SCHOOL NUTRITION SPECIALIST (SNS) CREDENTIALING EXAM HANDBOOK

SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION (SNA)
120 Waterfront Street, Suite 300
National Harbor, MD 20745
Toll Free: (800) 877-8822 * **Phone:** (301) 686-3100
Fax: (301) 686-3115
Website: www.schoolnutrition.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(For use in preparation for SNS exams to be administered July 10, 2011 and after)

WELCOME 2

Certification & Credentialing Governing Council 2

SNS Program Development 2

Benefits of the SNS Credential 3

Definition of a School Nutrition Specialist 3

APPLYING FOR THE SNS EXAM 4

SNS Exam Application Fee 4

Table – Example of College Courses by Key Area 5

Application Process 6

Special Exam Accommodations 6

Eligibility Denial Appeal Process 6

PREPARING THE SNS EXAM 7

Assessment Tool 7

Exam Prep Tips 7

SNS Exam Content/Knowledge Areas 8

Exam Resource List 16

Sample Questions 18

TAKING THE SNS EXAM 21

On Exam Day 21

Emergency or Inclement Weather 21

Exam Results 21

Hand Scoring Requests 22

Retaking the SNS Exam 22

Use of the SNS Credential 22

MAINTAINING THE SNS CREDENTIAL 23

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ANSWER KEY 23

SNS CREDENTIALING EXAM APPLICATION FORM 24

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WELCOME

Congratulations on taking this important career step to earn the School Nutrition Specialist (SNS) Credential! The School Nutrition Association (SNA) established the SNS Credentialing Program in 1997 to:

- ✓ enhance the professional image of school nutrition professionals
- ✓ elevate professional standards
- ✓ enhance individual performance

The SNS Credential is a mark of excellence and achievement that reflects what it takes to manage school nutrition programs in today's challenging climate. The SNS Credentialing Exam evaluates candidates' knowledge and skills required to perform specific job activities related to managing or directing school nutrition programs.

The SNS exam is based on 9 content knowledge areas and competencies that can be found on page 8 of this handbook. The exam has 200 multiple choice questions and candidates have 4 hours to complete. An independent testing company oversees the electronic grading of the SNS exam.

Certification and Credentialing Governing Council

The Certification and Credentialing Governing Council is responsible for the governance of the SNS Credentialing Program and all policies and standards related to the SNS credential. The Certification and Credentialing Governing Council does not discriminate against any person on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, medical condition, physical disability, or marital status.

SNA along with the independent testing company began the process of updating the SNS Credentialing Exam in August 2010. The updated exam will be administered beginning July 10, 2011 and after. SNA selected members of the Specification and Exam Development Committee from a pool of SNS Credentialed volunteers. SNA thanks the committee members for their service to the school nutrition profession. Their willingness to serve on the exam development committee is a testament to their dedication to their profession

SNS Program Development

The first step in developing an exam based on a professional development program is to complete a job analysis and identify the skills and knowledge required to complete the job. The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) developed a job analysis survey of school directors and supervisors in 1996. The job analysis survey was revised in 2009 and published by NFSMI under the title, *"Competencies, Knowledge and Skills for District-Level School Nutrition Specialist in the 21st Century".*

The purpose of the job analysis survey was to identify the job skills, knowledge, and competencies required by adistrict-level school nutrition professional to manage a school nutrition operation on a day-to-day basis. An expert panel of school nutrition professionals reviewed the results of the job analysis survey and identified the knowledge content areas for the SNS exam.

The SNS exam questions are written and reviewed by SNSs and subject matter experts to reflect the current practices in the school nutrition profession. Each year the questions are analyzed statistically to identify any flaws. Questions that are deemed flawed are reviewed by the Certification and Credentialing Governing Council. After the statistical analysis process is completed, questions that are unclear or unfair are modified or deleted from the pool. Once these issues are resolved, the exam is electronically scored.

Benefits of the SNS Credential

1. Provides formal recognition of professional achievement at a national level
2. Provides professional recognition from subordinates, peers and superiors
3. Increases ability to manage a complex foodservice operation
4. Demonstrates commitment to the school nutrition profession
5. Enhances career opportunities
6. Elevates self-esteem and pride in one's work
7. Improves credibility with school district administrators and the general public

Definition of a School Nutrition Specialist (SNS)

An SNS is a person who has successfully passed the School Nutrition Specialist exam, demonstrated the knowledge and competencies necessary to manage school nutrition programs and is dedicated to continuing their professional development.

APPLYING FOR THE SNS EXAM

Individuals interested in taking the SNS Credentialing Exam must meet the requirements of one of the options listed below:

	ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT	KEY AREA HOURS REQUIREMENT	WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT	DO I MEET THE REQUIREMENTS ?
OPTION I	✓ 60 College Credits or Associate's Degree	✓ An additional 30 College Credits in any of the four Key Areas: *Operation, Nutrition, Administration, Communications*/Marketing **(see table on page 5)** OR ✓ Work experience in coordinating, managing or supervising various aspects of child nutrition programs may be substituted for the 30 college credits. For example, 1 year of work experience equals 10 college credits. Therefore, 3 years of <u>additional</u> work experience may be used to substitute the additional 30 college credits listed above.	✓ One year work experience related to school nutrition within the past 5 years in any of the following settings: ❑ School Nutrition Program (District/State/Federal) ❑ Community Nutrition Program (Child Care/Head Start) ❑ College/University/Technical/Culinary Program (Staff/Faculty/Research) ❑ SNA State/National Association Staff ❑ State/Community Agency ❑ Trainer/Consultant/Industry Staff	
OPTION II	✓ Bachelor's Degree or Higher	✓ None	✓ One year work experience related to school nutrition within the past 5 years in any of the following settings: ❑ School Nutrition Program (District/State/Federal) ❑ Community Nutrition Program (Child Care/Head Start) ❑ College/University/Technical/Culinary Program (Staff/Faculty/Research) ❑ SNA State/National Association Staff ❑ State/Community Agency ❑ Trainer/Consultant/Industry Staff	

SNS Exam Application Fee

The SNS exam application fee is:

- $ 190.00 for SNA Members
- $ 285.00 for Non-Members

SNA accepts payments made by Check, Money Order, Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

<u>NOTE:</u> There is a $35.00 late fee for applications submitted or postmarked after the registration deadline.

SNA reserves the right to modify fees.

The exam application fee covers one exam sitting.

If the exam candidate is deemed ineligible to sit for the SNS Exam or cancels the exam registration, SNA will refund the exam fee minus a processing fee of $ 50.00.

Table - Examples of College Courses by Key Area

KEY AREA 1 - OPERATIONS		
Commodities	Food Preparation	Microbiology
CPR	Food Production	Operations
Culinary Techniques	Food Safety	Procurement
Emergency Response	Food Science	Purchasing
Equipment	HACCP	Quality Management
Facility Design	Hand Safety	Quantity Food Preparation
Fire Safety	Hazard	Safe Food Handling
Food Allergy	Hazardous Materials	Safety
Food and Beverage Control	Inventory	Sanitation
Food Biosecurity	Knife Safety	Special Diets
Food Defense	Menu Planning	

KEY AREA 2 - NUTRITION		
All Nutrition Courses	Family Nutrition	Human Nutrition
Child Nutrition	Feeding Children	Nutrition
Community Nutrition	Healthy Eating	Personal Health

KEY AREA 3 - ADMINISTRATION		
Accounting	Database Management	Payroll
Administration	Excel	Personnel Management
Adult Education/Teaching	Facilitation Skills	Professional Development
Adult Learning Principles	Finance	Record Keeping
Auditing	Foodservice Management	Regulations
Budget	Grant Writing	Sexual Harassment
Business Management	Human Relations	Stress Management
Cashiering	Human Resource	Supervising
Computer Information Systems	Interpersonal Skills	Time Management
Computer Programming	Leadership	Wellness
Computer Science	Legislature	Windows
Computer Software	Management	Word
Conflict Management	Negotiating/Resolution	Economics
Cost Management	Organizational Management	Ethics

KEY AREA 4 - COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING		
Advertising	Marketing	Public Relations
All Foreign Languages	Media Management	Public Speaking
Business Writing	Merchandising	Sign Language
Communications	Oral Communication	Social Media
Customer Service	Promotion	Speech
English Composition	Public Affairs	

Application Process

Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/sns to view the current listing of SNS Exams scheduled throughout the country. Select the exam date, complete and submit: 1) the SNS Exam Application Form on page 24 of this handbook; 2) a copy of your college transcript; and 3) appropriate payment to the address or fax number located on the exam application form.

- *Note that the application must be postmarked by the registration deadline posted online.* Once the application has been reviewed and accepted, SNA will send an exam confirmation notice via email. At least 2 weeks prior to the requested exam date, SNA will also send you an Admission Letter detailing the exam location and time.

- *If the application is incomplete,* SNA will send a notification email listing the missing documentation. If SNA does not receive the missing documentation at least 3 weeks prior to the requested exam date, the application will be returned and the applicant must submit in writing a request for a refund minus the exam processing fee. The application will be deemed incomplete if:
    - Information was incomplete or application is not signed
    - The appropriate exam fee or proper documentation was not included

- *If the application is denied,* SNA will send a letter stating the reason for denial along with the application form, and exam refund minus the processing fee. The application will be denied if:
    - Eligibility in the Academic, Work or Key Area Hour requirements are not documented
    - Information on the application is falsified

- All exam applications and results shall remain confidential. The exception to this is the publicized list of SNS professionals that is posted on the SNA website and the recognition letter requested by the SNS that is sent to the School District Director.

- SNA will mail the exam results to exam candidates at least 6-8 weeks after the initial exam date. Candidates who pass the exam will be mailed an SNS certificate and card. Candidates who fail the exam will be mailed a Diagnostic Report within the same time period.

Special Exam Accommodations

SNA complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act in accommodating candidates who require reasonable accommodations. SNA must be informed of exam needs or modifications in writing with supporting medical documentation at the time of application submission.

Eligibility Denial Appeal Process

Candidates who are denied eligibility to sit for the exam may appeal the decision to the SNA Appeals Committee (a sub-committee of the Certification and Credentialing Governing Council).

- The applicant making an appeal must submit the appeal in writing to the Appeals Committee within 30 days of receipt of the non-eligibility correspondence from SNA.
- The Appeals Committee will meet via web-conference within 30 days of receipt of the appeals letter.
- Notice of the Appeals Committee's final decision will be mailed or emailed to the applicant within 10 days of the decision.

