When Taylor started out, he wasn’t sure that salad bars could cure the ills of the world, but now he’s convinced they do.

Fairfax County, Virginia, where he is currently director of Food and Nutrition Services, is the 13th largest school district in the country with 186,785 students. It has developed the second largest bus system in the country, making over 250,000 one-way trips a day. He said, if our buses pass you, I can prepare food for you.

In Fairfax, 145,000 meals per day are served, or a 44% average daily participation rate.

Taylor has served as a food service director for 27 years in 9 districts, mostly in 2 districts, and he has 40 years experience in the food service industry.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is a business, not an entitlement. Salad bars are hard work for people who are committed to make them succeed.

Taylor started the Farmers Market Salad Bar in 1997 in Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Robert Gottlieb, Professor at Occidental College and Director of Urban Environmental Policy Institute, led the way. He provided the affluent support that was needed, when they were on the cutting edge.
“I didn’t know you could get so much attention from lettuce,” Gottlieb said. In Taylor’s view, the affluent just don’t go away. They want what they want, and they want it now. They push you beyond your comfort level and force you to grow.

During a 2-week trial one summer, Taylor experimented with the Childcare Development Department. They prepared colorful, cut-up vegetables that appealed to children. He was compared their vegetable offerings with his own bland salad display, and he realized that he was on to something.

Two years later, Taylor participated in a pilot program at McKinley Elementary School. He had trouble paying farmers and so arranged that the city paid, and FNS paid the city back.

Some obstacles are easily surmounted. People do not realize that the bidding rules apply to purchases over $5,000. Gap insurance, an onerous requirement, does not apply to small farmers.

“I’m trying to address you skeptics, because I know you are there, and I know how you think,” said Taylor.

One in 3 children will suffer Type 2 Diabetes, while it will affect 2 of 3 blacks and Latinos. Why are we not outraged by the statistics?

Teachers want every student to eat during testing week, inferring that it will help them do better. We should be feeding them right every day of the week.

Our program goals and objectives are to improve children’s health by encouraging the consumption of nutritious foods. We teach students to become life-long healthy eaters and provide students with daily access to fresh produce while we provide an untapped market for the small farmer.

How the program works: The district purchases fruits and vegetables directly from local farmers. Orders are placed a week in advance and produce is delivered to central kitchen. Produce is prepared at the central kitchen and delivered to schools to be served at lunch. Complementary classroom activities support the goals and round out the program.

“The lettuce is dirty; it has worms.” We hear that refrain; that’s the way lettuce grows. We use food as tools for teaching. For example, many students are not familiar with jicama. But if you ask a Hispanic student, he will tell you about the magic of jicama, chili and lime.

Fresh fruits and vegetables create excitement; they connect students to the garden, and the garden to the classroom. Fresh produce can be the catalyst for change in the community.

You can bring chefs and farmers into the classroom. Taylor partnered with Kaiser Hospital, Inova, and public health professionals to help his team provide healthy food and have a healthy bottom line.
Please see the attached logic model from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The question was, are students eating fruits and vegetables, and is it making a difference? They found that students did eat salads over two years, and the school nutrition program revenue neutral. [See http://centertrt.org/?p=intervention&id=1101 for more.]

It costs money to improve anything – it’s an investment but it pays off. We must engage students to motivate them to eat the colors. “I’ve got a rainbow in my tummy” stickers were given by a chef at end of salad bar line as a promotion for the salad bar in the Riverside Unified School District.

We wanted the salad bar to be an alternative to traditional lunch. It cost $10,000 to establish a salad bar, $5,000 for equipment and $5,000 for personnel in 1997.

If we had bowls of whole fruit on the table, most of the fruit would be there at the end of the meeting. If it were cut up on a platter, offering multiple fruits, it’s user friendly, pleasing to the eye, and students will eat it.

Taylor developed composed salads based on restaurant salads at Riverside (for schools without salad bars). Schools teach the salad bar etiquette (see attached flyer). He asked teachers to eat with students in exchange for free meals.

Support FNS staff include a salad bar coordinator, area managers and food service staff per school. A program educator develops educational components to integrate food service with the curriculum.

FNS staff are trained in three ways:
  1. Kitchen operators spend time at another school that has a salad bar to learn the system.
  2. The salad bar coordinator teaches staff the salad bar system and provides monthly salad bar in-services.
  3. Specialists show staff cooking techniques, such as how to blanche vegetables.

By 2009, the cost for all salad bar equipment was $6,777.

Farm to School programs are a unique way to forge a partnership among the school, the community and the farmers who produce the food.

To get started, plan for start-up funding. Write grant proposal, because cost can be a barrier. Schools should look beyond the traditional sources for grant funding. Develop a working relationship with the school’s business manager/purchasing director. Locate the nearest farmers market and visit the market. Set up a meeting with the farmers’ market manager.

