

Schools are Serving Up More Salads Nationwide

It is no secret that childhood obesity is a rising national concern. With recent regulatory efforts from the Obama administration and a call for action from society and celebrities, such as Rachael Ray, to combat this issue, schools are looking for ways to offer students healthier options. Nationwide, schools are beginning to integrate healthier, local foods into their menus.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in 2009, **86%** of U.S. high school students ate vegetables **less than** three times per day during the seven-day period before the survey. With the recommended daily vegetable intake for girls ages 14-18 to be two and a half cups and for boys of the same age to be three cups, many high school students need to integrate more vegetables into their daily meals. With poor eating habits and a lack of exercise, the American Heart Association reported that **one in three** children are overweight and **one in five** are obese. Schools have begun to combat the obesity battle by providing healthier meals.



As schools are integrating healthier meal selections, french fries have slowly been disappearing as they are replaced by fruits, veggies, and whole wheat products. Numerous schools are also participating in farm-to-school programs, encouraging local farming efforts and generating student interest in how and where their food is grown. With only 15% of public school cafeterias equipped with salad bars, Michelle Obama's Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools initiative plans to make salad a popular menu choice in schools.

However, as school food service is cutting back on salt and processed food in their menus, what challenges do they face and what equipment will help their healthy efforts?

As schools want to offer healthier menu options, they are concerned with the student backlash they may experience. However, many schools that have collaborated with the community and encouraged student involvement in their initiatives have had positive experiences. Some students have even been surprised with how much they enjoy the vegetables that they have never tried before.



For schools looking for new equipment to enhance their salad efforts, Lakeside's **Mobile Bowl Stands** are ideal. Great for preparing fruit and vegetable salads, this NSF listed stand allows school chefs to move the food preparation to the desired location. With a convenient lower shelf, storage for supplies and ingredients is readily available. When lunch has been served, the stainless steel stand is easy to clean and fits perfectly under counter tops for convenient storage. With **March** being **National Nutrition Month**, let Lakeside assist your healthy food efforts.

Are you serving your students salad? What healthy meals have you added to your menu?