PREPARING FOR THE SNS EXAM

Those who meet the exam eligibility requirements should expect to spend 3-4 months preparing for this comprehensive exam.

Assessment Tool:

Use the following questions as an assessment tool to prepare for the SNS Exam:

1. Do you have a good understanding of the SNS Exam Content/Knowledge Areas located on page 8?
2. Do you use the 9 content areas on the job regularly?
3. Do you have access to all of the materials listed on the Exam Resource List located on page 16?
4. If you have answered "No" to questions 1, 2 or 3, are you prepared to study all of the items listed on the required list of resources over a 3 – 4 month period?
5. Are you willing to organize and/or attend study groups extending over several weeks in order to prepare for the exam?

Exam Prep Tips:

Exam candidates may have been away from a test-taking environment for sometime, therefore, it is recommended that candidates:

- Begin preparing for the exam as soon as possible. Waiting until the last minute and cramming is discouraged.
- Review the content/knowledge areas that are understood and used on a daily basis.
- Plan in-depth study and preparation for those areas that are less familiar.
- Notice the percentage weight and number of questions per content/knowledge area. Those areas with a high percentage of questions are a significant portion of the exam, and therefore, require more time of study.
- Use of this handbook alone will not guarantee passing the SNS Credentialing Exam.
- Review the exam resource list. Thorough reading, study, and understanding is necessary to achieve a passing score on the exam. Study efforts should cover the resources listed.

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- Use the sample questions included in this handbook for practice. The sample questions in this handbook are NOT part of the SNS exam.
- Form a study group with other exam candidates in the area. Interacting with other exam candidates and discussing the content outline of the exam can be helpful.
- Contact an SNS professional at the local chapter or at the State Affiliate for mentoring.

SNS Exam Content/Knowledge Areas

The SNS Exam is based on the job competencies performed and knowledge needed by a School Nutrition Specialist. The following is a detailed guide to the Core Competencies/Content Areas and their Body of Knowledge that a professional must have in order to successfully pass the School Nutrition Specialist (SNS) Credentialing Exam. For each area, the percentage weight of questions on the exam is provided. This document should be used in preparation for exams administered on July 10, 2011 and after:

I: Facilities, Technology and Equipment Management *5% of exam*

(Approximately 10 questions from this content area will appear on the SNS exam)

A. Provides leadership in designing and planning facilities that support the operational goals of the school nutrition program.

1. Utilizes a team approach to develop a needs assessment and for planning new construction and/or renovation projects.
2. Seeks input from school nutrition staff for design enhancements to improve workflow and service systems.
3. Creates a profile describing the school nutrition program to guide the planning team in designing an effective and efficient operation.

B. Develops guidelines for selecting and maintaining equipment to accomplish the operational goals of the school nutrition program.

1. Ensures that equipment selected is appropriate for facility and operational needs to meet short and long-term goals of the school nutrition program.
2. Creates procedures for the proper care, preventive maintenance, and repair of equipment.
3. Seeks information from manufacturers' representatives and/or input from foodservice consultant (if applicable) to identify equipment best suited for facility and operational needs.
4. Evaluates school nutrition managers' requests and recommendations for new equipment.
5. Creates a strategic plan describing the short and long-term equipment needs at each school nutrition site.

C. Establishes an environmentally responsible school nutrition program.

1. Develops procedures and monitors implementation of initiatives that promote an environmentally responsible school nutrition program.
2. Provides leadership for developing school nutrition environmental management policies that are responsible and enforceable.
3. Utilizes technology and information systems to effectively manage the program.
4. Analyzes cost-effectiveness of initiatives that promote an environmentally responsible school nutrition program (e.g., energy conservation, recycling, waste disposal).

II: Financial Management *16% of exam*

(Approximately 32 questions from this content area will appear on the SNS exam)

A. Develops financial management guidelines that support school nutrition program operational goals and comply with regulations.

1. Establishes a pricing structure for meals and food items that follows federal, state, and local guidelines.
2. Prepares budgets that appropriately reflect financial goals.
3. Collaborates with appropriate district administrators to identify the desired school nutrition program financial outcomes.
4. Establishes and/or implements written procedures for collecting, reconciling, depositing, and disbursing funds.
5. Analyzes financial statements regularly to make informed financial decisions.
6. Reconciles projected annual budget with revenue and expenditure performance routinely and provides documentation to justify variances.
7. Evaluates financial performance of individual school nutrition sites and makes adjustments, as necessary.
8. Provides budget status to other district administrators, following local guidelines.
9. Establishes a system for archiving financial records following federal, state, and local regulations.
10. Uses financial management information system software to enhance financial reporting and accountability.
11. Shares financial information with school nutrition managers and develops strategies for addressing issues.
12. Monitors the appropriate use of external funding, when applicable.

B. Establishes cost control goals to effectively manage the school nutrition program.

1. Controls food cost by implementing standard procedures (e.g., appropriate product ingredients, standardized recipes, accurate portion sizes).
2. Controls labor cost by assessing meals served, labor hours, and school nutrition staff benefits.
3. Maximizes the use of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) foods to assist in controlling food cost.
4. Establishes benchmarks for food and labor cost percentages.
5. Identifies costs associated with maintaining a comprehensive technology infrastructure.

