

S

The Official Pub

NUTRITION

KIDS

*Marketing Strategies to Engage
Them (and Their Parents)*

Building and
Boosting Your
Brand

Gen Z Is
Growing Up

#ANC23: It's
Within Your
Reach

Let be your recipe for success!

Let's design a mobile serving station that improves your workflow!

We'll tailor the design to fit your unique operation. Customize with options like drop down shelves, slanted top shelf, graphic wraps, and more. Scan the QR code now and talk with an FWE representative to start your design.



SNE FOUNDATION FRIEND
JOIN US AT BOOTH #1115

ANC 2023
ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE



**SCAN FOR GRANT DETAILS +
MORE SCHOOL SOLUTIONS**

FOOD WARMING EQUIPMENT CO, INC. | IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, WE CAN BUILD IT
COOK | HOLD | TRANSPORT | SERVE | REFRIGERATION | BARS

ELEVATE YOUR MENUS

With **New** Zee Zees Snacks



Sour Raisins
1/2 cup FRT



Dried Pineapple
1/2 cup FRT



Trail Mix
1 M/MA & 1/2 cup FRT



Roasted Chickpeas
1 M/MA or 1/4 cup VEG (legume)





FEATURES

- 18** **Identify Your Next Marketing Move**
Attracting and retaining loyal cafeteria customers is a year-round project. Preview four #ANC23 sessions featuring best practice ideas and tips.

- 28** **What's Your Why?**
By Kelsey Casselbury
Answer this question—and a few others—and begin a journey to develop, strengthen or refresh your school meal program's brand.

- 32** **Fear Not the Trolls!**
By Liz Whiteman Roesel
See social media through a new lens, and put it to work for your school meals program.

- 38** **Let's TOK About School Nutrition**
By Dylan Roche
Learn why and how to tap into TikTok for next-level social media marketing.



- 42** **2023-24 NSLW/NSBW Sneak Peek**
Start planning now for next year's national celebrations of school lunch and breakfast.

FOOD FOCUS

- 70** **Fresh Takes on Favorite Bakes**
By Patricia L. Fitzgerald
Let comfort classics and contemporary creations earn a place on your menu.

61 ONSITE INSIGHTS

Focus on » Gen Z Grows Up

A special section for school nutrition managers, assistant managers and employees.

#ANC23



- 44** **Meet You at the Top!**
School nutrition professionals prepare to gather in Denver to "Reach Higher" at #ANC23, connecting, learning and growing toward new heights—together.
- 52** **Product Solutions at Their Peak**
Visit the ANC Exhibit Hall for unparalleled access to the largest K-12 foodservice marketplace in the country.

DEPARTMENTS

- 4** First Word
6 President's Perspective
8 Partner for Progress
10 What's Cooking
16 What's Cooking @ SNA
67 Things We Love
80 2023 SNA Patrons
81 This & That
82 Ad Index
83 Last Word
84 Promo Planner

JOIN SN ONLINE

- ▶ We've got even more details, resources and best practice ideas to share with you online. Check out this month's Bonus Web Content at: SchoolNutrition.org/bonuswebcontent

- 🔍 Read this issue online, share articles, link directly to web resources, search by keyword and much more by accessing our digital edition at: SchoolNutrition.org/snmagazine

- ✉ Tell us what you think, ask questions or suggest ideas! Drop us a line at: snmagazine@schoolnutrition.org

- 📘 Like SN's Facebook page at: www.Facebook.com/SchoolNutritionMagazine

GOOD TO-GO



Tasty, **NEW** choices
from students'
favorite brands!

**FREEZABLE
FOR A FUN
SUMMER
SNACK!**

**NEW Yoplait®
Simply Go-Gurt®
Mixed Berry**

**NEW Peach Cheerios™,
Cinnamon Toast Crunch™,
Lucky Charms™ 2 oz.
Equivalent Grain Cereal Bars**

**NEW Trix™ Cereal 25% Less
Sugar Single Serve K-12 2 oz.
Equivalent Grain Cereal Cups**

Scan here for more **details,**
inspiration and other ways you
can **help make students' days.**



The Official Publication of the
School Nutrition Association

Publication Staff

Publisher

Patricia Montague, FASAE, CAE

Editor

Patricia L. Fitzgerald

Production & Advertising

Specialist

Heidi Funkhouser

Content Coordinator

Mari Brand

Contributing Editors

Dylan Roche

Christina Uticone

Creative Director

Cher Williams

CW Design Solutions, Inc.

Editorial Office

2900 S. Quincy St., Suite 700

Arlington, VA 22206

703.824.3000

800.877.8822

snmagazine@schoolnutrition.org

www.schoolnutrition.org

Advertising

MCI USA

Dan Kaste

dan.kaste@wearemc.com

(410) 584-1993

Cover: www.gettyimages.com

All photography/illustrations courtesy of
www.gettyimages.com unless otherwise noted.

SCHOOL NUTRITION (ISSN 1075-3885) is published six times a year by the School Nutrition Association (SNA), 2900 S. Quincy St., Suite 700, Arlington, VA 22206. The appearance of editorial matter and advertisements does not imply SNA endorsement of ideas expressed or products offered for sale. Periodicals postage is paid at Arlington, Va., and additional mailing offices. Subscription price: \$100 per year for nonmembers (with addresses in North America) and \$2 per year from qualifying member's dues. All material in this magazine is copyrighted by SNA and may not be reproduced without written permission. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to School Nutrition, SNA Member Services, 2900 S. Quincy St., Suite 700, Arlington, VA 22206.



First Word

Patricia Montague, FASAE, CAE | SNA Chief Executive Officer



Tap into a Variety of Marketing Tactics

UPON LEARNING THAT THIS ISSUE'S MAIN FEATURES FOCUS ON MARKETING, I RECALLED MY FIRST COLLEGE MARKETING COURSE. I only recently parted with the associated textbook during a pandemic deep clean, and before donating, I leafed through the book to see if it was still relevant today. While many marketing fundamentals continue to apply, much has changed thanks to rapid advancements in technology and ever-changing consumer behaviors.

There are several distinct areas of marketing strategy that any business—including school meal programs—should be implementing. Some are newer concepts, while others have endured for generations.

Digital Marketing. The internet and social media together have irrevocably changed how we reach target audiences with key messages.

