



## Salad Bars in Missouri Schools

# Success Story

Planning for Success: Normandy School District

Normandy School District (NSD) is moving salad bars to their schools! The middle school and high school received the district's first two salad bars from the *Let's Move Salad Bars to School* Program in January 2011. Rather than rushing to get them on the service line, the district took a step back and thought it through.

"We wanted to do it right," says Lauren Arriola, a Nutrition Specialist with NSD.

NSD's first step in making salad bars available was to bring together the cafeteria managers for a brainstorming session. Since the managers would oversee day to day operations, their buy-in was key to success. Staff offered ideas for using the bars on the service line, and staffing and training requirements. The food service management team used the feedback to create their game plan.

One of the employees' biggest concerns about using salad bars was keeping them clean during service. Staff would have to ensure students were not misusing it. Not wanting to pull staff already working on the line, a group decision was made to use the kitchen manager, who served as a float already, for this task.

### Salad Bar 101

Once the principal at each school gave the green light for the new menu item, the two cafeteria managers were trained on salad bar basics using materials from [www.Lunchbox.org](http://www.Lunchbox.org). The managers then trained their staff. Topics included safe

food handling and fruit and vegetable preparation. The district also provided temperature log sheets, recipes and other resources that staff wanted.

### Salad Bar Manners

Arriola knew that students would need to have some guidance for using a salad bar as some may have never used one before. As a result, NSD developed "Salad Bar Etiquette" for students. Ahead of the salad bars' first appearance, the principals were charged with making sure their students were familiar with the rules. "Our principals made sure their students knew they were lucky to have a salad bar and knew how use it properly," said Arriola.

Once all the pieces were in place, the schools officially kicked-off the salad bar in April 2011.



**Normandy School District Stats**  
**Enrollment**  
4,671 students

**Free & Reduced Meal Eligibility**  
91.5%

**Average Daily Participation**  
Middle School 77%  
High School 49.5%



### **Keep the Line Moving**

The salad bar, placed after the cashier's station, is offered as an entrée at lunch. To ensure that students get a complete reimbursable meal and to minimize waste, students wanting the salad bar pick up pre-portioned lettuce and meat in the main serving line. NSD also offers a prepackaged side salad. According to Arriola, lunch participation has increased about 3 to 4 percent since introducing the salad bars. About 90 middle school and 75 high school students choose the salad bar every day.

The new entrée option is an enticing choice for students with the many different items available from onion, carrots, broccoli, peppers and low-fat cheese, just one of many commodity items used on the bar. Additional items are offered based on availability; for example dried fruit is often served.

### **Students Love Salad Bars!**

Arriola noted the reactions from students and administrators have been really positive. "In round table discussion groups, the kids said the salad bar is the best thing they have in the lunch program and the middle school principal said that the salad bar is key to the lunch program," said Arriola.

Overall, Arriola reports that the students are very good about keeping the salad bar neat and tidy. In fact, the teachers have become allies in encouraging the students to use the salad bar properly because they want to use it too.

Arriola noted that costs related to operating the salad bars are contained by controlling usage. Watching portions, especially for salad dressing, and limiting students from

taking miscellaneous items, such as lettuce and tomato for hamburgers, are two key strategies.

### **Healthier School Meals**

NSD's high school has been working toward the HealthierUS Schools Challenge. Arriola noted having the salad bar has been an advantage in this effort. "The salad bar helps to increase fresh fruits and vegetables as well as orange and dark green items," said Arriola. She also anticipates it will be a huge help in meeting the new school meal regulations.

### **Salad Bar Expansion**

The response to the salad bars in the upper grades has been so positive that the district is considering expansion to the elementary schools. There is some hesitation, but using the same planning process, Arriola hopes it will succeed. Some of the concern comes from the potential increase in cost; the elementary schools only serve one entrée currently.

The district plans to increase the number of salad bar meals served by offering theme days, like taco or baked potato bars, and using more local food.

### **Words of Advice**

Arriola gives the following advice for schools considering a salad bar:

- Take time to do it right
- Have a plan in place
- Make it a reimbursable meal
- Get buy-in from principal and other staff before implementation
- Plan a kick-off event to increase awareness about the new menu item



For more information about adding a salad bar to your nutrition program, visit

[www.saladbars2schools.org](http://www.saladbars2schools.org).



This publication is supported by a mini grant from the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND) through funding from Cooperative Agreement Number 5U58DP002233-02 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of ASTPHND or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Normandy School District's Salad Bar Etiquette

1. Always wash your hands first.
2. Use utensils. **NEVER USE YOUR FINGERS.**
3. If a utensil or plate falls on the floor, don't put it back. Tell a cafeteria person.
4. Don't taste food items at the salad bar.
5. Take a small amount of new foods to try.
6. Take only what you can eat.
7. Don't bring food back to the salad bar.
8. **DON'T PUT YOUR HEAD UNDER THE SNEEZE GUARD OR FOOD SHIELD.** Ask a friend or cafeteria person to help if you can't reach.
9. Always be polite in line. Wait your turn.
10. Always use a clean plate for seconds.

