



Elevating Young Minds Buncombe County Schools

Leadership at Buncombe County Schools feels strongly that their primary responsibilities are to guide children and young adults in the acquisition of knowledge, to equip students with essential skills and attitudes for living a productive, useful, and satisfying life, and to develop in students the desire to be lifelong learners.

As part of this, Buncombe County Schools are cooking up change, not putting wellness on the back burner. Improvements to school meals and nutrition education are just part of the recipe for success.

New Child Nutrition Director, Lynette Vaughn-Hensley, has taken stock of the school meals program and chosen to mix it up with some new ingredients. Chef Michael Wood has also joined the team, working to update some of the recipes for taste and seasoning.

Career Education students are involved with testing new recipes and students at all schools get to sample the new dishes and give their seal of

approval. The training that the students receive in Career Education helps to streamline into the Early College program with Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College.

Speaking of career education, Wood's chef whites draw immediate attention and peak the students' curiosity. They all want to know about the training required to become a chef, why he chose the particular career path and what steps they should take to follow in the same field.

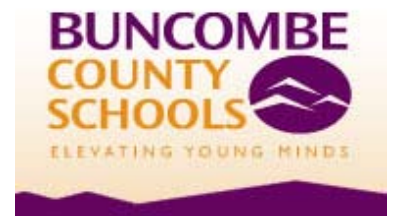
Chef Michael is reaching all students in another way—with the message of healthy eating. Wood and the Barnardsville Elementary cafeteria manager Marian Mundy make quite a team. Mundy has been recognized at the state and local level for her dedication to nutrition education.

One creative promotion the two cooked up tied in with the popular movie, *Ratatouille*. The nutrition education campaign brought students at Barnardsville into the kitchen to

become "Chef for a Day". Students learned how to make the infamous ratatouille. Their classmates then judged their skill during the lunchtime meal. Students had either read the book or watched the movie at school or at home and were excited to try the dish. *Ratatouille* received rave reviews. Who says that kids won't eat their vegetables?

It's a good thing, too, because vegetables are appearing on the menu more often. BCS have implemented the N.C. Nutrition Standards. Each day students can choose from four different fruit and vegetable sides. Fresh fruit is on the menu every day along with 100% juice. Legumes are offered at least once a week. An effort has been made to feature more vegetarian options. Students love the entree salads and fruit and yogurt plate. Local produce is highlighted.

Child Nutrition works closely with teachers and parents to foster healthy eating habits for students, providing an opportunity for optimal learning and good health.



Chef Wood and Cafeteria Manager Marian Mundy with Barnardsville Student Ratatouille Chefs

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