Data-Driven Marketing. Technology has increased our access to data. We can tap into numbers, often in real time, and use them to make what, where and when decisions for marketing strategies. Think, for example, about your best-selling products, the days of the week with the highest cafeteria participation and so on. Analyze this data and make it *work* for you.

Customer-Centric Marketing. The customer has always been “king,” but you have more tools today to identify and meet their wants and needs, allowing you to build relationships with students and families that start in kindergarten and last until graduation.

Branding. Building and maintaining a strong brand identity remains crucial. Branding connects customers to trusted, high-quality products and programs.

Word-of-Mouth Marketing. Positive recommendations from students and parents remains one of the most effective ways to grow your program. Identify ambassadors who will help you spread the word.

Innovation. Kids are exposed to thousands of messages every day. Creative innovation is how you cut through the noise and stand out. Spotlight what makes you different!

Speaking of what makes us different—for SNA, one thing is the quality of the Association’s volunteer leadership. As we prepare for the installation of the 2023-24 Board of Directors in July, I want to take the opportunity to thank current SNA President Lori Adkins for her extraordinary dedication and work across many years as a national leader.

With thanks also to the generosity of her district, Lori has been able to participate in countless media interviews, travel to numerous state affiliate and allied partner meetings, lead committees and taskforces and fly to D.C. (with little notice) for critical advocacy meetings. She’s served on the SNA Board in different roles, culminating in this last year as your president. She is a dynamic public speaker who always lights up a room with her warm and welcoming style. Thank you, Lori, for all you do to further SNA’s mission and vision. **SN**



Build relationships with students and families that start in kindergarten and last until graduation.





Looking for ways to *shake some sodium* out of your menus?

J.T.M.'s NEW Reduced-Sodium Cheese Sauces and Mac & Cheese products make it simple to serve up student favorites like nachos and pasta bowls without sacrificing quality or taste. Crafted with all the things you love like real cheddar cheese and whole-grain rich pasta, and without the things you don't, like phosphates and artificial flavors.



Cheese
Sauces have
approximately
50% less sodium
than the original
products.

CHEESE SAUCES:

- 5734 Premium R.S. Cheddar Cheese Sauce
- 5738 Premium R.S. Golden Hatch Queso
- 5741 Premium R.S. Alfredo Sauce
- 5742 Premium R.S. Queso Blanco
- 5744 Premium R.S. Jalapeño Cheese Sauce
- 5745 Premium R.S. Three Cheese Sauce

WGR MAC & CHEESE:

- 5776 Premium R.S. Mac & Cheese (elbow)
- 5749 Premium R.S. Mac & Cheese (stick)
- 5743 Premium R.S. Three Cheese Cavatappi



Mac &
Cheese products
have approximately
25% less sodium
than the original
products.

2023 ANC PREVIEW

Stop by booth 1555 to see how easy it is to shake the sodium out of your menus with our NEW Reduced Sodium Cheese products. Get inspired and **sample recipes** from our 2nd annual Crave recipe competition, and find out who the grand prize winner is at **12:30 on Tuesday!** We hope to see you there.



To request samples, please contact your J.T.M. Regional or Broker Rep.



LET'S CREATE GREAT DISHES TOGETHER.®

800.626.2308 | jtmfoodgroup.com



Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.®

2022-23 Board Of Directors

PRESIDENT

Lori Adkins, MS, CHE, SNS
Oakland Schools, Waterford, Mich.

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Chris Derico, SNS
Harrison County Schools, Clarksburg, W.Va.

VICE PRESIDENT

Shannon Gleave, RDN, SNS
Glendale Elementary School District
Glendale, Ariz.

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Warren DeShields
Bridgeton Public Schools, Bridgeton, N.J.

» Directors »

Lindsay Aguilar, RD, SNS

Tucson Unified School District, Tucson, Ariz.

Erin Bronner, RD, SNS

Creighton School District
Phoenix, Ariz.

Chris Burkhardt, SNS

Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio

Michael Gasper, SNS

School District of Holmen, Holmen, Wis.

Lynelle Johnson, RD, SNS

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
Bismarck, N.D.

Cindy Jones

Olathe Public Schools USD 233, Olathe, Kan.

Anne Leavens, SNS

Central Point School District #6,
Central Point, Ore.

Ashley Powell, PhD, RD, SNS

Auburn City Schools, Auburn, Ala.

Jill Riggs

Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation
Mishawaka, Ind.

» Representatives »

SCHOOL NUTRITION EMPLOYEE/ MANAGER REPRESENTATIVE

Heather Perry, SNS
Union County Public Schools, Monroe, N.C.

INDUSTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Nicole Nicoloff
Classic Delights, LLC
Ex-Officio

SCHOOL NUTRITION FOUNDATION BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

JoAnne Robinett, MS, SNS
SNF Board Chair
Ex-Officio

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Patricia Montague, FSAE, CAE
Ex-Officio



President's Perspective

Lori Adkins, MS, CHE, SNS | SNA President



A Year in the Life: Dreams Come True

I CANNOT BELIEVE SY2022-23 IS BEGINNING TO WRAP UP! It seems like just yesterday that I was sharing my leadership journey with attendees at SNA's 2022 National Leadership Conference and working with a photographer to capture images at last May's Oakland County (Mich.) Food Service Directors Meeting and during lunch at Waterford School District's Riverside Elementary to accompany the profile article in SN's 2022 August/September issue. SNA Past Presidents warned me that the year would go by in a blur—and they were right! But many memories do come into focus; here are just a few:

Last September, SNA CEO Patti Montague and I attended the White House Conference on Hunger, Health & Nutrition, where a national strategy aimed at ending hunger and reducing diet-related diseases by 2030 was unveiled by President Biden and Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack. When free school meals for all were discussed, the energy in the room was electric! Even though they are still a “moon-shot” at the federal level, dialogue has been amplified as more states implement laws to provide these meals to every student at no cost. It is exciting to see school meals be recognized as a significant strategy in ending childhood hunger.

Alaska in *January*? Yes, please! I had an incredible visit with warm and welcoming Alaska SNA members in Anchorage, attending their 55th annual state conference. To share solutions and innovations, these hard-working, dedicated directors traveled from across a state that is larger than Texas, Montana and California combined!

In March, it was an honor to host USDA/FNCS Deputy Undersecretary Stacy Dean and her staff when they visited Oakland Schools, attending the County Area 2 Workshop and Mini Food Show, a separate roundtable discussion with area school nutrition directors and a walk through Waterford's Kettering High School. Dean and I met again in April for a meeting hosted by the International Dairy Foods Association at Plymouth-Canton School District.

