

# Cafeteria Chronicles: Boulder Valley School District

Innovative recipes that meet nutrition and cost standards can be hard to find.

**Boulder Valley School District** in Boulder, CO looks to their students for innovative recipe ideas each spring at their student chef competition. Teams of 2-4 middle school students create a scratch-prepared dish that meets standards for nutrition, cost and scalability. The winning dish is then featured on next year's school lunch menu.

**Check out the student chef competition in action:**



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Deb Trevor, District Manager of Procurement at Boulder Valley shares how students love getting creative and take great pride in seeing their dishes featured on the lunch menu.

*"The kids get really engaged. They learn a lot about food. They get really excited about the competition."*

-Deb Trevor, District Manager of Procurement for Boulder Valley

On the day of the live competition, a panel of judges evaluates each team's dish. The top two dishes last spring were Red Lentil Dal and Beef Bulgogi with Cucumber Pico & Rice.



**Red Lentil Dal:** a flavorful dish featuring local red lentils, fresh ginger, garlic, cilantro, coriander, cumin, turmeric, curry powder, and garam masala.



**Beef Bulgogi with Cucumber Pico & Rice:** this on-trend dish includes a beef marinade with fresh garlic, ginger, and gochujang paste alongside local cucumbers.

The student chef competition is a highlight of the school year for many students, allowing them to influence menu development and establish culinary skills. Organizing this event earned the district the **Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals** Recognition Award, as part of the Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Recognition Awards on behalf of the USDA and Action for Healthy Kids.

Cheers to the team at Boulder Valley for innovating their school meals at this one-of-a-kind event!

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