

## DULUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DULUTH, MN



The Duluth School District's long-range facilities plan turned outdated kitchens into modern and comfortable eating spaces with fresh, good-looking food. The seven schools that opened in 2011 show notable differences — each with completely new kitchens that come with enviable ovens, efficient dishwashers, walk-in freezers and coolers, and more space. Gone are the long, banquet-style tables, darkened interiors, and endless lines.

The schools used to have their food cooked at former elementary and high school locations and shipped over daily, now each new school has the equipment and space to cook for their students. The old kitchens often had balky equipment, sometimes in need of repair. The improved equipment has made cooking breakfast and lunch for students much easier, creating more time to wash, peel and chop fruits and vegetables and cook meals right before each group of students arrives. The district is trying new and healthier things and is participating in a farm-to-school program. They are using their federal Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program allotment for the year at a faster pace because there is more space to display and store the food.

### [Elementary School Projects](#)

Piedmont Elementary  
Lester Park Elementary  
Laura MacArthur Elementary  
Lowell Elementary  
Homecroft Elementary

### [High School Projects](#)

Denfeld High School  
East High School



At Piedmont Elementary, students form two lines instead of one to receive their meals. After they pick the meal up, they are faced with a two-sided buffet of fruits and vegetables and as a result, kids are taking more vegetables and eating more fruit. The decreased time waiting in line is also among the many improved efficiencies. They are now moving approximately 300 students through the serving area in about 12 minutes. The lines of two allow for better flow, and they prevent bottlenecks allowing students more time to eat their meal.



The Denfeld High School cafeteria resembles a busy mall food court, with students clustered around booths and tables high and low stretching to a bank of windows at the far end of the room. The high schools each have a giant tilting skillet that allows for new menu items such as stir-fry, and the students disperse to various serving lines to choose among entrees, pizza, subs, fruits, and vegetables. The lines of two allow for better flow, and they prevent bottlenecks allowing students more time to eat their meal.

Kitchen staff members at Denfeld, where there are two lunch periods, have timed how long it takes to move 300 students through the serving area. They've got it down to about 12 minutes. "That's huge, for kids to be able to get their food and get their table and sit down and eat," said JoAnn Norman, cafeteria manager at Denfeld. "The less time they spend in a line, the better."