For Food Service Director Lori Van Slyke, transitioning to scratch cooking was “the right thing to do.” In her 20 years in the school food arena, she notes that lunch at school is sometimes the only opportunity for her students to get a home-cooked meal. Plus, many of her kitchen managers are industry veterans who remember earlier days of scratch cooking, so the transition was not as formidable. “They have a passion for giving kids healthy food,” she states. Van Slyke and her staff have also focused on minimizing highly processed foods by making just about 100 percent of their student meals from scratch. She has worked with a teacher, whose family owns a farm, to transport fresh produce to one school, as well as a local meat market to supply all-natural, fresh beef.

The Culinary Workshop was extremely helpful in providing tips for her staff’s time management through the use of a white board to plan a week in advance. It was also key to changing the mindset of her kitchen staff. “It’s not as hard as you think it is,” she says about learning new cooking skills. “I would recommend it to any school district.” The Garfield RE2 District was the first to undergo the School Meal Assessment and culinary training processes back in 2008. Van Slyke and her team took the leap while other districts watched and waited. Today, Van Slyke now enjoys a sustained momentum in her reform efforts, as well as the ability to plan for the future. On the horizon…she’d love to see more nutrition education and awareness of food waste woven into the student curriculum.

### Garfield RE2 School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Goals &amp; Vision</th>
<th>Strategic Action Plan Tactics</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase scratch cooking</td>
<td>• Increase purchase of fresh, whole ingredients • Train staff to safely &amp; efficiently handle fresh/raw foods</td>
<td>Now serving between 95% to 100% scratch-cooked foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine budget for greater efficiencies</td>
<td>• Reduce costs by altering commodities processing • Reallocate commodities funds toward purchase of fresh food</td>
<td>With commodities savings purchased superior ingredients for scratch cooking including: • Approx. $50,000 of fresh produce • Approx. $38,000 of “brownbox” proteins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce sugar consumption</td>
<td>• Eliminate all flavored milk</td>
<td>Reduced sugar consumption by about 4 lbs./per student annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lori Van Slyke
Nutrition Services Coordinator

**LOCATION:** Rifle, CO

**SCHOOLS:** 10

**STUDENTS:** 4,560

**FOOD SERVICE TEAM MEMBERS:** 38

**KITCHENS:** 10

Website [www.livewellcolorado.org](http://www.livewellcolorado.org)
Facebook LiveWellColo
Twitter [@livewellco](https://twitter.com/livewellco)
Pinterest livewellco

©2013 Copyright LiveWell Colorado. All rights reserved.