The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement

California Success Stories

California Department of Education
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A Message from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

On behalf of the California Department of Education, I am pleased to introduce *The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement: California Success Stories (SLM CA Success Stories)* as a valuable tool to assist local educational agencies in the effort to implement the SLM in school cafeterias.

Research consistently demonstrates that students' academic achievement is directly linked to their nutrition and health status. School nutrition programs throughout California serve a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat milk. Yet too few students are selecting and consuming the healthful foods offered to them through the national school meal programs.

Since 2009, the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs, (B.E.N. Center), home of the SLM national office, has conducted substantial research on student choices in the cafeteria. The key elements of behavioral economics—the study of how the social and physical environment influences decisions—has been shown to effectively influence student food selection and consumption in cafeterias and can be applied to the real-world school environment through the SLM principles and practices.

I have long been a champion for students' health. Healthy students not only excel academically but also are more likely to be positively engaged in social, community, and extracurricular activities. The benefits of supporting student health are far-reaching. This is why, as State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I launched the Team California for Healthy Kids (TCHK) initiative to make healthy choices the easy choices. My vision for the TCHK is also aligned with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy School Award to recognize schools that create healthier school environments through nutritious school meals, nutrition education, and physical activity.

The *SLM CA Success Stories* showcases the success stories of 18 of the 48 schools that participated in a Food and Nutrition Services' Team Nutrition grant program administered by the California Department of Education. This publication provides many ideas on how schools can encourage students to make healthy food choices.

We have incredible opportunities to make investments in education that give every child the chance to learn in a safe and healthy school environment. All of us who work with the youths of our state must join together to make the vision for a healthy California a reality for generations to come.

I trust that you will find this publication useful and the ideas fun to implement. I look forward to hearing about the results of your SLM successes.

Tom Torlakson

Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Acknowledgments

This publication was created with funding from a U.S. Department of Agriculture Team Nutrition Grant that was awarded to Nutrition Services Division (NSD) of the California Department of Education (CDE). The CDE awarded subgrants to 48 schools in 24 school districts. The featured success stories are from selected subgrantee schools.

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Collaborative Partners

The California Department of Education would like to thank all of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement of California (SLM of CA) Collaborative partners.
Dairy Council of California
UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program
California Department of Public Health
California Food Policy Advocates

With special thanks to Sara Floor, Dairy Council of California, for drafting several of the success stories.

Team Nutrition Subgrantees

We would also like to extend appreciation to all the school staff members who participated in the Team Nutrition grant. The following is a list of all the California subgrantees:

Carlsbad Unified School District (USD)
Coachella Valley USD
Davis USD
Eastside Union USD
El Centro Elementary SD
Encinitas Union Elementary SD
Fontana USD
Galt Joint Union Elementary SD
Kern County Superintendent of Schools
Las Virgenes USD
Livermore USD
Long Beach USD
Los Angeles USD
Millbrae Elementary SD
Monterey Peninsula USD
Moreno Valley USD
Oakland USD
Ontario-Montclair SD
Pajaro Valley USD
Plumas Lake Elementary USD
Roseville City Elementary SD
San Ysidro Elementary SD
Santa Cruz City SD
Wright Elementary SD

Introduction

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement (SLM) was founded in 2009 by the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs. Its goal was to create sustainable, research-based practices in the lunchrooms that guide students toward smarter choices in the school cafeteria. SLM is a national movement that uses evidence-based strategies that are low-cost or free of charge to nudge students to make healthier choices on their own. Strategies include changing the way food choices are presented. The SLM is based on behavioral economics theory and is successful in increasing student selection and consumption of healthier foods in schools across the nation.

Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Grant

The California Department of Education (CDE) was awarded a Team Nutrition (TN) grant by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for federal fiscal year 2015–17. With this funding, the CDE expanded the successful Smarter Lunchrooms Movement of California (SLM of CA) delivery model, which was launched in 2013 by the SLM of CA collaborative. The model develops expertise in SLM practices in school cafeterias across the state. The model includes training through regional SLM workshops, support from certified Technical Advising Professionals (TAP) to assist schools with implementation, and promotion of best practices through conferences and monthly newsletters. The collaborative currently comprises the following agencies: the CDE, the Dairy Council of California, the University of California (UC) CalFresh Nutrition Education Program, the California Department of Public Health, and California Food Policy Advocates.

Program Design

The purpose of the TN SLM grant project was to move a cohort of innovative California schools to the next level of SLM implementation. The goal ultimately was to create models for other schools to replicate.

With federal funding, the CDE awarded subgrants of $13,600 each to 24 school districts for School Year 2016–17 to implement the SLM in a total of 48 schools. Each school was required to:

- implement three focus areas of the 2016 SLM Self-Assessment Scorecard
- conduct training for frontline staff
- provide at least two nutrition education interventions aligned with the SLM focus areas
- evaluate the impact of the SLM practices on student consumption and/or selection of healthier foods

The CDE state grant team provided the subgrantees with an SLM training, three project workshops, and a series of Professional Learning Community webinars. The team also conducted on-site visits to the schools and provided ongoing technical assistance. In addition, each subgrantee was assigned a local TAP. The TAPs were nutrition professionals from the Dairy Council of California and the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program who had completed the SLM of CA TAPs certification process. The TAPs assisted each school with an assessment of its cafeteria using the 2016 SLM Scorecard, completion of an action plan and evaluation, training for frontline staff, resources, and guidance on implementing SLM and nutrition education.

> "With the support of a TAP from the Dairy Council of California, we implemented Smarter Lunchrooms strategies that enhanced the cafeteria at two school sites. We increased our scores by 30 points!"
> —Plumas Unified School District

To fulfill the grant requirements, school staff members submitted their budgets, action plans, and evaluation results to the CDE. All schools completed a pre- and post-implementation SLM Scorecard and conducted at least one measurement of student selection or

consumption, such as evaluating pre- and post-sales records, food production records, or plate-waste studies. Eighteen of the schools completed either a targeted or comprehensive pre- and post-plate waste study; three schools were assisted in their plate-waste studies by in-kind support from the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program, and two schools were assisted by UC San Diego through supplemental funding. All schools also completed pre- and post-project surveys and submitted midproject and final reports and expenditures.

SLM Implementation Increases

All 48 subgrantee schools achieved a high degree of SLM implementation, increasing their scores on the SLM Scorecards by an average of 19 points, starting from an average pre-implementation score of 41 points out of 100 points to an average post-implementation score of 60 points out of 100 points. The majority of schools selected signage, vegetables and salads, fruit, and the lunchroom atmosphere as their SLM focus areas.

The most impactful SLM changes were (1) fruit slicing; (2) providing salad bars with different themes; (3) making the menu more prominent throughout the school; (4) promoting menu items in various ways; (5) decorating the cafeteria with posters, and, when feasible, (6) branding the cafeteria and installing colorful murals.

> "The kids like the bright graphics and posters on campus, and our staff feel more 'connected' with the school because of signage outside the serving line."
> —Plumas Lake Elementary School

Many of the subgrantees found that the SLM strategies and the nutrition education activities deepened the connection with the larger school community.

> "The staff feeling more connected to the school and included as part of the bigger picture was not expected. Having both the students and the staff get something out of this has been a huge bonus."
> —Santa Cruz Unified School District

Stakeholder Engagement

Most schools took almost the whole grant year to truly engage the stakeholders and get stronger teacher buy-in, but for many of them, the SLM became an effective vehicle to expand connection with the larger school community, particularly with teachers. In their post-project surveys, 89 percent of child nutrition staff members rated their competence in stakeholder engagement as high or very high, compared with 22 percent in the pre-project survey.

Engaging the cafeteria staff was a first step in stakeholder engagement. Food service directors, with the support of TAPs, provided in-service education for their cafeteria staff on a variety of topics, including the SLM and nutrition education. By being involved in some of the decision making on how to enhance the cafeteria, the staff felt invested in the process and came up with creative ways to implement the SLM.

> "Get your team to learn the SLM strategies, and they will go the extra mile."
> —Las Virgenes Unified School District

Getting buy-in from the principal and other school staff was also critical. Widespread support of the administration, fiscal staff, and janitorial staff eased the way to obtaining purchases and making changes in the operation and physical layout of the cafeteria.

> "Meeting with the principal really helped boost this entire process; if you can get support at that level, you will be successful."
> —Coachella Valley Unified School District

Youth Engagement and Nutrition Education

All schools exceeded the minimum requirements to conduct two nutrition education interventions. The average number of nutrition education interventions per school was 7.5. In total, these schools reached approximately 20,000 students with nutrition education that included taste tests in both the cafeteria and classroom, nutrition education lessons, interactive assemblies such as the Dairy Council's Mobile Dairy Classroom Assembly, student art, and mural projects.

> "There is a big gap between selection and consumption. Without nutrition education, the good intention of the school nutrition program gets lost. Taste testing is a great way to engage students and convey nutrition messages."
> —Long Beach Unified School District

Schools also employed youth-engagement strategies such as student surveys, naming contests, nutrition advisory councils, and student nutrition ambassadors programs. The interaction with students through taste tests and related nutrition education efforts strengthened the connection with students.

> "The student pre-test was probably one of the more enlightening activities and it really helped me learn how the students felt about the cafeteria, food offerings, and nutrition knowledge."
> —Roseville Elementary School District

The schools identified multiple benefits of connecting the cafeteria with the classroom through youth engagement and nutrition education. They found that, despite the initial challenges of teacher engagement, by the end of the grant many teachers became much more open to offering nutrition education.

