

Cafeteria Chronicles: Hillsborough County Public Schools

Developing new recipes builds excitement for your school nutrition program.

This is something Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa, FL know well. To think outside of the typical breakfast offerings, Hillsborough worked with the Florida Department of Agriculture to develop a new fruit and yogurt parfait recipe featuring a whole-grain waffle. Using a waffle instead of granola was something exciting and new that students loved.

In total, 21 new recipes were developed for the district's breakfast menu, all using whole grain options lower in added sugars! These efforts, along with switching to unflavored milk and cereals lower in added sugars, led to Hillsborough being awarded the Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) **Breakfast Trailblazer Award**.

Check out a recent podcast featuring Hillsborough County Public Schools in this [video](#).

Crafting new lunch recipes lower in sodium was another challenge Hillsborough was eager to take on. Their "Hulk Salad" recipe featuring spinach, mandarin oranges, and dried cranberries replaced a higher sodium Cheesy Spinach Bake recipe. Students also favored a new vegetable dip recipe made with chili lime seasoning, that was lower in sodium, over Ranch dressing in a taste test, allowing them to further reduce sodium in their lunch menu. By making these creative recipe changes and offering more fresh produce at lunch, the district was recently awarded the **Lunch Trailblazer Award** as well.

To garner excitement about all the new recipes, the district hosts a student food show called the "School Food Experience" each year. At the event, the culinary team presents new recipes, students taste them and provide direct feedback. School board leadership and local media are also invited to promote the district's recipe development. The event is fun for all who attend, but more importantly, students in Hillsborough feel valued as being contributors to the menu development process.

Let's celebrate Hillsborough and their leadership in transforming school meals!

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