

Fork & Field News

January 2025

Hello & Happy January, PPS! My name is Shannon Barlow and I am the Food Systems Literacy Coordinator for the Princeton School District. You can find out more about me and my position below! Each month, I will be sharing this newsletter with you. Inside, you will find updates on some of the food & sustainability related projects happening around the school district. You will find things related to the school gardens and cafeteria food service as well! Lastly, I will share recipes each month that will be served in the cafeteria and feature the Garden State on Your Plate (more about that below) produce item of the month.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, ideas, or suggestions at shannonbarlow@princetonk12.org.

About Me!



I am a recent graduate of Rutgers University where I received my Masters Degree in Public Health Nutrition

R



Neala



Moose

I live on a small homestead where I raise chickens, maintain a large vegetable & herb garden, have fruit trees & bushes, and grow many plants for medicinal & crafting purposes!

I have two wonderful puppies, Neala, a 6 year old beagle & Moose, a 11 month old basset hound.

Info & Goals For My Position

In my role as the Food Systems Literacy Coordinator I am responsible for working with a lot of different teachers and subjects across the entire district! My main role so far has focused on work with the school garden educators, science department, food service staff, and a few outside partnerships. My vision for this role is to shape and develop a group of young stewards in the Princeton Public School community that respect, care for, appreciate, understand, and (most importantly!) enjoy the food on their plate, where it comes from, and the labor that went into producing it. A few goals for this school year include working closely with the new food service company, Pomptonian, continuing Garden State on Your Plate, and reducing food waste across the PPS community!

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Garden State On Your Plate

January's Garden State On Your Plate produce item of the month is Sweet Potatoes! This month, the elementary schools and middle school will have sample tastings of mashed sweet potatoes with maple syrup and roasted sweet potatoes with salt & pepper. See below for dates at each specific school!

January 9th: Riverside

January 14th: Littlebrook

January 15th: Community Park

January 16th: Johnson Park

January 22nd: PMS



Sweet potatoes can come in a variety of colors like red, orange, yellow, white or purple!

Sweet potatoes are actually a tropical plant! They grow in New Jersey throughout the summer months.

Sweet potatoes contain more vitamin A than any other vegetable!

Chinese New Year

Towards the end of January we will be celebrating the festival of Chinese New Year also called Lunar New Year. In 2025, this festival falls on January 29th and will last a total of 16 days culminating on February 12th with the Lantern Festival. Chinese New Year also represents the transitions between zodiac signs with 2024 being the year of the dragon and 2025 being the year of the snake.

Foods to Eat During Chinese New Year

1. Noodles to live long & prosper
2. Citrus Fruits for prosperity & luck
3. Dumplings for prosperity



4. Leafy Greens for wealth
5. Fish for abundance
6. Sweet Rice Balls for unity

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Bake For Good

In December, 7th grade students at PMS were treated to a fun, exciting, and informative presentation by King Arthur Flour called Bake for Good. This program provided bread making supplies for the entire 7th grade class and did a live demonstration for the students on how to use their supplies to make bread at home for their families.

Two student representatives were able to help mix the dough and form shapes like a braided loaf, cinnamon rolls, dinner rolls, and even

pizza!



Students took home their bread making kits on Friday and spent the weekend baking with their families. They were asked to bring in a loaf of bread the following Monday that would be donated to members of their community. We collected 105 loaves of bread that were delivered to the Adventist Community Church, TASK, and Homefront.

Soup-er Saturday

PMS hosted a Soup-er Saturday cooking and baking event for 7th graders and their families in December! During this event we had families and students bake focaccia bread together while a local chef helped to prepare two soups and roasted veggies. This was a very hands on event where the kids were able to help by chopping herbs, mixing bread dough, and seasoning veggies! The students ended their day by spiralizing apples to make apple hand pies!



Special thanks to Fairgrown Farms, Cherry Grove Organic Farms, Trader Joe's of Princeton, McCaffrey's, PMS PTO, Chef Chris, and everyone who was able to make this day possible!

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Sourdough @ PHS

The biology classes taught by Alexis Custer at PHS were able to participate in a very exciting project this year: sourdough! Students worked to create their starters or "bread pets" and continued to feed them daily while learning key concepts of the sourdough process as it related back to bio. With the help of the cafeteria and a PEF grant, every student was able to make a loaf of bread that they brought home to their families! The sourdough project was presented at the December BOE meeting and will be presented in March at the National Science Teachers Association Conference in Philadelphia!



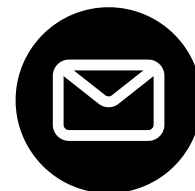
Community Highlights

Special thanks to some of the special community partners listed below that helped to enhance the food system of PPS in December!



Contact Me!

Please reach out to me with any questions, ideas, suggestions, or comments. I would love to hear from you and would love to incorporate your feedback into my work!



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Veggie & Feta Cheese Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients

2 sweet potatoes	1/4 cup chopped onions
1/4 cup chopped carrots	1 cup feta crumbles
1/4 cup chopped parsnips	Olive Oil
3/4 cup chopped butternut squash	Salt & pepper

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Toss onions, carrots, parsnips, and butternut squash in oil, salt, and pepper and roast for 20 minutes or until soft. Pierce the potatoes with a knife and roast until softened about 35-45 minutes. When the potatoes are soft, slice the tops open and add in the roasted veggies and feta cheese. Enjoy!

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Black Bean & Sweet Potato Burrito

Ingredients

2 cups diced sweet potatoes (about 2 large ones)

2 cups black beans

2 whole wheat wraps

Olive Oil

Salt & Pepper

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread black beans and sweet potatoes onto sheet pans and toss with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Cook until the potatoes are fork tender and the beans are warmed through. Add black beans and sweet potatoes to a wrap and serve warm. This can be served with rice, sour cream, cheese, and/or chicken!

Moroccan Sweet Potato Salad

Ingredients

2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled & diced

2 tsp. Chinese 5-spice powder

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

1/4 cup coconut or brown sugar

Salt and Pepper

Olive Oil

4 cups chopped romaine lettuce

2 cups chopped spinach

1/4 cup dried cranberries

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese shavings

1/4 cup maple syrup

1/4 cup balsamic vinegar

1 tbsp. dijon mustard

Instructions

First, mix the sweet potatoes with the 5-spice, cinnamon, 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and the coconut or brown sugar. Place these on a sheet tray and bake at 350 degrees until fork tender. While they bake mix together the maple syrup, balsamic vinegar, dijon mustard, and 3 tablespoons of olive oil to make the dressing. Season the dressing with salt and pepper and set aside. Assemble the salad by mixing the greens, cranberries, Parmesan cheese and sweet potatoes together. Add in the dressing and enjoy!

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Mashed Sweet Potatoes with Maple Syrup

Ingredients

3-4 medium sized sweet potatoes

2 tablespoons butter

4 tablespoons maple syrup

1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon

3-4 tablespoons half-and-half or milk

Salt

Instructions

Boil or bake sweet potatoes until very tender. Using a hand masher or blender, mash the sweet potatoes with the butter, salt, and maple syrup until smooth. Add in the cinnamon to taste then continue to the mash with the milk or half-and-half to the desired consistency.