> "Working together with the science and physical education teachers helped to add more nutrition education."
> —Las Virgenes Unified School District

Meal Participation Increases

Many schools (59 percent) reported an increase in the meal participation due to SLM implementation and youth engagement. The increase in the paid meal participation indicated that marketing efforts were effective even with students who might have perceived the school meals as a program specifically for low-income students.

> "It was interesting to find that our sales of full-price meals increased over the last year . . . the changes enticed full price families to trust more the foods and selections offered through the cafeteria."
> —Monterey Peninsula Unified School District

In general, schools saw numerous benefits in outreach to both students and to parents.

> "Student involvement is key to promoting your nutrition program. When students are involved in growing the food, creating marketing materials, and promoting the program, you are far more likely to get them eating in your lunch lines!"
> —Encinitas Unified School District

Reduction of Produce Waste

Schools that conducted plate-waste studies identified that whole fruit and vegetables were the food items most often wasted by students. Schools used the plate-waste information to focus their SLM implementation and youth engagement strategies to reduce the waste and increase student consumption of produce.

> "Looking at the production records and plate waste made this whole project so much worth it. We placed fruits in multiple areas of the service line, and we installed a station for students to cut fresh fruit. Wasted apples decreased from 52 pounds to 13 pounds and wasted oranges from 22 pounds to 5 pounds."
> —Los Angeles Unified School District

Overall Benefits

Schools reported a greater connection to students, cafeteria staff, teachers, administration, and the school community as a result of SLM implementation.

The following factors were the keys to success for these schools:

- Tools such as the SLM scorecard and an action plan worksheet to guide their work for structured implementation
- Engaging administration and other school staff
- Creating youth engagement opportunities
- Networking with other school districts
- Receiving technical support from the state grant team and local TAPs

> "Teachers and administrators are involved in changes. The principal and director of maintenance are on board and plan to remodel the cafeteria building within the next several years. More teachers now want school food, modeling salad bar consumption and healthy behaviors to students."
> —Pajaro Unified School District

Sustainability

Many subgrantees expressed their commitment to expand the SLM to other schools in their district. Several had incorporated SLM into their Local School Wellness Policies, and most planned to enhance the nutrition education that was launched during the subgrant.

> "Expansion of efforts has already been implemented. Activities have been replicated at other school sites. Harvest of the Month will continue, and milk promotions will be integrated as part of the nutrition education activities conducted at other school sites. Digital menu boards are already in place at 14 elementary schools, and we will continue to update the content. Schools receiving Healthier US School Challenge recognition awards will sustain wellness plans that support SLM strategies as well as overall wellness."
> —Ontario Montclair Unified School District

The next section highlights success stories at schools throughout the state. See appendix A for useful web-based resources.

School Success Stories

Kelley Elementary School
Carlsbad Unified School District (USD)

Tierra Bonita Elementary School
Eastside Union USD

Margaret Hedrick Elementary School
El Centro Elementary SD

Ocean Knoll and Paul Ecke
Elementary Schools
Encinitas Union Elementary SD

Almeria Middle School
Fontana Unified SD

Kelley Blanton Education Center
Kern County Superintendent of Schools

Sumac Elementary School
Las Virgenes USD

Marylin Avenue Elementary School
Livermore USD

Lillian Elementary School
Los Angeles USD

Lomita Park Elementary School
Millbrae Elementary SD

Piedmont Avenue Elementary School
Oakland Unified SD

E. A. Hall Middle School
Watsonville High School
Pajaro Valley Unified SD

Cobblestone Elementary School
Plumas Lake Elementary USD

Kaseberg Elementary School
Roseville City Elementary SD

Vista Del Mar and Smythe Elementary Schools
San Ysidro Elementary SD

Marketing —It All Works Together!

CARLSBAD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT • KELLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Moving More White Milk
- Increasing Sales of Reimbursable Meals
- Creating School Synergies

QUICK TIPS

> Get your plan together early and have complete coordination with those involved.
>
> —**Susan Renaud,**
> Child Nutrition Director

Goals

- Increase student intake of fruits and vegetables
- Increase white milk choice over chocolate milk

Actions

- Conducted plate-waste study
- Moved white milk in front of the chocolate milk
- Installed salad bar signage on salad bar
- Sliced whole fruits and vegetables and conducted taste tests in the classroom as part of nutrition education
- Placed the menu in three different locations and modified the combination meal, based on student preferences
- Provided two staff trainings on Smarter Lunchrooms strategies

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 43 points from 40 points to 83 points out of 100 points, an increase of more than 100 percent.
- Purchases of white milk increased by 18 percent compared with chocolate milk purchases, resulting in an overall increase of 1 percent of milk purchases. Consumption of white milk increased by 38 percent, while consumption of chocolate milk decreased 2 percent.
- Sales of reimbursable meals increased per month by 205 meals.

Next Steps

- Increase fruit and vegetable promotion through signage, taste tests, second-chance fruit options, and more displays around the salad bar.
- Complete a mural.
- Purchase outdoor signage.

Kelly Elementary School

Grade Levels: K–5

Enrollment: 440

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 34

Carlsbad Unified School District

Grade Levels: K–12

Number of Schools: 18

Enrollment: 11,169

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 19.7

Food Service Director:
Michelle Johnson

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professionals (TAPs):
Tracy Conkey, Dairy Council of California

Heather Troska Berkoben, Dairy Council of California

Martha Lopez, UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

Funded by a 2015 Team Nutrition Training grant administered by the California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division. Visit http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/smarterlunchrooms.asp. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

continued Marketing—It All Works Together!

GOAL: REDUCE FOOD WASTE

Carlsbad Unified School District wanted students to make healthier food choices and avoid waste of food. To accomplish this, Michelle Johnson, the Food Service Director, applied for and was awarded grant funding from the California Department of Education Team Nutrition to implement Smarter Lunchrooms and to conduct a plate-waste study at two schools in the district. Susan Renaud, the Carlsbad grant manager, says " We learned that there is so much food from schools and from home that is wasted. We focused our digital marketing toward choosing what you want to eat and eating what you choose."

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE STUDENTS' MILK CONSUMPTION

Increased white milk consumption is the area that Kelly Elementary saw the most change. A 38 percent increase in milk consumption was documented, as shown by the plate waste study. Changes were low cost but were impactful. Staff members displayed colorful milk clings, which were free from the Dairy Council of California, on the milk coolers and placed the white milk in front of the chocolate milk.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKETING

To highlight fruit and vegetables, child nutrition staff decorated the cafeteria with fruit models, posters, and signs. Items in the salad bar were given creative names. Staff members also marketed the different types of fruit by placing them in a tiered basket close to the point of service. They made choosing whole fruits and vegetables more convenient by using a fruit slicer that was also featured during nutrition education in the classroom. The taste tests were very popular. Students gave the produce high acceptability scores during the nutrition education sessions.

MENU PROMOTION

Kelly Elementary School used colorful signs in three areas to promote the menu. A colorful mural painted by a high school art class was installed. Three videos were developed to run on TV monitors and addressed healthy choice, exercise, food groups, and avoiding waste of foods. Grab n' go "fitness packs" were created and very popular with the students.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Ms. Renauld is optimistic about the impact of Smarter Lunchrooms: "We are confident now that all the pieces are in place that we will see even more significant increases in our sales of reimbursable meals next year."

Mascot Magic at Tiger Roars Restaurant

EASTSIDE UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT • TIERRA BONITA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Focusing on Fruit
- Targeting Entrée of the Day
- Creating School Synergies

QUICK TIPS

> Have fun with it. Implementing new strategies in the cafeteria is easier than you can imagine!
>
> —**Anita Molina,**
> Child Nutrition Director

Goals

- Increase meal participation
- Create a livelier cafeteria

Actions

- Displayed fruit is in attractive baskets on the serving line so students had a second chance to choose fruit. Offered different varieties of fruit to entice students to try something new.
- Created new menu items that were cooked from scratch for Soup and Sandwich Day. The students tasted the difference.
- Enlisted students to vote for a cafeteria name. Large banners of the name were hung inside and outside the lunchroom. In addition, Team Nutrition posters and menus were displayed inside and outside as well.
- Incorporated the tiger mascot into all aspects of the lunchroom. In addition to the name of the lunchroom (Tiger Roars Restaurant), menu items were named to match the theme (e.g., "Tiger Pick!"). The mascot appeared during breakfast and lunch, dressed in a child nutrition apron, to promote sales and increase participation. The mascot also participated in nutrition education in the lunchroom.
- Established a Student Nutrition Advisory Council (SNAC) that taste-tested menu items.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased from 30 points to 61 points out of 100 points—an increase of more than 100 percent.
- Approximately 75 percent of the students participating in a lesson about MyPlate improved their knowledge of associated food groups.

Next Steps

- Continue with mascot appearances to promote breakfast and lunch and increase appearances tied to nutrition education.
- Rotate the posters quarterly to keep the message "fresh."
- Use the SNAC more often to elicit student feedback and provide menu item tastings.
- Expand nutrition education to more grade levels.

Tierra Bonita Elementary School

Grade Levels: K–6

Enrollment: 617

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 87.4

Eastside Union Elementary School District

Grade Levels: K–8

Number of Schools: 6

Enrollment: 3,397

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 84.9

Food Service Director: Anita Molino

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP): Abby Magill, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

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Mascot Magic at Tiger Roars Restaurant

INVOLVING STUDENTS IS WORTHWHILE

The California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant helped get things started. According to Anita Molino, Child Nutrition Director, "The Smarter Lunchrooms grant has allowed us to connect more with the students." With the new posters, fun names for food items, and the branding to Tiger Roars Restaurant, the cafeteria changed its look. Students wanted to eat in a place they find comfortable, and Smarter Lunchrooms provided it.

