



Alabama Farm to School Culinary Challenge

2025 Evaluation Report

Fall 2025

Culinary Challenge Overview

The Alabama State Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs partnered with the Chef Ann Foundation to co-create and implement the Alabama Farm to School Culinary Challenge. The Chef Ann Foundation provided onsite culinary training and created 24 student-friendly recipes featuring Alabama Harvest of the Month items. These recipes incorporated locally grown items, USDA Foods in Schools items, and/or statewide bid items and were customized to Alabama students.

Participant Overview

The following districts participated in the Culinary Challenge:

- Andalusia City Schools
- Gulf Shores City Schools
- Haleyville City Schools
- Holy Family School
- Homewood City Schools
- Lee County Schools
- Pell City Schools
- Restoration Academy
- University Charter Schools
- LEAD Academy

24 new scratch-cooked recipes

10 school districts

7,543 students reached

Harvest of the Month Recipes Added to District Menus

Nine out of the 24 Harvest of the Month recipes developed were incorporated into the district menu. Among these, the average student satisfaction rate was 79%.

Harvest of the Month Recipe	Month	Number of Districts	Student Satisfaction
Easy Garlicky Collard Greens	February	1	76%
Garlic Parmesan Roasted Green Beans	September	2	79%
Peachy Keen Green Smoothie	February	2	79%
Roasted Broccoli	January	2	70%
Smokin' Slaw	January	1	77%
Southern Spice Sheet Pan Shawarma	June	2	70%
Strawberry Sunrise Smoothie	April	2	95%
Sweet & Smokey BBQ Beef	October	1	93%
Veggie Hero Skillet	June	1	68%



“[My biggest takeaway was] learning more about using fresh, local ingredients in our recipes and how much the students enjoyed them.”

-Food Service Director

Confidence Gains

- **75%** of participants that attended culinary training increased confidence using kitchen equipment for scratch cooking with local ingredients.

Scratch Cooking Success

- **88%** of school nutrition directors reported an increase in scratch-cooked entrées in their districts.
- **100%** of directors plan to continue student taste testing activities in the 2025-26 school year.
- **100%** of directors are somewhat or very likely to implement additional school food program changes, such as salad bars and composting, after completing Chef Ann Foundation School Food Institute courses.

Local Procurement

- **75%** of districts increased local procurement after the AL Culinary Challenge, these shifts were supported by farm field trips and student recipe taste tests.



Overall Success:



of directors were very or somewhat satisfied with the Culinary Challenge



of directors were very likely to recommend the Culinary Challenge to other districts



“[My biggest takeaway is that] scratch cooking can be implemented with the right recipes and training. Plus, students are definitely looking for new foods to try.”

-Food Service Director



The Chef Ann Foundation is a 501c(3) non-profit dedicated to promoting whole-ingredient, scratch cooking in schools. Scratch cooking enables schools to serve the healthiest, tastiest meals so that kids are well-nourished and ready to learn.

To date, we've reached more than 16,000 schools and 4.4 million kids with healthy school programming.

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