in case you need to make more photocopies.

4. In a team meeting:
   
   - Discuss each question on the Questionnaire.
   
   - Decide how to collect the information needed to answer each question accurately.
   
   - Once all the information is to hand, calculate the consensus score for each question. Use this tool to identify strengths and weaknesses and for planning improvements. It should not be used for evaluating staff.
   
   - Record the scores (0-3) for each question on the Score Card and calculate the overall Score.
   
   - Use the scores written on the Score Card to complete the Planning Questions at the end of the tool.
   
   - Use the results from the third question in Planning Questions to identify the one, two, or three highest priority actions that you will recommend to the School Health team for implementation this year.
   
   - Use the answers to the Planning Questions to decide how you will present your results and recommendations at the follow-up team meeting.
Instructions:

1. Carefully read and discuss the Questionnaire, which contains questions and scoring descriptions for each item listed on this Score Card.

2. Circle the most appropriate score for each item.

3. After all questions have been scored, calculate the overall score and complete the Planning Questions located at the end of this tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Fully in place</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1. Breakfast and lunch programmes</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2. Variety of foods in school meals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Low-fat and skim milk available</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Meals include appealing, low-fat choices of fruit, vegetables, grains, dairy products</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. A la carte offerings include appealing low-fat fruit, vegetables, grains, and dairy products</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Sites outside the cafeteria offer appealing low-fat choices of fruit, vegetables, grains, dairy products</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Food purchasing and preparation practices to reduce fat content</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Promote healthy cafeteria selections</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Clean, safe, pleasant cafeteria</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Preparedness for food emergencies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Collaboration between food service staff and Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Degree and certification of food service manager</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Professional development of food service managers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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**COLUMN TOTALS:** For each column, add up the numbers that are circled and enter the sum in this row:

**TOTAL POINTS:** Add the four sums above and enter the total to the right
Questionnaire

1. **Breakfast and lunch programmes:**
   Does the school offer nutritious breakfast and lunch programmes* that are fully accessible** to all students?

   *Nutritious breakfast and lunch programmes means programmes that are designed to meet the national nutrition standards.

   **Fully accessible means that the school offers free and reduced-price meals for students who meet income requirements.

   3 = Yes.
   2 = Offers breakfast and lunch programmes, but they are not fully accessible to all students.
   1 = Offers only a lunch programme.
   0 = The school offers neither a breakfast nor a lunch programme.

2. **Variety of foods in school meals:**
   Do school meals include a variety of foods**?

   **Variety means that the school meal programme offers at least two choices of vegetables, fruits and foods containing whole grains.

   3 = Yes, always.
   2 = Yes, frequently but not always.
   1 = Yes, rarely.
   0 = Not at all.

3. **Low-fat and skim milk available:**
   Does the school food service offer low-fat* and skim milk every day?

   *Low-fat means either 1/2% or 1% fat.

   3 = Yes, low-fat and skim milk are offered every day.
   2 = Either low-fat or skim milk is offered every day.
   1 = Low-fat or skim milk is offered, but not every day.
   0 = Neither is offered any day.

4. **Meals include appealing low-fat items:**
   Do daily school meals include at least one appealing* low-fat** item from each of the following food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains*** and dairy products?

   *Appealing items are food items that are acceptable to a majority of students.

   **Low-fat means items that contain no more than 3 grams of fat per serving. In most cases, this does not include items such as fried potatoes, foods cooked with or covered with butter or margarine, fruits in pies, cookies, cakes and other pastries.

   ***Low-fat grains include pastas, cereals, bread products, etc.
3 = Yes, from all four of those food groups.  
2 = From three of those food groups.  
1 = From one or two of those food groups.  
0 = Daily school meals do not include at least one appealing low-fat item from any of the four food groups identified.

5. **A la carte offerings include appealing low-fat items:**  
Do the daily a la carte offerings* include at least one appealing low-fat item from each of the following food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products?  

*A la carte offerings means a set of foods from which students can choose individual items that are not usually counted as part of a reimbursable meal.

3 = Yes, from all four of those groups.  
2 = From three of those food groups.  
1 = From one or two of those food groups.  
0 = The daily a la carte offerings do not include at least one appealing low-fat item from any of the four food groups identified.

6. **Sites outside the cafeteria offer appealing, low-fat items:**  
Do most or all sites outside the cafeteria* offer appealing, low-fat fruits, vegetables, grain, or dairy products?  

*Examples of sites outside the cafeteria include:

- vending machines  
- school stores and canteens  
- concession stands  
- special events  
- meetings  
- extended day programmes (that is, school-sponsored after-school programmes)

3 = Yes, most or all sites outside the cafeteria do.  
2 = About half of the sites do.  
1 = Fewer than half of the sites do.  
0 = None of the sites do.

7. **Food purchasing and preparation practices to reduce fat content:**  
Does the school food service consistently engage in the following sample food purchasing and preparation practices to reduce the fat content of foods served?

- Spoon solid fat from chilled meat and poultry broth before using.  
- Adjust specifications of pre-prepared foods to require lower fat content.  
- Rinse browned meat with hot water to remove grease before adding to other ingredients.  
- Remove skin from poultry before or after cooking.  
- Roast, bake or broil meat rather than fry it.  
- Roast meat and poultry on rack so fat will drain.
• Prepare vegetables using little or no fat.
• Cook with non-stick pans rather than with grease or oil.
• Offer low-fat salad dressings or condiments.

