

Boulder Valley School District Central Kitchen Vision Statement

On August 1st 2017 we had a ribbon cutting and local food celebration to commemorate the opening of the Boulder Valley School District's (BVSD) new culinary facility. The Lead Certified Culinary and Nutrition Center (CNC) is a showcase for healthy, delicious scratch cooked school meals with a priority on buying and cooking with local food. The CNC will support 20,000 freshly prepared meals per day that are made from the highest quality ingredients possible given financial constraints assuming a yearly positive financial position. These meals include breakfast, lunch, snacks, catering, vending, Food Trucks as well as a Café. Total combined revenues top \$20M annually with a 3% bottom line surplus.

Why go to all of this expense and use of scarce resources some might ask... the answer of course is the students. Our primary responsibility is to feed our students the healthiest possible food. In fact I often go so far as to say that it should be a birthright in our country that every child – every day has healthy delicious food in school and that no child is ever hungry. That is exactly what we're doing in our CNC – assuring that all of our children are well nourished; body, mind and spirit and that they are knowledgeable in food literacy. Our passion for healthy food shines through in all we do; from the juiciest roast chicken, to the sumptuous ripe peaches to the rainbow colors of the fruits and vegetables prepped for the District salad bars – flavors overwhelmingly abound.

From the moment you walk into the lobby, you'll know you're someplace very special. The natural lighting will feel warm and highlight the pictures and posters of farmers, kids and team-members. The food tasting area will bring the sights and smells of production to guests and staff alike. The comfortable seating area will be a place for informal "casual collisions" and the administrative staff in this area will exude the pleasures of the surroundings.

Moving on through the lobby into the production area, the natural light fills the workspaces that are bright, shiny and mobile by design. Not only is the equipment mobile, but prep table heights, shelving heights and transport cart heights will all be built with the utmost ergonomic flexibility in mind. The smells that assail as you walk through the production area remind us that delicious food is being cooked and that the professionally attired production team has both the most trained palettes and technologically advanced equipment possible – making their jobs both fun and fulfilling. The equipment is a blend of combi ovens, sous vide tanks, blast chillers, conveyor lines, vegetable choppers, steam kettles and chill tanks that together bring flexibility of cooking techniques paired with the utmost efficiency.

The passion of the team members comes through not only in the quality of the food they produce but in their overall positive attitude to their work. The team is all paid a better than living wage, has full benefits, comfortable/professional uniforms and a locker room that includes showers, changing areas and personal lockers. Additionally the staff has their own dining area that has both inside and outside seating. The CNC's offices, which overlook the production facility, will have the same light and feel as the rest of the building and will have office spaces that are conducive to both individualized and collaborative work. Additionally there will be a meeting room that will support meetings as large as 50, but will be able to be broken up into multiple small meeting spaces.

From a purchasing standpoint, the CNC will support local farmers and producers and place a high priority on local ingredients and products. We will cook with the least possible processed ingredients; 50% of our ingredients will be organic, natural, ABF and GMO free – 100% will be HFCS, added trans-fat, chemical and dye free. All of our food will be made with these high quality ingredients, with the exception of specific items such as tortillas, bagels and tamales, which will be made to our specifications and which will follow our vision.

The relationship between the farmers, producers and the CNC is one of collaboration and mutual support. Not only do farmers and producers stop in to visit the CNS, but the team members often visit the farms and

production facilities. As a founding partner of Making Local Food Work and the Boulder County Food Shed one of our highest priorities is to support the production and consumption of local food. In order to accomplish this we will be purchasing at least 50% of all of our produce, 75% of our beef and 60% of our chicken from our Food Shed, which we consider to be Boulder County, the Western Slope and the Eastern Planes. To achieve this, we will be processing produce during the growing season for service during the rest of the year. By purchasing 80 tons of potatoes to roast, 100 tons of tomatoes for sauce, 50 tons of apples for sauce and 200 tons of ABF beef and chicken we intend to utilize our purchasing dollars to promote and support regional agriculture and our community.

BVSD's food program will be on the leading edge of school food in the country; hosting seminars, special events, cooking classes, boot camps and conferences to assist school district staff and advocates in segueing schools across the country from highly processed to scratch cooked food. Food Literacy for the students, faculty, staff and community of BVSD will be a major component of the program. The Center's gardens, outdoor eating area and Café will serve as a community gathering place and as an educational facility for school field trips and student education. The CNC will host community cooking classes, seminars as well as food production and sustainability forums and events. The events will include a Harvest Festival as well as classes in chicken and duck husbandry, green house gardening, raised bed gardening and cultured food production.

From an educational standpoint our on-sight composting program and recycling facilities, solar power system, plug-ins for electric cars and bike parking facilities will all highlight our sustainability efforts. A "cat-walk" will allow for viewing of the production facility by the Elementary students and the secondary school students will have kitchen space dedicated to Catering and Pro-Start programs and secondary school students will also participate in catering and off-site events.

The Center, considered a Food Hub will partner with local farmers and producers to assist in value added production and will service BVSD students as well as other schools, school districts and community organizations such as Meals on Wheels and Community Food Share. In this vein the CNC will host a weekly farmer's market as well as serve as the meeting and training facility for the Food Service Team and an educational, marketing and outreach facility for the BVSD community as well as the larger National School Food and Farm to School communities.

The legacy of the CNC will be what we see on our student's plates both at home and in school. Changing their palettes and eating habits will be the result of their hands-on experiential food experiences that the CNC will both guide and provide. These experiences will include every Elementary School (ES) student visiting a farm, the CNC, attend a cooking class, participate in a Salad Bar Rainbow Day, participate in numerous tastings and have the ability to participate in an Iron Chef competition. ES students' art and science curriculums will be Every ES school will have a garden and the garden fruits and veggies will be served on the salad bars. Further, every ES student will know farm fresh flavors, tasted dozens of new foods and will have a basic understanding of the relationship between healthy food, healthy kids and healthy earth.

As students matriculate into Middle School (MS) their experiences with food will become more sophisticated. At least two Iron Chef winning recipes will appear on the menu each year, which will be the culmination of their cooking classes. At least one of these competitions will include cooking from their school gardens and during BVSD's Day at the Farmer's Market, these students will do cooking demonstrations for the market's customers. When the MS students participate in their yearly farm visit, they will focus on animal husbandry including animal welfare, animals as food and the relationship between CNC's composting program and the animal's feed. Finally these MS students will become the "Green Food Team," which will mentor the ES students on their food choices and our food system.

Finally as our students are seeing graduation on the horizon, they will take with them from the BVSD experience a true sense of real food, a sense of seasons, of flavors, of the deliciousness of what's on their plates, the balance between what they eat, how its grown and the sustainability of life itself. As our students begin

their lives be it college or work or travel, our food and Food Literacy education will have positively impacted them for their lifetimes and with that we will have succeeded in changing the health of our nation's children and perhaps saved the planet as well. Lofty goals from a kitchen – but real food can and will save the generations to come and the CNC will play a part in that!