



Trisha Bautista Larson, MPH; Theresa LeGros, MA; Vanessa A. Farrell Ph.D., RD; Lauren McCullough, MPH; Scottie Misner, Ph.D., RD

Background

Students consume up to 50% of daily calories at school.¹ To encourage healthy choices in school cafeterias, the Arizona Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education (SNAP-Ed) implemented the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement (SLM) in middle schools.²

Objective

To determine which SLM middle school was the most effective at increasing students' trips to the salad bar.

Methods

Recruitment & Intervention

Four middle schools with salad bars were recruited.

School 1: Control

School 2: Student-led Intervention

School 3: Staff-led Intervention

School 4: Student/Staff-led Intervention

SLM Activities Over 7-Week Intervention Period

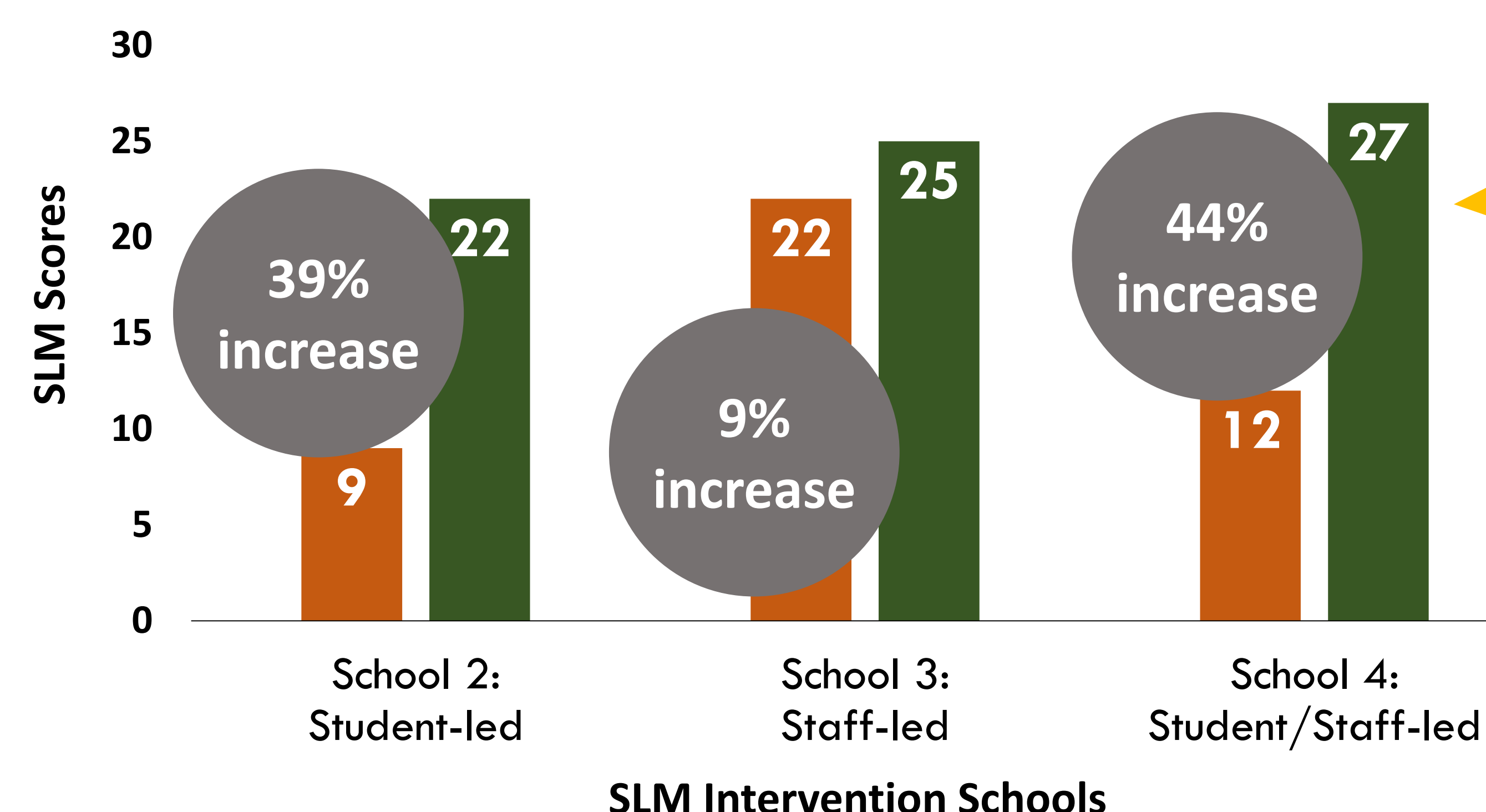
Created posters/suggestive selling signs and hosted taste tests

Prompted students to visit the salad bar

All three activities: posters/signs, taste tests, prompting

Results

Table 1: Total Pre and Post SLM Scorecard Results with Percent Change from Intervention Schools



The maximum score for the five SLM Scorecard strategies was 34.