III: Food Production and Operation Management *15% of exam*

(Approximately 30 questions from this content area will appear on the SNS exam)

A. Develops a management system to ensure high standards for quality food production.

1. Establishes procedures to maintain required daily food production records at each school nutrition site.
2. Develops food production planning procedures including, but not limited to, forecasting, production schedules, standardized recipes, and portion control.
3. Develops guidelines for recipe modification to meet nutrition objectives and increase customer acceptability.
4. Trains managers in food production and forecasting procedures.

5. Selects the most effective food production system for school nutrition sites.
6. Develops food quality standards to assist school nutrition staff in evaluating menu items prior to service.
7. Maintains current training materials for use by school nutrition managers to train staff on food production techniques.
8. Coordinates training for school nutrition staff to enhance their culinary and/or catering skills.

B. Establishes operational systems for managing food production and service.

1. Develops contingency plans for use in the event of hardware and/or software failure, such as performing backup of information periodically.
2. Encourages school nutrition managers and staff to produce and serve meals in a customer-friendly environment.
3. Establishes and communicates quality customer service standards to the school nutrition staff.
4. Ensures a dining environment that promotes good nutrition and healthy eating behaviors.
5. Demonstrates ability to utilize customer feedback in improving production and service.
6. Establishes an effective food distribution system for all school nutrition sites.
7. Develops safe and efficient work methods to maximize staff productivity.
8. Develops guidelines for work schedules that effectively and efficiently meet operational goals.
9. Develops procedures for measuring and evaluating delivery systems, appearance and efficiency of serving area, and serving techniques.

IV: Food Security, Sanitation, and Safety *14.5% of exam*

(Approximately 29 questions from this content area will appear on the SNS exam)

A. Establishes policies and procedures to ensure food is prepared and served in a sanitary and safe environment.

1. Develops and monitors a HACCP-based food safety and sanitation program that meets federal, state, and local regulations.
2. Ensures that all food safety inspection deficiencies are addressed competently and in a timely manner.
3. Develops a sanitation training program for school nutrition staff.
4. Develops emergency procedures and practices for food recalls and foodborne illnesses.
5. Establishes communication procedures within the school district regarding food safety issues.
6. Conducts routine food safety and sanitation inspections at each school nutrition site and develops corrective action plans, as needed.
7. Develops procedures and trains school nutrition staff on proper use, cleaning, and sanitizing of foodservice equipment.
8. Develops safe, effective methods for prevention and control of insects, rodents, and other pest infestations.

B. Provides leadership in creating a safe work environment for school nutrition operations.

1. Encourages school nutrition staff participation in creating a safe work environment.

2. Ensures that the Material Safety Data Sheets for chemical products are up-to-date and accessible to school nutrition staff.
3. Establishes policies for posting workplace safety information.
4. Ensures school nutrition staff training on the proper use of fire extinguishers.
5. Ensures compliance with health and safety regulations established by federal (OSHA), state, and local agencies.
6. Documents safety training following district guidelines.
7. Develops safety requirements and standards for selection and use of chemicals, hazardous materials, and equipment.
8. Develops training procedures and safety guidelines for workplace injury prevention and injury response reporting.
9. Initiates and/or maintains a needs-based safety training program.

C. Develops a systematic approach to address emergency and disaster situations.

1. Establishes and communicates a basic plan for dealing with an emergency/disaster situation to school nutrition staff and appropriate school/district staff.
2. Establishes a school nutrition crisis management team to develop a plan outlining the functions of school nutrition staff in the event of a crisis.
3. Determines the food and supply items to be available for use at each school nutrition site in case of an emergency.
4. Ensures first aid training programs are provided to school nutrition staff.
5. Develops an emergency feeding plan and trains school nutrition staff on appropriate implementation.
6. Develops a plan for communicating with appropriate federal, state, and/or local officials concerning the use of USDA foods for disaster relief.
7. Develops a plan to secure food, equipment, and supplies from outside organizations in case of emergencies.
8. Verifies with district administration that the school nutrition program emergency/disaster plan is aligned with the district plan.
9. Communicates with appropriate state and/or federal officials concerning the use of USDA foods for disaster relief.

V: Human Resource Management *10% of exam*

(Approximately 20 questions from this content area will appear on the SNS exam)

A. Establishes a human resource infrastructure for the school nutrition program that complies with school district policies as well as federal, state, and local regulations.

1. Interprets and communicates human resource management policies and procedures to school nutrition managers and provides guidance, as needed.
2. Interprets and disseminates the school district's human resource policies and procedures to school nutrition staff.
3. Maintains accurate school nutrition staff records and other pertinent human resource documentation.

4. Reviews and recommends wages, salaries, and fringe benefits that are equitable and competitive.
5. Verifies that human resource decisions follow due process established by the school district.
6. Monitors and tracks incidence of on-the-job injuries and related liabilities.
7. Develops and maintains a school nutrition staff handbook with current organizational chart and information on school nutrition program and district regulations, policies, and procedures.

B. Develops and implements a process for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting qualified school nutrition staff in compliance with the school district's written procedures and labor laws.

