



FAST FACTS

NAME OF SCHOOL DISTRICT:	Tahoe Truckee Unified School District (TTUSD)
LOCATION:	Truckee, CA
GRADES SERVED:	PK-12 and provides meals to Truckee Early Head Start, Truckee Head Start, Placer County Office of Education Community Day School, and Sierra Expeditionary Learning School.
NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED:	approximately 4,100
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE- OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS (PRE-PANDEMIC):	32%

TTUSD OFFERS A RAINBOW OF NUTRITIOUS FOODS, MANY OF WHICH ARE PLANT-BASED



Tofu Crumble Tacos made with a well spiced tofu recipe, wrapped in whole grain tortillas topped with fresh tomatoes, cheese, lettuce, and black olives. It is served with sliced cucumber mixed with fresh squeezed lime juice and Tajin.



A classic favorite: whole grain chicken tenders, fresh California grown broccoli with scratch made buttermilk Ranch dressing, fresh made mashed potatoes, whole grain dinner roll and fresh fruit.



Scratch-made whole grain breakfast muffins are a hit. Student favorites include Chocolate Beet (made with cocoa powder), Blueberry, Strawberry, Banana, Apple, and Pear.



Soba Veggie Noodles with fresh veggies and tofu.



Baked Honey Glazed Tofu over brown rice with watermelon, salad, and sliced cucumbers.



Freshly baked chicken ziti with whole grain pasta, offered with fresh made kale chips, apples, and sliced oranges.

At Tahoe Truckee Unified School District, Director of Food & Nutrition Services Kat Soltanmorad, RDN, leads a team of full-time staff dedicated to scratch cooking delicious meals for students. Meals are made with 100 percent whole grains (when available), meet the USDA sodium reduction target 2, and are limited in added sugars.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PARTNERSHIPS

Scratch cooking became a priority for the district thanks to the advocacy of a committed parent group and the school district's mission to expand healthy meals. Scratch cooking began in 2012, when Soltanmorad was hired. . Soltanmorad credits the ongoing success of the program today to strong partnerships. TTUSD is part of a tight-knit community, and the Food & Nutrition Department is no exception. Soltanmorad and her team partner with the Tahoe Food Hub, the Sustainability Watershed Education Program (S.W.E.P), and the local hospital, to name a few. Thanks to partners like S.W.E.P, TTUSD earned the 2018 US Green Ribbon [Award](#) in Sustainability!

“THE CAFETERIA IS A LEARNING LAB. WHAT YOU LEARN IN HEALTH CLASS, THOSE NUTRITION PRINCIPLES FOR OVERALL HEALTH ARE WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO EMULATE.”

INVESTING IN STAFF

Invaluable to the program's success is the district's commitment to school meals. With the district's support, 98% of the school food staff are full-time and are paid full benefits. At no greater time is full time staffing needed with California's "Free Meals for All" starting school year '22-'23 and continuing the rising trend of increased meal participation. Staff are provided with ongoing training related to the USDA meal pattern, regulations, and strategies to reduce waste. Staff often call each other at neighboring schools to swap tips. All trainings are provided in English and Spanish.

TEACHING HEALTHY HABITS

When possible, all whole grains at TTUSD are 100 percent whole grain, which exceeds the federal requirement that grains be at least 51 percent whole grain and starting next year, at least 80%. Pandemic-related shortages in whole grain tortillas have required that they use white flour tortillas, but overall, whole grains are well-received, and Soltanmorad doesn't receive complaints. To limit added sugars, TTUSD staff make their own yogurt parfaits with plain Greek yogurt sweetened with concentrated, canned, or bulk fruit.

What kids see in the cafeteria is reinforced in the classroom. Through the Harvest of the Month Program staffed by over 100 parent volunteers, children receive nutrition education in the classroom thanks to a partnership with the local hospital and the district.



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Making lasting change doesn't happen overnight. Soltanmorad notes that this is a process, and there are ongoing challenges. External factors that present challenges to Soltanmorad's program include the opportunity for high school students to leave campus and eat elsewhere, not having enough time for kids to eat, and working to shift taste preferences for fresh, healthy items over time. To reduce sodium in meals, TTUSD

experiments with herbs and spices, but the sodium content of commodities and students' taste preference for higher sodium items present challenges for reducing sodium. Soltanmorad would like to see a greater emphasis on the importance of sodium reduction outside of the cafeteria to reinforce the changes they are making in school meals



This story was developed and based on an interview and email correspondence with the district from April-June 2022.. Compliance with nutrition standards is self-reported and has not been verified by CSPI.

School Instagram: [@ttusdfood](https://www.instagram.com/ttusdfood)

School website: <https://www.ttusd.org/food>

For more information, please contact policy@cspinet.org

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