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## **Norwalk Public Schools' Dining Service named best in country among Chartwells partnership school districts**

Norwalk, Conn. (Sept. 18, 2023) - The Chartwells K-12 Dining Services team at Norwalk Public Schools has been awarded top honors among the Chartwells' more than 650 partner school districts across the country.

The 2023 Chartwells National Account of the Year has been awarded to their team at Norwalk Public Schools for their innovation in in-school dining, an unwavering commitment to food and nutrition education, operational excellence, and outstanding community partnership.

"We are so proud of the work that we have done with Chartwells over the past four years to keep our students fed and focused on what matters," said Jill Kress, NPS State and Food Liaison. "Our close partnership with Chartwells has yielded great results and we look forward to continued success."

Kress's team has worked with Chartwells for four years to ensure that our students are well-fed with delicious, balanced meals for breakfast, lunch and snacks throughout the day.

Along with their day-to-day excellence, Norwalk has also been the breeding ground for multiple initiatives that have been implemented across Chartwells' vast network of school districts.

Norwalk Public Schools was one of the first districts in the country to feature Chartwells' now award-winning program, Global Eats. Developed by Chartwells K-12 chefs and dietitians, Global Eats invites students on a journey to explore cuisines around the world. Students at Naramake Elementary School had the chance to sample the unique ingredients and authentic flavors from China, India, Italy and Mexico during the 2022-23 school year.

Chartwells also introduced their Smoothie Station culinary concept featuring healthy wholesome drinkable breakfast, lunch, and snack options packed with fruits and dairy in more than a dozen flavor combinations. This initiative was launched at 10 Norwalk elementary schools and students were able to taste a variety of smoothie flavors and recipes. As a

national leader for having the highest student participation in the pilot, Norwalk won one of five custom painted blender bikes donated by General Mills.

The NPS Chartwells team has also worked closely with FoodCorps, a national organization placing volunteer service members alongside educators and food service leaders, at Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy and Fox Run Elementary School.

NPS Food Services and Chartwells have also been present at a number of school and districtwide events including School Choice Fairs and NPS Reading Opens the World: A First Book Initiative.