1. Develops a staffing plan based on school nutrition delivery systems, student participation, facilities, and services provided.
2. Develops job descriptions and job specifications.
3. Determines minimum skills and characteristics required for an effective school nutrition staff member.
4. Utilizes interviewing techniques and hiring procedures that comply with federal, state, and local guidelines.
5. Designs an effective orientation program that introduces new school nutrition staff to the school nutrition program mission, requirements, and goals.
6. Establishes a process for conducting performance appraisals that follow district timetables and guidelines.
7. Utilizes competency-based performance appraisals to identify school nutrition managers' areas of strength and develop plans for improvement to address weaknesses.
8. Trains school nutrition managers to effectively conduct competency-based performance appraisals of school nutrition staff.
9. Applies conflict resolution, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques when dealing with school nutrition staff issues.
10. Develops and implements a procedure for school nutrition staff to provide feedback for improving productivity and morale.
11. Develops contingency staffing plans to operate effectively when positions are vacant.
12. Develops and implements a school nutrition staff recognition program, as appropriate.
13. Provides school nutrition staff information regarding professional organizations and opportunities for personal and professional development.

C. Designs a comprehensive needs-based training infrastructure that enhances learning and improves job skills.

1. Ensures that school nutrition staffs have access to training opportunities for acquiring certification, as appropriate.
2. Seeks resources for technical information and educational materials appropriate for school nutrition staff training.

VI: Marketing and Communication *7% of exam*

(Approximately 14 questions from this content area will appear on the SNS exam)

A. Develops a systematic approach for marketing the school nutrition program.

1. Leads the development of a marketing plan that integrates marketing objectives, strategies, implementation, and evaluation.
2. Aligns the school nutrition marketing plan with district marketing initiatives.
3. Designs and implements an effective public relations program to maintain a positive image for the school nutrition program.
4. Responds appropriately to school nutrition program publicity generated by the media.
5. Networks with school nutrition professionals to share best practices in marketing.
6. Evaluates the school nutrition marketing plan and promotional campaigns periodically and modifies ineffective initiatives.
7. Evaluates the feasibility of providing additional services to increase participation and meet nutrient needs of children (e.g., breakfast options, grab and go meals, vended reimbursable meals).

B. Develops a customer service infrastructure to promote the school nutrition program.

1. Trains school nutrition managers and staff to enhance customer service systems.
2. Develops procedures to maintain the aesthetic qualities of menu items and service area throughout the meal period.
3. Empowers school nutrition managers to address and resolve customer service issues.
4. Develops procedures for collecting, analyzing, and addressing customer feedback.

C. Establishes a communication infrastructure with stakeholders to promote the school nutrition program.

1. Communicates the relationship between nutrition adequacy and educational performance of children, using research findings when applicable.
2. Coordinates the use of multiple approaches for informing stakeholders of menu, nutrition information, policy changes, and other services available (e.g., web site, social media, newsletter, printed menus).
3. Encourages school nutrition staff to support and participate in school district nutrition/wellness initiatives.
4. Represents the school nutrition program publicly and gives presentations on school nutrition initiatives, program best practices, challenges, and innovations, as requested.
5. Coordinates with the school district public relations liaison or spokesperson to prepare program information and press releases for stakeholders and media.
6. Encourages school nutrition managers to integrate themselves into the school community.

VII: Menu and Nutrition Management *17% of exam*

(Approximately 34 questions from this content area will appear on the SNS exam)

A. Develops guidelines for planning menus that comply with nutrition objectives and support operational goals of the school nutrition program.

1. Plans nutritionally sound menus that comply with federal, state, and local regulations.

2. Develops and implements a menu system to maximize use of USDA foods.
3. Develops an effective system for menu planning that includes, but is not limited to, costing, forecasting, nutrient analysis, variety, and customer preferences.
4. Collaborates with school staff, parents, physicians, and other health professionals to meet the special food and/or nutrition needs of children, as mandated.
5. Ensures all menu items served are consistent with nutrition objectives and contribute to the development of healthy eating habits.
6. Develops procedures for collecting customer feedback that may include, but is not limited to, surveys, taste panels, and menu committees.
7. Plans menus to incorporate cultural preferences and introduce students to a variety of foods.

B. Provides leadership to support the nutrition and wellness initiatives within the school district.

1. Promotes healthy eating habits and provides guidelines for selecting healthful meals and snacks through nutrition education and appropriate marketing in the school cafeteria.
2. Utilizes appropriate nutrition education and promotional materials to encourage healthy eating behaviors.
3. Supports nutrition education programs for students, school nutrition staff, administrators, teachers, and other school district staff.
4. Promotes activities to increase wellness and nutrition awareness among students, administrators, teachers, and other school district staff.
5. Forms partnerships with parents, students, and the education community to support an integrated approach to nutrition education.
6. Evaluates the effectiveness of nutrition education programs initiated by the school nutrition program.

VIII: Procurement and Inventory Management *5.5% of exam*

(Approximately 11 questions from this content area will appear on the SNS exam)

A. Develops procurement guidelines that comply with established regulations and support operational goals of the school nutrition program.

1. Develops and monitors procurement procedures for school nutrition sites to order, receive, and store products.
2. Evaluates current purchasing practices to determine effectiveness and compliance.
3. Develops appropriate bid documents that include product specifications, usages, and special instructions/conditions following federal, state, and local regulations.
4. Evaluates bids/quotes and makes purchase recommendations following federal, state, and local regulations.
5. Analyzes technical support, training availability, maintenance service availability, and cost of upgrades when considering new purchases.
6. Utilizes appropriate resources to gather information on potential purchases.
7. Evaluates purchasing methods (e.g., bid buying, prime vendors, group purchasing) and selects most appropriate method for the school nutrition program.