Having the students vote for names of the cafeteria and menu items involved students and staff alike. Prior to this, the staff members were not able to check off any items on the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard related to student involvement. Nutrition education proved an effective way to involve students. During voting day, child nutrition staff members were able to conduct some nutrition education that included students completing MyPlate journals during breakfast every morning.

The school also strategically placed menu boards around the campus and colorful posters and signs along the serving line.

MASCOT ADDS THE MAGIC

Tierra Bonita Elementary School wanted to continue promoting the cafeteria name so that student participation and reimbursable meal sales would increase. The mascot made appearances during breakfast and lunch so that students would associate it with nutrition. The mascot was also an effective tool to engage students in nutrition education.

"I think it's awesome that we have a mascot that gives us free nutrition things. I will use the journal to keep track of my own healthy meals." Student, grade six

Staff members absolutely loved the mascot costume purchase, and the students enjoyed it just as much.

"Dressing up as the mascot was very fun and a unique experience. Seeing the excitement in the students' faces was very rewarding. I definitely want to do it again!" Michelle Quirece, Child Nutrition Clerical Assistant

Eastside Union Elementary School District plans to use a mascot costume with other schools to see if participation would increase there too.

Smarter Lunchrooms Boost Connection to Whole School

EL CENTRO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT • MARGARET HEDRICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Focusing on Fruit
- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Moving More White Milk
- Creating School Synergies

QUICK TIPS

> Take time to really listen and work with students. Students will change when it comes to food if we work next to them in educating and letting them take ownership.
>
> —**Molly Diaz,**
> Child Nutrition Director

Goals

- Increase fruit and vegetable consumption by 3 percent
- Reduce waste
- Promote increased consumption of white milk

Actions

- Conducted a plate-waste study in partnership with the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program.
- Educated students on meal options and types.
- Conducted taste testings of different foods such as vegetables, fruits, and entrées.
- Packaged sliced and individually wrapped fruit items in transparent containers to increase appeal.
- Posted pictures and names of food in the cafeteria.
- Collaborated with the food bank to provide a pop-up farmers market that included nutrition education. Carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, and romaine lettuce were distributed to students to take home.
- Conducted a "Name Our Café" contest.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 33 points, from 40 points to 73 points out of 100 points.
- The connection between the students and the school increased.
- The café was branded Shining Star, and a mural and signage were created.

Next Steps

- Continue to engage students and the school community in the nutrition program by offering tastings, nutrition education, and fun ideas geared around student lunches. Activities to be continued or to start:
  - Pop-up farmers market
  - Classroom contest—food naming, poster coloring
  - Walk to School—healthy nutrition theme
  - Wellness Wednesday—announcement to students

  The plan also includes training all staff members at all sites to use the Smarter Lunchrooms strategies and provide fun nutrition education to students and teachers.

Margaret Hedrick Elementary School

Grade Levels: K–6

Enrollment: 517

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 78.1

El Centro Elementary School District

Grade Levels: K–8

Number of Schools: 14

Enrollment: 6,049

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 81.6

Child Nutrition Director: Molly Diaz

Technical Advising Professionals (TAPs): Heather Troska Berkoben, Dairy Council of California

Martha Lopez, UC CalFresh NEP

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

continued

Smarter Lunchrooms Boost Connection to Whole School

Molly Diaz, Child Nutrition Director at El Centro Elementary School District, said, "The California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant opened my eyes to new opportunities for food service staff. We have always been viewed solely as the cafeteria preparers and servers. The grant taught me how to approach all areas of the school community. Food service staff members improved their knowledge and participated in outreach efforts to the school community. I believe it has made them feel a real part of food service."

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES PROMOTED

Seasonings were offered to students to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption. Cafeteria staff members were provided with fun nutrition facts to share with students. Ms. Diaz believes "Students need lots of nutrition education. Student truly prefer to eat fast foods, so if we dress up our items they will eat more."

SCHOOL COMMUNITY VALUES CHILD NUTRITION MORE

Implementing the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement helped educate the whole school community about school meals' relationship to student success in school. The pop-up farmers market provided students with nutrition education and increased the visibility of the child nutrition program throughout the whole school. Ms. Diaz feels that school staff members are more aware of how nutrition education encourages students to make healthy food choices now and in the future.

COLORFUL LUNCHROOM ATMOSPHERE CREATES STUDENT OWNERSHIP

At Margaret Hedrick, they have been able to look at the lunchroom atmosphere and include student involvement, which in turn has made students look at the lunchroom in a different way. As a result of the student contest, the café was branded "Shining Star." Taste tests were conducted with students for a variety of menu items. Colorful posters and attractive food displays resulted in students saying that the food tasted better and looked good to eat. All of these efforts have created ownership by the students and an improvement in how the students perceived the foods offered in the school lunch program.

Funded by a 2015 Team Nutrition Training grant administered by the California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division. Visit http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/smarterlunchrooms.asp. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Root for Healthy Lunch at Green Garden Café

ENCINITAS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT • OCEAN KNOLL AND PAUL ECKE CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

FOCUS AREAS

- Increasing Sales of Reimbursable Meals
- Targeting Entrée of the Day
- Creating School Synergies

QUICK TIPS

Include site staff members as much as possible; train, elicit feedback, and get their buy-in to help support efforts.

> Student involvement is key to promoting your nutrition program. When students are involved in growing the food, creating marketing materials, and promoting the program, you are far more likely to get them eating in your lunch lines!
>
> —**Lea Bonelli,**
> Director of Child Nutrition

Goals

- Increase participation in the school meal programs
- Increase the perception of school meals as healthy, high-quality meals
- Increase the confidence of child nutrition staff in promoting school meals

Actions

- Created a new mobile menu app to show pictures, nutrition information, and notifications to parents about healthy meals in the cafeteria.
- Trained staff members on using the app, customer service strategies, and the display plate to increase participation.
- Highlighted the Entrée of the Day by using restaurant-style display plates.
- Worked with student groups to create artwork promoting the school lunch program.
- Provided nutrition education about MyPlate and instituted California Thursdays to educate students on the school meal program and the healthy options.
- Formed Student Nutrition Advisory Council that taste-tested menu items.
- Obtained the services of a graphic designer to create menu signage.
- Launched Meet Your Farmer event at Ocean Knoll to promote the program and locally grown food.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased from 42 points to 72 points for Ecke Central and from 41 points to 66 points out of 100 points for Ocean Knoll.
- A campaign called "Encinitas Unified School District Eats Healthy" was rolled out to promote the farm to school program.
- Meal participation increased due to the change in menu items and the display plate promotion.
- Changes were made in menu items and kitchen production to reflect healthier choices and to make more entrées from scratch. The new menu items have been well received by students.
- Lunchroom environments were updated with new tablecloths, banners from the meal campaign, and display plates.
- A total of 386 students were collectively reached through nutrition education and taste testing at both sites.
- Knowledge of California Thursdays was increased by conducting an event at Ocean Knoll. California Thursdays is a promotion to serve healthy, freshly prepared school meals made from California-grown food on Thursdays during the school year.

Ocean Knoll and Paul Ecke Elementary Schools

Grade Levels: K–6 and K–6

Enrollment: 629 and 623

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 29.9 and 26.2, respectively

Encinitas Union School District

Grade Levels: K–12

Number of Schools: 9

Enrollment: 5,313

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 13.6

Food Service Director: Lea Bonelli

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP): Tracey Conkey, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

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continued Root for Healthy Lunch at Green Garden Café

Next Steps

- More students will be recruited for involvement in rolling out the new meal campaign.
- New menu signage will roll out to draw more students in and increase marketing.
- Staff training and site administrative education about how to promote the school meal program will be increased.
- Smarter Lunchroom strategies will be expanded to seven other sites in the district.

MARKETING WORKS

Shortly after the beginning of the school year, Lea Bonelli became the new food service director for Encinitas Union School District. She inherited the grant, which she implemented with enthusiasm. Ms. Bonelli was particularly interested in increasing the number of paying students who participated in the meal program, since the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals was less than 30 percent at both schools.

CLEARER SIGNAGE PROMOTES SCHOOL MEALS TO STUDENTS

Ms. Bonelli noted that prior to implementation of the California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant students could not see the menu signage. Students always asked what was on the menu when they walked up to the window, which caused the line to move slower. New menu boards and signage were created by a local graphic designer who incorporated the district logos and student-designed artwork. The district also added new salad bar signage to the two schools and placed labels for each entrée on the lunch line. A clear dome placed over the sample meal allowed students to see what was in the meal.

STUDENTS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN NUTRITION EDUCATION

Ms. Bonelli learned that the students were already knowledgeable about nutrition and actively participated in the lessons. Next year, she feels she will be able to offer more advanced nutrition education to the students to build on current knowledge.

TARGET MARKETING EFFORTS TO PARENTS TOO

Marketing to parents was just as important as marketing to students in the district, as the parents were extremely involved in their schools. The mobile menu app increased parent awareness and access. Adding photos of the locally grown food helped to market the meal program, as most parents did not know that organic food and a salad bar were offered at Encinitas schools.

Ms. Bonelli emphasized, "Families are appreciative of the visual appeal of the student lunchroom, as evident on Facebook. When they learn that their children have access to fresh seasonal choices at every meal, they report willingness to send their child to buy school meals."

