

Education: Round Rock taking challenge to improve school food; KIPP Austin opens new dual language school

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ROUND ROCK

District goes for gold in school food challenge

The district's food services department is adopting new menus that meet the gold level of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's HealthierUS School Challenge.

The voluntary program was started in 2004 to recognize districts or schools participating in the national school lunch program that promote healthy school environments. The gold level standard includes:

Offering a different vegetable every day of the week, with dark green or orange vegetables offered three or more days a week.

Offering a different fresh fruit every day.

Providing legumes, including beans and peas, at least once a week.

Providing a whole grain daily.

The standard exceeds the nutrition requirements set by the USDA and the Texas Department of Agriculture.

"We believe that by continuing to increase the healthy food options that it will translate into better grades and test scores," said Steve Smith, the Round Rock district's director of food services.

PFLUGERVILLE

Food grants to fuel programs

Pflugerville's food services department will receive \$68,500 in grants from the Texas Department of Agriculture for its nutrition education programs, Go For More and Chef Patrick's Pals.

The district partners with food service provider Aramark for its Go For More program, in which elementary school students who buy a school lunch may get free second helpings of fruits and vegetables. The district tested the program in 2009 and expanded it to all elementary schools this year.

Fruit and vegetable consumption has increased by as much as 33 percent, according to district estimates.

Chef Patrick's Pals is a nutrition education program that teaches children about nutrition through interactive demonstrations. The live show toured the district's elementary schools last spring, and Aramark and the district may use the grant for more demonstrations and nutrition education materials.

"These resources will do a great deal of good in our district," said Geoff Holle, the director of food services who applied for the grants in April. "We're thrilled that our efforts will be supported."

KIPP AUSTIN

Dual-language campus opened

Kipp Austin Public Schools has opened its fourth school, Kipp Austin Comunidad, a dual-language elementary school.

The school opened this week with 132 kindergartners. Officials will add a grade in subsequent years through the fourth grade. The kindergarten's motto is "courage," and each area is named for a child or activist in history who demonstrated courage: Anne Frank, César Chávez and Ruby Bridges.

Frank was of one the most well-known German-Jewish victims of the Holocaust. She wrote her world-famous diary while in hiding. Chávez was a Mexican American farmer and civil rights activist who founded the United Farm Workers. Bridges was the first black student at the formerly all-white William Frantz Public School in New Orleans.

Also, in keeping with KIPP's tradition in its upper-grade levels, each classroom is named for its teacher's college or university, in the school's efforts to encourage college readiness.

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