Now, as we transition to the next school year, SNA, led by President-Elect Chris Derico, Patti Montague and the incoming Board of Directors, is well positioned for meeting the next challenges that lie ahead. As your 2022-23 President, I am proud to have worked with such a stellar group of volunteer leaders, not only on the Board, but also on numerous committees and working groups. My experiences as your national president have created indelible memories, and I have so much gratitude in my heart for our Association and all of you, its amazing members. Thank you, SNA, for making this girl's dreams come true! **SN**



“SNA Past Presidents warned me that the year would go by in a blur—and they were right!”





HANDLED WITH CARE

Everything we do at Huhtamaki is handled with care, from creating future-proof and sustainable foodservice packaging to supporting your business. You can trust that every item in our extensive line of foodservice packaging delivers for you, from sturdy molded fiber cafeteria trays to high-quality paper food containers. We offer sustainable options that are recyclable, compostable, produced with recycled content or made from renewable resources. Our innovative and solutions-focused products are designed to perform while also caring for you, your students, and the planet.

Visit us at ANC 2023 in Denver, CO July 10-11 at Booth #741

Huhtamaki

To learn more, scan QR code,
visit us.huhtamaki.com
or call 800-244-6382.



Partner for Progress

Tom Ferris » Senior Vice President of Sales, E S Foods

Back to Basics for a Breakfast Boost

The Meal Kit Solution

Staffing shortages. Time limitations. Supply chain disruptions. Declining student participation. As school nutrition professionals, you have a lot of challenges on your plate, and you need solutions that can check multiple boxes.

Closing the longstanding gap between breakfast and lunch participation is a great place to focus your attention, and meal kits can be a valuable resource in your efforts. Meal kits are efficient, nutritious and delicious, featuring kid-favorite menu items.

Efficient. They are ideal for the grab 'n' go requirements of many breakfast service models, including breakfast in the classroom and second-chance breakfast, where convenience and portability are essential. If you are short-staffed, they greatly reduce time needed for breakfast prep and clean-up, as well as for managing inventory. This allows your team to focus on other tasks and initiatives, ranging from daily lunch prep to coordinating a participation booster like coffee drink service.

Nutritious and Audit Proof. You can find meal kits that include all or most of the required meal pattern components with items that comply with nutrition standards. This also makes preparing for your state review a bit easier!

Delicious. Meal kits feature many kid favorites and you can find them in a variety of item configurations, giving students more choices and alleviating menu fatigue.

Safe. Many meal kits are shelf-stable, requiring no refrigeration. (Thaw-and-serve and heat-and-serve options are also available.) Components are individually wrapped. Utensils are often provided for a full turnkey solution.

To learn more about E S Foods' line-up of meal kits for school nutrition programs, visit ESFoods.com.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT DECLINING SCHOOL MEAL PARTICIPATION NUMBERS following the expiration of the pandemic-era waivers that allowed districts to provide free school meals for all. Child Nutrition Tables issued by USDA/FNS show concerning drops in the initial months of SY2022-23, with both school breakfast and lunch falling below pre-pandemic levels. And with the slow recovery of our post-pandemic "new normal," it's difficult to predict when, or if, those numbers will rise.

Improving participation numbers is critical for the nourishment and well-being of students, as well as for the health of your program's bottom line. When I attended SNA's Legislative Action Conference in March, I asked operators about their recent experiences, and they shared numerous challenges, in addition to the loss of federal waivers, that have an impact on sustaining or growing participation. These include staffing shortages, time constraints, supply chain disruptions and declining student interest. Many of these are beyond our collective control to fix—but engaging students is something we *can* tackle. A good place to start is your school breakfast program.

At E S Foods, we've made school breakfast a major focus for over 20 years, doing our part to help turn innovative strategies into tried-and-true practices. Alternate breakfast service programs—including breakfast after the bell, breakfast in the classroom, second-chance breakfast and grab 'n' go kiosks in hallways or at school entrances—have evolved into proven game-changers.

These tactics are highlighted and encouraged in *The Reach of Breakfast and Lunch*, a March 2023 report from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). Noting the growth in meal participation in SY2021-22, exceeding pre-pandemic numbers, FRAC encourages ongoing advocacy to support legislation that provides healthy school meals for all. In the meantime, FRAC recommends implementation of innovative breakfast models as proven best practices in boosting participation. Low breakfast participation is costly on many levels: Students miss out on associated educational and health benefits, while districts miss out on substantial federal funding. Even with SY2021-22 showing increased breakfast participation, FRAC estimates almost \$2.2 billion was "left on the table."

Now is a good time to revisit school breakfast, evaluating current practices with an eye on creating new excitement to woo students back in SY2023-24. Has the menu gone stale? Is enough variety offered? Do students have easy access to the meal? Is there an element of fun with breakfast service? Is there a way to involve students in breakfast in the classroom service to support your staff and take some ownership in the program? Are you up to date on good marketing techniques to attract Gen Z and Gen Alpha?

You can find great ideas and materials for boosting breakfast engagement from many sources, including USDA's Team Nutrition, SNA and your industry partners. (Consider, for example, grab 'n' go meal kits for streamlined classroom breakfast service.) We know there is no single magic solution to today's school foodservice challenges, but we share a mutual goal to improve school breakfast consumption. Industry stands ready to help. **SN**



This article content is made available with support from E S Foods.



GRAB & GO Breakfast Solutions!



Audit Proof

Meets 3 of 4 required
food components in
required quantities



Perfect for

Alternate Site Breakfast
Classroom Breakfast
Before the Bell

E S Foods offers the largest variety of Shelf-Stable and Grab & Go Breakfast products. We also have an assortment of Thaw & Serve and Warm & Serve options, giving you and your students the most breakfast menu choices!

ESFoods. Always the best solution.

Call [516.682.5494](tel:516.682.5494) for an appointment or visit esfoods.com.



What's Cooking

Great Leaders Can Say “I Don’t Know”



When you’re in a leadership position, saying “I don’t know” might feel like a dangerous misstep that undermines your credibility and your authority. Whether you’re leading a work team, a group of volunteers or even a family, aren’t they looking to you to have all the answers? Simply put: *No*.

When something lies outside of your area of expertise, or when you need more information or when you simply don’t have the answer right away, it’s always better to admit you don’t know, rather than take a phony “all-knowing” approach and guess. Admitting you don’t know doesn’t inherently make people question your competency or damage your integrity as a leader—but lying, making up an answer and getting caught in it later definitely will!