There are various models for farm-to-school, such as Harvest of the Month and the after-school supper program.
To operate the salad bar, design the menu. See the attached sample menu (following the Healthy Hunger-free Kids Act requirements). Salad bar specials break the monotony, such as burritos, soup, pasta, tacos and more.

Begin a marketing campaign. Provide in-service training for cafeteria staff. Plan and host a grand opening.

Educate students: Healthy means different things to different people. Provide models for healthy eating habits to grow healthy students. Connect to the origins of food.

Various methods of educating students include promoting the harvest of the month, school gardens, organizing farmer visits, chef visits, farm field trips, and farmers’ market field trips. Cooking carts are useful for providing interactive cooking demonstrations.

In the cafeteria, have a display plate to show students, “This is what we mean, when we tell you to eat the colors.” By where we place the food, we can influence student eating behaviors.

Only 33% of students were going through the salad bar In the Riverside Unified School District (RUSD). After the promotion, more than half of the student body was selecting salad bar meals.

Send them through the salad bar before the pizza (“SB1 = salad bar first”). Engage students, place salad bar in front, and have 1 staff at either end. Start with K-1 for the first 2 weeks, to get used to going through the line quickly.

Kaiser Permanente used a program called “Steps to Health” to measure students’ BMI and encourage activity with pedometers.

What happens, when you put emphasis on eating fruits and vegetables? A study of his program showed kids eat more.

In RUSD, they held a poster contest. As a result, they were able to publish a FNS menu calendar with 12 awards, presented at an assembly.

A farmers market program can include farm tours, poster contests, garden projects, salad bar feature days, farmers’ market tours, classroom cooking carts and teacher training.

Self-serve, all-you-can-eat fruits and vegetables: How did that work? Students had greater access to fruits and vegetables, and they ate more of them. The program was revenue neutral. It lowered food costs and reduced waste, increased participation, increased revenue and changed perception of the food service program. The nutrition program played a significant role in augmenting the educational processes in the school district.

“Quit whining about how little money you’ve got, and innovate!”
FNS plays a role in child obesity. When Taylor began at Riverside, student meal participation was at 40%, and when he left, it was at 70%. Our children deserve our best.

We're not just transforming school food, we're transforming the food system.

**Q & A**

*What about putting protein and carbohydrate on salad bar, so it's a compete meal?* It's optional; it's up to the school district. Using USDA commodities helps to reduce costs.

*If the school is more affluent, do you ever sell salad by the pound?*

In high schools, selling salad by the pound didn’t go over well, and so they came up with Fresh Express (a line of restaurant-style sandwiches and salads).

*A la carte foods are used to make up deficits. How do you deal with a la carte foods?*

“Smart” snacks are really dumb snacks and accounted for around $4,000,000 per year in revenue at Riverside. At Riverside it took time to transition away from them; they had to win trust and they slowly reduced a la carte items to only string cheese and yogurt.

We are trying to move away from processed food. In a perfect world, we’d want scratch cooking. We have to do the best we can with what we have. Minnesota is gradually going back to scratch cooking. Detroit has a 17-acre school farm. We’re not going to change FNS overnight. Fairfax is a big ship; it takes time to turn a big ship.

The salad bar in Fairfax is located in the serving line. If students pay for lunch, it costs $2.90 (the cost of a regular lunch).

The Chef Ann Foundation has partnered with Let’s Move! for salad bar donations. Whole Foods gave financial support to Riverside and helped market it with videos.

Beat the bush for untraditional partners! Any marketer targets young children to build loyalty. We need to figure out who is at the table, and get them involved.

*Would it help the local economy to buy produce from local farmers?*

The FNS budget at Riverside was $8 million when Taylor began, and 10 years later it was $21 million, and a lot of that was going to local farmers.

*How can you engage with multiple farmers, when you have limited staff?*

Start small with a farmers’ market; be slow and thoughtful. Feature a fruit or vegetable every month. One obstacle: Farmers sell by the pound at farmers markets, and we buy by the item. Farmers can’t sell at farmers’ market prices to schools, but we can take their less perfect produce that they can’t sell.

*What kind of impact do salad bars have on affluent high schools, where many students bring their lunch?*

What are youths buying in the marketplace? Taylor’s team developed a line of salads and sandwiches that you won’t see in any school in America. They used professional photographers and food stylists to promote them.
Suggestions for breakfast in the classroom?
If hunger is the worst thing that kids from at-risk homes face, they are doing well. Taylor suggests oatmeal or cottage cheese and fruit, for example.

What are your thoughts about offering chocolate milk?
Take it out at breakfast; keep it in at lunch (keep calcium in schools).

