



Learnings from the Field

Beaufort County Schools

Beaufort County, SC

District Enrollment:

22,000

Production Model: Contracted

Food Service Management

Company

District F/R: 57%

School Year Implemented:

2016-2017

District ADP: 54%

No. of Grants Awarded: 10

Beaufort Elementary School

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 100%

School ADP: 48%

Broad River Elementary School

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 67%

School ADP: 54%

Whale Branch Elementary School

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 100%

School ADP: 84%

Hilton Head Creative Arts

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 61%

School ADP: 40%

Hilton Head IB Elementary

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Large (900+)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 61%

School ADP: 44%

St. Helena Elementary

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 100%

School ADP: 81%

McRiley Elementary

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 77%

School ADP: 63%

Mossy Oaks Elementary

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 69%

School ADP: 58%

Port Royal Elementary

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Small (Under 300)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 63%

School ADP: 53%

Red Cedar Elementary

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 63%

School ADP: 60%

Project Description

When Beaufort County schools received Project Produce Grants for ten of their elementary schools, they had an opportunity to expose a large number of young students to fresh fruits and vegetables. Each month, Director of Wellness Jessica Perez would orchestrate taste tests in the cafeteria. Throughout the month, the students would try each item three separate times. First would be a taste test in the cafeteria. Next, the cafeteria chef would incorporate the item into a recipe. Finally, the item would be featured on the cafeteria salad bar. For example, with spinach, the students tasted it raw, then the chef prepared it in a sweet spinach pasta salad, and finally it appeared on the salad bar. The idea was that a student might not be receptive to trying a new fruit or vegetable initially, but after being exposed to it three separate times in three different ways, they would be familiarized with the item and more likely to try it.

Each month, the chef and marketing manager would rotate to a different school to spend time with the students sampling the food. They also passed

out nutrition education sheets for the students to review with their teachers. Additionally, parents received newsletters telling them about the taste tests and the benefits of the fruits and vegetables being sampled.



Director Perez attributes much of the success of the project to key partnerships with both their produce purveyors and individual champions at each school. Their produce purveyor was instrumental in planning which fruits and vegetables to offer at certain times. The individual school champions were imperative to achieving operational success and student engagement. Director Perez is planning on continuing with taste tests during Nutrition Month this school year.

Successes

- The students loved the project so much that they are continuing with taste tests at the various schools.
- Positive press through the school community featuring Project Produce Grant efforts.

Challenges

- Identifying individuals at each school to help coordinate the taste tests.

For resources related to Project Produce, visit www.thelunchbox.org.

