



BHS Chef Eric Corradetti



BHS students select grab n' go lunch items such as salad, fresh fruit, and cheese and crackers.



Grab n' go sushi packages at BHS.

Barrington 220 Aces The Taste Test

FROM SUSHI MONDAYS at Barrington High School to fresh fruit smoothies at Barrington 220 middle schools, students have enjoyed healthier options and more variety in their school cafeterias for the past few months. The welcome change comes after the Board of Education made it a priority during the 2018-19 school year to evaluate the district's food services. Quintessential Barrington spoke with Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian Harris about the importance of offering more quality food options to students.

QB: *Can you give us a brief history of food services in Barrington 220?*

BH: Prior to the 2019-20 school year, all Barrington

220 schools were on the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), contracting with a food service vendor. The NSLP provides reimbursements from the state and federal government which also have some significant guidelines to qualify for the funds. As required by the State of Illinois, the district's contract with its food service vendor must go out to bid every five years.

In anticipation of our contract expiring at the end of the 2018-19 school year, in 2016, Barrington 220 formed a Menu Planning Advisory Committee in order to gain feedback from our staff and parents about what they wanted to see in our kids' lunches. Barrington 220 also conducted surveys with students, parents, and staff, and visited area school lunch programs.

QB: *Which food service vendor does Barrington 220 currently have a contract with?*

BH: After going out to bid, in April 2019 the Board of Education approved two new food service vendor contracts for Barrington 220. Barrington High School is served by Quest Food Management Services Inc. Our elementary and middle schools are served by Sodexo North America.

QB: *Are all Barrington 220 schools still on the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)?*

BH: No. Barrington High School has moved off the NSLP. Our elementary and middle schools remain on the NSLP. Moving off the NSLP at the high school level eases restrictions. This allows us to work with Quest to offer a wide variety of options for our students. Our elementary and middle schools remain on the NSLP, as it provides more structure and age appropriate options for those students.

“When I was in high school, lunches were mostly processed. Frozen pizza. Nachos. A lot has changed through the years. I’m all about fresh produce, fresh meats, fresh dairy. For me, it’s about being proud of what you do. Not everybody is going to be happy with what you serve, but if you can put out a superior product, that’s what it’s all about.” – Eric Corradetti, BHS Chef



Fresh vegetables at the Stir Fry station at BHS.



A BMS-Station student enjoys a fresh fruit smoothie during lunch.



Grab n' go items at the BHS cafe/coffee bar.

QB: *What are some of the menu items included at BHS?*

BH: Each day there are several food stations students can choose from including: stir fry, salad bar, deli, grill, and the picante station, which features Mexican-style dishes. Every Monday, there is a fresh sushi station, which is quite popular with the students. In addition, each day students can select grab n' go items such as Greek yogurt, hummus and vegetables, and fresh salads and deli sandwiches. At the end of September, Quest opened a new cafe/coffee bar at BHS, which sells grab n' go fruits, baked goods, smoothies, and various coffee beverages. I have had the chance to eat lunch at BHS a few times this school year and the food is outstanding!

QB: *What are some of the popular menu items at the elementary and middle schools?*

BH: At our middle schools, the fresh fruit smoothies, freshly prepared salads (taco salad, chicken salad, chef salad) and wraps are very popular with the students. At our elementary schools, breakfast for lunch has been a big hit! We have worked extensively with Sodexo to offer healthier options for our youngest learners.

QB: *Why is it so important to offer students fresh, healthy options?*

BH: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most children in the United States attend school for six hours a day and consume as much as half of their daily calories at school. Kids who eat healthy foods at school learn better lifelong eating habits and are readier to learn.

QB: *How does moving off the National School Lunch Program at BHS impact the district financially?*

BH: Moving off the NSLP means the district no longer receives reimbursements from the state and federal government for BHS meals sold. However, each month we receive 7.5% of Quest's total sales at the high school. In the first seven weeks of the 2019-20 school year, Quest brought in nearly \$291,000 in sales. Compare that to the first seven weeks of the 2018-19 school year, when our lunch sales at BHS were approximately \$155,000. The quality and variety of the food is better, which means more kids are choosing to buy lunch at school. If sales continue to rise, in the future we could have the ability to re-negotiate a higher rate of return from Quest. Therefore, in the long run we have the potential to generate additional funds for the district to reinvest in our food service program. The intended goal is to provide tasty and nutritious food for our students, which will have a positive impact on student learning. 