Final Wrap-Up Notes

Question: Did you tell or ask principals to put in salad bars?
Rodney: We ask principals, you don’t tell principals, to have a salad bar. Their priorities may be different from ours and their school is their kingdom. Our message is, “It’s different from what you are doing.” Go to your champions; they will support you.

We need policy, boots on the ground and advocates. Tell them what your vision is, and ask to work with them. Go to the cafeteria manager, and let them do their job. It will take time.

Q & A
What is the challenge for him?
The bureaucracy and red tape – that’s life. His mantra is perseverance, patience and persistence.

Student: Is there a way that kids can get the message out? How can we make salad bars more successful?
Try a student culinary competition (Fairfax, for instance, had 11 schools competing). Recipes must meet reimbursable meal qualifications. Some school districts have a student advisory committee that reports to the superintendent, and FNS responds. There are more positive ways to partner with FNS.

Right now a Team Nutrition grant application is being written to propose a tool for parent/student feedback on school meals at the state level in Maryland to translate into changes that meet requirements.

At present, Fairfax has one salad bar and one farmer who grows year round.
What is the growing season, so we can take advantage of seasonal fruits and vegetables?

Chris Guerre (farmer in VA): Low tunnels allow winter growth of lettuce, spinach, root vegetables, carrots, kale (they don’t grow as fast during cold weather). He plants in August for crops being harvested now.

Taylor is committed to local foods to the extent possible, but he is committed to healthy food year round.
Inputs
- Child obesity data
- Healthy food access/availability
- Salad bar/Farm to School approach
- Existing and model practices for salad bars/Farm to School
- Politics/ Stakeholders
- Nutrition Services
- School district
- Farmers
- Teachers
- Students
- Parents/families
- Political will
- Other
- Administrative structures
- Harvest of the Month resources
- Monitoring and compliance systems
- Start-up funds

Activities
Throughout process
- Develop marketing/communication materials
- Garner media attention
- Raise awareness of Salad Bar Program
- Engage stakeholders through conversations, events, etc.
- Build support for and continually promote the salad bar (grand opening, taste tests, special events, etc.)

Outputs
Throughout process
- # of marketing & communication materials distributed
- # of media hits about Salad Bar Program
- Parent and student awareness of Salad Bar Program
- Stakeholders engaged in Salad Bar Program through conversations/events
- Established Salad Bar Program that addresses school food environment using Farm to School

Reach
- # and representativeness of students reached by Salad Bar Program
- Adoption
- # of schools adopted Salad Bar Program
- Implementation
- # of contracts with local farmers
- Cyclical menus developed at all participating schools
- Implementation acceptable to teachers, food service staff, and students/parents
- Implementation of salad bar feasible for school & district
- Salad bar is compliant with NSLP standards

Outcomes/Effectiveness
Results or changes for individuals, groups, organizations, communities, or systems

Short Term (1-3 years)
- Increase in accessibility of locally grown fruits and vegetables in schools
- Increase in school meal program participation among K-6th grade students
- Increase in knowledge of local foods/nutrition among K-6th grade students
- Improvement in attitudes towards eating locally grown fruits and vegetables among K-6th grade students
- Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables at school among K-6th grade students

Intermediate (4-6 years)
- Improved perceptions of the school nutrition program

Unintended consequences

Long Term (7-9 years)
- Public Health Impact
- Effective in achieving population level improvements in child health and well-being
- Equitable distribution of improvements across population subgroups, particularly those at greatest risk
- Cost Effective in achieving improvements

Process Evaluation Data Sources
- Program trackers for monitoring adoption, materials, farmer contracts, training, etc.
- Meal participation tracker (school and district levels)
- Farmer Interview Guide*
- Educator Interview Guide*
- Student feedback forms or surveys (about curriculum and changes in cafeteria)
- Food Service Professional Interview Guide*

Outcome Evaluation Data Sources
- Fruit and Vegetable Neophobia scale*
- School lunch recall*
- Observational site visits (at a sample of schools)
- School meal participation tracker (school and district levels)
1. Always wash your hands first.

2. Use utensils. NEVER USE YOUR FINGERS.

3. If a utensil or plate falls on the floor, don’t put it back. Tell a cafeteria person.

4. Don’t taste food items at the salad bar.

5. Take a small amount of new foods to try.

6. Take only what you can eat.

7. Don’t bring food back to the salad bar.

8. DON’T PUT YOUR HEAD UNDER THE SNEEZE GUARD OR FOOD SHIELD. Ask a friend or a cafeteria person to help if you can’t reach.