3 = Yes, for all nine practices listed above.
2 = For six to nine practices.
1 = For three to five practices.
0 = For two or fewer practices.

8. **Promote healthy cafeteria selections:**
Are cafeteria selections low in fat, sodium and added sugars promoted and advertised through the following methods?

• Nutritional information about available foods displayed.
• Promotional materials such as posters displayed.
• Healthy cafeteria selections highlighted in menus that are distributed or posted.
• Taste-testing opportunities offered.
• School-wide audio or video announcements made.

3 = Yes, through three or more promotion methods.
2 = Through one or two methods.
1 = No, but there are plans to start doing so.
0 = They are not promoted through any of these methods.

9. **Clean, safe, pleasant cafeteria:**
Does the school provide students with a clean, safe and pleasant cafeteria, according to the following criteria?

• Physical structure (for example, walls and floor covering) does not need repairs.
• Tables and chairs are not damaged and are of appropriate size for all students.
• Seating is not overcrowded (that is, never more than 100% of capacity).
• Rules for safe behaviour (for example, no running, no throwing food or utensils) are enforced.
• Tables and floors are cleaned between lunch periods or shifts.
• Age-appropriate decorations are used.
• Appropriate practices are used to prevent excessive noise levels (for example, no whistles).
• Smells are pleasant and not offensive.
• Appropriate eating devices are available when needed for students with special health care needs.

3 = Yes, for all nine criteria listed above.
2 = For five to eight criteria.
1 = For three or four criteria.
0 = For two or fewer criteria.

10. **Preparedness for food emergencies:**
Are school food service staff trained to respond quickly and effectively to the following types of food emergencies?
• Choking.
• Natural disasters (for example, electrical outages affecting refrigeration).
• Medical emergencies (for example, severe food allergy reactions, diabetic reactions).

3 = Yes, for all three types of emergencies.
2 = For two types.
1 = For one type.
0 = No.

11. **Collaboration between food service staff and teachers:**
Does food service staff use the following methods to collaborate with teachers to reinforce nutrition education lessons taught in the classroom?

• Participate in the design and implementation of nutrition education programmes.
• Display educational and informational materials that reinforce classroom lessons.
• Provide food to be used in classroom nutrition education lessons.
• Provide ideas for classroom nutrition education lessons.
• Teach a lesson or give a presentation to students.
• Provide cafeteria tours for classes.

3 = Yes, with three or more collaboration methods listed above.
2 = With one or two methods.
1 = No, but there are plans to start doing so.
0 = No.

12. **Degree and certification of food service manager:**
Does the school’s food service manager have a nutrition-related degree and certification/credential in food service?

3 = Yes, a degree and certification/credential.
2 = A degree or certification/credential, but not both.
1 = Neither a degree nor certification/credential, but he/she is working on one or both.
0 = Neither a degree nor certification/credential, and he/she is not working on either.

13. **Professional development for food service manager:**
Does the food service manager participate at least once a year in professional development/ continuing education* training, seminars or workshops related to dietary guidelines or nutrition education?

*Professional development/continuing education means on-site (school, region/district) and off-site (city, state, national) training opportunities.

3 = Yes.
2 = On one topic, but not the other.
1 = No, but there are plans to participate in the near future.
0 = No, and there are no plans to participate in the near future.
These Planning Questions will help your school to identify and prioritize changes that will improve policies and programmes for healthy eating.

**Planning Question 1**

Look back at the scores assigned to each question. According to these scores, what are the strengths and the weaknesses of your school’s food service policies and programme?

**Planning Question 2**

For each of the weaknesses identified above, list several recommended actions to improve the school’s scores (for example, offer an accessible school breakfast programme).
Planning Question 3:

List each of the actions identified in Planning Question 2 above. Use the five-point scales defined below to rank each action on five dimensions (importance, cost, time, commitment and feasibility). Add the ranking points for each action to get total points. Use the total points to help you choose one, two, or three top-priority actions that you will recommend to your school health team for implementation this year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>How important is the recommendation to my school?</th>
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<td></td>
<td>5 = Very important 3 = Moderately important 1 = Not important</td>
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<th>Cost</th>
<th>How expensive would it be to plan and implement the recommendation?</th>
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<td>5 = Not expensive 3 = Moderately expensive 1 = Very expensive</td>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>How much time and effort would it take to implement the recommendation?</th>
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<td>5 = Little or no time and effort 3 = Moderate time and effort 1 = Very great time and effort</td>
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<th>Commitment</th>
<th>How enthusiastic would the school community be about implementing the recommendation?</th>
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<td>5 = Very enthusiastic 3 = Moderately enthusiastic 1 = Not enthusiastic</td>
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<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>How difficult would it be to attain the recommendation?</th>
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<td>5 = Not difficult 3 = Moderately difficult 1 = Very difficult</td>
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<th>Actions</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002). *School Health Index for Physical Activity, Healthy Eating, and a Tobacco-Free Lifestyle: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide. Elementary school version*. Atlanta, Georgia: CDC.