



# Realizing the Dream: A Fully Integrated FOH, BOH, and Payments K-12 Nutrition Solution

## CHALLENGES

- Siloed, manually updated data in disparate systems
- Complex workflows for 17 managers across 22 sites
- Time-consuming student meal account change requests

## SOLUTIONS

[LINQ District Nutrition \(formerly TITAN\)](#)

[LINQ Connect](#)

## RESULTS

- Integrated, automated system that provides real-time data to drive decisions
- Saves managers at least 30 minutes per purchase order and enables 24/7 remote access
- Eliminated hours of student meal account management requests from families

K-12 nutrition can get complicated, but the technology used to manage it shouldn't be. Lori Drenth, Director of Food and Nutrition Services at Hernando County School District, knew that's how it should be. With over 24,000 students enrolled, the Florida district struggled with disparate systems, complex workflows, and a lack of real-time data to drive informed decisions. Without a single integrated system, Drenth and her team spent much of their day updating data in multiple systems, verifying accuracy, and fixing errors that inevitably occurred.

Even if the situation was common, Drenth recognized there had to be a better solution. That was five years ago, right before she heard about [LINQ Nutrition](#) (formerly TITAN) for the first time. It was news that would alter the course of Hernando County's nutrition program and unleash its potential.

## There had to be a simpler K-12 nutrition software answer, right?

Drenth and her team were looking for a single solution for managing every front of house (FOH) and back of house (BOH) aspect of their nutrition program. It was a solution they felt should exist, so full integration became their top criteria.

However, they didn't know where to start. Drenth said that a K-12 nutrition professional from another district first mentioned LINQ Nutrition, and she quickly realized it offered the complete FOH and BOH integration they were looking for. "We felt like we'd found our dream system," remembers Drenth.

**“It’s a full solution. Information transfers from one module to the next, and that’s something we were always looking for. Plus, it’s really easy to use.”**

**Lori Drenth**  
Director of Food and  
Nutrition Services

The more they learned about LINQ’s nutrition solution, the more they knew it would help solve the complexities in their program. “It’s a full solution,” Drenth says. “Information transfers from one module to the next, and that’s something we were always looking for. Plus, it’s really easy to use.” It was the ease –of use that helped them get team buy-in when it came time to implement their new solution.

## **Getting team buy-in for an all-in-one FOH and BOH solution**

Team buy-in makes a big difference in any implementation, and Drenth says it played a significant role with them. Hernando County School District Operations Specialist Bill Ward agrees. He oversees the technology side of the district’s nutrition program. He says team buy-in came down to showing their staff just how much time LINQ Nutrition could save them. “It automates so many of their day-to-day tasks,” he explains, “like cutting their truck orders down to three or four minutes.” He says managers previously spent 30 minutes or more inputting orders, so the system’s automation made a measurable impact on everyone’s day.

Ward also says those more concerned with the technology side of the system were also convinced from the start. “Back-up documentation, cloud-based data that’s not in jeopardy during a storm or natural disaster, redundancy if the power or network goes down—all of that sold me on the system,” he says. According to Ward, having a single, fully integrated cloud solution like LINQ Nutrition delivers the most important factors for IT professionals.

Security is also a big piece of the puzzle for Ward, and he says LINQ’s bank-level encryption gives him peace of mind. “Now that you guys went to that, with the two-factor login, I know that the system’s really secure,” he adds. In an era when K-12 cybersecurity risks remain high, he says it’s a primary concern for any district.

**“Back-up documentation, cloud-based data that’s not in jeopardy during a storm or natural disaster, redundancy if the power or network goes down—all of that sold me on the system.”**

**Bill Ward**

District Operations Specialist

## **Real-time data to drive decisions—and accessible from anywhere**

Drenth and Ward agree that menu planning, production records, and ordering are where their integrated solution saves the most time. Rather than searching for numbers and verifying accuracy, site managers simply click through the tasks they need to complete.

They can access information and reports from anywhere, and that’s a big time saver for those managing kitchens at multiple locations. “Some of our managers oversee operations at more than one building,” explains Ward, “so the fact that they can complete their production records and menu planning without having to be at the location physically is a huge plus.” Because inventory updates in real-time, they can trust that it’s accurate and doesn’t need to go into the cooler to verify it before placing an order or planning a menu.

Ward says kitchen managers quickly learned to trust the system. “I’m the one people come to with questions when they need help with the system,” he says. “So, early on, I would have managers question the orders the system was telling them they needed. We would go into the walk-in, count what was there, and then they’d see that the system was correct.”

## **Self-service student meal accounts put families in charge of their funds**

Hernando County also relies on LINQ Connect as part of their complete K-12 nutrition solution to simplify meal payments. Previously, their old system required district staff to manage changes to an account—like address changes or moving funds between a family’s students. “We used to have to move money between student accounts. Now, families can take care of that as well as set spending limits for each student,” Ward says. LINQ Connect gives staff back the time they once spent handling these requests. Families can manage their students’ accounts from anywhere on the mobile app or through the online portal.

**“We used to have to move money between student accounts. Now, families can take care of that as well as set spending limits for each student.”**

**Bill Ward**  
District Operations Specialist

Drenth agrees that using LINQ Connect for meal payments makes life easier for students and staff. Lunch lines can move quickly, and digital payments can usually be processed faster than counting out cash and change. Next on the horizon for Hernando County is using LINQ Connect to process school fees outside of meal payments. Drenth and Ward say they’re more than pleased with how it simplified payments in the cafeteria, so they felt it’s likely the right solution for other departments to accept everything from field trip and sports payments to library fees and yearbook purchases.

## **Sailing ahead with a fully integrated K-12 nutrition solution**

Hernando County on Florida’s West Coast offers residents and visitors some of the most naturally beautiful vistas in the state. From manatees gently cruising through crystal clear rivers to breathtaking sunsets along the Gulf Coast, it’s a place Ward and Drenth proudly call home. The county is also famous for its live mermaid shows at Weeki Wachee Springs State Park, a whimsical attraction steeped in Florida’s tourism history.

However, Ward and Drenth say their fully integrated K-12 nutrition solution isn’t mere magic—it’s a dream come true. It’s the purpose-built, intuitive system schools and districts should have in a modern nutrition program. With it, they simplified workflows to save countless hours, gave their managers deeper data insights and flexible access to information from anywhere, and made meal payments easier for families with a secure, easy-to-use mobile app. They’re both excited for the future and confident they have the technology in place to help their program thrive through challenges for years to come.

See how LINQ District Nutrition supports districts like Hernando County School

[EXPLORE LINQ NUTRITION](#)