Not knowing answers may be unsettling and make you feel insecure. But being honest and saying “I don’t know” shows humility, self-awareness and, ultimately, self-confidence in admitting your vulnerabilities in front of others. It also gives leaders an opportunity to seek more information and/or involve others on their team, asking for input and encouraging critical thinking or a brainstorming session. Instead of fearing the phrase “I don’t know,” embrace it, as you demonstrate to others your willingness to connect, learn and grow, exemplifying your leadership *bona fides*.

Pack Car-friendly, Veggie-centric Snacks

Warmer weather, longer days and more sun—summer is almost here! As schools close and the season begins, long road trips are in store for many. Maybe you’re headed to a family reunion or a wedding. Perhaps you’re taking the highways and byways to a vacation destination. Or maybe you’re headed to Denver for SNA’s Annual National Conference (ANC)!

Wherever you’re headed, snacks are a vital element of any road trip. After all, no one wants to be trapped in a car with a hangry passenger or driver! Instead of relying on convenient, fast-food drive-thrus to help you get through mile after mile, consider packing your own healthy, car-friendly, veggie-centric snacks instead. Here are some suggestions for your pre-trip checklist.

Bake and Take. Try out some recipes for healthier spins on baked goods made with vegetables. Muffins are an especially good option for long car rides—no slicing necessary, and no messy frosting or glaze! Look for muffin recipes featuring carrots or zucchini—which also hide well in chocolate muffins for the picky travelers in your vehicle.

Wrap It Up. Wraps are a great way to pack a lot of healthy vegetables into a convenient, hand-held and travel-ready bundle of flavor. The internet is a great source of a wide range of veggie wrap recipes. You can even pack simple ingredients to assemble sandwiches en route. For example, spread hummus across a tortilla, top with pre-chopped vegetables and an optional protein of your

choice and roll. Mix and match with different ingredient combinations.

Dried and Fried.

Well, *not* fried exactly, but baked vegetable chips (made from carrots, kale, zucchini or even Brussels sprouts) can make for a great replacement for the more conventional, less healthy fried chip options. Roasted chickpeas seasoned with a light touch of garlic, smoked paprika, cayenne pepper, kosher salt, ranch seasoning, curry or cinnamon sugar makes for a craveable snack. Looking for something sweeter? Pack some dried fruit.

Keep It Simple. Eager to hit the road without taking the time to prep homemade snacks? There are many fresh veggies (and fruits) that can be consumed whole or with only a simple chop and packed into a resealable bag or container. Maybe pass up options like berries (which easily stain) and oranges and peaches (both are drippy) in favor of no-muss/no-fuss carrots, apple slices, bell peppers, celery, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers and grapes.



Washington Round Up



IT'S BEEN A BUSY SPRING IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL for advocates of child nutrition programs. Hard on the heels of USDA's February announcement of a proposed final rule establishing new, phased-in limits on sodium and added sugars (*"What's Cooking," March/April 2023*), a capacity crowd filled the ballroom at the J.W. Marriott for SNA's annual Legislative Action Conference (LAC). The packed agenda included insights on the political landscape from noted pundit Charlie Cook, as well as updates from top USDA officials, who made time to answer questions about the proposed rule. The Association's Public Policy & Legislation (PPL) Committee also prepped attendees on the points of SNA's *2023 Position Paper* ahead of

a Capitol Hill lobbying day. In other recent action:

- USDA announced a proposed rule to **expand the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** by lowering the threshold required for schools and school districts to implement CEP from 40% to 25%. This change would dramatically increase access to school meals at no charge. The public comment period ends **May 8, 2023**.

- USDA extended the comment period for the **Revisions to Meal Patterns** proposed rule from April 10 to **May 10, 2023**, to give the public more time to provide feedback on the complex proposal.

- The federal agency also opened applications for up to \$10 billion in FY2023 **Team Nutrition grants** to support and expand nutrition education programming beyond the cafeteria, incorporating it into all parts of the school day and even enrichment activities.

- As part of its Healthy Meals Incentives Initiatives, USDA is awarding \$50 million to the following organizations to manage the **School Food System Transformation**

Challenge Sub-Grants: Boise State University, Chef Ann Foundation, Full Plates Full Potential and Illinois Public Health Initiative. The sub-grants will foster innovation in the school food marketplace to bring a wider variety of healthy, appealing foods to lunch trays.

- In Congress, Rep. James McGovern (D-Mass.) introduced the **Healthy Meals Help Kids Learn Act** (H.R. 1269) to permanently increase the federal reimbursement rate for all school lunches by 45 cents and school breakfasts by 28 cents, with annual adjustments. The bipartisan **Helping Schools Feed Kids Act** (H.R. 1424), introduced by Reps. Abigail Spanberger (D-Va.) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.) would extend the currently increased reimbursement rate of 40 cents for lunch and 15 cents for breakfast through SY2023-24. As current reimbursement rates expire in July 2023, SNA strongly urges its members to support these bills and guard against a significant decrease in federal funding, impeding efforts to meet student needs and jeopardizing progress for school nutrition programs.

Fare Share

While it seems that most conversations about the generations emphasize profound differences between them, a new national survey finds some common ground among Baby Boomers and Gen Z when it comes to preferences in a number of dining behaviors. "Food really does bring people together," says Sharon Olson, Executive Director of Y-Pulse (www.ypulse.org), which surveyed more than 2,000 consumers.

A significant majority of Baby Boomers (85%) and Gen Z (86%) respondents said they prefer sharing meals with other people rather than dining alone, and similar percentages enjoy food market-style venues where each member of a group dining together can get very different cuisines. Nostalgic foods

and family traditions also appeal to Boomers and Zoomers alike.

Not only do both demographics appreciate old family recipes (88% and 84%, respectively), they also enjoy creating new food traditions when cooking with friends and family (76% Boomers and 82% Gen Z). More than 70% of both groups also agreed they prefer to order menu items with locally sourced ingredients, even with a premium price point.



