



## **Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) Bulletin**

### **August 7, 2024 - Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) Bulletin No. 6 - Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Awards**

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Over the last year, as part of a cooperative agreement to develop and implement the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Initiative, Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) has offered Recognition Awards to celebrate sponsors that have made significant improvements to the nutritional quality of their school meals. These Recognition Awards spotlight innovative practices, student and community engagement activities, and strategies schools have used to provide meals that are consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Michigan Department of Education's Office of Nutrition Services applauds the great work of the state's first HMI recognition awardees:

#### **Armada Area School District**

##### *Small or Rural School Food Authority Lunch Trailblazer Award*

Armada Area School District reduced sodium by adding more fresh vegetables to their menu and using herbs and spices to add flavor instead of salt. Prior to the start of the school year, school nutrition staff were taught how to prep and cook fresh vegetables using their new combi ovens, which were purchased with funds from their HMI Grant for Small and/or Rural School Food Authorities. Students often ask for seconds of the new flavorful vegetable options such as Roasted Carrots with Fresh Rosemary and Garlic Green Beans with Grilled Onions.

## **Bendle Public School District**

### *Innovation in Nutrition Education*

Bendle Public School District provided nutrition education to students in grades K-12 in two ways. First, teachers trained on the Michigan Model for Comprehensive Health to deliver age-appropriate lessons in the classroom based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Second, the district offers the Bendle Beyond Cooking and Gardening Class that teaches students about gardening and the preparation of healthy foods throughout the semester.

## **Lansing Catholic High School**

### *Lunch Trailblazer Award*

Lansing Catholic High School reduced added sugars by incorporating more scratch made menu items including Scrambled Eggs, Yogurt Parfaits, Banana Bread, and Zucchini Bread. They also switched to reduced sugar cereals. Students enjoy these changes and favor the scratch made items over pre-packaged items.

## **Plymouth-Canton Community Schools**

### *Innovation in Nutrition Education*

Plymouth-Canton Community Schools presented to district parents about eating well on a budget, including information about MyPlate and limiting nutrients of concern such as sodium, added sugars, and saturated fats. The presentation was held virtually on two separate occasions to better accommodate busy schedules.

## **Zeeland Public Schools**

### *Innovation in Nutrition Education*

Zeeland Public Schools educated parents about nutrition at a school expo. Zeeland's food service director and registered dietitian attended and taught parents about the district's school nutrition programs including local foods, how to build a balanced plate at home, and the importance of whole grains, low sodium foods, and reducing sugar intake.

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Interested in applying for an HMI Recognition Award for your district? There still is time! Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through **June 30, 2025**. Here are Five Reasons for You to Apply This Summer!

1. Opportunity to celebrate your school nutrition team for the amazing meals they provide each day!
2. Networking with other HMI Recognition Awardees and school nutrition organizations across the country.
3. Awardee toolkit with promotional resources to help you share the news.
4. National and local recognition.
5. Complimentary registration and two travel stipends to attend an exclusive national [Healthy Meals Summit](#).

Interested sponsors can learn more about this opportunity on the [HMI Recognition Awards Webpage](#). Applications are accepted via the [My AFHK Portal](#). Applicants will be notified of

their results within two months of submission. Applicants who do not receive the award can receive technical assistance and support from the AFHK to modify and re-submit their application.

Before applying, sponsors must obtain a State Agency Letter of Support to disclose that they do not have any outstanding corrective actions and that any previous findings have been resolved. Applicants can request this letter of support from MDE ONS through the following Microsoft form at [State Agency Letter of Support Request Form](#).

Questions about the Recognition Awards and application can be emailed to: [award@healthymealsincentives.org](mailto:award@healthymealsincentives.org).

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## Contact Us

Email: [MDE-SchoolNutrition@Michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-SchoolNutrition@Michigan.gov)

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