Stepping into Montana’s Smarter Lunchrooms

Troy School District—Troy Middle and High School

Goals:

⇒ Boost high school students participation in lunch program.
⇒ Increase intake of fruits and vegetables.
⇒ Decrease food waste.
⇒ Engage with students to improve acceptance and build support for school lunch program.

Action:

⇒ Student Council, food service, and school staff engaged in an open discussion to provide feedback and recommendations for the menu and cafeteria environment.
⇒ Turned the salad bar, allowing both sides to be used for easy, fast access.
⇒ Enhanced salad bar to include soup, homemade bread, and convenient fresh vegetable cups. Offered a soup/salad/bread reimbursable meal option.
⇒ Branded the lunchroom with new name displayed on banners, aprons, and hats for food service staff.
⇒ Advertised daily menu options on a new menu board, and created new signage at salad bar and a la carte line.

Results:

⇒ Number of students using the salad bar increased by 15 percent.
⇒ Participation in the lunch program increased by 17 percent; however, Community Eligibility Program (CEP) an influencing factor.
⇒ Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Score increased by six points.
⇒ Staff and student collaboration was effective with new menu initiatives implemented quickly and pleasant, respectful rapport was maintained.

Next Steps:

⇒ Improve lunchroom atmosphere by repainting the cafeteria.
⇒ Once cafeteria renovations are complete, host an open house to further market Helen’s Café and educate students, staff, and parents on the variety of choices.
⇒ Implement an expanded breakfast program next year and add signage to promote breakfast and its academic benefits.
⇒ Start offering theme bar (e.g., pasta or taco bar) lunch menus.
⇒ Apply for a HealthierUS School/Smarter Lunchroom Challenge award.

Smarter Lunchrooms Principles Used:

1. Increase visibility
2. Increase convenience
3. Increase student/staff rapport