

Quarterly Report

April 2025



New Berlin CUSD #16 Elementary School
Project Q1: January - March 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With funding from the Innovation Collaborative Award through USDA, Beyond Green Sustainable Food Partners (BGP) officially launched a scratch-cooking and local food initiative in collaboration with New Berlin Elementary School in January 2025. New Berlin was a scratch-cooking kitchen prior to Covid and the staff is eager and ready to return to that style of food preparation. They have embraced the BGP methodology and are very supportive of one another as they embark on this project. Heather is aware of her staff's strengths and has done a good job in allowing them to grow in the new paradigm of scratch cooking and local food. The team is enthusiastic to serve better food to the students they so clearly care for, and students are enthusiastic for the new food.

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHT

Our second onsite training occurred on March 12 during which the team conducted taste tests of Meatballs, Carrots, and French Toast Casserole. We arrived to a kitchen prepared for our visit; they had a cart in the walk-in cooler with all of the items needed for our taste tests including the French Toast Casserole that was prepped the night before. This is a sign of a well-organized kitchen that works well together.

PROJECT TIMELINE



DATA SUMMARY

This report includes project data from December 2024-January 2025.



LOCAL FOOD (EXCLUDING MILK):

New Berlin has not yet started procuring local food with the exception of milk. The winter months are usually a difficult time to secure local food produce. Local food purchases will start to increase as the growing season begins in the spring. Other local ingredient sources include: Janie's Mill which provides oats, flour and grits; 4 Lees Farm which provides poultry, beef, and pork; and Michael Myers and Moon Girl Farm that provide hoop house lettuces.

0%

local
purchases

\$0

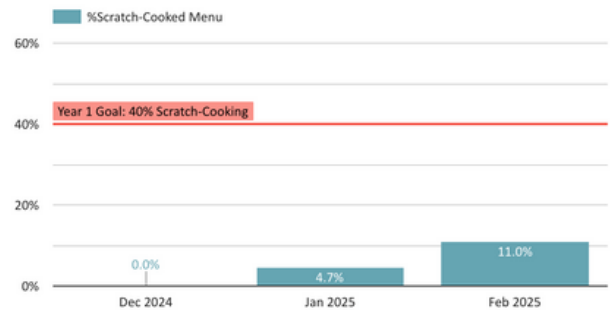
spent on
local food



SCRATCH COOKING:

New Berlin began this project cooking nothing from scratch. They quickly embraced BGP's suggestions on how to begin the transition and have made strides at both breakfast and lunch. The team is scratch cooking the following menu items: Marinara Sauce, Scrambled Eggs, Granola and Yogurt Parfaits, Sloppy Joes, Cornbread, and Chili.

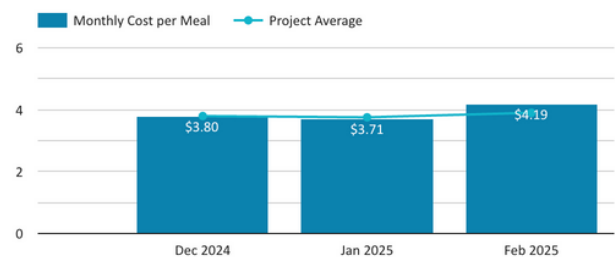
% Scratch-Cooked Menu



COST NEUTRAL:

In our Strategy & Vision Session we discussed cost as a potential challenge to the project. BGP mitigated this concern by sharing our past experiences and that creating kitchen efficiencies, tracking meals per labor hour data, analyzing overproduction waste data, and decreasing menu variety can help maintain a cost-neutral program. The team began tracking overproduction in March 2025. There is currently no cause for concern with the cost per meal data.

Combined Food and Labor Cost per Meal



DATA SUMMARY, CONTINUED



LEADERSHIP, TEAMWORK & ACCOUNTABILITY:

- Foodservice Director Heather Pidcock is attending and participating in the bi-weekly Cohort Calls.
- Principal is a cheerleader of the project. He attended the taste test in March, bringing along other staff and teachers, and engaged the kids and took photos. His plan is to begin engaging more with the menu and posting updates to social media.
- Superintendent is effectively engaged in the project.

TEACHABLE ONLINE TRAINING PROGRESS

Heather has completed Chapters 1-6 in the Teachable Online Learning Platform course (85%); Heather is doing a great job responding to requests and tasks in Basecamp.

YEAR 2 PROJECT GOALS

LOCAL FOOD:

20% Local Food Purchases (*excluding milk*)

SCRATCH COOKING:

40% Scratch-Cooked Menu

PREFERRED FOOD:

25% Preferred Food Purchases

EATER SATISFACTION:

5% Decrease Plate Waste
1% Increase in Participation Rate

COST NEUTRAL:

8% Overproduction of Lunch Entrees

LEADERSHIP, TEAMWORK & ACCOUNTABILITY:

100% Online Training Complete via Teachable

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

1. Begin to integrate local food into the menu starting with proteins and then produce as it becomes more readily available.
2. Increase scratch-cooked items on the menu using feedback from taste tests to create recipes that align with the students' tastes and preferences.
3. Continue to utilize the Teachable Online Learning Platform videos and bi-weekly cohort calls to learn outside of the kitchen.
4. Utilize the clock as a tool. Use Production Schedules to maximize efficiencies and train all staff on Swarming and the benefits of using the clock to their advantage.

DEFINITIONS:



LOCAL FOOD DEFINITION:

For this project, local is defined as food that is grown, produced, or harvested in **ILLINOIS**. At the start of a project, we collaborate with the stakeholders to create an agreed upon definition of local to be used for the program. Local food is fresher and benefits the local economy.



PREFERRED FOOD DEFINITION:

Preferred foods are raw ingredients that have not been turned into anything else and are in their most whole, most unadulterated, and most natural form. To be considered preferred food, we take into account both the state of processing and the packaging. Preferred ingredients are essential for scratch-cooking.



SCRATCH-COOKING DEFINITION:

Scratch-cooking means cooking meals that incorporate whole, fresh ingredients, rather than pre-assembled or processed meals and meal components. Scratch-cooking prioritizes the use of raw proteins, whole grains, and fresh fruits and vegetables that can create nutritious and delicious meals.



EATER SATISFACTION DEFINITION:

Eater Satisfaction is tracked through **participation** or meal counts. We monitor this data point to see if more students are coming to eat as the menu changes. We also measure **plate waste** which allows the school to see how much food students are throwing away. Surveys and taste tests allow us to gather student feedback.



COST-NEUTRAL DEFINITION:

We measure operational efficiencies through cost per meal, meals per labor hour, and overproduction. In order to maintain a cost-neutral program, overproduction must be measured and tracked and labor costs must be managed through strong leadership, systems, and teamwork.



LEADERSHIP, TEAMWORK & ACCOUNTABILITY DEFINITION:

As a program is implemented, we work to build capacity among the foodservice staff through trainings, leadership coaching, and new menu development. We recognize the importance of effective leadership and communication as they relate to the success of an initiative, so we recommend providing all staff with leadership coaching to create strong teams.