

Smarter Lunchrooms: A Policy, Systems & Environmental Approach to School Meals

May 2017 | Katie Bark, Project Director

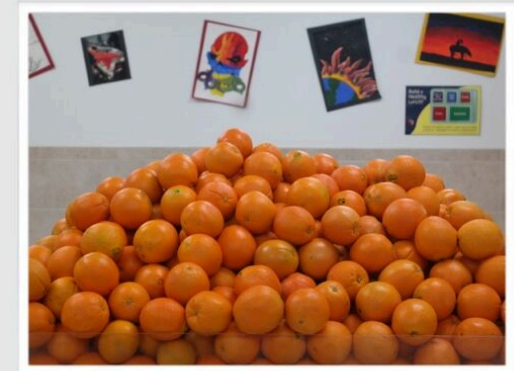
Montana Team Nutrition, MSU

+ Smarter Lunchroom Projects

- Smarter Lunchroom Pilot Project in 5 Montana High Schools
- Team Nutrition and SNAP ED Partnership in Creating Smarter Lunchrooms in Montana Elementary Schools
- Development of a *Best Practices for Engaging Students in Smarter Lunchrooms Guide*



Orange Mountain--Smarter Lunchroom Project--Hardin High School--March 5, 2015



Hardin HS, Orange Mountain

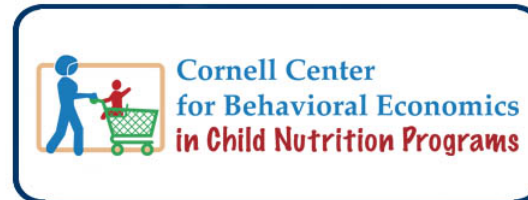


Skyview HS, Billings Refreshing Smoothies

+ Team Nutrition and Food and Health Lab High School Smarter Lunchroom Partnership

Project Outcomes:

1. Development of food waste protocol
2. Data collection and analysis of food waste and consumption in schools
3. Development of (1) Creating Smarter Lunchroom in High School Video, (2) Conducting a Plate Waste Study using the BEN Center's Quarter Method Video, (3) Salad Bar Method Video



+



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+ Creating Smarter Lunchrooms in Montana High Schools Pilot Project

Methods:

- Developed SLAC (School Lunch Advisory Council) in each school. Foodservice/Teacher/3+ students.
- Developed plan to implement 3+ SL strategies
- Conducted Pre and Post Score Card and photos; Collected 3 Days pre and post plate waste

Outcomes:

Individual Reports and Success Story on each school
Plate Waste Data that showed positive impacts
Utilized information to design trainings and projects

From
This



To
This



Columbia Falls HS Service Line Makeover

+ High School Salad Bar Actions



1

- Turned the salad bar, allowing both sides to be used for easy, fast access.
- Enhanced salad bar to include soup, homemade bread, and convenient fresh vegetable cups. Offered a soup/salad/bread reimbursable meal option.
- Created new signage at salad bar and a la carte line.

2

- Created a restaurant-style salad bar to offer more fruit and vegetable choices.

3

- Repositioned the salad bar to be the first station in the service line.

4

- Redesigned the lunchroom by moving the salad bar to the beginning of the lunch line, allowing for easy access and high visibility.
- Enhanced marketing of salad bar items with eye catching placement of fruit.
- Using shallower pans on salad bar to decrease waste and leftovers.

5

- Moved salad bar to the front of the line.



Pre

Post

High School Salad Bar Results



Waste Per Consumer

1.20 ounces

1.15 ounces

Ounces Eaten Per Consumer

4.89 ounces

6.30 ounces

Vegetable Selected Per Consumer

.63% of total on salad bar

.98% of total on salad bar

Total Selected Per Consumer

.76% of total on salad bar

.95% of total on salad bar

Significant Relationship (p < 0.05)

YES

NO

Note: Data collected from salad bars 3 days pre and 3 days post intervention at 5 high schools, totaling 30 observation days.

+ High School Lunch Tray Actions

1

- Branded the lunchroom with new name displayed on banners, aprons, and hats for food service staff.

- Advertised daily menu options on a new menu board,

- Created a smoothie bar featuring a variety of flavors and a reimbursable meal option.

2

- Catchy and appealing smoothie flavors/names attract student's attention.

- Created eye-appealing décor along the serving line.

- Redesigned the lunchroom room for a more efficient flow pattern. Created a faster service line in a separate corner of the cafeteria and moved the custom sandwich cart to improve access.

