

Cafeteria Chronicles: Hunterdon Central Regional High School District

Incorporating local food into scratch-made meals is a winning combination.

At **Hunterdon Central Regional High School District** in Flemington, NJ, switching to more scratch-made meals gave the school nutrition team more control over ingredients in their recipes. Their goal was to source as many of those ingredients locally as possible. With the help of partnerships with local New Jersey farmers, Food Service Director Timothy Hendrickson and his team were able to develop several new recipes with local ingredients:

Homemade Beef Lasagna with Marinara Sauce: local tomatoes

Honeynut Squash Soup: local squash

Honey Glazed Purple Potatoes: local honey and potatoes

Applesauce: local apples

Braised Cabbage: local cabbage

Homemade Cranberry Sauce: local cranberries

Check out the local, scratch-made meals at Hunterdon in this [video](#).

“Thanks to Tim's efforts, the cafeteria consistently offers a vibrant array of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables. That's not only to meet nutritional standards but are genuinely enjoyed by the students. His hard work makes a real difference in their daily lives. And it's a joy to see the positive impact he has on our school community.”

-Laura Rosman, Registered Dietitian, Pomptonian Food Services

“The cafeteria is an extension of the classroom. It's a place where students learn by tasting, exploring and connecting food to health. Here we have the opportunity to lay the foundation for lifelong healthy eating habits.”

-Toni Bowman, Director of Nutrition Services, Pomptonian Food Services

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Serving scratch-made meals with local ingredients reflects what the district values most, healthy meals for students, and supporting the local community. To promote their efforts, the team from Hunterdon uses flyers in the cafeteria to indicate where local ingredients are sourced from, as well as noting this on their website, in social media posts and in their “Nutrition News” video segments.

The district saw many positive outcomes after implementing their new scratch-made recipes, including greater participation rates, positive feedback from parents as well as lower sodium and added sugars in their school lunch. Another positive outcome was that the district earned the USDA’s Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Recognition Award for **Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals**.

Congrats to the team at Hunterdon for leading the way in school nutrition!

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