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West New York middle school teaches good nutrition with menus that are delicious as well as balanced

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WEST NEW YORK - For most kids in New Jersey, breakfast is either laden with fat or nonexistent. Here, though, even the orange juice is freshly squeezed.

"I want to congratulate the district here for the wonderful work that they are doing at providing fresh and nutritious fruits and vegetables for school breakfast," New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher told students at School 2 yesterday morning.

Fisher and Patricia Dombroski, mid-Atlantic regional administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, stopped by the school to celebrate National School Breakfast Week.

Mayor Sal Vega, School Superintendent John Fauta, and school board president Cosmo Cirillo also attended.

"This school is just a fantastic example of serving delicious and nutritious food that really gives kids a great start in the morning," Dombroski said.

According to Sal Valenza, the Food Service director, the district has taken a proactive approach in providing healthier versions of traditional school lunches: Pizza with whole wheat bread, cheese that is low in fat, and even a brand-new juicer that squeezes fresh oranges at the push of a button.

Valenza said he saw the juicer at a restaurant show in Manhattan and negotiated with the seller to get a reduced price for the expensive machine, which arrived at the school on Wednesday.

"It's a three-month trial program right now and we are going to see how it works, but the kids love it so far," Valenza said.

Nutrition and health education is just one part of the district's efforts to encourage a healthy lifestyle for students. Physical activity, such as the district's partnership with NFL Play60 in which former NY Giant football player Amani Toomer visited the Middle School on Thursday, is emphasized as well.

"I come to breakfast sometimes," said Alexandra Caballero, a fifth-grader at School 2. "But it was nice seeing all the people come and recognizing our school for how healthy and nutritious our food is."...



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