Lunchroom Changes Make a Difference

FONTANA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT • ALMERIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Targeting Entrée of the Day
- Increasing Sales of Reimbursable Meals
- Creating School Synergies

QUICK TIPS

> Begin purchasing early on as it is harder when you need outside approval to make purchases. Buy-in from principals and other departments is very important for success.
>
> —**Kelley Mitchell,** Grant Manager

Goals

- Increase sales of reimbursable meals and meal participation
- Improve eating environment
- Involve students in nutrition education

Actions

- Conducted training for frontline staff.
- Provided students with food samples.
- Established a partnership with the Dairy Council of California to obtain nutrition education materials, milk posters, and colored straws.
- Purchased food baskets, tablecloths, condiment holders, frames for posters, and nutrition education bulletin boards, and hired a mural artist.
- Collaborated with the principal, paint department, interns, and kitchen staff members to paint a mural featuring the dolphin school mascot.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 27 points, from 34 points to 61 points out of 100 points.
- The average daily participation for students in the lunch program increased by 8 percent.
- Entrée-of-the day sales increased as a result of signage and taste tests with students.
- The lunchroom atmosphere was enhanced with a variety of physical changes: framed posters, laminated photos of menu items, and nutrition education bulletin boards.
- Nutrition education was available to all students.

Next Steps

- Continue to promote nutrition education.
- Expand the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement to other schools.
- Apply for recognition award programs.

Almeria Middle School

Grade Levels: 6–9

Enrollment: 827

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 77.5

Child Nutrition Director:
Trieste Chiquete

Fontana Unified School District

Grade Levels: K–12

Number of Schools: 45

Enrollment: 38,014

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 85

Food Service Director:
Lea Bonelli

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP):
Alyson Foote, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

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continued

Lunchroom Changes Make a Difference

WORKING TOGETHER PAYS OFF

Child Nutrition Director Trieste Chiquete wanted to bring students into the cafeteria to eat. Working with the grant manager, Kelley Mitchell, Ms. Chiquete found that staff training and student taste tests were beneficial. Involving the principal and other school staff helped with support of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. The "aha" moment was sharing the progress in revitalizing the cafeteria and the results with the school board, principal, and parents so that they would know all the great work from this California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant.

ALLOW EXTRA TIME FOR PLANNING PURCHASES

It is always good to plan ahead before starting any project. Purchase orders took a long time to be processed, and getting in touch with the paint department also took time. The cafeteria wall had to be repainted a solid color before the mural artist could begin painting. Ms. Mitchell recommends asking companies for free shipping and handling or a discount for schools before purchasing products. Before ordering items, school nutrition staff must consider how each school lunch line is set up, since the same kind of baskets, organizers, and display items may not work as well in one school as it does in another.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES IN NUTRITION EDUCATION

With the help of Technical Advising Professional Alyson Foote, all classrooms had access to nutrition education curricula, and colorful educational posters and bulletin boards were displayed in the cafeteria. Online fun facts were shared during taste tests. Ms. Mitchell learned that teachers really have to engage with students and take time to teach them.

CHANGES IN THE CAFETERIA PAY OFF

Morning announcements with catchy names and descriptions of the entrée of the day promoted school meals. Colorful monthly menus were laminated and displayed. Menu labels and pictures of entrées were displayed so the students would know what was offered that day. Fruits were displayed in attractive bins. Because meal participation increased slightly after free samples were distributed and students were encouraged to try new foods, taste tests were conducted for new entrées whenever possible.

The lunchroom now looks much more attractive. The principal loves the dolphin mural design, and the kitchen staff members are excited about the rest of the changes that will take place.

Blanton Café Transformation for At-Risk Students

KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS • KELLEY BLANTON EDUCATION CENTER

FOCUS AREAS

- Focusing on Fruit
- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Enhancing Lunchroom Atmosphere

QUICK TIPS

> Making small changes has big rewards. Create a warm, inviting environment for students to come into the lunchroom will have a big payoff.
>
> —**Sarah Brooks,** Grant Coordinator

Goals

- Implement positive environmental changes to make it less institutional and encourage students to eat in the cafeteria more often.
- Increase school lunch participation by adding signage and a salad bar.

Actions

- Conducted plate-waste study that revealed salad and fruit had the highest waste.
- Installed school salad bar to encourage consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Granted youth engagement team members a food handlers' certification, while also gaining work experience and school credit.
- Conducted Harvest-of-the-Month taste tests in the cafeteria.
- Developed healthy recipes through the efforts of four science teachers who worked with their classes on the community garden.
- Promoted the school lunch program to students and staff by installing signage and menu boards around campus.
- Rearranged seating and added awnings to the lunchroom.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 40 points, from 31 points to 71 points out of 100 points—an increase of more than 100 percent.
- School meal participation increased to 85 percent of students eating lunch.
- Plate waste decreased by 11 percent, and almost 50 percent less produce was wasted than before the grant.

Next Steps

- Add floor decals to create better flow in the lunchroom.
- Expand the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement to other sites.
- Collaborate with the Kern County Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention program to continue to support SLM and nutrition education.

Kelly Blanton Education Center

Grade Levels: 9–12

Enrollment: 220

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 86.9

Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Office of Education

Grade Levels: K–12

Number of Schools: 7

Enrollment: 4,389

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 67.8

Food Service Director:
Mason Hollingsworth

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP):
Alyson Foote, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

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continued Blanton Café Transformation for At-Risk Students

Mason Hollingsworth, and Sarah Brooks, Grant Coordinator for Kelly Blanton Education Center, noticed that students at this court and community school were not eating the lunch provided to students through the national school lunch program, even though 87 percent were eligible to receive it for free. The school was awarded the California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant. Funding was used to transform the cafeteria, improve the eating experience, and increase the number of students eating in the cafeteria.

Elizabeth Velasco-Ramirez, Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program, coordinated the grant implementation and nutrition education. Jannine Golden, the cafeteria manager, was the creative force behind the lunchroom makeover. Beginning with a plate-waste study, the school team noticed right away that vegetables, particularly baby carrots, and whole fruits, were ending up in the trash cans instead of being consumed by students.

BISTRO CREATES ATMOSPHERE

The seating in the lunchroom was rearranged to make it more inviting, and awnings were added to give the cafeteria a bistro look. Colorful posters, donated by the Dairy Council of California, and Harvest of the Month displays brightened the walls. The awning and valances, tablecloths, window signs, and partition in front of the ice machine transformed the cafeteria into the newly branded Blanton Café.

The food service staff placed menu boards throughout different areas of the campus. Students began to ask teachers what was for lunch. Printed menus were visible at the entry point to the school to encourage students to come to the cafeteria. All these changes inspired the students with a sense of pride that resulted in students being neater and more respectful in the cafeteria.

TEEN PARENTS GET JOB TRAINING

A youth engagement team of 80 teen parents earned a food handlers' certificate, gaining job experience and school credit. The teen team also participated in Harvest of the Month taste tests led by the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention program. The teen parent team then promoted the salad bar to other students, who now looked forward to salad bar days.

SALAD BAR PROMOTES MEAL PROGRAM

A salad bar purchased through Local Control Funding was a big draw for students and staff alike to eat in the dining area. And all the changes reduced food waste and increased meal participation. The post-plate-waste study showed that the total average waste decreased from 59 percent waste to 46 percent waste—a 13 percent change in food thrown away. Of particular note, fruit waste decreased from 79 percent to 39 percent; vegetable waste from 83 percent to 46 percent—almost 50 percent less produce being thrown away. Now 85 percent of students participate in the meal program and eat the foods they selected. Administration is delighted that more students stay on campus to eat lunch.

Voyagers' Café—Joins the Team of Good Nutrition

LAS VIRGENES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT • SUMAC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Increasing Sales of Reimbursable Meals
- Creating School Synergies

QUICK TIPS

"Get your team to learn the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement strategies, and they will run the extra mile. The key to successful changes: training and encouragement—repeat, repeat, and repeat!"

—**Waleska Cannon,**
RDN, Director,
Child Nutrition LVUSD

Goals

- Increase participation in school meal programs
- Decrease food waste
- Increase consumption of healthy foods

Actions

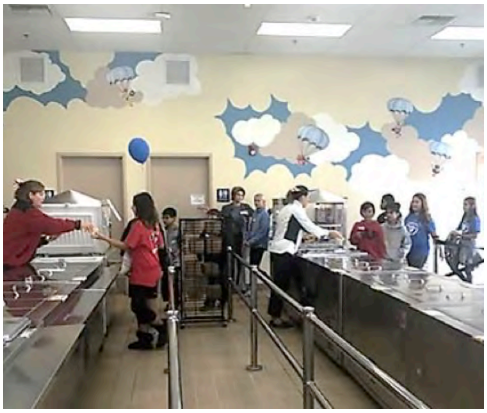
- Instituted school breakfast program to bring students into the cafeteria. The program was promoted by the principal during assemblies and morning announcements.
- Launched Twitter account @LVUSDNutrition.
- Decorated the cafeteria.
- Encouraged the consumption of fruits and vegetables through taste testing and offering more choices.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 18 points, from 33 points to 51 points out of 100 points.
- Sales of reimbursable meals increased by 15 percent.
- A new nutrition committee was formed with staff and parent participation.

Next Steps

- Apply for Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools award.
- Expand Smarter Lunchrooms strategies to other elementary schools, provide continuous staff trainings, and review Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard twice each year.