What's Cooking

Closing Kitchens for Summer



Natalie Tenney, SNS
Nutrition Services Director
Gilbert (Ariz.) Public Schools

"We have a manager's meeting four weeks before the last day of school, reviewing expectations, tasks and delegation ideas and distributing end-of-the-year checklists—one for elementary schools, one for secondary sites and one for sites that will be operating the Summer Feeding Program. The lists are very detailed, with tasks that include reminders about appropriate ordering (especially for milk) for the last days of school, as well as paper goods to have on hand for the first week of school (which must be delivered

before school ends, stored and locked up at each site); cleaning of large equipment; the specific date to conduct an ending inventory; securing smallwares; and documents to bring to the final check-out at the central office. Managers mark off each task on the list, sign the bottom and turn it into their supervisor on the last day of school. We've used this method for the last 15 years, and our kitchens look spotless and are shut down properly each summer. It's super specific but it helps keep everyone organized.

One more hint: There are appointed windows for different managers to check out with their supervisor. This ensures we don't have everyone showing up at once when we can't give them the individual attention and thanks that they deserve. We make sure to give a small gift as they leave. Last year, we gave each a beach towel with a bottle of sunscreen!

For a downloadable PDF of the end-of-year checklist used by Gilbert's Nutrition Services team, visit www.schoolnutrition.org/resource/hints-hacks

Peer Exchange:

hints & hacks



Gender Identity. Cafeteria Equity.

By Krista Hamilton-Neal, MS, RD/LD, SNS

I have three children: a 20-year-old son, a 17-year-old middle child and a 15-year-old daughter. Why don't I assign a gender to my middle child? Because they identify as non-binary. Gender is a social construct, and it doesn't always match the physical attributes of biological sex. My child does not feel particularly female or male, so they are non-binary.

Our family has several friends who are changing names and genders. Sometimes it is because their birth name is associated with bad experiences. Sometimes it is because they do not associate with the gender typically assigned to their name. Whatever the reason, our job as adults, and as school nutrition professionals, is to support the identity they have chosen. We do not judge them, question their choice or minimize their feelings. We accept them as they are.

A point of pride for me is how we, as school nutrition professionals, never ask anything of our students—except to take a fruit or vegetable. We are a safe place for our young customers, and part of serving as a safe place includes supporting a student's identity change. If your POS won't let you update a record with a name they have chosen, you should be able to create a work-around, like a pop-up reminder or memo notation of that update. You would do that for the student who goes by their middle name, right? You should do it for *everyone* who is using another name. That said, when you see the student in public, before you call them by any name, listen to determine how people in their company address them. A student may not be using a new name or gender identity at home, and you should not be the person who outs them.

You love your students, and that means loving whatever identity they have chosen, even if you don't always understand it. The concept of gender identity is changing, and change can be hard. As a parent and as a peer, I ask you to make an effort. Do your best.

Krista Hamilton-Neal is Director of Nutrition Services for Stillwater (Okla.) Public Schools.

For the Kid Within

If you have fond memories of eating Campbell's canned SpaghettiOs® in your youth, but find the flavor way too mild for your adult palate, get ready to feed your inner child! Campbell's Soup has just introduced new SpaghettiOs Spicy Original, spiked with Frank's RedHot® (a brand of McCormick & Company) to deliver a mild-medium heat level.

The collaborative flavor twist is a savvy marketing move by the manufacturers, appealing across the generations—the canned pasta product has been on supermarket shelves since 1965, and continues to have surprising resonance among grown-ups today. Campbell's estimates that Millennials account for one-third of total SpaghettiOs annual sales. In a survey of adults (ages 18-35) who ate SpaghettiOs in the past year, more than one-third noted they add spices to the canned pasta to satisfy current taste preferences.





WHAT'S NEXT ON YOUR MENU?

The Conagra Foodservice team and Waypoint's dedicated K-12 teams are here to help! We are looking to the future with creative meal plan options.

100% of The MAX entrees meet sodium and other meal requirements for School Years 22/23 AND 23/24*!

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU AT

ANC 2023

LOOK FOR US IN

BOOTH 1545

For More
Information Call:
1-800-357-6543

*When served with broccoli, fruit and milk.



© Conagra Brands, Inc. All rights reserved.

School Gardens Harvest Health



Evidence continues to mount, affirming the many benefits of school garden projects. They're a great way to engage students, helping them learn about where food comes from and making them more willing to consume the fresh fruits and vegetables they grow and harvest. Adding to the research literature, new findings from UTHouston show that school gardens can positively impact students' physical health, as well. Researchers focused on the nine-month implementation of Texas Sprouts, "a gardening, nutrition and cooking intervention," at 16 elementary schools in the Austin Independent School District.

Students participating in the Texas Sprouts program saw a reduction in both blood sugar and "bad" cholesterol levels, pointing to a lower risk of type 2 diabetes and prediabetes. Highlights of the program included forming a Garden Leadership Committee, building an outdoor teaching garden, 18 lessons for students about gardening, nutrition and cooking, as well as nine lessons for parents. The research was published in *JAMA Network Open* in January 2023.

Be The Light
"If you cannot feed a hundred people, then feed just one."
 Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa built an order of nuns and lay volunteers who continue to operate hospitals, clinics, shelters and youth centers all across the globe, from the U.S. to Yemen. According to *The New York Times*, "When she won the Nobel Prize in 1979, [she was] praised not just for her commitment to the poor but for her managerial skills."



INGREDIENTS FOR HEALTH: CUCUMBERS

English, Persian, kirby and lemon—did you realize that the common cucumber came in different varieties? If you want to get scientific, *technically* cucumbers are fruits (by their botanical definition), but in the culinary world, they're definitely a longstanding favorite in the veggie category. Clearly, cucumbers can't be easily boxed-in, and that's affirmed by their versatility both in and out of the kitchen.

HOW TO EAT. Cucumbers may be best known in their pickled form, although they can be consumed fresh and raw, peeled or unpeeled! You've probably tried them in cucumber salads and dainty cucumber sandwiches. Add them to water or lemonade for a refreshing drink that's perfect for the emerging summer season. You can cook them, too—several Vietnamese, Korean and Thai dishes feature sauteed, roasted or stir-fried cucumbers.

NUTRITION. Unless the texture really ruins it for you, try eating cucumbers *with* their peel to maximize their nutritional value. One *unpeeled* cucumber contains around 50 mcg of vitamin K and 48 mg of calcium, both of which are important for bone health, along with 39 mg of magnesium and 442 mg of potassium. Peel or no peel, cucumbers are mostly (96%) water, making them a great low-calorie snack that can improve your mental and physical performance and help you meet your daily hydration goals!