8. Develops product specifications that ensure broad customer acceptability and nutrition integrity utilizing pre-bid conferences, product testing/screening, and product comparison.
9. Monitors current market conditions that influence procurement decisions (e.g., price, supply, demand).
10. Updates product knowledge by communicating with industry and other foodservice professionals.

B. Establishes operational procedures to effectively manage receiving and inventory systems.

1. Develops delivery requirements that address product quality indicators (e.g., temperature upon delivery and receipt, packaging), time, and quantity.
2. Develops and communicates receiving procedures to ensure that products received match delivery requirements.
3. Develops and communicates procedures for returning and crediting unacceptable merchandise and ensuring that only authorized substitutions are accepted.
4. Develops procedures for inventory control that address the delivery date, storage, and turnover rate of food products and supplies.
5. Develops inventory procedures to keep operating costs at a realistic minimum.
6. Develops and updates systems for tracking inventory.
7. Creates an effective food and supply distribution system to all school nutrition sites, when appropriate.

IX: Program Management and Accountability *10% of exam*

(Approximately 20 questions from this content area will appear on the SNS exam)

A. Establishes a system to ensure nutritional, financial, and regulatory accountability of the school nutrition program.

1. Ensures all applications for meal benefits are correctly approved and verified according to USDA regulations.
2. Ensures the counting and claiming system used in the school nutrition program is reliable and provides accurate data in a timely manner.
3. Develops and implements procedures to maintain accurate and appropriate records that comply with federal, state, and local regulations (e.g., CRE, SMI).
4. Establishes an effective system for preparing and submitting reports according to federal, state, and local regulations.
5. Performs internal reviews/audits on all aspects of the program to identify and control problem areas, including site monitoring, civil rights compliance.
6. Complies with federal, state, and local regulations concerning the sale of competitive food items.
7. Develops policies and procedures to accommodate children with special food and/or nutrition needs.
8. Develops guidelines for implementing the components of the local wellness policy that are pertinent to the school nutrition program.

B. Provides leadership to position the school nutrition program as an integral component of the school district.

1. Conducts regular meetings with school nutrition managers to evaluate program performance, facilitate problem solving, and encourage information sharing.
2. Follows the district reporting structure when creating and/or implementing policies and procedures.
3. Interprets district policies and procedures for school nutrition staff.
4. Seeks district administration input on continuous quality improvement activities for the school nutrition program, as appropriate.

Exam Resource List

The following resource list is intended to be a guide for exam candidates. The list was compiled to reflect the resources used in developing the Content/Knowledge Areas and is useful in preparing to take the SNS exam.

- Association of School Business Officials International. ***The School Foodservice Handbook: A Guide for School Administrators.*** Reston, VA: Author, 2003. *All Areas (I through IX)

- Blocker, L. and Hill, J. ***Culinary Math, 3rd Edition.*** Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007.
  *VII. Menu & Nutrition Management

- Duyff, R. ***American Dietetic Association's Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, 3rd Edition.*** Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006. *VII. Menu & Nutrition Management

- Gregoire, M. ***Foodservice Organizations: A Managerial and Systems Approach, 7th Edition.*** Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 2010.
  *I. Facilities, Technology & Equipment Management – III. Food Production & Operation Management

- Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. ***School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children.*** Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2010. *VII. Menu & Nutrition Management

- Keiser, J. et al. ***Analyzing and Controlling Foodservice Costs: A Managerial and Technological Approach, 5th Edition.*** Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 2008.
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Sample Questions

The following are sample questions that are intended to illustrate the types of questions on the SNS exam. The answer key is located on page 23.

1. **Which of the following types of fat should make up less than 10% of total daily calories?**

   A. Saturated
   B. Polyunsaturated
   C. Hydrogenated
   D. Monounsaturated

2. **A food item contains 10 grams of fat and 364 calories. How many calories are from fat?**

   A. 9.1
   B. 36.4

C. 40
D. 90

3. **A foodservice director is changing meal patterns from traditional to enhanced food based. Weekly servings of which of the following food item(s) must be increased?**

   A. Meat
   B. Milk
   C. Bread
   D. Dessert

4. **A standardized recipe serves 100, but the forecasted need is 475 servings. Which of the following conversion factors should be used when preparing the recipe?**

   A. 0.21
   B. 4.75
   C. 21
   D. 47.5

5. **Which of the following cooking methods is best for retaining nutrients when fresh vegetables are prepared in large quantities?**

   A. Stir fry
   B. Microwave
   C. Boil
   D. Steam

6. **A high school with 1,200 students has two 40-minute lunch periods. There are no students standing in line after the first 8 minutes of each meal period, and meal counts are 125 in the first meal period and 175 in the second. Labor costs are very high and the program is losing money. The foodservice manager should:**

   A. Reduce costs by reducing staff
   B. Recommend that the school have only one lunch period
   C. Develop a marketing plan to bring more students in the cafeteria
   D. Investigate serving items from a local fast food restaurant

7. **Which of the following food items is most susceptible to bacteria growth?**

   A. Dried fruit
   B. Fresh fruit
   C. Uncooked vegetables
   D. Baked potatoes

8. **A full, covered, 6-inch steam table pan of chili is placed in the cooler at 2:00 pm. At 8:00 am the next day, the temperature of the chili is 45°F. The best next step is to:**

   A. Quickly reheat the chili to 165°F
   B. Cool the chili in an ice water bath to 40°F
   C. Freeze the chili
   D. Discard the chili

9. What is the recommended maximum storage time for canned items?

A. 2 months
B. 6 months
C. 12 months
D. 18 months

10. A cafeteria produces 25,126 meal equivalents per month and has a productivity standard equal to 16 meals per labor hour. How many labor hours should be scheduled per month?

