



# Montana Team Nutrition Success Story

## January 1<sup>st</sup> - March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### The Roadmap to Building Quality School Meals

Montana Team Nutrition is pleased to share a new resource for school nutrition programs in serving high quality school meals entitled the [Roadmap to Building Quality School Meals](#). To create this tool, Montana Team Nutrition conducted literature reviews on school meal quality and gathered input current and former Montana school food service directors, as well as Montana Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Program staff.



This self-paced, self-directed tool is designed to help school nutrition staff identify current strengths and areas of improvement in serving quality school meals. It can be used as a tool for setting training and program goals to help school nutrition programs serve more scratch cooked meals over time. The roadmap was developed as part of the 2019 Team Nutrition Training Grant for Innovative State Training Programs awarded to the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI).

### ROADMAP PILOT PROJECT

To test the effectiveness of the tool as a resource for goal setting, Montana Team Nutrition initiated the Roadmap Pilot Project. Four of Montana's dedicated school food service directors agreed to participate in this project. They were asked to complete the roadmap in its entirety and use it to set a specific program goal and action plan. Montana Team Nutrition followed up with the food service directors on their goals after three months.

#### DEER LODGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Shelli Boggess from Deer Lodge School District used the roadmap to set a goal to train school staff to allow students to eat and try new things without being rushed. She set a detailed action plan on achieving this goal and was able to increase the eating time for students in her cafeteria from 12 minutes to 20 minutes. When asked if she felt like the roadmap helped her meet her goals, she said:

*"The roadmap is a great idea - I keep it on my desk and have met most of my goals. It really helped as a reminder of what to work on."*

### Learn More

#### WEB

[www.montana.edu/team-nutrition](http://www.montana.edu/team-nutrition)

#### FACEBOOK

[www.facebook.com/MontanaTeamNutrition](https://www.facebook.com/MontanaTeamNutrition)

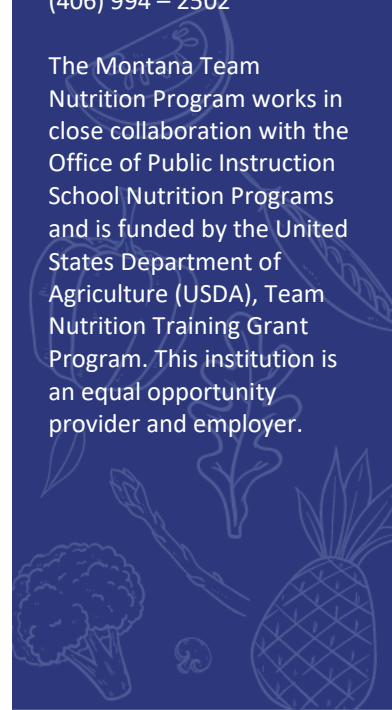
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From setting and achieving ambitious goals, using creative approaches to meal service, and sharing her delicious recipes with other programs, Shelli is a school nutrition program rockstar! Her innovative approach to production records was recently featured in an Institute of Child Nutrition [S.T.A.R. Webinar on Back to School: Completing Food Production Records the Best Way.](#)

#### LIVINGSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

As they continue to grapple with the impact of the COVID19 pandemic, Livingston School District used the roadmap to continue to work on their goal of returning the salad bar to the high school. Food service director Michele Carter and her staff were able to do just that! She shared:

*“Livingston School District along with Farm to School of Park County and their student interns have been able to re-open their high school salad bar recently. Staff shortages have caused a reduction in many areas of their programming so being able to move forward with this is [a] positive forward motion and very well received by students and staff.”*

The Livingston Lunch Ladies and Farm to School of Park County (F2SPC) set the standard for innovation and collaboration in Montana. Follow the [Livingston Lunch Ladies](#) and [Farm to School of Park County](#) on social media for more examples of their excellent work!



PHOTO 1: STUDENTS AT THE SALAD BAR IN LIVINGSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LIVINGSTON LUNCH LADIES FACEBOOK PAGE

#### SUPERIOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Chandra Plakke, the Food Service Director from Superior School District, used the roadmap to set a variety of impressive goals. She had set an initial goal related to her food service budget, but due to the ongoing supply chain issues and rising costs related to COVID19 she pivoted to focus on a different goal she had set using the roadmap: serving more scratch cooked meals at breakfast, including wholesome baked oats and delicious egg scrambles. Kudos to Chandra and her team for their adaptability and commitment to serving delicious, scratch cooked meals. Examples of some of their scratch cooking are pictured below!



PHOTO 2 & 3: FRESH KALE SALAD WITH HOMEMADE DRESSING AND SCRATCH BAKED PUMPKIN MUFFINS

## TARGET RANGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The fourth school district to pilot the roadmap was Target Range School District. Devin Kavanagh, food service director, set the following goal:

***By end of the year, we will have tested 20 new culturally appropriate and diverse foods a minimum of three times for each item and collect feedback.***

To achieve this goal, Devin worked with a chef consultant to develop a 6-week menu cycle with 30 scratch cooked, nutritious recipes, exceeding his original goal of 20. Their recipes include Vietnamese Bahn Mi sandwiches, Jamaican Jerk drumsticks, Greek gyros, Alabama BBQ and more. A feature of their menu cycle is that it includes detailed instructions for possible modifications to the menu to accommodate changes in staffing and food availability, which is essential in the current school nutrition environment. Devin is in the process of collecting formal feedback from students on his new menu, but so far it has been well received by students and staff alike.

When asked if the roadmap helped him meet his goals, Devin shared that he liked the goal setting and action planning worksheets included in the roadmap, as that resource helped him focus in on his goals and create a detailed action plan. To learn more about the wonderful meals being served at Target Range School District, read this recent [story from the Missoulian](#) on the meal they served featuring locally sourced lentil meatballs and the new Montana Marinara sauce made from Montana-grown squash, onions, and carrots.

## CELEBRATE SCHOOL LUNCH HERO DAY

Thank you to the school nutrition programs at Deer Lodge, Livingston, Superior, and Target Range School Districts for participating in the pilot project, and to all the other professionals who have contributed to developing the roadmap.

These stories are just a few of the many examples of how Montana school nutrition professionals go above and beyond to ensure that children in Montana are well nourished and ready to learn. We want to give a big shout out to all the School Lunch Heroes for their hard work and dedication to serving Montana Children. All of us at Montana Team Nutrition appreciate your commitment and all you do for Montana students!

Please join us in celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> annual School Lunch Hero Day on Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. It is the perfect opportunity to recognize the hardworking professionals in your school cafeteria. Find more resources for celebrating School Lunch Hero Day at the [School Nutrition Association website](#).