The staff-led group started with a higher score; however, the student/staff combination showed greater improvements (Table 1)

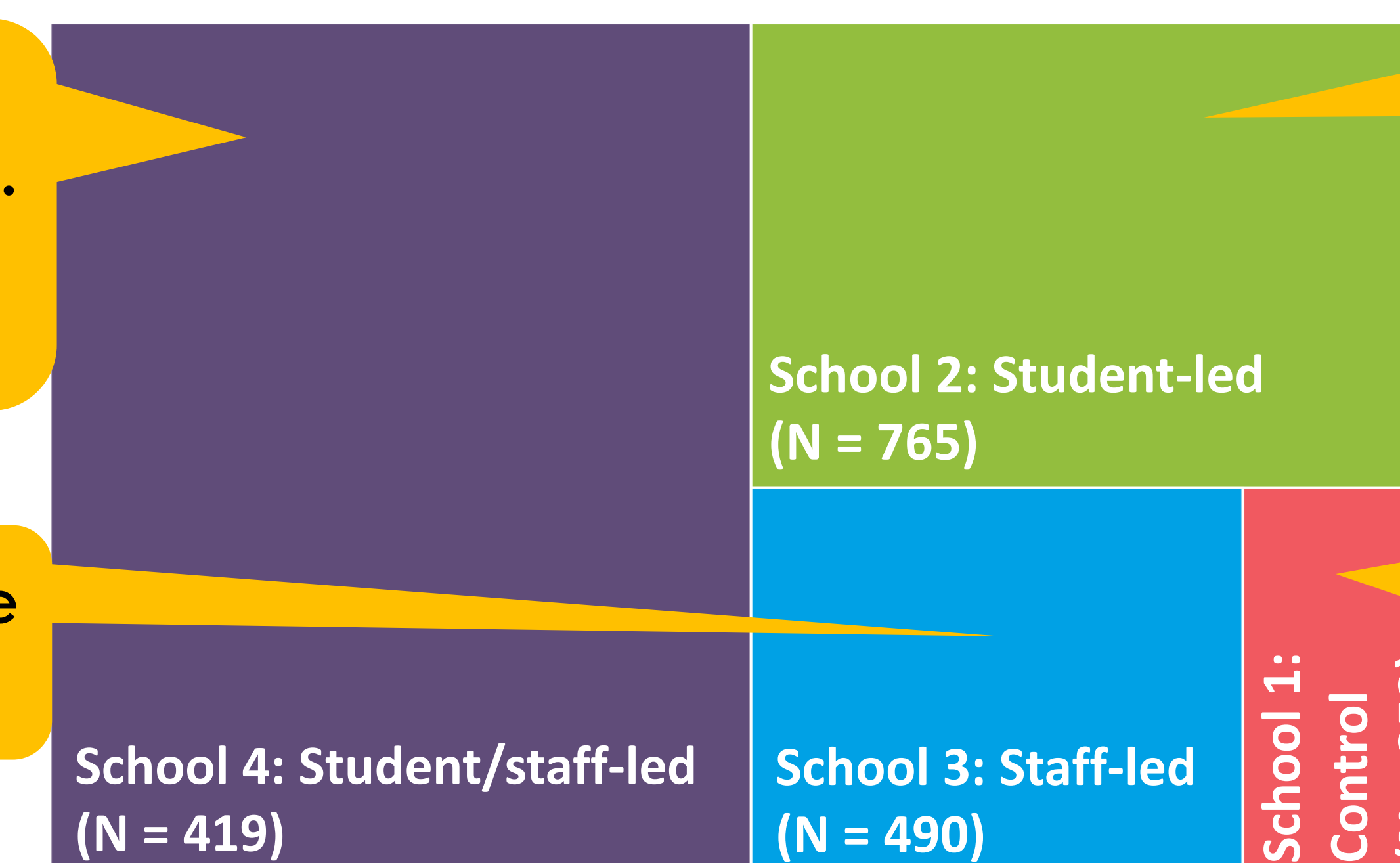
Figure 1: Total Salad Bar Visits from All Schools over a Seven Week Period

148% (n=622) visited the salad bar in school 4. Students took multiple trips to the salad bar!

41% (n=201) visited the salad bar in school 3.

45% (n=342) visited the salad bar in school 2.

26% (n=91) visited the salad bar in school 1.



N = Total Number of Students
n = Number of Visits

Assessments Used to Measure Impact of the SLM

- SNAP-Ed staff used an observation tool once per week for seven weeks (Box 1)

The SLM Observation Tool

- Counted number of whole fruits offered on the salad bar before/after lunch time.
- Tallied number of students visiting the salad bar who took and did not take an item.

Box 1: Factors Tracked on the SLM Observation Tool

- Intervention schools were assessed pre/post using five of the eight sections of the SLM scorecard (Box 2)

Five of the Eight SLM Scorecard Strategies Were Assessed

Focus on Fruits	_____	of 6
Vary the Vegetables	_____	of 8
Highlight the Salad Bar	_____	of 4
Lunchroom Atmosphere	_____	of 10
Student Involvement	_____	of 6

Total Possible Score _____ of 34

Box 2: Five of the Eight SLM Scorecard Strategies Assessed

Conclusion

The middle school with student/staff combination made the most improvements to the cafeteria environment *and* had the highest number of visits to the salad bar. Future studies should explore the efficacy and feasibility of engaging students and/or staff in the full, eight-strategy Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.

References

- Welkers, E., Lott, M., Story, M. (2016). The school food environment and obesity prevention: progress over the last decade. *Current Obesity Trends*. 5(2): 145-155.
- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. (2017). The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. *Smarter Lunchrooms* Retrieved from: <https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/about>.