



Learnings from the Field

Cincinnati Public Schools

Cincinnati, OH

District Enrollment:

37,000

Production Model: Self

Operated

District F/R: 85.5%

School Year Implemented:

2017

District ADP: 81%

No. of Grants Awarded: 6

Academy of World Languages

Age Group: K-5, 6-8

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Urban

School F/R: 100%

School ADP: 87%

Mt. Washington Elementary School

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Urban

School F/R: 100%

School ADP: 83%

Mt. Airy Elementary School

Age Group: K-5

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Urban

School F/R: 100%

School ADP: 90%

Oyler Elementary School

Age Group: K-5, 6-8, 9-12

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Urban

School F/R: 100%

School ADP: 88%

Roberts Paideia Academy

Age Group: K-5, 6-8

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Urban

School F/R: 100%

School ADP: 99%

Sayler Park Elementary School

Age Group: K-5, 6-8

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Urban

School F/R: 100%

School ADP: 80%

Project Description

Each quarter during their Project Produce Grant period, Cincinnati Public Schools hosted a Cultural Celebration Day. They selected a variety of cultural celebrations, such as Dewali festival of lights, Lunar New Year, or Cinco de Mayo, and prepared cafeteria lunches specific to that culture's cuisine. At the end of the lunch line, they would receive a sample of a culturally appropriate fruit or vegetable that complimented the lunch. Once at their tables, the students would enjoy culturally appropriate music, videos, and entertainment. The elaborate production created an engaging platform for students to get excited about trying new foods.

The program was supported largely by the Community Learning Center. The local organization provided volunteers to pass out samples and produce at the events. They also facilitated a voting system in which students placed their stickers on whichever fruit or vegetable was their favorite.

Food Service Director Jessica Shelly explained that the program went so well, that the district will continue featuring various cuisines through monthly Cultural Celebration Days. For example, during the winter Olympics in South Korea, they featured Korean cuisine in the cafeteria. She explains this was always the intention behind the grant, "We don't like to do things with grants unless we can show sustainability with it. So unless we have a long term plan of action, we don't do the grant."

Director Shelly's advice to districts interested in applying for the Project Produce Grant is simple, "Do it! Don't be intimidated or scared to try it. There is a champion out there at every school. You have to find that champion and engage with them and find out how they can get on board. "

Successes

- Students loved trying the produce samples.
- Success with the program created long term initiatives in the cafeteria.

Challenges

- Time management amongst staff.
- Finding a sufficient amount of volunteers.

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

