



## Case Study: Hanover Public Schools

Grades: PreK-12

Location: Hanover, Pennsylvania

## NutriStudents K-12<sup>®</sup> Offers Much-Needed Guidance Through Audit and Drives Increased Participation

The workday is never dull for the cafeteria manager for Hanover Public Schools in Hanover, Pennsylvania. The fast-paced job includes overseeing the district's entire foodservice program, including the 22 staff members, preparation and service of breakfast and lunch in the district's five kitchens, administering the free and reduced meal program, placing all food and commodity orders, managing catered functions and filling in for absent servers, dishwashers and food prep staff.

When the district was due for its tri-annual USDA Administrative Review in 2016-2017, Cafeteria Manager Crystal Gauss knew she needed help streamlining her daily tasks and managing the additional duties that accompanied the audit.

"NutriStudents K-12 caught my attention because everything was in one place - all the menus, recipes, food production records and distributor market baskets," Gauss

said. "Equally important was knowing NutriStudents K-12 would support us through the audit by providing all the menus and ingredients we needed in the state-required nutritional analysis program."

Unlike the state's required system, NutriStudents K-12 offers more than 100 total weeks of complete, chef-created, USDA-certified menus, with accompanying recipes, reports, photos and market baskets. With the user-friendly support of NutriStudents K-12, Gauss could save days on data entry.

"As a smaller district, our director has a lot of day-to-day responsibilities, including assisting with cooking," said Troy Wentz, business manager for the district. "NutriStudents K-12 relieves the burden of having to key in each ingredient in every recipe in every menu week. She can use the menus in NutriStudents K-12 and forego entering all that information. It's all done for her."

### Responsive Audit Support

Throughout the audit, NutriStudents K-12 provided answers, direction and general support, which even the administration appreciated. Superintendent Dr. John Scola said, "Our director called NutriStudents K-12 whenever the auditor had questions about menu items and ingredients. They were really helpful and

responsive."

"NutriStudents K-12 provided better support than anyone in my district could offer," Gauss

***"NutriStudents K-12 responded to my calls and emails immediately, and patiently answered my questions, teaching me exactly what I needed to know. Their support and general encouragement through the audit were outstanding."***



said. “They patiently answered my questions, teaching me exactly what I needed to know. Their support and general encouragement through the audit were outstanding.”

### Streamlining Daily Tasks

Day-to-day, NutriStudents K-12 has helped Gauss streamline her work. The NutriStudents K-12 client portal provides 24/7 access to all the needed reports, menus, recipes and plated-meal photos. “It’s all in one spot. You print the menus and food production reports, and make the binders for each building,” she said. **“I’m so happy I don’t have to spend time creating menus that are nutritionally compliant every week. I just drop in a menu week from the system and spend the time I save with the kids.”**

Wentz agreed, “NutriStudents K-12 benefitted our district by streamlining our director’s workload and freeing up time to interact more with the students. Our district values student feedback, especially at the high school level. This system gave her time to learn what students liked most.”

The staff also loves the simplicity and time savings. Working from the food production reports printed from NutriStudents K-12, they enter the day’s servings, final counts and factors affecting participation, and the reports can be filed. It takes a lot less time than handwritten reports.

The plated-meal photos have also helped the staff learn that small touches, such as adding scallions or fresh cilantro to a main entrée, or just a little garnish or dip, can help entice students to try the day’s meal.

“We eat with our eyes first,” Gauss said. “I like the sample menu pictures because they help staff to know how the meal should look on the

tray. The photos can also be used to post the day’s meal to Twitter.”

Since rolling out NutriStudents K-12 menus in grades K-8, **the district experienced an average participation increase of 25% per day** just in the middle

school, where students are of an age that tends to be more difficult to please.

Gauss attributes the growth, in part, to the improved presentation of the meals as well as small adaptations, such as incorporating beans into the nachos or walking taco rather than serving them on the side. Overall, the students and teachers have responded well to the NutriStudents K-12 menus.

“At the end of the first year, NutriStudents K-12 was very successful for us and still is,” Business Manager Wentz said.

For the streamlined menu planning and reporting processes to the delicious meals and outstanding customer support, **“Foodservice directors would have to be totally out of their mind not to use this program!”** Gauss said.

**With NutriStudents K-12, Hanover schools experienced an average participation increase of 25% per day just in the middle school.**

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