

## • March is National Nutrition Month and National Breakfast Week

### National Nutrition Month

This theme reinforces the key messages of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which emphasize lean proteins and more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Featuring whole grain brown rice as the “canvas of our plates,” students can enjoy colorful brown rice bowls at lunchtime and learn about the health benefits of eating more healthy whole grains. Colorful classroom educational booklets have been made available at a discount thanks to the U.S. Rice Federation.

### National Breakfast Week

During our winter promotion of “Eat Breakfast,” our schools are doing great things with breakfast and educating our students about the importance of eating a complete and balanced breakfast. See our Great Stories on page 3.

## • Add Color at Every Meal



An easy way to tell if you are eating a healthy meal is to see how many different colors are on your plate. If most of the time your plate is full of brown and white food, you may not be getting all the nutrients you need.

For nutrition and good health, think about eating with color. Eating fruits and vegetables of different colors gives your body a wide range of valuable nutrients, like fiber, folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C. Some examples include green spinach, orange sweet potatoes, black beans, yellow corn, purple plums, red watermelon, and white onions.

For more variety, try new fruits and vegetables regularly. Choose from fresh seasonal varieties, frozen, dried, and canned without added salt or sugar.

Use these tips to help increase the color and nutritional value of your meals:

### Breakfast

- Enjoy a vegetable scramble by adding

fresh mushrooms, spinach, pepper and onions to scrambled eggs.

- Top your cereal or yogurt with fresh berries or dried fruit.
- Make a fruit smoothie by combining fruit and low fat milk in a blender (try adding some 100% vegetable juice like carrot to kick up the vitamins).

### Lunch

- Add grilled vegetables like zucchini or peppers to your sandwich.
- Instead of pepperoni or other meat, top pizza with vegetables.
- Have a half sandwich with lettuce, tomatoes, and shredded carrots with a cup of vegetable soup, instead of a whole sandwich made with just meat and/or cheese.

## • Sign up for e·bites!

If you're viewing this newsletter from a school website and would like to receive it via email, please visit [eatlearnlive.com](http://eatlearnlive.com) to sign up for future issues.



EAT LEARN LIVE  
WITH  
COLOR

### Dinner

- Add dried fruit to brown rice or quinoa for a tasty, heart healthy side dish.
- Roast peeled fresh sweet potato wedges in the oven instead of frozen white French fries.
- Add fresh or frozen vegetables to baked pasta dishes.

### Dessert/Snack

- Bake apples, peaches, or pears in the oven and top with low-fat vanilla yogurt for a healthy dessert.
- Mix dried fruit, nuts, and whole grain cereal to make your own trail mix.
- Dip sliced cucumbers, bell pepper strips, baby carrots, and grape tomatoes in hummus or low fat ranch dressing.



## March Food Focus: Whole Grains

Jump start your metabolism with a breakfast including nutritious whole grains. Hot hearty oatmeal, cold whole grain cereal, and whole wheat pancakes, waffles, and French toast are excellent choices to give you plenty complex carbohydrates, fiber, and other nutrients you need for sustainable energy.

### For Whole Grain Options Try:

- Baked corn chips
- Barley
- Brown rice
- Corn tortillas
- Oats
- Popcorn
- Whole grain cereal
- Whole wheat pasta
- Whole wheat pizza crust
- Whole wheat bread, bagels, and rolls
- Whole wheat pancakes, waffles, and French toast



## Food for Thought...

### If You Serve it, They Will Come!

A study done by the University of Minnesota has found that school lunch sales don't decline when healthier meals are served.

The study also shows that more nutritious lunches don't necessarily cost schools more to produce. The study reviewed and analyzed data for 330 Minnesota school districts in order to make recommendations for improving the nutritional quality of school lunches for the state of Minnesota.

Some previous studies have shown that students demand less healthy meals and that healthier meals cost more to produce. This University of Minnesota study contradicts both of those findings, instead finding that nutritional quality is unrelated to both student demand and per-meal cost.



Courtesy of Better School Food, which raises awareness of the connection between food and children's health, behavior and learning – [www.betterschoolfood.org](http://www.betterschoolfood.org).

## Colorful

### Orange Chicken and Vegetable Rice Bowl

#### RECIPE



This recipe is from the USA Rice Federation. For more healthy recipes, please visit their website at [www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com).

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 pound skinless, boneless, chicken breasts, cut into strips
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 carrot, thinly sliced
- 1/2 medium onion, sliced
- 1/2 each yellow and red bell peppers, sliced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 7 ounces low-sodium chicken broth
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grated orange zest
- 1 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 1/2 cups hot cooked brown rice

### Preparation

In a large skillet or wok, heat 1/2 tablespoon of oil; add in chicken and stir fry until lightly browned; remove and set aside. In same skillet, heat remaining oil; stir fry vegetables and ginger 4-5 minutes, or until vegetables are tender crisp. Combine chicken broth, orange juice and zest, soy sauce and cornstarch in bowl and stir until smooth. Add to skillet, stirring constantly. Boil 1 to 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir in chicken and cook until heated through. Spoon over or toss with warm rice.