Sumac Elementary School

Grade Levels: K–5

Enrollment: 262

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 66

Las Virgenes Unified School District

Grade Levels: preK–12

Number of Schools: 16

Enrollment: 11,300

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 8.2

Food Service Director:
Waleska Cannon, RDN

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP):
Morgan Carey, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

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continued

Voyagers' Café—Joins the Team of Good Nutrition

Sometimes all it takes for change is an invitation. For years, Child Nutrition Director Waleska Cannon, at Las Virgenes Unified School District, had wanted to begin a school breakfast program and revitalize the lunch program. With the help of the California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant, she had her opportunity during the 2016–17 school year. Ms. Cannon noted that getting her frontline staff involved was a key to success.

With the great teamwork of Technical Advising Professional, Morgan Carey from the Dairy Council of California, Principal Silvestre, the nutrition services staff, and the parents and students enjoyed a taste-testing event in the cafeteria. A variety of unfamiliar fruits and vegetables, such as jicama, star fruit, and dragon fruit, were featured.

Ms. Cannon states, "Both parents and students loved it! Parents were encouraging their kids to try new foods, and parents learned about the healthy choices offered in the cafeteria."

NUTRITION EDUCATION

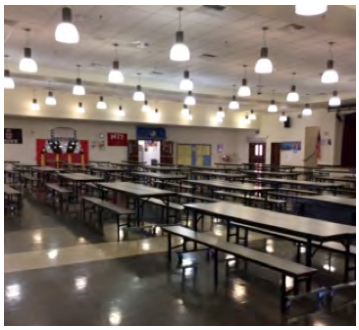
A nutrition education program was started by using the Dairy Council of California's curriculum on topics such as MyPlate. At first, child nutrition staff was unsure whether teachers would be interested, as there was not much nutrition education in the classroom before the grant. However, Ms. Cannon found that "Some teachers are just waiting to be invited, and we are not aware of it!" Next year, she plans to expand the nutrition education to include more teachers.

PROMOTION MATTERS

Students participated in a contest to select a recipe from the Team Nutrition recipe book and to name the dishes. Student helpers came to the cafeteria every day to promote the meals. Colorful posters advertised the featured item for the day. Combo meal items were labeled with creative names and posted on a bulletin board with the "MyPlate" logo. The menu was published online, e-mailed to the parents, and posted in the front office and in the cafeteria.

A NEW LOOK FOR THE CAFETERIA

Sumac's cafeteria received a makeover to become Voyagers' Café, themed after the school mascot. Because of the changes, which included decorative food displays and fresh paint, the cafeteria became an inviting place where students want to socialize and eat.



A school breakfast program also was implemented and promoted. Through marketing techniques and involvement of students, cafeteria staff, and administration, sales of reimbursable meals increased by 15 percent. Ms. Cannon plans to implement breakfast programs in additional schools.

Roadrunner Café

LIVERMORE VALLEY JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT • MARYLIN AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Creating School Synergies
- Moving More White Milk
- Promoting Vegetables & Salad

QUICK TIPS

> The idea of using a smart TV turned out to be a great one. We were able to engage and educate our customers with videos, text, music, and pictures.
>
> —**Mojgan Hashemi,** R.D.N., Nutrition Education + Operations Manager

Goals

- Enhance the ambiance in the cafeteria and make it more welcoming
- Increase white milk selection in relation to chocolate milk
- Increase consumption of vegetables in relation to fruits
- Decrease food waste

Actions

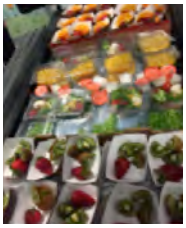
- Personalized the cafeteria, naming it after the school mascot; added colorful fruit and vegetable posters, decorations, and menu signs.
- Installed smart TV to showcase menu and play nutrition messages/videos.
- Increased the variety of vegetables, fruits, and salads; added labels and made offerings easier to eat; provided Harvest of the Month vegetable samplings for all classrooms.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased from 38 points to 52 points out of 100 points.
- Vegetable selection increased by 76 percent, making vegetables 15 percent of the total produce selected by students.
- White milk selection increased by 97 percent, representing 30 percent of all milk selected.
- A plate-waste study with StopWaste.org revealed that vegetables were less wasted than fruits.
- A Smart TV nutrition education study with the Dairy Council of California demonstrated students' knowledge gains.
- Teacher and student involvement in nutrition programs improved in the classroom and the cafeteria.

Next Steps

- Partner with videography teacher to create student-led videos for additional nutrition education.
- Expand cafeteria enhancements to other schools.



Marylin Avenue Elementary School

Grade Levels: TK–5

Enrollment: 372

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 73

Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District

Grade Levels: TK–12

Number of Schools: 18

Enrollment: 14,052

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 22

Food Service Director:
Barbara Lee,
blee@lvjusd.k12.ca.us

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP):
Valerie Fung-A-Ling, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

continued

Roadrunner Café

KID-FRIENDLY TECHNOLOGY DELIVERS NUTRITION EDUCATION

How can nutrition education be memorable? Use a smart TV! When Barbara Lee, Director of Campus Catering at Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, looked for ways to educate students in the cafeteria, she believed technology would be a familiar and popular choice.

With support from the California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant and resources provided by the Dairy Council of California, Ms. Lee and Nutrition Educator Mojgan Hashemi created video clips of nutrition messages. While moving through the line to choose a meal, students viewed menu items and listened to brief nutrition tips on the smart TV. In the end, the digital TV provided dual benefits: promoting the meal offerings and providing nutrition education

THE RESULTS

Students remembered the information. Surveys taken before and after the cafeteria upgrade showed students were more knowledgeable about the components of a nutritious breakfast and the importance of eating breakfast. Lee states, "Through this project, I've learned nutrition messages that are brief, focused, and repeated can be an effective and powerful way to provide nutrition information to students."

This pilot program provides support for using technology in nutrition education. Valerie Fung-A-Ling, Dairy Council of California, states, "The cafeteria is an excellent venue for nutrition education, and the timing is right to lead schools in implementing this new technology."

Funded by a 2015 Team Nutrition Training grant administered by the California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division. Visit http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/smarterlunchrooms.asp. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Café LA—A Great Part of Your Day!

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT • LILLIAN STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Focusing on Fruit
- Moving More White Milk
- Enhancing Lunchroom Atmosphere

QUICK TIPS

> Student involvement is key! Students want to make the decisions at their cafeteria: they want to choose menu names, they want options, and they want to be informed.
>
> —**Theophilos Okuribido,** Food Services Training Specialist at LAUSD

Goals

- Increase student awareness of the nutritional benefits of school meals so students can make healthy choices and eat what they choose
- Decrease food waste
- Use color to make eating areas more attractive and engaging

Actions

- Designed marketing strategies for the café area, with school input, using professionally designed signs and banners to rebrand the cafeteria.
- Adopted messages such as "Choose What You Want, Eat What You Choose; Taste, Don't Waste; Feed Your Body, Not the Trash Can; and It's Not Nutrition Unless It's Eaten." Trained food service staff members in the use of messages to nudge students to healthier choices.
- Implemented public announcements to showcase the menu.
- Conducted plate-waste study of fruit, milk, and other foods.
- Installed a station to cut fresh fruit to increase fruit consumption and reduce waste.
- Held Mobile Dairy Classroom Assembly provided by the Dairy Council of California, featuring a live cow, to improve nutrition education and food literacy.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased from 43 points to 64 points out of 100 points.
- Fruit waste, specifically apple and orange waste, decreased by 75 percent: waste from the cutting of fresh apples from 52 pounds down to 13 pounds and oranges from 22 pounds to 5 pounds.
- Milk waste decreased by 5 percent.
- Lunch participation increased by 11 percent.

Next Steps

- Continue efforts to reduce food waste, keeping the message fresh that is delivered to students.
- Involve more schools in a recognition program.
- Incorporate Smarter Lunchrooms Movement marketing with training at all Los Angeles Unified School District school sites.

Lillian Street Elementary School

Grade Levels: K–6

Enrollment: 630

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 94

Los Angeles Unified School District

Grade Levels: K–12

Number of Schools: 1,015

Enrollment: 639,337

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 78.7

Food Service Director:
Joseph Vaughn

Grant Contact:
Dawn Soto, Senior Training Specialist, dawn.soto@lausd.net

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP):
Morgan Carey, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

continued

Café LA—A Great Part of Your Day!

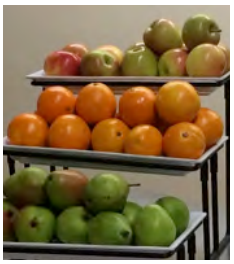
FOOD WASTE IN DISTRICT LUNCHROOMS

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) was faced with a big problem when it came to food waste. A 2016 report found that 600 tons of nutritious foods were thrown out districtwide each week. Lillian Street Elementary School chose to use the California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchroom Movement grant to address the food waste head on.

After rebranding the eating area as Café LA and adopting the slogan "It's not nutrition unless it's eaten," the food service staff at Lillian came up with helpful messages and methods to combat food waste. One of the most successful campaigns was the "Choose What You Want, Eat What You Choose." The school conducted a plate-waste study that revealed that over 70 pounds of apples and oranges went uneaten in a single day. To address the problem, the staff introduced a station for cutting fresh fruit.

FRUIT CUTTING STATIONS TO THE RESCUE

Students brought fruit to the cutting station for the staff to peel, slice, or quarter, and staff prepped the fruit while sharing some important nutrition messages. As a great way to interact with students, the principal hosted the fruit station a few times.



"Participation has gone up greatly because of the fruit cutting station, and waste is like nothing before," said Theophilos Okuribido, Food Services Training Specialist at LAUSD. "Students are now eating the fruit they take."

This simple action of slicing fruit for students slashed fruit waste by more than 75 percent!

