

HMI Cafeteria Chronicles: Regional School Unit #89

Regional School Unit #89 (RSU 89) in Stacyville, Maine, is making headlines for their outstanding achievements in school nutrition. The district is a recipient of Action for Healthy Kids and USDA's Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Grant and has also earned the Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals Award. Both honors celebrate RSU 89's dedication to providing healthy, delicious, and innovative school meals to their students. They also recognize the district's dedication to meeting USDA's updated school nutrition standards.

Utilizing HMI Grant funds, RSU 89 has taken several steps to enhance the quality of school meals. One of the most significant improvements has been the addition of more staff, as well as training for staff on healthier cooking methods and implementing scratch cooking. This has enabled the district to prepare higher-quality, scratch-made meals for students. This approach ensures that students receive meals made from fresh, local ingredients, reducing reliance on processed foods and enhancing overall nutrition. The district's popular scratch-made menu additions include homemade sub rolls, croutons, pickles, roasted chickpeas, Broccoli Chicken Penne, Buffalo Chicken Calzones, and Sweet Chili Asian Noodle Bowls.

See the efforts of RSU 89 in this [video](#).

The HMI Grant has also made it possible to purchase new kitchen equipment such as a cooler/freezer combo that allows them to properly store (and even freeze) local produce, allowing them to utilize it even in the off season. The district has partnered with Keep Ridge Farm in Benedicta, Maine to source fresh, local food, such as squash, onions, eggs, carrots, and kale. These fresh ingredients have significantly improved the taste, student acceptance, and nutritional value of school meals.

RSU 89's achievements show that innovation in school nutrition can not only be healthy, but tasty as well. Congratulations to RSU 89 for leading the way in school nutrition!

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