Makes 6 servings, 1 cup each.

Nutrients per serving: 169 calories, 4 g fat, 34 mg cholesterol, 371 mg sodium, 18 g carbs, 2 g fiber, 15 g protein.



## Great Stories in Our Schools

As we celebrate National Breakfast Week in March, here are some of the great things our schools are doing with breakfast!

**North Haven High School (CT)** has introduced "Breakfast for Lunch" made-to-order omelet stations. They have been a big hit, averaging about 110 meals per day.

**Glencoe-Silver Lake Public School District (MN)** has seen a significant increase in universal free breakfast program participation. Last year the district averaged 238 breakfasts—this year they are averaging 500.

**Pelham High School and Middle School (NY)** ran a free breakfast promotion during Regents Week. Participation that week went up by nearly 30%, and stayed up by 4% after the exams as children continued to come in for breakfast after the promotion.

**Winthrop Public Schools (MA)** did a "Breakfast with Pizzazz," where servers dressed up in white shirts and ties, serving maple baked French toast with a warm apple compote or blueberry sauce, ham and cheese calzone and a vegetable frittata.

**Ottawa School District (KS)** hosted a Chef's Table during lunch, providing featured breakfast entrees of the month as samples (i.e., apple muffin squares, carrot coffee cake, breakfast crepe and whole grain French toast sticks)

and discussing the importance of eating breakfast everyday comparing it to fuel in your car.

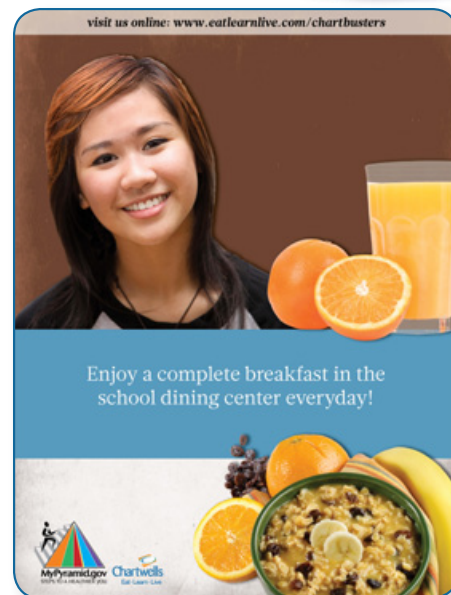
**Westerly Public Schools (RI)** offered grab and go breakfasts, or breakfast in a bag, roughly serving 2,000 more breakfasts than last year at this time. The bags consist of muffin, yogurt, fruit and milk. Last fall, they served breakfast during NE-CAPS state testing and Kid's First RI spoke at Dunns Corners and Bradford schools (RI) discussed the importance of eating a healthy breakfast, offering blueberry breads and RI grown apples to the students.

**Connetquot Schools (NY)** started \$1 Breakfast during testing week in the High School last year. Previously, they averaged 19 breakfasts per day. By the end of testing week, breakfast counts were up to 80 per day. The \$1 Breakfast now offered each month and will be featured all of March for National Nutrition Month.

**Kelso School District (WA)** has seen breakfast participation double. In January 2010, they served 187 meals for the month. In January 2011, they served 370. They serve breakfast favorites such as pancakes, French toast, breakfast sandwiches, breakfast burritos and pancake on a stick. The program will expand even more next year!

**Belding Public Schools (MI)** started breakfast in the classroom at all levels in the fall of 2008. Participation increased 237% and the district won the state superintendent's Breakfast Challenge two years in a row.

**Brush School District (CO)** serves a universal breakfast to all students



free of charge and won \$2,000 in prize money from Colorado's Campaign to End Childhood Hunger. Beaver Valley proudly received the prize money from Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter and Interim Commissioner of Education Robert Hammond during a banquet last December at the Colorado Department of Education.

**Comal ISD (TX)** celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday on March 2nd, with fun meals and a Green Eggs and Ham breakfast promotion.

**William Penn School District (PA)** offers hot breakfast 2-3 times per week of Cinnamon Swirl French Toast, Strawberry Splash Pancakes in a Bag, breakfast pizzas, oatmeal with fruit toppers and more. Their warm corn muffins and yogurt days are popular on cold days and, during the fall, they offered fresh peaches that many kids had never tasted or experienced before.

**Bullhead City (AZ)** offers Breakfast in the Classroom for more than 350 students. They pack crates mixed with 1/2 hot breakfasts and 1/2 cold breakfasts, 100% juice and/or fresh fruit and 1% milk white. They also use a return system, whereby items are recycled for the next day.