TRY THIS. The best way to store cut cucumbers is to wrap them in a damp paper towel and place them in an airtight storage container. Place the container in the crisper drawer and you can use the cut cukes for five days.

FACT. Cucumbers aren't just for snacking—they're used in some health, beauty and household hacks too! Cucumber peel can be used to erase pen and crayon marks, while cucumber slices can remove tarnish from stainless steel and freshen your breath.

Read More: Find more cucumber fun facts (and hacks) at www.lovemysalad.com/blog/cucumber-fun-facts



Real **Simple.** Real **Cool.**
AN EASY WAY TO ENHANCE YOUR MEAL PROGRAM.

purchase



submit



redeem



Dear *Child Nutrition Professionals*

Congratulations on another year of **HEROIC DEDICATION** to providing healthful nutrition to the next generation! Cool School Cafe is proud to support your meal program and over 14,000 more like it, with **100,000 ITEMS REDEEMED** annually using Cool School Points. We're so excited to continue serving you into the 23 - 24 school year with our **80 NEW SKUS** and **INCREASED POINTS ON HUNDREDS MORE** from 120 qualifying brands. How will you redeem your points to enhance your meal program this year? We can't wait to find out! *Cool School Cafe*



LEARN MORE!



VISIT
ANC BOOTH #1615
TO RECEIVE A **COOL SCHOOL APRON**
AND **BONUS POINTS!**



©2023 Cool School Cafe® is a registered trademark of RealTime Solutions, LLC. *For Cool School Cafe enrolled districts only. While supplies last. Some restrictions may apply.

CoolSchoolCafe.com | 800.468.3287 | Support@CoolSchoolCafe.com | @CoolSchoolCafe | Cool School Cafe





SNA Elects New Leadership

SNA congratulates the following candidates for their election to the SNA Board of Directors, Industry Advisory Council and Leadership Development Committee, and thanks all the candidates for their enthusiasm and commitment to the national Association.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Vice President:** Stephanie Dillard, MS, SNS
- **Director:** Daniel Ellnor, SNS
- **Director:** Jessica Gould, RD, SNS
- **Director:** Keba Laird, MBA, RDN, SNS
- **Director:** Mark Oswalt, MS, RDN

SNA INDUSTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL

- **Chair:** Jack Crawford, Gold Creek Foods

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- **Mountain Plains Regional Representative:**
Monica Deines-Henderson, MBA, SNS
- **Southwest Regional Representative:**
Sharon Glosson, MS, RDN, LD, SNS

The Time Is Right for Education

If you're looking to pursue professional growth opportunities over the summer, SNA has you covered with a robust library of On-Demand Webinars! Association members can access most of these webinars free of charge at any time and from anywhere, making it easy to fit them into your busy schedule—especially if you cannot make it to #ANC23!

You'll discover a wide range of best practices, helpful hints, thoughtful strategies and much more in these online presentations. Plus, each of USDA's four required training areas (administration, operations, nutrition and communications/marketing) are reflected in the On-Demand library, helping you to meet requirements for professional standards. Consider checking out some of these always-topical webinars presented over the past year:

"Teach Me How to Cook! The Seven Skills of Fruitful Leadership": Presenter Frank Kitchen draws comparisons between leadership and cooking, diving into the skills

needed to create a leadership style that produces environments where people and dreams flourish.

"Making USDA Entitlement Work for You": This session features school districts sharing their efficient use of USDA Foods. Discover the importance of early planning for optimal results and how entitlement can be impacted during the school year.

"Smooth Operator: How to Safely Serve Peanut Butter in Schools": Food allergies can be an intimidating subject, but there are ways to safely offer peanut butter, a kid-favorite, nutritious, economical ingredient, in school cafeterias. The key is a comprehensive food allergy management plan.

Don't start a busy new school year wishing you'd made better use of your summer break. Take advantage of SNA's On-Demand webinars and gain the benefits of professional growth! Visit SNA's Training Zone at www.schoolnutrition.org/trainingzone.



SNA EXPLORES
MEMBERSHIP
MODEL OPTIONS

To ensure SNA remains a strong organization positioned to thrive in the years ahead, the Association has begun an assessment of the relevance, sustainability and applicability of its existing membership model, guided by a consulting firm with association expertise. The goal is to determine whether SNA's current structure is the most effective to serve its valued members and make changes, if necessary. Initial steps in this endeavor have involved identifying key and underserved audiences within SNA, conducting a needs analysis of existing member groups and comparing SNA's membership approach to similar associations.

All SNA member segments, as well as its state affiliates, are key stakeholders in this project! In April, SNA distributed an email survey to all members and select non-members. Member input is crucial to this initiative. In the weeks ahead, the Association will conduct additional research to develop recommendations for leadership. Keep an eye on SNA's digital communications, including emails, newsletters and social media, to learn about how you can participate.



Lead and Succeed in Your Field

The slightly slower pace of summer makes it an ideal time to take advantage of professional growth opportunities offered in person at SNA's Annual National Conference (ANC) in Denver (*page 44*), virtually through SNA's On-Demand

Webinar library (*left*) and in both formats via the LEAD to Succeed™ multi-module online training program developed exclusively for school nutrition professionals. Individuals can complete online courses at their own pace in 15-20 minute sessions or request in-person or virtual facilitated group trainings for their SNA state affiliate or state agency. USDA has granted SNF/SNA a six-month extension to offer this valuable educational content free of charge through March 2024, so states should take this into consideration when planning 2023-24 conference programming.

Highlights of the LEAD to Succeed™ content include:

Communication for Impact Series:

Four modules focused on improving communication, marketing and customer service skills (12 hours and 45 minutes of training)

Leadership Growth Series:

Three modules (*two are still to be launched*) focused on the skills and practices needed to effectively build, lead and manage a team (9 hours of training)

Adult Training Series:

Best practices in adult learning to be applied in a variety of scenarios, including staff meetings, conference sessions and formal training (84 minutes of training)

Spanish Language Content:

Módulo 4: DESARROLLAR: habilidades de comunicación is a one-hour session developed in partnership with a premier translation service. It features a Spanish-speaking panel of manager-level members reacting to Communication for Impact Series activities on promoting a personal image and discussing how they will implement these with their own cafeteria teams.

Training Facilitation Resources:

Each module of LEAD includes a training facilitation guide, handouts, pre/post-tests and a PowerPoint slide deck to allow leaders at the district or state level to share the LEAD course content in person to staff teams.