A. 220
B. 1570
C. 2094
D. 6700

11. Food cost increases at one school during the school year with no obvious cause. Which of the following audit procedures is appropriate for determining the cause of the increase?

A. Calculate meals served per hour worked
B. Count the number of students of the free/reduced list who participated
C. Compare food purchased and delivered against what is used and recorded
D. Convert a la carte sales to meal equivalents

12. Which formula is used to determine the sales volume necessary to break even?

A. Fixed cost ÷ (100% - Variable Cost%)
B. Revenue - Expenses
C. Fixed costs + Variable Costs
D. Expenses ÷ Revenues

13. If required information is missing from an application for meal benefits, the most appropriate way to obtain the information is to:

A. Request that the household complete another form
B. Ask the school administration to provide it
C. Refer to the application from the previous year
D. Contact the household by telephone or in writing

14. Which of the following measures is best for evaluating the productivity of foodservice operation?

A. Labor hours per employee
B. Cost per meal
C. Meals per labor hour
D. Average wage per employee

TAKING THE SNS EXAM

Upon receipt of the Admission Letter confirming eligibility to sit for the exam, secure directions and parking information for the exam site. The SNS exam will be proctored by current SNS professionals. In order to enter the exam room, a photo ID and admission letter are required to be shown. Irregularities observed by the proctor during the test may result in the removal from the exam room or invalidate the exam score. The Certification and Credentialing Governing Council reserves the right to investigate incidents of misconduct or exam irregularities.

On Exam Day

- Arrive at the exam site no less than 30 minutes prior to the exam start time.
- In order to be admitted into the exam, bring the following:
  - Exam Admission Letter.
  - Current photo ID (i.e., driver's license or passport)
  - Handheld/pocket calculator. Cell phone may not be used as calculator.
  - Two sharpened # 2 pencils with erasers.
- Adhere to the following:
  - Books, study materials, scratch paper, translation aids <u>are not permitted</u> in the exam room.
  - Electronic devices and cell phones <u>must be turned off</u>.
- Always dress comfortably and bring a jacket. Some exams do take place in large convention centers and the temperature may be cool.
- Get a good night's rest and arrive with a good attitude.

Emergency or Inclement Weather

In the event of an emergency or inclement weather on the day of the exam, the proctors at the exam site location will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling of the exam. The proctors will also notify the exam candidates regarding the cancellation and/or new exam date.

Exam Results

- SNS exam results will be mailed approximately 6-8 weeks following the exam administration date.
- Exam results cannot be given by phone, email or fax.
- Those who pass the exam will be mailed a notification letter, SNS certificate and card, but not the actual exam score.
- Those failing to pass the exam will be mailed a Diagnostic Report with the exam score, the minimum score required for passing and their performance on each of the nine content areas. Those who fail the exam are encouraged to review the report and develop a study plan to improve knowledge in the areas of weakness identified. Candidates who fail the exam should understand that further study and preparation is necessary before retaking and ultimately passing the exam.

Hand Scoring Requests

Candidates who fail the SNS exam may request their exam answer sheet be scored by hand. Requests must be submitted in writing within 30 days of receiving results.

Written requests for hand scoring along with payment of $ 60.00, made payable to SNA should be sent to:

SNA c/o SNS Credential
120 Waterfront Street, Suite 300
National Harbor, MD 20745

Retaking the SNS Exam

Unsuccessful exam candidates may retake the exam at the next scheduled exam date, subject to the following conditions:

- Re-apply for the exam (submit the application form and payment only – there's a late fee for applications submitted after the registration deadline)
- Exam may be taken up to three times (initial test plus two retakes) without having to present evidence of additional college course work
- Following a third failure, candidate may only register for the exam by presenting documentation of additional coursework (credit or certificate college course) in the content area of deficiency as shown by the Diagnostic Report.

Use of the SNS Credential

- Individuals who successfully pass the exam may use the title "School Nutrition Specialist" and the abbreviated designation "SNS" in official correspondence and in all forms of address.
- The title and designation may be printed on letterhead and business cards.
- Use of the title "School Nutrition Specialist" or the designation "SNS" by persons who have not passed the SNS exam is prohibited.

MAINTAINING THE SNS CREDENTIAL

The SNS credential is valid for three years and is renewable for additional three-year periods.