9. Always be polite in line. Wait your turn.

10. Always use a clean plate for seconds.
# FARMERS’ MARKET SALAD BAR CYCLE MENU 2009/2010

## MONDAY

**Meat/Meat Alternate (select 3)**  
Cheese – shredded or diced  
Ham – diced  
Boiled eggs – cut in 4ths  
Peanut butter

**Vegetables (select 5)**  
Lettuce mix*  
Carrots – peeled & sliced in sticks  
Celery – sliced in sticks  
Broccoli – bite size  
Tomatoes  
Seasonal veggies

**Fruits (select 5)**  
Trail mix  
Apple – sliced  
Orange - wedges  
Strawberries - sliced  
Tangerines  
Seasonal fruit  
Mellon

**Bread (select 3)**  
Dinner rolls  
Croutons*  
Crackers*  
Pasta

---

## TUESDAY

**Meat/Meat Alternate (select 3)**  
Tuna salad  
Ham – diced  
Peanut butter  
Fajita, chicken strips

**Vegetables (select 5)**  
Lettuce mix*  
Carrots – peeled & sliced in sticks  
Celery – sliced in sticks  
Cauliflower –bite size  
Tomatoes  
Seasonal veggies

**Fruits (select 5)**  
Trail mix  
Apple – sliced  
Oranges – wedges  
Strawberries – sliced  
Grapes  
Seasonal fruit  
Mellon

**Bread (select 3)**  
Dinner rolls  
Croutons*  
Crackers*  
Pasta

---

## WEDNESDAY

**Meat/Meat Alternate (select 3)**  
Cheese – shredded or diced  
Fajita, chicken strips  
Peanut butter  
Cottage cheese

**Vegetables (select 5)**  
Lettuce mix*  
Carrots – peeled & sliced  
Celery – sliced in sticks  
Broccoli – bite size  
Tomatoes  
Seasonal veggies

**Fruits (select 5)**  
Trail mix  
Apple – sliced  
Orange - wedges  
Tangerines  
Kiwi  
Seasonal fruit

**Bread (select 3)**  
Dinner rolls  
Croutons*  
Crackers*  
Pasta

*To be used daily: Secondary side*
**FARMERS’ MARKET SALAD BAR CYCLE MENU 2009/2010**

### THURSDAY

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<th>Fruits (select 5)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cheese – shredded or diced</td>
<td>Lettuce mix*</td>
<td>Trail mix</td>
<td>Dinner rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham – diced</td>
<td>Carrots – peeled &amp; sliced in sticks</td>
<td>Apple – sliced</td>
<td>Croutons*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiled eggs – cut in 4ths</td>
<td>Celery – sliced in sticks</td>
<td>Orange - wedges</td>
<td>Crackers*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter</td>
<td>Cauliflower –bite size</td>
<td>Strawberries - sliced</td>
<td>Pasta</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### FRIDAY

<table>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham – diced</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fajita, chicken strips</td>
<td>Broccoli –bite size</td>
<td>Strawberries – sliced</td>
<td>Pasta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* To be used daily: Secondary side
Salad Bar Specials

Soup Bar
Chicken Noodle Soup
Crackers (Saltine)
Gold fish crackers

Build a Better Burger
Burgers
Buns
Sliced Onion
Sliced Tomatoes
Pickles, chips
Sliced green Peppers
Lettuce
Cheese slices
Sliced Cucumbers
1000's Island dressing
Avocado
Chili

Build a Bowl of Chili
Bowl of Chili
Beef Crumble
Chopped onion/red
Chopped bell peppers
Shredded cheese
Chopped tomatoes
Taco chips/Fritos or corn
Corn/canned
Jalapeños/ canned
Sliced mushrooms
Cilantro
Sour cream
Black olives
Guacamole

Stuff a Submarine
Small sour dough roll
Sliced red onions
Sliced tomatoes
Sliced green peppers
Sliced cheese
Sliced pickles
Banana peppers
Sliced cucumbers
Coleslaw
Shredded cheese
Turkey
Pepperoni
Ham
**Baked Potato Bar**
- Baked potatoes
- Taco meat
- Nacho cheese
- Chopped onions
- Shredded cheese
- Kidney beans
- Tomatoes
- Sour cream
- Broccoli
- Jalapenos
- Butter

**Nacho Bar**
- Tortilla
- Jalapeños canned
- Cilantro
- Green onion
- Cherry tomatoes
- Kidney beans
- Corn
- Lettuce
- Carrots
- Cucumber
- Jicama
- Salsa
- Black olives
- Taco meat
- Shred cheese
- Nacho cheese
- Sour cream

**Pasta Salad Bar**
- Pasta
- Lettuce
- Tomatoes
- Sliced carrots
- Chopped onions
- Peas
- Shredded cheese
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Sliced zucchini
- Sliced pepperoni
- Sliced black olives
- Tuna
- Italian dressing

**Top a Taco salad Bar**
- Filled taco shells
- Beef crumble
- Refried beans
- Sour cream
- Salsa
- Chopped tomatoes
- Black olives
- Jalapenos
- Sliced mushrooms
- Shredded cheese
- Cilantro
- Guacamole
- Chopped onions