You can reference an FAQ document (www.tinyurl.com/LEAD-FAQs-SNmag) that describes the material and provides details about how to access this free content through the SNA Training Zone. You do not need to be an SNA member to take advantage of this great educational resource! If you are a state affiliate or state agency leader interested in requesting facilitated training, visit www.schoolnutritionfoundation.org/leadtraining. Start a journey to elevate your professional standing and visit www.schoolnutrition.org/lead today!

SNA PLANNER

MAY 5, 2023

School Lunch Hero Day

JULY 9-11, 2023

Annual National Conference
Denver, Colo.

OCT 9-13, 2023

National School Lunch Week

JAN 14-16, 2024

School Nutrition Industry Conference
Orlando, Fla.

MAR 3-5, 2024

Legislative Action Conference
Washington, D.C.

MAR 4-8, 2024

National School Breakfast Week

APRIL 25-27, 2024

National Leadership Conference
Seattle, Wash.

JULY 14-16, 2024

Annual National Conference
Boston, Mass.

IDENTIFY YOUR NEXT MARKETING MOVE

Attracting and retaining loyal cafeteria customers is a year-round project.

The captive audience concept is a myth. Yes, school lunch periods are short, the cafeteria is close and the competition can be limited, especially if yours is a closed campus. But you simply cannot compel students to select a school meal if they prefer to bring food from home, pick up grab 'n' go on the way to school, have meals delivered by restaurants, third-party services or even parents, purchase "black market" snacks from entrepreneurial peers or even go hungry until the final bell. Like every other type of foodservice operation, you need to feed potential customers a steady diet of good reasons to choose yours.

In this issue of *School Nutrition*, we stand ready to help you launch, refresh or elevate your school meal marketing efforts. We start with some best practice approaches and ideas presented by four SNA members who have been selected to share their marketing expertise and innovations as speakers at SNA's Annual National Conference (ANC) in Denver this summer. (These presentation excerpts may be the final incentive you need to register!) You'll also get a primer on the elements of an effective branding program (*page 28*), be encouraged to overcome any lingering hesitancy around social media marketing (*page 32*), discover the potential benefits of short-form videos uploaded to TikTok (*page 38*) and get excited about putting new marketing strategies into action in SY2023-24 as you celebrate National School Lunch and Breakfast Weeks (*pages 42-43*)! Read on and get ready to make some marketing magic.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION!

SNA Ideas Exchange: SN Magazine Live! is a new webinar series that invites readers to turn on their cameras, unmute and participate in a live book club-style discussion related to content featured in your favorite professional magazine. The next Ideas Exchange is scheduled for June 8, when we'll discuss effective marketing strategies for school nutrition programs. Be sure to read all the main feature articles and get ready to share some of your most effective marketing moves. Use the QR code to register.



Responses to Four Common Complaints

School foodservice, much like the hospitality industry at large, is often subject to direct customer feedback that may be hard to hear without feeling reactive, defensive and frustrated. Fielding criticism comes with the job, but that doesn't mean you just have to grin and bear it. Over 20 years leading school district meal operations, I've learned that negative comments are actually valuable *opportunities* to be an advocate for our profession and programs. They allow us to connect with someone who is engaged—even in a negative way—and use their attention to correct misperceptions, clarify confusion and potentially turn a critic into a champion. Here are four of the most common opportunities you may encounter and the marketing messages you can apply in your answers.



**Lora Gilbert, MS, RD,
FADA, SNS**

2022-23 President

Florida School Nutrition Association

1. My kids don't like your food.

"I'm sorry to hear that. We know that we can't please all of our students all of the time, but we take a lot of time to identify items that most kids do like. What do your kids like to eat at home or when you go to a restaurant? I'd be interested in talking with your children and would encourage them to participate in our next taste test."

Also: Be sure to cite the number of options that are available on the line each day, in particular emphasizing the number of different fruits/vegetables and whether they are fresh and locally sourced. Point out any new, recently added menu items.

This response conveys the time and attention your team takes to create appealing menus that offer variety to cater to different taste preferences. It also demonstrates your care for students (and their parents) as individuals.

2. Students don't have enough time to eat.

"The decisions for lunch and breakfast periods are made in consideration of a whole host of factors, including academic requirements and getting your child home on time. Every child does have the minimum time—10 minutes, as recommended by the Institute of Child Nutrition. If you feel the time is insufficient, I recommend you bring your concerns to the attention of the school administration. But be assured, we will always feed your child."

This is a professional way to convey the fact that you do not have control

over the length of lunch periods without inappropriately sharing your own frustrations on this matter. The reassurance at the end demonstrates your responsibility to students.

3. Why can't we bring cupcakes or treats to school?

"Special occasions and the treats we use to celebrate them are important to all of us! But our schools are a great place to model healthy decision-making about food. As such, our school district has signed an agreement with USDA to provide healthy, nutritious meals to students during the entire school day. This agreement includes strict requirements to ensure foods served in school are prepared in accordance with health and safety protocols. We can't guarantee safety to your child when we don't know the kitchen where items have been prepared. There are some occasions and treats that are appropriate, and these have been outlined in the district's Wellness Policy."

This response places greater weight on food safety standards than on nutrition ones, making it almost impossible to argue with. It also reminds parents about the existence of a wellness policy that should reflect values all across the district and not just the cafeteria.

4. Why do you serve chocolate milk?

"The most important reason is that children need to drink milk. They don't get enough calcium and other nutrients without it. The small amount of added flavors helps entice

children to consume milk, rather than go without. I don't eat a salad without a small amount of dressing; a flavored milk is a great way to dress a container of milk."

Also: Use this opportunity to segue to the importance of developing new recipes and flavors so kids don't get bored. *"Flavor trends influence recipes, and we try to keep up with the kids."* Cite one or two examples of menu items that burst with flavor, such as New Orleans-style rice and beans, maple turkey sausage or whole-grain blueberry muffins. Be prepared to provide parents with research on flavored milks, such as this link: www.usdairy.com/news-articles/chocolate-milks-13-essential-nutrients.

WHEN A REPORTER CALLS....

"Thank you for calling. What is your question? Is this question based on a recent article?"

Some school districts require journalists to go through a central communications department; you may need to supply that contact information. If you plan to respond yourself, take the time to prepare, checking to see if you have sufficient time before the reporter's deadline.

➡ For background information on the question, review the SNA website, www.schoolnutrition.org, to determine if the issue has been addressed and if talking points are available.