- Added signage promoting the daily soup, local foods, daily lunch menu, and offer versus serve.

- Fruit and vegetable baskets were placed next to the cash register.

3

- A Student Nutrition Advisory Council was formed with school staff to guide the strategies to be implemented.

- Student-designed fruit and vegetable art work was displayed in the lunchroom.

- Food service staff were retrained on the offer versus serve option, stopped pre-plating trays, and promoted choice within fruits and vegetables.

4

- Started a grab and go lunch meal station for students who don't want to eat in the lunchroom.

- Placing fruits, vegetables, salads and milk front and center on the a la carte line.

- Enhanced the main line with decorative baskets and serving dishes.

- Offered smoothies, fruit parfaits, and fresh vegetables with attractive promotional signage on the a la carte line.

5

- Promoted the daily lunch menu in multiple areas with chalk board and sandwich board signage.

- Improved ambiance with eye-appealing décor, removed clutter, and ordered colorful banners.

- Started a sharing bowl for leftover whole fruit.



Pre

Post

High School Lunch Tray Results



Percent Vegetable Waste

41% per tray

30% per tray

Percent Fruit Waste

33% per tray

36% per tray

Percent Overall Waste

21% per tray

20% per tray

Significant Relationship
($p < 0.05$)

YES

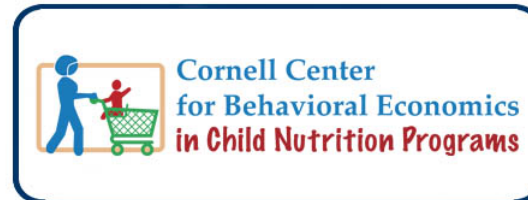
NO

Note: Data collected from student lunch trays 3 days pre and 3 days post intervention at 5 high schools, totaling 9,943 individual observations.

+ Team Nutrition and Food and Health Lab High School Smarter Lunchroom Partnership

Development of a *Best Practices for Engaging Students in Smarter Lunchrooms Guide*

- This guide will provide 6 nutrition lessons for high or middle school educators to use to engage students in Smarter Lunchrooms initiative.
- Including a plate waste study lesson plan that can be used as the “Prove it” method.
- The lessons have been piloted by educators and published as :
Let’s Eat in Dec 2017



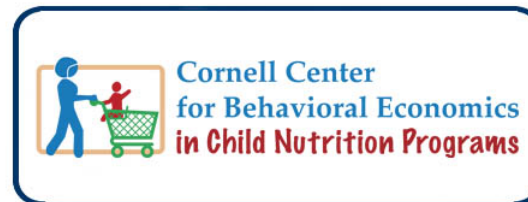
+ Team Nutrition and Food and Health Lab High School Smarter Lunchroom Partnership



Let's Eat!
Engaging Students in Smarter Lunchrooms

[http://www.montana.edu/
teamnutrition/
documents/LetsEat_
SmarterLunchRooms
_AllPages.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/documents/LetsEat_SmarterLunchRooms_AllPages.pdf)

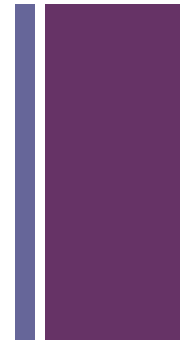





Facilitated Factors for Successful Student Engagement

- Collaborative relationship with foodservice staff and educator
- Popular and effective way for feedback and input on school menus and meal procedures
- Flexibility around student's schedule and use of incentives
- Conduct projects in the fall rather than spring semester
- Training of front line staff and follow-up to continue collaborations and assess long-term sustainability of strategies

<http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasantmeals/smartcafes.html>




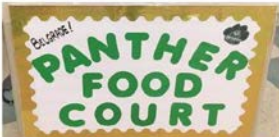

+ **Stepping into Montana's Smarter Lunchrooms**



Belgrade School District, Belgrade High School

Smarter Lunchrooms Principles Used:

1. Increase convenience
2. Improve visibility
3. Enhance taste expectations

Goals:

- ⇒ Increase the amount of fruits and vegetables selected and eaten by students.
- ⇒ Try several Smarter Lunchroom's principles to improve the lunchroom environment.
- ⇒ Engage students in the process of creating a Smarter Lunchroom.

