



## Success Stories

The following stories describing successful strategies were summarized from statements by officials involved in the process of becoming prize-winning schools. Allow them to inspire you as you take the HealthierUS School Challenge!

**Barnes County Schools**  
**Valley City, North Dakota**  
**35 Percent Free and Reduced-Price**  
**Sue Milender**  
**Sue.Milender@sendit.nodak.edu**  
**(701) 845-0483**

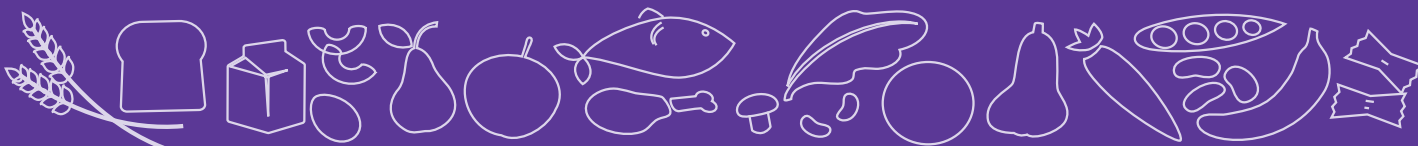


*Gather a progressive team. Evaluate the areas having the greatest need and plan to work on mini-projects until your ultimate goal is realized. This challenge has allowed us to showcase all of our hard work over the years. The greatest result is the camaraderie that is felt as a group of professionals work on a piece of the puzzle together.*

### How We Did It!

Everyone in our school community came together; administrators, physical education teachers, nutrition professionals, and the school board toward a common goal. We all felt it was imperative to change direction and begin making healthy lifestyles a normal part of our school environment.

We utilized grants from several sources to get started. These grants allowed us to complete mini-projects, that over the years, helped develop a wonderful overall environment of wellness. The HealthierUS School Challenge was another important step in our journey to promote health.





**Moss Public School**  
**Holdenville, Oklahoma**  
**52 Percent Free and Reduced-Price**  
**Cheryl Carpenter**  
**Cherylcarpenter@mossps.k12.ok.us**  
**(405) 379-7251**

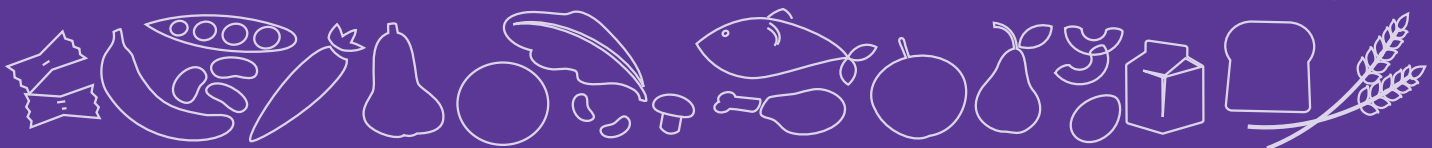


*It has become more important than ever for our children to learn about healthy eating. The HealthierUS School Challenge is one of the best ways to educate the children about fitness and healthier eating. By implementing this program in the school, our children have realized that fruits and vegetables are good to eat, and now they choose them over candy and junk food when they are away from school. In return they are feeling better and have more active lifestyles.*

### How We Did It!

I first approached our Superintendent with the pros and cons. On the upside, we would be the first school in Oklahoma to receive the award and our students would benefit from healthier meals. The downside is the possibility of higher food cost and more paperwork. After gaining his approval (he said, “Go for It!”) we put it to a student vote to either “accept or not accept the challenge!”

At first the application may seem a little overwhelming, but if you break down the menu planning to meet each days’ requirements, then check the weekly totals, it is not so difficult. Let your students be part of the decision to apply and they will take ownership of the award and may even use what they have learned outside of school.





**Arroyo Elementary**  
**Glendale, Arizona**  
**81 Percent Free and Reduced-Price**  
**Connie Parmenter**  
**connie.parmenter@wedschools.org**  
**(602) 896-8505 or 896-5230**

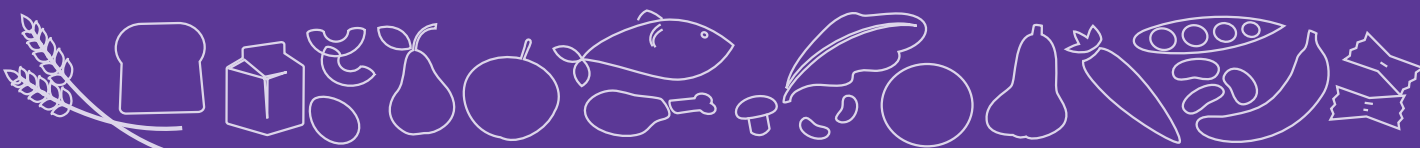


*Obtaining the HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Award builds a sense of pride in that other schools, school districts, and States recognize that you are a step above the rest in regard to child nutrition, and the result is that kids are better for it.*

**How We Did It!**

District staff came together as a team to work with schools, specifically on physical activity opportunities and lunch menus, to meet qualifications. Several schools were approached, and Arroyo accepted the challenge. Sue Lange, Arroyo Elementary Cafeteria Manager, and Melissa Paulsen, a Registered Dietitian, were instrumental in assembling the winning application.

Applying for the Challenge may seem overwhelming at first, but some schools may already be meeting or close to meeting the requirements and just need a bit of encouragement to complete the application.





