



Learnings from the Field



Malvern Public School District

Malvern, AR

District

Enrollment: 2022

District F/R: 75.8%

Production Model: Contracted

School Food Service Management
Company

School Year Implemented: 2018-
2019

District ADP:

70.1%

No. of Grants Awarded: 2

Wilson Intermediate School

Age Group: 6-8

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 81%

School ADP: 75%

Malvern High School

Age Group: 9-12

School Size: Medium (301-900)

School Environment: Rural

School F/R: 66%

School ADP: 66%

Project Description

As a result of the Project Produce grant, students in grades 5 and 6 at Wilson

Intermediate School in Malvern Public School District were involved in a project called "Getting Students Back to Their Roots: Vegetables." Through this project, students were given the opportunity to sample fresh vegetables that are difficult to eat raw. The vegetables were discussed in the science classes prior to the taste testing culmination. Students researched where the veggies are grown, the climate needed for growth, and the nutritional impact of each. Recipes were provided for the students and their parents, sent home with the students, included in the school's newsletter/communication to home, and added to the district website.

The featured vegetables were:

- Asparagus
- Black beans
- Brussel sprouts
- Kale
- Zucchini

The recipes were steamed asparagus with fresh garlic, bacon broasted brussel sprouts, baked kale chips, parmesan zucchini coins, and black bean brownies. To craft these recipes, a chef from the school's dining service company, used the assistance of six students from the high school to help prepare and serve the vegetables and provide informational sheets on each. After the taste testing event, the fifth and sixth grade students were asked to vote on their top three favorites so that the item(s) could be added to the school's menus. At one school, 159 students responded to the google docs by logging in and choosing their favorites. The next week, the top two picks, the kale chips and black bean brownies, were added to the lunch menus.

In regards to the Project Produce grant, Terri Bryant, the Director of School Improvement at Malvern said, "Students in high poverty school districts like Malvern, do not have access to the foods we have been able to share with them through this grant. Asparagus, Brussel Sprouts, Zucchini, Black Bean Brownies and Kale Chips are not foods they would have at home. Through the taste testing and recipes being provided, the families may get to try them at home when the prices are low. And, they are eating healthier foods than fast foods."

Successes

- Introducing students to new vegetables

Challenges

● Sharing the kitchen with cafeteria workers

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

