

# Innovative Idea Award

## Project:

Improving the Lunch Card  
Identification Process



**Name:** Denise Caulkins

**County:** Martin

**FSNA Region:** VI

Jensen Beach Elementary  
Cafeteria Manager

# What Did You Do?

- I identified a need in our school after observing the K-2 grade students looking for their lunch cards.
- Younger students would stand near the card rack with a lost look in their eyes, overwhelmed by the task of finding their card.
  - Out of frustration and/or fear, some students would select any card or no card at all.
  - Not only did locating their card in a sea of cards cause students anxiety and frustration, it also increased wait times in the serving line as well as precious eating time in the cafeteria.
- Since most children are visual learners (*limited reading ability*), I came up with the idea of placing a teacher photo above the class card column.
- To make it even simpler, I placed a unique, colorful sticker on each card.



# What Did You Do?



# Why Was Your Idea Useful?

- ❑ Teachers, cafeteria aids and school administration noticed how much smoother the lunch card retrieval process became after implementing this new practice.
- ❑ My staff and I have received many compliments thanking us for putting this simple yet effective process into place.
- ❑ The principal asked if I would continue this process for all grade levels now... and in the future!



# Results:

- Lunch lines sped up (K-2) by 3-5 minutes.
- Reduces line gaps in the serving line (wasted time).
- Lessens frustration and tears.
- Students receive their meal sooner!



# Did you Share Your Idea?

- I shared my innovative idea with my district office who in turn shared it with fellow cafeteria managers.
- I was asked to share my idea and photos of how I implemented the project.
  - Supplies used
  - Implementation time table
  - Results

**As a result, the FNS team has encouraged all elementary sites to implement this idea for the 19/ 20 SY.**



# What Responses Did You Receive Resulting From Your Efforts?

*“I absolutely **LOVE** the card rack that Ms. Caulkins has set up this year. She has our teacher pictures (literally my face), so that my kindergarteners can easily locate our class’ cards quickly. They are so independent so early this year; I have actually been able to enjoy my lunch break! Usually, the kindergarteners take at least 2 months to remember which class is theirs and need help finding their names. The new card set up has greatly improved the students’ ability to be independent and my ability to have a break. Thank you to Ms. Caulkins for all that she does!” - Sara Voss - Jensen Beach Elementary Teacher*



# What Responses Did You Receive Resulting From Your Efforts?

*“I just wanted to let you know how much smoother the cafeteria lunch line has been running this year. The use of the teachers’ pictures and then individual stickers has been so helpful. Many of the students haven’t learned to read their teacher’s name and the pictures speed the card finding process up. Thanks so much for helping to feed our students quickly and efficiently so they have more time to eat and socialize!”*

*- Jamie Law - Jensen Beach Elementary Assistant Principal*





*"Sharing is caring"*