MILK CHOICE REDUCES WASTE

A separate pilot program showed that when the option of flavored milk was reintroduced, there were increases in milk consumption and decreases in milk waste. "Areas of waste improved dramatically once we brought the choice back to the milk. Now students are getting the nutritients that are packed in milk, whether it's flavored or unflavored," said Okuribido.

Funded by a 2015 Team Nutrition Training grant administered by the California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division. Visit http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/smarterlunchrooms.asp. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Kids' Way Café Is Fruitful

MILLBRAE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT • LOMITA PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Focusing on Fruit
- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Enhancing Lunchroom Atmosphere
- Increasing Sales of Reimbursable Meals

QUICK TIPS

Offer taste tests of fruit. Students will try it!

> Cut the fruit, and students will eat more. Students do not want to take the time to peel citrus.
>
> —**Lisa Corner,** Food Service Director

Goals

- Improve the ambiance in the lunchroom
- Increase student consumption of healthy foods
- Increase participation in the school meal programs

Actions

- Switched to serving all fresh fruit (rather than canned) and sliced the fruit.
- Conducted taste tests of featured fruit with students.
- Added more menu boards and an electronic menu board.
- Repositioned white milk to the front of the coolers.
- Added colorful decal footprints on the floor leading to the salad bar.
- Decorated lunchroom with student art focused on nutrition.
- Replaced containers with new, colorful ones.
- Offered "homemade" salads at the salad bar.
- Trained staff to encourage students to take more fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Provided nutrition education to 225 students.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 32 points, from 32 points to 64 points out of 100 points.
- Students took more fruit, thanks to taste tests using fresh fruit, and slicing the fruit.
- Students loved the digital TV menus!
- Paid lunch participation increased by 25 percent.

Next Steps

- Continue to offer tastings on all menu items, not just fresh produce. The students enjoyed the tastings and tried new items. Will expand the tastings to all sites in the district.

Lomita Park Elementary School

Grade Levels: PreK–5

Enrollment: 315

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 54

Millbrae Elementary School District

Number of Schools: 5

Enrollment: 2,432

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 20.4

Food Service Director:
Lisa Corner,
lcorner@mesd.k12.ca.us

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professionals (TAPs):
Valerie Fung-A-Ling, Dairy Council of California

Mary Vollinger, UC CalFresh, NEP

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

continued

Kids' Way Café Is Fruitful

FRESH FRUIT A WINNER!

Lisa Corner, the Food Service Director for Millbrae Unified School District, inherited the California Department of Education Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant from her predecessor. Ms. Corner met with the principal to review the grant and worked with teachers and the cafeteria staff to achieve great results. Her goal was for students to eat the healthy foods offered through the meal program.

TASTE TESTS AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PAY OFF

Ms. Corner noticed, "On the days that we did extra tasting at the salad bar, the consumption was higher and the waste was less. Many students tried items they have never heard of and then asked if their parents could buy it. And our produce usage increased." The taste-test survey was easy to implement. Working with the UC CalFresh nutrition education program, food services staff simply put out cups in three colors. Two hundred students submitted their votes: Loved it, Liked it, or Not today. Lomita Park School also collaborated with the Dairy Council of California to offer classroom nutrition education.

Other strategies involved the display and preparation of fruits and vegetables. Before the grant, canned fruit was served. Now twice as much fresh produce is served. Loma Park showcased its produce in attractive rustic-style bins. Fresh fruit was cut and served. Students did not want to take the time to peel citrus, and they liked the cut fruit better. An analysis of the food production records showed that prior to the grant, 180 students selected fruit; however, after implementation, 225 students now chose fruit.

SALES OF PAID MEALS INCREASE

At first, Lomita Park experienced challenges in finding signage to purchase. By attending the grant project workshop and talking with other directors, cafeteria staff members were able to identify products that others had found successful.

Menu boards and digital TV screens were installed at the beginning of the lunch line so that students could see the menu as they waited in line. The students loved the TV menus. And sales of paid meals increased by 25 percent.

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Making Room for Fresh Produce

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT • PIEDMONT AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Focusing on Fruit
- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Targeting Entrée of the Day
- Enhancing Lunchroom Atmosphere

QUICK TIPS

> Just because you do not or cannot have salad bar at your site, does not mean you cannot offer appealing cut fruits and vegetables for students! Get creative, work with your staff, and invest in a high-quality fruit sectionizer.
>
> —**Alex Emmott,**
> Farm to School Supervisor,
> Oakland Unified School District

Goals

- Increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Increase student participation in California Thursdays
- Improve the cafeteria atmosphere

Actions

- Moved fruits and vegetables to the front of the serving line.
- Added colorful signage for fruits and vegetables.
- Purchased colorful serving bowls.
- Posted photos of all entrées and added a display table with a sample meal to the hallway entrance of the cafeteria.
- Branded the cafeteria as the Panther Café and hung a banner with the new name outside the cafeteria entrance.
- Purchased a fruit sectionizer.
- Taught a series of nutrition education classes for grade three students, featuring the Harvest of the Month fruit or vegetable served in the cafeteria.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 20 points, from 40 points to 60 points out of 100 points.
- More than 200 students and 15 teachers were reached with taste tests and nutrition education.
- Lunch participation increased by 7 percent.
- A produce market was launched at this school, which sold over $4,500 of fresh produce to the school community.

Next Steps

- Continue work with a FoodCorps service member to conduct a cooking demonstration at the produce market featuring fruits and vegetables available and a recipe from the cafeteria.
- Continue to increase signage in the multipurpose room and share ways to do so with other satellite schools in the district.

Piedmont Avenue Elementary School

Grade Levels: K–5

Enrollment: 349

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 64.5

Oakland Unified School District

Grade Levels: K–12

Number of Schools: 126

Enrollment: 49,098

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 74.1

Food Service Director: Jennifer LeBarre

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professionals (TAPs): Valerie Fung-A-Ling, Dairy Council of California

Mary Vollinger, UC CalFresh, NEP

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

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continued Making Room for Fresh Produce

OVERCOMING SPACE CHALLENGES

Alexandra Emmott, the Oakland Unified School District grant manager for the California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant saw that Piedmont Avenue Elementary lacked space in the cafeteria. The cafeteria staff served food prepared in the Central Kitchen, but because the multipurpose room lacked sinks, staff members were not able to serve a traditional salad bar. For this reason, Ms. Emmott selected this site for implementing the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement to improve the cafeteria experience for students.

MORE FRESH FRUITS AND VEGGIES, PLEASE!

Fruits and vegetables were moved to the front of the serving line and served in colorful serving bowls. A sectionizer was purchased to cut fruit for students. Peggy Gruendl, the cafeteria lead, used it to cut fruit individually for students. Ms. Gruendl said she immediately saw an increase in students selecting fruit.

COLORFUL SIGNAGE

Although posters were not allowed to be hung on the walls because the space was rented out on the weekends to community groups, colorful signage on the serving line was added. Vivid laminated signs were displayed in the hallway. Using the Smarter Lunchrooms principle of enhancing taste expectations, the cafeteria staff added a display table to showcase the daily entrée so that the students could see what was offered. A banner was purchased to brand the cafeteria as the Panther Café.

IT ALL WORKS TOGETHER

The school quickly learned the synergestic benefits of targeted farm to school events, cafeteria redesign, and nutrition education conducted in the classroom, the cafeteria, and the community.

California Thursdays, which features California-grown food on the school menu each Thursday, were promoted. Taste tests featuring Harvest of the Month produce were conducted and also served in the meal program. A school produce market for parents was provided. Ms. Gruendl taught a series of six classes to students, reaching 50 students a month. Additionally, Harvest of the Month fruits and vegetables were served four times, reaching 209 students and 15 teachers each month with fresh produce samples and nutrition education.

Ms. Emmott noticed that students are more willing to try new fruits and vegetables since the produce market and Smarter Lunchrooms Movement program were implemented at Piedmont Avenue Elementary.

Piedmont child nutrition staff observed improved teacher and student involvement in nutrition programs through nutrition education activities in the classroom and cafeteria.

Thanks to changes in the cafeteria, teachers and students report an improved cafeteria atmosphere, and Ms. Gruendl observed increased student consumption of fruits and vegetables. Lunch participation is up 7 percent over last year.

Green Power

PAJARO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT • E. A. HALL MIDDLE SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Focusing on Fruit
- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Targeting Entrée of the Day
- Enhancing Lunchroom Atmosphere

QUICK TIPS

> It takes time and dedication to really engage the school community and staff.
>
> —**Linda Liu,**
> Food and Nutrition Services Director

Goals

- Increase fruit and vegetable consumption through nutrition education and increased visibility of produce
- Increase consumption of healthy foods and sales of reimbursable meals to reduce food waste
- Improve lunchroom environment through posters and signage
- Reconfigure the lunch line and brand the cafeteria
- Expand eating areas to include outside seating

Actions

- Conducted trainings for frontline staff through a partnership with Kristal Shelden, a Technical Advising Professional from the Dairy Council of California.
- Promoted Harvest of the Month, reaching 200 students.
- Engaged more than 70 students in over 10 hours of hands-on nutrition and garden education with the leadership of Brianna Egan from the FoodCorps, highlighting the importance of eating fruits and vegetables, and reducing food waste.
- Added three-tiered fruit baskets, menu signs, and bright posters to the cafeteria serving area.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 13 points, from 45 points to 58 points out of 100 points.
- Meal participation increased by 9 percent at breakfast and 18 percent at lunch.
- Fruits and vegetables in Harvest of the Month were extended to reach middle and high school menus in the district.
- School staff worked with the principal to open eating areas outside, which reduced congestion in the cafeteria.
- A branding and marketing kit was created by a community-based, student-run graphic design group, Digital Nest.

