

POWER UP YOUR PROGRAM!

Issaquah School District

Brian Olson, Director - Food Service
Brian Lisser, Food Service Supervisor



Brian Olson came into Power Up Your Program with strong culinary interests and a commitment to making every student feel seen and valued through the meal program. Focusing on family and student engagement, he partnered with a parent advisory group to generate recipe ideas and worked with student leaders to gather cafeteria feedback. Inspired by a dish shared by a staff-member from Thailand, he teamed up with Brian Lisser to develop a Thai Yellow Chicken Curry recipe for school lunch. In May, the Brians held a highly successful taste testing event at Issaquah Middle School—an overwhelming 92% of tasters said they would like to see it on the menu! Students praised the dish for its sweet, savory, and slightly spicy flavors. For some, this was the first time they had tried a curry dish, while others remarked that it reminded them of home or their parents' cooking. The team plans to launch the menu item district-wide next year, along with a host of new culturally inclusive meals. This district celebrated this initiative by sending their communications team to capture the event and promote the program's emphasis on new flavors and student belonging.



Project Highlights

- Attended parent advisory group to solicit recipe ideas
- Worked with student leaders who gathered peer-to-peer meal input
- Created a new, staff member-inspired Thai Yellow Chicken Curry recipe
- Served over 100 taste-test portions to Issaquah Middle School students
- 92% of students recommended adding it to the menu!
- Worked with district communications on website feature to promote the program's impact on inclusion



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