Action:

- ⇒ Repositioned the salad bar to allow students' self-selection on both sides. Promoted choices through offering a variety of colorful, and appealing fresh fruits and vegetables on the salad bar.
- ⇒ Served a Chinese meal in Chinese takeout boxes. The high school students loved it!
- ⇒ Branded the cafeteria by naming it after the school mascot, Go Panthers!
- ⇒ To entice students to take more beans, the staff started serving refried beans in a popular Tostada bowl rather than offering just a plain scoop of beans.

Results:

- ⇒ Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Score Card increased by 19 points from spring to fall 2016 creating a cafeteria that significantly nudges students to make a healthy choice.
- ⇒ Students using the salad bar are taking an additional 3.5 pounds total (or 1/3 cup per student) of romaine lettuce/fresh spinach mix daily.
- ⇒ Staff reported having a positive experience in working with students to assess and improve the meal environment.

Next Steps:

- ⇒ Conduct taste testing of new products with students.
- ⇒ Create signage with enticing photos to promote Grab and Go options.
- ⇒ Create and display eye-appealing signage in high traffic areas to promote the daily lunch menu.
- ⇒ Incorporate additional student art work as décor in the cafeteria.

Developed by Candace Gamer, MS, MSU Dietetic Intern, September 2016

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Montana's Smarter Lunchrooms Resources

- Montana's Smarter Lunchrooms Success Stories
- Creating Smarter Lunchrooms in Montana High Schools Video
- Simple Signage Resource Guide
- Plate Waste Protocol and Videos
- Best Practices for Engaging Students in Smarter Lunchrooms Guide



+ MSU, Team Nutrition, & SNAP ED Partnership

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+ Team Nutrition and SNAP Education Elementary School Partnership

Two webinars & one check in telephone call

1. Schools are identified by SNAP-Ed Program and/or Team Nutrition's School Wellness Coaches.
2. Schools create School Lunch Advisory Committees (SLAC's) to implement and evaluate change. SLAC's includes SNAP ED Educator and School Nutrition Manager.
3. Team completes the "Spot it" phase, develops a simple action to "Plan it" and implements 1-3 strategies to "Do it," and determines simple "Prove it" method.

+ Stepping into Montana's Smarter Lunchrooms



Butte School District, West Elementary School

Smarter Lunchrooms Principles Used:

1. Increase Visibility of Healthy Foods
2. Increase Convenience of Healthy Foods
3. Utilize Suggestive Selling and Signage



Contact Kurt Marthaller
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Goals:

- ⇒ Increase the selection of fruits, vegetables, and white milk by students in the lunchroom
- ⇒ Create an inviting, colorful, pleasant atmosphere in the lunchroom
- ⇒ Promote the school meals program to students and parents

Action:

- ⇒ Offered at least two types of fruit each day and placed fruit in at least two different locations along the serving line
- ⇒ Offered whole, mixed fruit in an eye-appealing bowl at the cash register
- ⇒ Promoted white milk and all fruit and vegetable choices on the daily menu board
- ⇒ Placed the white milk in front of the chocolate milk in the milk cooler
- ⇒ Increased the visibility of the daily menu by posting a larger-sized menu in the lunchroom and the hallway
- ⇒ Added colorful posters to help students build a healthy meal

Results:

- ⇒ Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Score Card increased by 16% in two months; This created a cafeteria that is more inviting and nudges students to make a healthier choice.
- ⇒ Students selected more white milk (62% increase)
- ⇒ Students selected more fruits and vegetables (increased by 30 servings per day).

Next Steps:

- ⇒ Follow-up evaluation to determine long-term effects
- ⇒ Expand Smarter Lunchrooms strategies to Kennedy School
- ⇒ Support Smarter Lunchroom efforts with Nutrition Education in the classroom provided by the MSU Extension SNAP-Ed Program

Partnership: Butte School District, MSU Extension SNAP-Ed, Montana Team Nutrition
2016-2017 School Year



Montana Team Nutrition Program

Visit www.opi.mt.gov/MTeamNutrition
Call 406-994-5641

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Evaluate



Pre Score
Card

Post Score
Card

Photos

“Prove It”
Strategies

+ Results and Tips

- Building collaboration and positive relationships between school staff and community members.
- SNAP Ed educator had connections with teachers providing opportunity to carry out the student engagement component—such as creating catchy names for menu items.
- Opportunity for school nutrition program manager and staff to be in spotlight. Press releases featured positive changes in school lunch program.
- Convinced staff that simple changes work... Butte Elementary school saw increase in white milk quickly.
- Expanding to more schools in district and around the state.



+ Project Director



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