Edible Schoolyard Kitchen Culture

Summary
The rituals and routines that students and teachers follow create a kitchen classroom culture that fosters positive contributions and community.

Student Rituals and Routines
In the kitchen, we have established a set of rituals and routines for the students so they know what to do when they enter the kitchen. Students:
- Line up outside the kitchen classroom and wait to be greeted by a kitchen teacher
- Enter the kitchen, put their backpacks away in the cubbies, put on an apron and meet at the middle table for the Chef Meeting
- Wash their hands after the Chef Meeting and go to their table groups
- Work in the same table groups for their entire kitchen rotation
- Choose their kitchen jobs each kitchen class
- Serve everybody at the table before eating
- Bus their dishes and clean the kitchen after every kitchen class

Kitchen Teacher Rituals and Routines
As a kitchen staff, we have established a set of rituals and routines so that students know what to expect. Teachers:
- Greet the class outside and wait for the students to be lined up, focused, and ready to enter the kitchen
- Share leadership of the Chef Meetings and closing circles
- Ask check-in questions at the table groups that set a tone and allow the kitchen teachers to get to know the students
- Take notes on each class to track group continuity, fairness, and behavioral issues
- Debrief with the classroom teacher after class
- Discuss ongoing issues with the school counselors

Student Buy-In
With these practices, we aim to instill a sense of ownership and love for the kitchen in each student. Students:
- Eat what they make
- Use real tools
- Cook in the kitchen what they have grown in the garden
- Harvest from the garden during kitchen class
- Take copies of the recipes home
- Take leftovers in to-go containers
Encouraging Success

In the kitchen, we empower students to make decisions and encourage them to be their best selves. Kitchen teachers:

- Ask for student input whenever possible
- Engage all of the senses
- Know the classroom teachers’ management styles in advance
- Create a culture of “yes!”
- Use “random” decision-making processes (rock/paper/scissors; pick a number)
- Create kitchen jobs that will bring out the best in particular students or groups, and figure out appropriate work for particular students’ needs
- Are flexible, and assign new kitchen jobs when necessary
- Redirect unproductive behavior
- Praise, praise, praise!
- Reward students with more responsibility
- Make positive phone calls home
- ‘Word of the Week’ board unifies student experience throughout the school