Next Steps

- Work with graphic designers to create signage at other schools and expand the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement at other sites.
- Continue working with students on nutrition education through the FoodCorps.

E. A. Hall Middle School

Grade Levels: 6–8

Enrollment: 662

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 93

Pajaro Valley Unified School District

Grade Levels: K–12

Number of Schools: 33

Enrollment: 20,400

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 75.3

Food and Nutrition Services Director: Linda Liu

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP): Kristal Shelden, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

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continued

Green Power

EATING HEALTHY IS EXCITING

Linda Liu, Food and Nutrition Services Director, wanted to inspire middle school students to eat healthy and reduce food waste. She was awarded the California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant for the school year of 2016–17 to support her vision. With the help of Brianna Egan, FoodCorps service member, E. A. Hall Middle School launched a nutrition education program that generated greater excitement from students about eating healthy and more teacher engagement and support of the meal program.

STUDENTS LOVE NUTRITION EDUCATION

Brianna Egan, affectionately known as the "Food Lady," engaged more than 70 students in over 10 hours of nutrition and garden-based education that highlighted the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and reducing food waste.

The students loved the hands-on education, which included making green power smoothies with kale, celery, bananas, and mangoes. Many students made the smoothies at home for their families.

A vegetable preference survey indicated that, on average, students tried two new vegetables during the course of nutrition education lessons. Nine in 10 students at the end of the year had improved attitudes toward vegetables, trying new ones or maintaining high regard if they already liked them.

CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH THE CAFETERIA

The Harvest of the Month promotion, which reached more than 200 students during lunchtime, enhanced the nutrition education in the classroom. Several students also participated in a plate-waste study to learn about how much food was being wasted and to recommend changes. Changes in the display of menu items, more-visible signage, and installation of additional eating areas were inspired by student feedback and supported by the principal, who was instrumental in expanding the eating areas for students.

"Thank you for all you are doing to connect the cafeteria to the classroom!" Principal of E. A. Hall Middle School

Engaging Students Pays Off

PAJARO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT • WATSONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Increasing Sales of Reimbursable Meals
- Creating School Synergies

QUICK TIPS

High school students can be vocal. Use that for the good! Work with the ones who are the most outspoken; suggest to them projects they can use to help your cause.

—**Brianna Egan,**
FoodCorps service member

This is fresh and good! I love tomatoes. Things are changing around here.

—**Watsonville High School student**

Goals

- Implement salad bar service
- Increase sales of reimbursable meals
- Create a marketing kit that includes posters, signage, and menu cards
- Create a more vibrant and inviting atmosphere for students
- Engage students to gather ideas and feedback on meals and lunchroom design ideas

Actions

- Conducted trainings for frontline staff through a partnership with Kristal Shelden, a Technical Advising Professional from the Dairy Council of California.
- Implemented weekly meals for California Thursdays plus salad bars on Tuesdays and Thursdays through the efforts of Supervisor Randy Jenkins and cafeteria staff.
- Administered an online survey completed by 450 students.
- Purchased posters, fruit baskets, and menu sign holders to improve the flow and appearance of the lunch line.
- Continued ongoing branding and application of decal materials.
- Facilitated a student forum event reaching more than 70 students.
- Sparked a district-level project to envision broader remodeling plans for the kitchen and eating areas.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 26 points, from 42 points to 68 points out of 100 points.
- Meal participation increased by 5 percent at breakfast and 26 percent at lunch.
- Harvest of the Month fruits and vegetables were extended to middle and high school menus in the district.
- New furniture was purchased for eating areas, and a committee was formed for the 2018 kitchen remodel.

Next Steps

- Continue to improve the cafeteria with fresh paint and wall decals (designed by local student graphic design artists).
- Expand salad bar program.

Watsonville High School

Grade Levels: 9–12

Enrollment: 1,965

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 82

Pajaro Valley Unified School District

Grade Levels: K–12

Number of Schools: 33

Enrollment: 20,400

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 75.3

Food and Nutrition Services Director: Linda Liu

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP): Kristal Shelden, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

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Engaging Students Pays Off

ASK STUDENTS

Linda Liu, Food and Nutrition Services Director for Pajaro Unified School District, wanted to make the lunchroom more inviting for students. With the help of FoodCorps service member Brianna Egan and a grant from the California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement, she involved students in her lunchroom makeover. The Nutrition Department administered an online survey completed by 450 students. They provided insight on how they currently viewed the cafeteria and the changes they wanted to see. A student forum event, conducted by Brianna Egan of the FoodCorps, with the help of eight volunteers from the Jovenes SANOS youth advocacy group, reached more than 70 students. These students participated in the blueprint sketching, voting on furniture, and naming of the cafeteria.

THE RESULTS

Students provided helpful and insightful comments on the survey and showed that they were definitely thinking about their food choices and want to make known their voice. Greater student engagement is noticeable, and the salad bars offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays are appreciated.

THINK BIG!

The Smarter Lunchrooms grant sparked the school to envision a much broader remodeling plan for the kitchen and eating space. The director of maintenance, school principal, an architect, and a community donor are working on a team with the district's Nutrition Department to come up with plans to completely overhaul and update the facilities. Ms. Liu recommends approaching donors who want to support the community by improving the school cafeteria.

Nutrition Ambassadors Lead the Way at Crocodile Café

PLUMAS LAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT • COBBLESTONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Moving More White Milk
- Increasing Sales of Reimbursable Meals
- Creating School Synergies

QUICK TIPS

> Be honest with students. When they ask for foods outside the cafeteria's ability to provide, tell them why. Visit often and talk; listen constantly. Get excited, and show passion. Pass along love of the project!
>
> —**April Mackill,**
> Food Service Manager

Goals

- Utilize nutrition education to encourage healthy choices and portion sizes
- Increase participation in breakfast and lunch
- Increase selection and consumption of white milk

Actions

- Established Nutrition Ambassadors student leadership group for interactive nutrition education in the cafeteria.
- Added menu item labels and bistro baskets to display the options.
- Established monthly emails and social media accounts like @PLESDWellness to increase communication with parents and students.
- Branded the cafeteria Crocodile Café.
- Conducted a milk plate-waste study.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased from 39 points to 67 points out of 100 points.
- Nutrition Ambassadors were present in the cafeteria over 90 percent of the time and conducted taste tests during National School Breakfast Week.
- Lunch participation increased 4 percent; breakfast participation increased 6 percent.
- Plate-waste study showed that before the changes wasted milk went from 40 to 60 percent down to 20 percent afterward, and 85 percent of students opted for milk.
- Cafeteria staff reported a more pleasant environment for students, less disruptive behavior, and an increase in student interest in bundled vegetables.

Next Steps

- Increase the number of serving lines available to students
- Feature student artwork in the serving area and cafeteria
- Continue staff training to focus on preparation and packaging techniques

Cobblestone Elementary School

Grade Levels: TK–6

Enrollment: 406

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 42

Plumas Lake Elementary School District

Grade Levels: K–8

Number of Schools: 3

Enrollment: 1,235

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 40

Food Service Manager:
April Mackill

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP):
Leslie Pring, Dairy Council of California

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Nutrition Ambassadors Lead the Way at Crocodile Café

A BIG VISION

April Mackill had a lot on her plate as a brand new food services manager at Plumas Lake Elementary School District. Nevertheless it did not stop her from applying for and receiving a Team Nutrition grant from the California Department of Education to implement Smarter Lunchrooms in two schools. She had a vision to involve students and re-invent the school cafeteria. With the teamwork of her staff and the involvement of the students, she succeeded. Menu labels were printed and meals displayed in attractive bistro baskets. The school cafeteria was branded, and a social media and email campaign was launched to promote the meal program to parents and students.

STUDENTS PROVIDE FEEDBACK

To improve healthy choices at Cobblestone Elementary School's Crocodile Café, each day the fifth-grade Nutrition Ambassadors student leadership group shared key nutrition messages, highlighted menu items provided by local farmers, and gave stickers to students choosing a fruit, vegetable, and milk.

Nutrition Ambassadors played a key role in conducting a taste test during National School Breakfast Week. Students tasted new and current entrées, as well as fruits and vegetables, including fresh strawberries from a local farm. Students then provided feedback: "serve again" or "skip it, please."

With student feedback, Ms. Mackill incorporated new food items. A "grab and go" breakfast option was also added for students to take to class when arriving at the last minute. Another positive outcome was that participation in the school breakfast and lunch programs increased by 6 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

WONDERFUL WHITE MILK CAMPAIGN

Ms. Mackill teamed up with Principal Marcie Nichols to launch a "Wonderful White Milk" campaign. The school regularly measured milk waste as a baseline and as a way to monitor success. Marketing clings and signage from the Dairy Council of California were provided free of charge. Milk was placed first in the coolers. Nutrition education was conducted, and student Nutrition Ambassadors promoted milk.

As a result, plain milk selection increased significantly while milk waste declined. Ms. Mackill reports that initially 40–60 percent of milk was being thrown away, but now 85 percent of students are choosing milk, 80 percent of which is consumed. Engaging students in the conversation with fun taste testing produced many positive results.