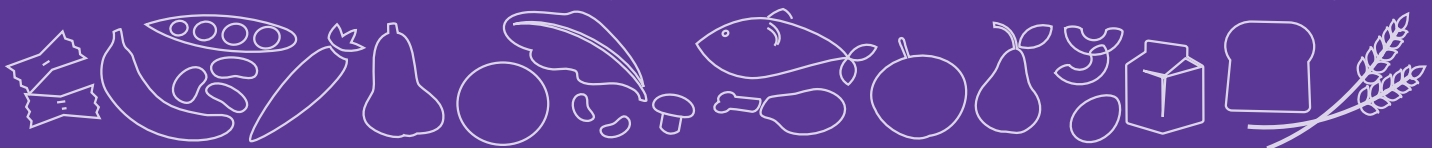
Prince William County Schools  
Manassas, Virginia  
30 Percent Free and Reduced-Price  
Serena Suthers  
sutherss@pwcs.edu  
(703) 791-7314



*Winning the HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Award brought our Food Service Program more recognition than any other promotional campaign we've done. Our staff received a real morale boost from the attention and respect they have received from the superintendent, school board, principals, teachers, and parents for their hard work and success.*

### How We Did It!

We reviewed our centralized menus, added a source of whole grain, and juggled existing menu items around a bit until the well-balanced result met the Challenge criteria. With our menu and district-wide physical education programs we were able to meet the criteria for 53 out of 55 schools.





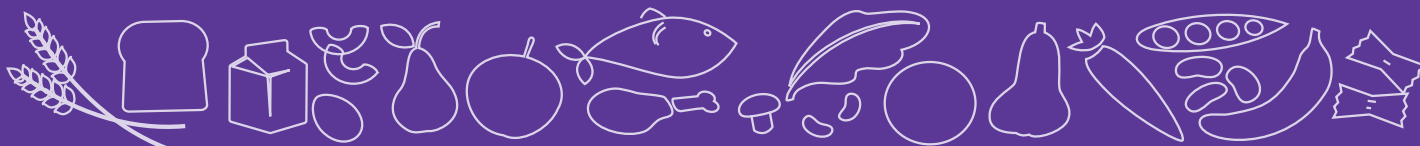
Elementary School  
Pennsylvania  
42 Percent Free and Reduced-Price



*At times it got frustrating for the team, but it also proved to be a good training opportunity for the staff. Our mantra became, “If it was easy, it wouldn’t be called a challenge!”*

How We Did It!

We made many alterations to our menu over an 18-month period. Some of the changes were very dramatic, others more subtle, but all of them were learning experiences. Our students were excited to be “guinea pigs.” The students became partners in the Challenge and asked how we were doing with it. We really worked to make them feel part of the process and gave them opportunities to voice their opinions and ideas. Since making the menu changes at the elementary level, I have noticed that those students (who are now in 5th, 6th, and 7th grades) are making healthy choices at the middle school level.





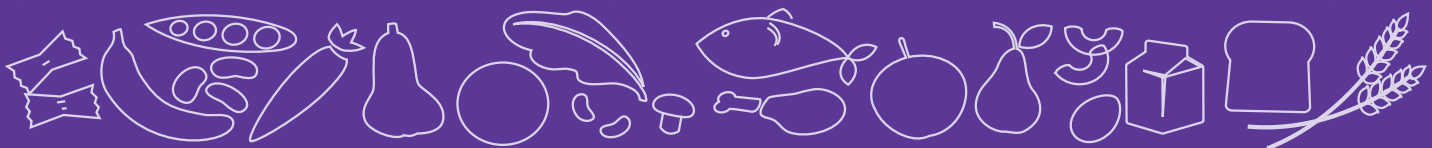
**Kettering City County Schools**  
**Kettering, Ohio**  
**32 Percent Free and Reduced-Price**  
**Louise Easterly**  
**[Louise.easterly@ketteringschools.org](mailto:Louise.easterly@ketteringschools.org)**  
**(937) 499-1446**



*Receiving the award gives a lot of credibility to our programs, and it shows that it's a matter of doing the right thing for kids. Concentrate more on marketing meals and less on a la carte sales.*

### How We Did It!

We switched all milk to 1 percent and skim, used whole-grain foods in menus three times per week, and provided a variety of fresh fruits/vegetables daily. We had to carefully review all whole-grain labels for legitimacy. It truly takes determination and leadership to work towards a voluntary program with the biggest reward being providing children with a nourishing meal and opportunities for nutrition education and physical activity. We hope to serve as an inspiration to other schools who are considering applying for the Challenge.

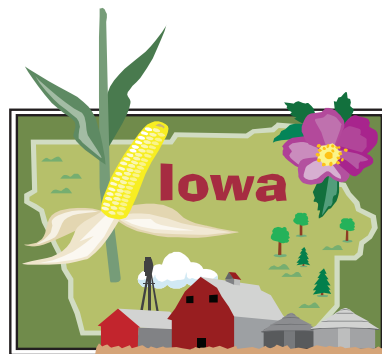




Elementary School

Iowa

13 Percent Free and Reduced-Price



*What a great opportunity for administrators to lead the way in nutrition and fitness for students of today and the future through the HealthierUS School Challenge! Yes, it is a challenge to take the first step to lead the way, but be supportive and open-minded to new ideas in nutrition and physical activity. The benefit it gives back to the students, staff, and parents is priceless. Take the Challenge and move your school to the next level!*

How We Did It!

Our path to the HUSSC began several years ago when the principal agreed to and supported a change to the daily schedule by allowing recess before lunch. After the first year, the dramatic change in fruit/vegetable and milk consumption made us believe the guidelines we implement could make a difference in the children’s eating habits. We bake fresh almost daily, so using whole-grain flour was easy; the acceptance of the students was a little more challenging. With the change in the nutritional part of our curriculum and guidance of our teachers and staff, along with the support of our parents, our students are gaining the knowledge to point them in a much healthier direction to benefit them throughout their lives.

