

# MONTEREY WOWS

## STUDENTS WITH KIMCHI

### ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD) is located on California's Central Coast in Monterey County. The district serves 23 transitional kindergarten-through-twelfth grade schools serving 9,809 students, of which 63.5 percent were eligible for free and reduced-price school meals in the 2022–2023 school year.

### ACTIVITIES

- Partnered with Coke Farm to locally source napa cabbage for their featured kimchi sandwich
- Conducted taste-testing with students at one middle school and one high school
- Offered nutrition education events and provided digital nutrition education

### LONGSTANDING FARM TO FORK PARTNERSHIP

MPUSD nutrition leaders had long been familiar with Coke Farm, an organic produce farm which had become a successful food hub for the Central Coast, helping to lower costs and ensure quality, consistent inventory. The food hub represented over 100 small farms, which were 95% minority or women owned.

After an inspiring farm tour, MPUSD was ready to make this partnership a reality. MPUSD began the partnership with Coke Farms using micro purchases to procure seasonal crops to enhance menus. Beginning in the fall of the 2022–2023 school year, Coke Farm produce began making an appearance on MPUSD salad bars district wide.

Regular communications between the farm and the school helped the district to better understand which crops were available season-to-season and how best to incorporate these items into menus. MPUSD plans to continue the partnership with Coke Farms and are looking toward a small bid process for future academic years.

### LOCAL INGREDIENT

The partnership with Coke Farm also helped MPUSD develop appealing standardized recipes featuring napa cabbage as a local agricultural product. When napa cabbage came into season in November 2022, MPUSD purchased 140 pounds to use in the kimchi topping for their Crispy Kimchi Chicken Sandwich recipe.



*Crispy Kimchi Chicken Sandwich with Quick Napa Kimchi*

## RECIPE DEVELOPMENT

Kimchi is a traditional Korean dish made of seasoned vegetables and salt. It can be fresh, like a salad, or it can be fermented. MPUSD's "quick" kimchi is not fermented, but pickled in salt, sugar, and vinegar. MPUSD uses readily-available chili flakes, rather than the Korean chili gochugaru, which results in a green rather than red kimchi.

The recipe debuted to over 1,000 middle and high schools students district wide with an acceptability rating of 90%. "We need more food like this" commented one Monterey High School student. Monterey High School Instagram @toreadortimes writes, "we love that you are incorporating cultural food into school nutrition!"



*Monterey High School students enjoying Crispy Kimchi Chicken Sandwich*

## NUTRITION EDUCATION

MPUSD started a "Fresh Delish" magazine that spotlighted the Crispy Kimchi Chicken Sandwich in the Summer edition. The article included information about the origins of kimchi, its ingredients and probiotic benefits. In the Winter 2022 edition, Coke Farm was featured. This magazine was a great way to highlight to the district and families the quality of school meals and to showcase the great work of the child nutrition staff.



**Monterey Peninsula Unified School District**

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*Recipes: Quick Napa Cabbage Kimchi  
Crispy Kimchi Chicken Sandwich*



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