Mural Magic in the Cafeteria

ROSEVILLE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT • KASEBERG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOCUS AREAS

- Focusing on Fruit
- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Enhancing Lunchroom Atmosphere

QUICK TIPS

> Learn who is instrumental to get approval at the school site for planned activities. Plan for the unplanned, and go with the flow. Make it fun and interesting for everyone involved.
>
> —**Pamela Rapp,** Grant Coordinator

Goals

- Increase student fruit and vegetable consumption
- Increase school lunch participation through signage and communication efforts
- Positively impact student morale in the dining area

Actions

- Conducted fruit and vegetable naming contests.
- Conducted a plate-waste study through the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program (NEP).
- Offered nutrition education in partnership with the UC CalFresh NEP and Dairy Council of California.
- Promoted school meals on social media, and posted menus at multiple points on campus and in the cafeteria.
- Created a Student Nutrition Advisory Council.
- Painted a mural in the cafeteria.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased by 20 points, from 35 points to 55 points out of 100 points.
- School meal participation increased in average daily participation and sales of reimbursable meals.

Next Steps

- Continue fruit and vegetable taste tests.
- Create and post catchy entrée item names daily.
- Display team nutrition posters and nutrition information board in the cafeteria.
- Move janitorial equipment out of the direct pathway to dining area.
- Update menu boards and Bluetooth menu signs daily.
- Continue nutrition education lessons.

Kaseberg Elementary School

Grade Levels: K–5

Enrollment: 370

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 29

Roseville City School District

Grade Levels: K–5

Number of Schools: 18

Enrollment: 10,554

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 51

Food Service Director:
Mohamed Elazazy

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professionals (TAPs):
Rosemary Carter, UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program

Lisa Larsen, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

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Mural Magic in the Cafeteria

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES GALORE

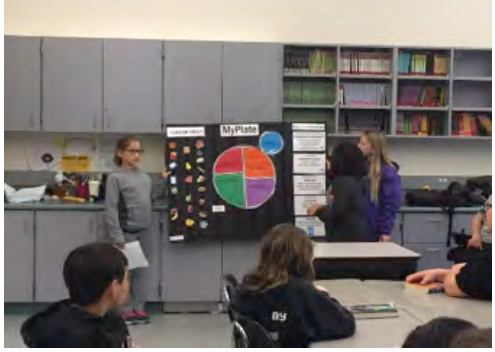
Pamela Rapp, Registered Dietitian for Roseville City Elementary School District, wanted students to eat more of the fresh fruit and vegetables provided through the school meal program. She was awarded grant funding from California Department of Education Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement for the school year of 2016–17 to engage students and freshen up the cafeteria environment. She implemented many changes to spruce up the cafeteria and improve student perception of fruits and vegetables.

INVOLVING STUDENTS IS KEY

"The student pretest was probably one of the more enlightening activities, and it really helped me learn how the students felt about the cafeteria, food offerings, and nutrition knowledge," says Ms. Rapp. Student preference surveys were administered at Kaseberg Elementary, and fruit and vegetable naming contests and taste tests were conducted. With the help of Rosemary Carter, Technical Advising Professional (TAP) from UC CalFresh, and Lisa Larsen, TAP from the Dairy Council of California, students participated in nutrition education. A Student Nutrition Advisory Council, with a current membership of 26 students, was launched under the leadership of Ms. Carter. The students were instrumental in the taste tests, helping to promote school meals and creating artwork for the cafeteria.

PAINT IT UP

The most visible change is the colorful mural now gracing the once drab walls of the lunchroom. Student morale has been positively impacted by the cafeteria makeover, and school staff members commented that they love the mural, which has made the cafeteria more warm and welcoming.



Freshening Up

SAN YSIDRO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT • VISTA DEL MAR ELEMENTARY AND SMYTHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

FOCUS AREAS

- Moving More Milk
- Promoting Vegetables & Salad
- Creating School Synergies

QUICK TIPS

Constant communication with the school principal is key to relay messages to teachers. Make sure there is a designated staff member to update the digital board. Nobody would take the beans until we named them "Bouncy Beans."

—**Paloma Perez,**
Child Nutrition Director

This is not only easy but is backed up with research, which makes it even better!

—**Mr. Tapia,**
Principal of Smythe Elementary School

Goals

- Increase consumption of white milk by 10 percent
- Increase fresh vegetable and salad consumption by 10 percent
- Improve the lunchroom atmosphere

Actions

- Placed white milk first in the coolers.
- Established a partnership with the Dairy Council of California to conduct nutrition education in the classroom and offer a Mobile Dairy Assembly.
- Conducted a plate-waste study in partnership with UC San Diego and learned that the item wasted most often were baby carrots and whole fruits and that the portion sizes were, in some cases, too large for younger students.
- Placed fun labels on the salad bar for fruits and vegetables.
- Conducted a Harvest of the Month farmers market on campus to promote fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Installed a digital menu board to promote meal items and California Thursdays.
- Installed a mural at the cafeteria in Vista Del Mar Elementary School.

Results

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard increased from 21 points to 48 points out of 100 points for Smythe and from 30 points to 47 points out of 100 points for Vista Del Mar.
- Nutrition education digital boards were well received.

Next Steps

- Work on updating nutrition information on the digital menu board.
- Install mural at Smythe Elementary School.
- Prepare and serve fruits and vegetables in the salad bar tailored to the age of the student.
- Implement the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement strategies at other school sites.

Vista Del Mar Elementary/ Smythe Elementary

Grade Levels: K–3

Enrollment: 560 for Vista Del Mar, and 694 for Smythe

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 69.5/80.9

San Ysidro Unified School District

Grade Levels: K–5

Number of Schools: 7

Enrollment: 4,808

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: 99

Child Nutrition Director: Paloma Perez

Smarter Lunchrooms Technical Advising Professional (TAP): Heather Troska Berkoben, Dairy Council of California

For more information about TAPs and for additional Smarter Lunchrooms resources, visit the SLM of CA website at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

Funded by a 2015 Team Nutrition Training grant administered by the California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division. Visit http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/smarterlunchrooms.asp. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

continued

Freshening Up

Paloma Perez, acting Child Nutrition Director for San Ysidro Unified School District, worked with Pamela Lambert, former Child Nutrition Director, to take on the challenge of transforming the school cafeterias, with the help of the California Department of Education's Team Nutrition Smarter Lunchrooms Movement grant

REDUCING WASTE IS A FOCUS

The first step was to conduct a plate-waste study of both Smythe and Vista Del Mar Elementary Schools through a subcontract with the University of California, San Diego. They were surprised to learn that not only were vegetables the most wasted food and least selected, but that whole fruit was being tossed in the garbage too.

The next step was to engage the cafeteria staff through training and soliciting their ideas for the cafeteria makeover.

NUTRITION EDUCATION IS A BIG PART

A real highlight of the grant was the opportunity to offer students schoolwide assemblies. Both schools participated in a Mobile Dairy Classroom Assembly (provided by the Dairy Council of California) and conducted a farmers market to engage students and promote healthy foods. These events received publicity through a local TV channel. The Dairy Council also provided colorful posters and curriculum for classroom education. Working with the Dairy Council, San Ysidro piloted a digital method of nutrition education, which was well received by students.

MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

Both Smythe and Vista Del Mar made changes to the salad bars, including slicing whole fruit and adding chili powder, and adding creative fruit and veggie cards. They provided mixed, sliced fruit in transparent cups. Other changes included installing a new milk cooler at Smythe and placing the white milk at the front of the cooler in cafeterias at both schools.

The custodian at Smythe noticed that when the plate-waste study was conducted, the number of trash bags used was significantly reduced from the amount he usually used, because of how the plate-waste team stacked the trays. As a result, he suggested to the maintenance department a change in the system to reduce trash volume.

At Vista Del Mar, a colorful mural was installed in the cafeteria. Based on feedback from the students, some entrées were changed and theme days, including Meatless Mondays and California Thursdays, were instituted.

Appendix A:
Web-Based Resources

Web-Based Resources

California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division

The CDE Nutrition Services Division was awarded a 2015 Team Nutrition Training grant to administer the SLM subgrants to 48 schools, of which 18 are featured in this publication. The CDE's SLM web page provides information on the SLM at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/smarterlunchrooms.asp.

Smarter Lunchrooms Movement of California

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement of California (SLM of CA) is a collaborative comprised of the following organizations: CDE, California Department of Public Health, California Food Policy Advocates, Dairy Council of California, UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program, and the BEN Center. The SLM of CA website, hosted by the Dairy Council of California lists upcoming trainings and webinars, provides information on how to access Technical Advising Professionals, and provides other useful SLM tools and resources. The website can be accessed at https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Foodservice/Smarter-Lunchrooms-Movement-of-California.

Smarter Lunchrooms Movement National Office

The BEN Center is supported by funding from the United States Department of Agriculture. The BEN Center continues to conduct and support innovative research that applies principles of behavioral economics in order to discover strategies that improve children's food choices in schools. The BEN Center is home of the SLM National Office, which brings strategies supported research to schools nationwide.

The SLM National Office provides tools, training, and support to educational, extension, and community groups who apply Smarter Lunchrooms strategies in school lunchrooms, creating environments that "nudge" students towards better nutrition and improved overall health. The SLM National Office website provides multiple resources for implementing SLM at https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/.

Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard

The Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard contains simple, no-cost, or low-cost strategies that lunchrooms can use to increase participation, improve consumption of healthy food, and reduce food waste. The strategies are based on research from the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs and partners. The latest version of the scorecard consolidated the 100 strategies in the 2016 version to 60 strategies for ease of completion. The online version of the scorecard is available at https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/documents/SLM-Scorecard2.0_5.pdf

Team Nutrition

Team Nutrition is an initiative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to support the Child Nutrition Programs through training and technical assistance for food service, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity. The Team Nutrition website provides many free resources to support schools in child nutrition at https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition.

California Department of Education
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