

**Important Note:** This activity was developed for the original Green Lunchroom Challenge program, a voluntary pledge program for K-12 schools to improve the sustainability of their food service



operations. The project was coordinated by the [Illinois Sustainable Technology Center Technical Assistance Program](#) with funding from US EPA Region 5.

The following page(s) represent the content of this activity as it appeared on the original project web site, complete with available points and instructions for submitting documentation. **The project is no longer funded and as of June 2018 schools may no longer submit activity documentation to earn points and recognition as described.** The activity is presented for your information to guide your organization's sustainability efforts.

If your school or district implements the suggested activity and wishes to share its experiences, please email [Joy Scrogum](#). Your story may be incorporated into a blog post on this web site, the main ISTC site, or shared on social media to foster networking and inspiration among peer institutions.

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# Use creative names to encourage interest in trying new foods, choosing vegetables, etc.

**Activity Category:** Food Presentation

**Activity:** Use creative names to encourage interest in trying new foods, choosing vegetables, etc.

**Rationale:** Research has shown that the simple act of giving a food selection an interesting, appealing name can increase the amount of that item actually eaten by students (see "[Catchy vegetable names increase affinity for greens](#)" ). This marketing technique is simple and costs nothing but the time to be creative. If even slightly more of an item is consumed rather than thrown out because of an appealing name, that's a worthwhile return on investment.



**Activity Description:** During the Challenge period, offer a menu item to students first without a "special" name, and later with a creative name. The items should be offered as part of identical menus—the only difference between the menus should be the name of the item being considered. You'll also want to offer the different conditions (with and without the special name) during the same season, on similar days (e.g. don't make one of the days a field trip or assembly day) to avoid differences in mood due to other factors (it's good to offer the two conditions within the same month). "Special" names should be age appropriate (see the first link listed in the "Resources" section below for advice). The creative name should be listed on a menu board or signage where students can see them as they wait in line for their lunch. Inspiration for your "special" names may come from feedback solicited from students as part of another Challenge activity (see "[Solicit feedback from students and/or observe selection of menu options...](#)" ). You'll compare the amount of the item selected, and more importantly, consumed, with and without creative names. Your comparison of consumption amounts may include any combination of visual assessment or physical sorting of trash/tray waste, information from point-of-sale systems, and observations of food service/lunchroom staff. See the "Tray Waste" video in the "Resources" section below for tips on measuring tray waste.

**Earn Challenge Points (100 points):** Write a report summarizing the results of your creative name experiment, in Word or PDF format, including the following information:

-  The food item which served as the focus of your experiment
-  What the item was called without a creative name and the creative name
-  An overall description of the conditions in which you presented the food item with and without a creative name
-  2-4 photos of signage or menu boards promoting the item, with and without the creative name
-  A summary of the results of selection and consumption of the food item under the two different name conditions
-  Whether your school/district will try this technique again

Your report should be 2-4 pages in length and should be emailed to Joy Scrogum at [jscrogum@illinois.edu](mailto:jscrogum@illinois.edu).

#### Resources:

-  [Smarter Lunchrooms: Give Vegetables Creative Names](#)
-  [Smarter Lunchrooms: Display the creative/descriptive age-targeted names on a poster or menu board outside the cafeteria](#)
-  [Catchy vegetable names increase affinity for greens](#)
-  [Marketing Healthy Foods in Wisconsin K-12 Schools](#) (Loads of great ideas in this document; see pg. 15 (19 of the PDF) for information specific to this activity)
-  [Ohio Smarter Lunchrooms Movement](#) (See "Timberlane Learning Center (PreK-K), Northridge Local Schools, Montgomery County RENAMING VEGETABLES INCREASES STUDENT CONSUMPTION")
-  [Smarter Lunchrooms video: Tray Waste](#) (helpful in measuring tray waste)

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