- There is an annual maintenance fee that is assessed to maintain the SNS credential. The renewal notices are mailed 3 months prior to the expiration date. To renew, SNS professionals must complete the renewal form, pay the renewal fee. If audited, it will be necessary to submit documentation of 45 CEUs during the 3-year credentialing period.
- SNS professionals are responsible for maintaining their own CEU records.
  - CEUs are earned for participating in job related activities such as state and national conferences, workshops, online courses, webinars, *School Nutrition* magazine Professional Development Articles (PDAs) or in-service trainings that provide ongoing professional development. Note that exhibits, tours, food shows and tradeshows qualify for 1 CEU only.
  - The following is a list of acceptable forms of documentation:
    - Certificates of Completion
    - Copies of Rosters
    - College/University Transcripts
    - Program Books/Brochures
    - Registration Confirmation Letters
    - Program Agendas
    - Badges
    - Payment Receipts
    - *MySNA* Transcript

Earn CEUs online via SNA's Online Learning Center. For more information visit, www.schoolnutrition.org/learningcenter

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ANSWER KEY

The content area is listed along with the answers. Please refer to the SNS Exam Content/Knowledge Areas on page 8.

1. **A. Saturated.** Content Area VII
2. **D. 90.** Content Area VII
3. **C. Bread.** Content Area VII
4. **B. 4.75.** Content Area III
5. **D. Steam.** Content Area III
6. **C. Develop a marketing plan to bring more students into the cafeteria.** Content Area VI
7. **D. Baked potatoes.** Content Area IV
8. **D. Discard the chili.** Content Area IV
9. **C. 12 months.** Content Area I
10. **B. 1570.** Content Area V
11. **C. Compare food purchased and delivered against what was used and recorded.** Content Area II
12. **A. Fixed cost ÷ (100% - Variable Cost%).** Content Area II
13. **D. Contact the household by telephone or in writing.** Content Area II
14. **C. Meals per labor hour.** Content Area II

Code: MBNSNS

SCHOOL NUTRITION SPECIALIST (SNS) CREDENTIALING EXAM APPLICATION

For SNS exams administered July 10, 2011 and after

(Print or type all information)

Part I - APPLICANT INFORMATION - Preferred Mailing Address: ❑ Home ❑ Work

Check here ❑ if membership application has been submitted, but no membership number has been provided

SNA Membership Number: _____ Sex: ❑ Male ❑ Female

First Name _____ Initial _____ Last Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____

Exam Date _____ Exam Location _____

**Part II - ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT - ***Submit college transcript

Check all that apply:

❑ 60 College Credits
❑ Bachelor's Degree
❑ Doctorate Degree
❑ Associate's Degree
❑ Master's Degree
Major/Area: _____

***NOTE:* <u>If your college transcript lists less than 90 earned college credits,</u> please review the table on page 4 "Option I - Key Area Requirements"**

Part III – EXAM FEE PAYMENT ❑ $ 190.00 SNA Member ❑ $ 285.00 Non-Member

NOTE: Add an additional $35.00 (late fee) for applications submitted or postmarked after the registration deadline

If paying by check: mail the application, documentation and payment to:

SNA c/o SNS Credential
120 Waterfront Street, Suite 300
National Harbor, MD 20745

❑ Check ❑ Money Order

If paying by credit card: fax your application, documentation and payment to: **(301) 686-3115**

❑ Visa ❑ MasterCard ❑ American Express ❑ Discover

Card Holder's Name _____

Credit Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

Code: MBNSNS

Part IV - WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT – Minimum of 1 year work experience within the past 5 years

Total Years of Experience in the field: ❑ 1-5 years ❑ 6-10 years ❑ 10-15 years ❑ 16+ years

1. Current Employer _____

Title _____ From: ____/____/____ To: ____/____/____

Setting:

❑ School Nutrition Program (District/State/Federal)
❑ Community Nutrition Program (Child Care/Head Start)
❑ College/University/Technical/Culinary Program (Staff/Faculty/Research)
❑ SNA State/National Association Staff
❑ State/Community Agency
❑ Trainer/Consultant/Industry Staff
❑ Other _____

2. Previous Employer _____

Title _____ From: ____/____/____ To: ____/____/____

Setting:

❑ School Nutrition Program (District/State/Federal)
❑ Community Nutrition Program (Child Care/Head Start)
❑ College/University/Technical/Culinary Program (Staff/Faculty/Research)
❑ SNA State/National Association Staff
❑ State/Community Agency
❑ Trainer/Consultant/Industry Staff
❑ Other _____

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING: I have read and understand the information provided in the SNS Exam Handbook. I declare that all the information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that SNA reserves the right to verify any or all information on this application or in connection with my credential. Therefore, I understand and agree that my failure to provide information that is true, respond to authorized SNA requests for additional information or abide by SNA policies and procedures shall constitute grounds for rejection of my application or denial or revocation of my credential.

(APPLICATION MUST BE SIGNED AND DATED)

Signature _____ Date _____

SNS EXAM APPLICATION CHECKLIST

❑ **Part I** – Completed Applicant Information
❑ **Part II** – Completed Academic Requirement and Submit College Transcript
❑ **Part III** – Exam Fee Payment *(Include late fee if submitted or postmarked after the exam registration deadline posted on the website)*
❑ **Part IV** – Completed Work Experience Requirement

MAKE A PHOTOCOPY OF YOUR APPLICATION FOR YOUR RECORDS. Please call the SNA Service Center at (800) 877-8822 with any questions.
SAVE MONEY! Become a member of SNA when you apply to sit for the SNS Exam. For a membership application, call SNA's Service Center.