Let's Eat! Engaging Students in School Lunch
Molly Stenberg, RDN
Montana Team Nutrition Program
326 Reid Hall, MSU
Bozeman, MT 59717
Phone 406.994.7217
stenberg@montana.edu
www.montana.edu/teamnutrition

Welcome
Molly Stenberg, RDN
Montana Team Nutrition Program
326 Reid Hall, MSU
Bozeman, MT 59717
Phone 406.994.7217
stenberg@montana.edu
www.montana.edu/teamnutrition
http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Managem
ent-Operations/School-Nutrition

Objectives for today
1. Provide a quick introduction to Smarter Lunchrooms
2. Learn about a new, free Montana Team Nutrition resource, Let's Eat - Engaging Students in Smarter Lunchrooms which schools can use to
   a) form a School Lunch Advisory Council (SLAC) and
   b) teach middle and high school students through six lesson plans designed to meet Education Standards for Family Consumer Science, Health Enhancement and Science.

Poll questions

What is Smarter Lunchrooms?
- www.smarterlunchrooms.org
- The National Handbook gives you everything you need to know!
- Based upon Behavioral Economics—designing the lunchroom to make the healthy choice the easy choice.
- The layout of your lunchroom can nudge students to make healthy choices.

Why does this matter?
School meals fuel smart and active students.
Students who eat school meals consume more fruits, veggies, milk and less fat than those who eat meals from home or the convenience store = more calcium, iron, zinc and fiber = more brain food!
School meals nourish hungry students. 1 in 5 students are food insecure/hungry.
School meals are good for students and good for the school's budget.
+ Why should we involve students in Smarter Lunchrooms?

- They have GREAT ideas.
- Student feedback improves customer service and satisfaction.
- Helps create a lunchroom which nudges healthy eating and decreases food waste.
- All of these add up to more pleasant and positive mealtime at school.

Pilot sites all created some form of a School Lunch Advisory Council (SLAC).

+ Acknowledgement and appreciation to:

We would like to acknowledge the following schools for their participation in the Montana Smarter Lunchrooms Pilot Projects from 2013-2017:

- Belgrade High School, Belgrade
- Castle Rock Middle School, Billings
- Columbia Falls High School, Columbia Falls
- Hardin High School, Hardin
- Kalispell Middle School, Kalispell
- Park High School, Livingston
- Ronan Middle School, Ronan
- Skyview High School, Billings
- Troy Junior High and High School, Troy

+ What we learned from these pilot sites… students can create positive change!

- Troy salad bar is easy for customers to reach it from both sides.

+ Tips from Montana Schools

Columbia Falls High School
 misconduct family style serving bowls to make the traditional hot lunch line much more inviting.
- Student musicians perform in the cafeteria during lunch.
+ Created a customer-friendly salad bar per student request

Billings Skyview Salad Bar is ALL GREEN for St. Patrick's Day!

+ Signage promotes new menu items with creative names at Skyview High School.

Added a Smoothie Bar per student request!

+ Advice from Patrice Benjamin, Hardin High School

Orange Mountain - Smarter Lunchroom Project - Hardin High School - March 6, 2015

It is more FUN to choose an orange from an Orange Mountain than from a chaffing dish…… Even for high school students!!

+ Added a Grab and Go station by the busiest entrance/exit at Hardin High School

Serves 20 – 25 meals per day – serves customers who would not participate otherwise

+ Tips from Montana Schools

Livingston High School shop students make metal signs for the soup station.

+ Tips from Montana Schools

Livingston High School students develop creative marketing materials.
Do Smarter Lunchrooms strategies help students eat healthier at school? Yes, they can.

How to engage students in this process?

Middle school students at Luther School, MT.

Use this *Let’s Eat! Engaging Students in Smarter Lunchrooms* Guide to:

1. form a School Lunch Advisory Council (SLAC) and
2. teach middle and high school students through six lesson plans designed to meet Education Standards for Family Consumer Science, Health Enhancement and Science.

[http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasantmeals/letseatlessons.html](http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasantmeals/letseatlessons.html)

Acknowledgement and appreciation to:
The following persons assisted with lesson development and review:

- Galen Eldridge, Research Associate, MSU Extension Nutrition Education Program
- Alex Gonzalez, Glendive School District
- Chris Holt, Whitefish School District
- Joanna Krogstad, Bozeman School District
- Lorie Martinez, Columbus School District
- Twylla McPherson, Glendive School District
- Elizabeth Svisco, MSU graduate student
- Megan Vincent, Family & Consumer Sciences Education Specialist, Montana Office of Public Instruction
Best Practices to Engage Students in School Meals

1. Build a School Lunch Advisory Committee (SLAC)
   - Advocating for student voice in decision-making.

2. Encourage Student Participation
   - Involving students in menu planning and feedback.

3. Spot, Plan, Do and Prove
   - Establishing a SLAC and conducting regular meetings.

4. Evaluate Student Preferences
   - Using surveys and feedback to improve meal offerings.

5. Plan for Continuation
   - Ensuring sustainability and ongoing improvement.

Connect classroom projects with the lunchroom with these hands-on lessons:

- Smarter Lunchrooms strategies
  - Designed for hands-on involvement with critical thinking, problem solving and assessment by students.
  - Test-piloted by Montana FCS teachers.
  - Most lessons are 3-4 class periods plus a lunch period.
  - Lessons are designed to be used in any order.
  - Developed for middle and high school students.
  - All build relationships with school staff, students and food service managers through a SLAC.

Lesson 1 – Redesign the Lunch Line

http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasanthmeals/letseatlessons.html
Lesson 1 – Redesign the Lunch Line

Tips for using the lessons

Tips and tricks from the field

Questions or Comments?

How do I get started? Create a School Lunch Advisory Council (SLAC)

Tips and tricks from the field

Be creative in how you choose the students
- Both male and female, some who eat school lunch and some who don’t
- An existing student club or class
- Contest to participate – short essay on why it matters yielded a committed group.

Be creative in how you choose the adult mentors. Anyone who has an interest in this topic.

Timing matters – Fall, winter, early spring are OK. Avoid April and May!

Plan for continued student involvement.

Strive to get the front line food service staff on board so that changes are continued.

http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasantsmiles/letseatlesson.html
Contact Montana Team Nutrition for support –
We’ll help guide you through the process!

Molly Stenberg, RDN
Montana Team Nutrition Program
406.994.7212
stenberg@montana.edu
www.montana.edu/teanutrition

Virginia (Ginny) Mermel, PhD
Billings area School Wellness Coach
Virginia.mermel@montana.edu

Katie Bark, RDN
Montana Team Nutrition Program
406.994.5647
kbark@mt.gov
www.montana.edu/teanutrition

Jeanne Seifert, RN
Kalispell area School Wellness Coach
Jean.seifert1@montana.edu

MT OPI School Nutrition Programs
406.444.2501