



Renowned Chefs Bring Flavors of Chicago to School Menus With Local Chef Council

Some of Chicago's very best chefs and food professionals are sharing their culinary passions with students throughout the Chicago Public School District, bringing local flavors and dishes to school menus.

The CPS Chef Council, which launched its first event in partnership with Aramark Student Nutrition in 2020, is on a mission to increase awareness and fuel enthusiasm around school meal options by highlighting celebrated Chicago culinary artists. The council includes award-winning chefs, acclaimed cookbook authors, restaurant owners and other food educators.

The featured chefs bring a creative flair to the school menu with custom-created recipes incorporating locally sourced food. Students are exposed to new flavors and dishes, which are served district-wide, while also having the opportunity to participate in live cooking demonstrations and other unparalleled educational experiences.

In addition to developing and elevating school meals, the Chef Council program:

- Promotes broader awareness of diverse school menu options among students.
- Gets kids excited about eating well.
- Celebrates cultural holidays and celebrations like Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month, and Earth Day.
- Engages students' interest in the culinary arts with demonstrations and take-home recipes.

The Chef Council is a unique opportunity for students and schools across the CPS district. Not only does it contribute to student satisfaction, it shapes students' overall experiences with food by highlighting Chicago's flavors, rich history and vibrant culture.



ENROLLED STUDENTS:
284,800

TOTAL SITES:
475

HIGH SCHOOLS:
123

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:
352





CPS CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

with Chef Chloe Gould

Chef Chloe Gould created a special signature dish to celebrate Black History Month. The owner of DixiePura Catering, who's often described as a "food translator" for melding together diverse flavors into tried-and-true dishes, developed a [Southern Curry Jambalaya recipe](#) specifically for CPS students.



CREATIVE RECIPES THAT ENGAGE STUDENTS

Every month, one of the Council chefs creates a new, inspiring recipe for the district. The recipes, which reflect the chefs' diverse backgrounds, are enjoyed by thousands of students across the district during awareness and cultural months and celebrations and are incorporated into the district's menus.

The chefs work hand-in-hand with Aramark Student Nutrition nutritionists and food service experts to ensure they meet nutritional requirements and can be scaled for meal service across the district.

The dishes are then featured on school menus and served to students at the district's over 500 schools, connecting school food options to the wider community and providing exciting culinary experiences for all.

ENHANCING CULINARY ARTS PROGRAMS

Great food is at the heart of the program, but it's not only about exciting flavors and nutritious meals. The Chef Council has strong partnerships with the district's culinary arts programs, where students participate in monthly live demonstrations and learn hands-on how to cook the chefs' dishes themselves.

Each culinary arts class receives a pre-prepared box with all the required ingredients, sustainably sourced and of the highest quality, so participating students can follow along in real-time with the chef. The chef-led cooking demos are live streamed and recorded so other students and parents can watch them online, alongside recipe cards with information about the dish and the chef.

Conversations during the cooking sessions cover topics ranging from sustainability to culture to history to career paths, and much more. In some of the presentations, students come together to learn about the mechanics, theory and science behind cooking. In others, students dive into the taste and texture of fresh ingredients, learning techniques like roasting that bring out complexity of flavor or creative ways to work with plant-based proteins.



Seeing how it was made and seeing the ingredients used and hearing the history was all very interesting."

- Student Participant

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

at Martin Luther King College Prep

Students at Martin Luther King College Prep spent a few hours making tortillas from scratch with Miss Juanita for Hispanic Heritage Month. They learned how corn turns into masa, which is mixed with water and pressed into dough. Then they grilled the tortillas and used them for tacos, filling them with an assortment of tasty, wholesome ingredients.

The students went on a journey that spanned the history of tortillas, touching on topics like agricultural production to food processing, while cooking and tasting the warm, fresh tortillas.



I really like the program and I think it's very cool because I've always wanted to do stuff that's agricultural." - Student Participant



Here at KCP, where the student population is 95% African American, we are providing our students with opportunities to learn different things in different cultures.”

– Meyer Reynolds, School Culture Coordinator at Martin Luther King College Prep



EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR ALL

The Chef Council culinary experts have a wide range of professional and lived experiences, including as community advocates, sustainability trailblazers and health leaders. This allows the council, in partnership with Aramark Student Nutrition, to create a range of unique educational experiences.

These experiences have included building outdoor gardens used to grow produce used in the school menus, guest chef speakers sharing how their personal background and upbringing shaped their cooking approach, and an e-learning series.

Serving High-Quality Meals That Engage & Inspire

As a partner to K-12 schools for over 60 years, we're committed to bringing healthy meals made with the freshest of ingredients that create connections and inspire communities.

Contact us today for more information.

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& [CPSFARMTOSCHOOL.COM](https://www.cpsfarmtoschool.com)



PLANT-FORWARD FOOD & NEW GARDENS

For Earth Day

On Earth Day 2022, students at Edward Tilden Career Community Academy High School planted outdoor garden beds and built an indoor vertical garden system donated by Aramark. Those gardens included some of the vegetables used to make Impossible™ Breakfast Sausage Burritos and Spicy Bean Burgers, two plant-forward [recipes developed by Chef Eddie Garza](#). Both dishes were then served to students across the school district on Earth Day.