➡ Take some time for a bit more online research. Use key words in the browser search for other coverage of the issue.

- ➔ Connect with directors in nearby districts to see if they also have been contacted with the same question.
- ➔ Prepare your talking points and send these to your supervisor. You may need their approval to respond to

reporters, but even if you don't, it's a good practice to keep them in the loop.

- ➔ Respond to the reporter, sticking to your talking points. **SN**

*Gilbert is scheduled to present "Five Phrases to Memorize Before Media Events" on Tuesday, July 11, 2:15-2:45 p.m. * Her session will go into more depth about the value of staying on top of current news trends and anticipating questions from the media.*

*ANC23 presentation schedules are subject to change. Check the SNA Conference app when you arrive in Denver for daily updates.

Picture This: Increasing Access and Meal Participation Through Picture Menus



Juliana Fisher, MS, RDN, CD, SNS

Director of Foodservice
Northshore School District
Bothell, Wash.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light a number of school nutrition issues that had been overlooked or were largely hidden in our regular processes and practices. One of these was **access**. When school meals were free to all and the financial barrier was removed, we saw a significant increase in student participation—including among children who previously had been eligible for free/reduced-priced meals, but had not taken advantage of the school meal program, likely due to fears of being stigmatized.

Like many of our peers across the country, when the pandemic waivers expired for SY2022-23 and meal applications and payments resumed, we braced ourselves for a participation hit. It felt like we were taking multiple

steps backward! However, instead of just letting it happen, we focused our attention on identifying *other* barriers that might dissuade Northshore students from eating school meals and figuring out what we could do to address the ones that we had the power to influence. Creating picture menus began as a marketing idea that took shape and found purpose in this context.

We discovered that our menus were unintentionally creating cultural and emotional barriers. Our district is a suburb of Seattle and home to around 23,000 students, many from families who represent more than 85 different languages and who do not frequently eat typical American cuisine at home. Written menus highlighting unfamiliar items and brand names are a particular mystery to our youngest learners.

Imagine what you might think if you'd never heard of Chicken Corn Dogs, Cheese Pizza Quesadillas or Cheesy Bread Rippers!

I experienced this disconnect myself when I asked my 3rd-grade daughter if she had tried the Dutch Waffle served at lunch. Her response? "No. I didn't know what it was." Similarly, youngsters accustomed to American favorites may not know some of our culturally responsive dishes, such as Chana Masala or Pineapple Teriyaki Beef. It made me realize that many of our students might face a significant challenge when making decisions about what to eat and feeling uncomfortable or excluded in the process, barring them from accessing meals that bridged the hunger and nutrition gap.

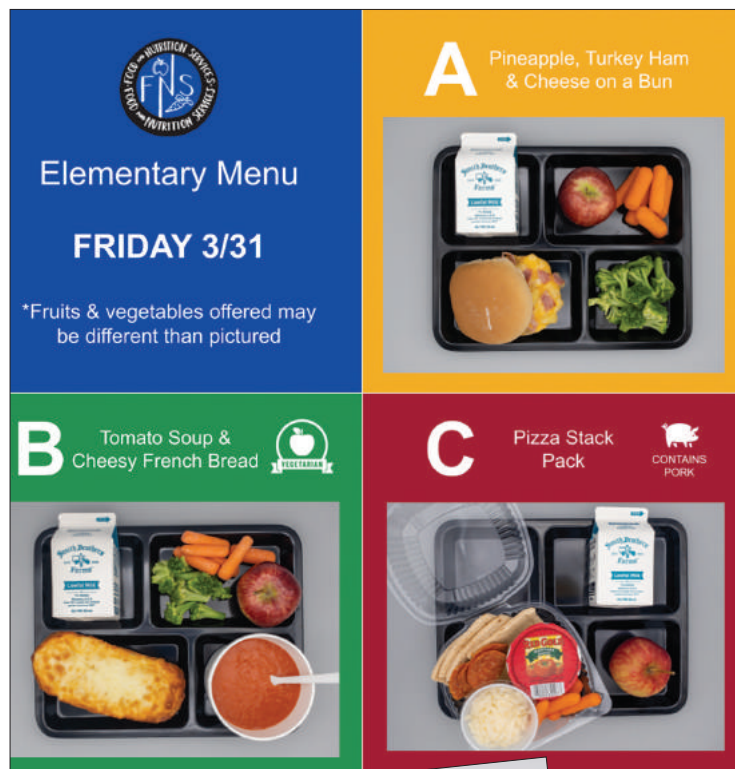
To address this barrier, we revived

an idea we had begun exploring before the pandemic: creating photo-based menus. In 2019, we worked with a dietetic intern who was interested in photography and social media. She helped us create our first social media account and captured top-down photos of elementary lunch trays that looked amazing! At the time, we weren't sure exactly how we would put these to use, but by 2022, we realized these could be a valuable marketing tool that would address cultural barriers that impede access of school meals.

Our initial goal was to create a catalog of tray photos that would encompass all of our elementary menu options for the school year—72 total images to date! We have created picture menus for each of our seasonal menu cycles and these are posted daily and weekly on the district website and our interactive menu, plus Facebook and Instagram. We also share with school staff via our Google drive.

The project cost only about \$125 for a portable light box and silicon mats. I manage it myself, with a little support from the district's communication department in posting on the district website. The result? An incredibly valuable resource for our students and families, helping them to get excited by our school meal choices! Parents and school staff regularly express their appreciation for these picture menus. We have adapted the presentation, options and locations of them based on teacher feedback; we are always learning and adapting as we go. In the future, I hope to add the photos to our menu-planning software, increase their use in the classroom beyond the early adopters and use them to boost social media engagement among parents.

The picture menus are posted on the department's Instagram (@nsd foodandnutrition) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/nsdfoodandnutrition) accounts, as well as on its Menus web page on the district website (www.nsd.org/schools/get-started/food-services/menus). **SN**



Fisher is scheduled to present "Picture This: Increasing Access and Meal Participation Through Picture Menus," back by popular demand from the 2023 School Nutrition Industry Conference, on Monday, July 10, 4:00-4:30 p.m. Her session will go into greater depth about the picture menu process, lessons learned and tools to help attendees replicate the project in their own districts.*

*ANC23 presentation schedules are subject to change. Check the SNA Conference app when you arrive in Denver for daily updates.

Increasing High School Students' Participation Through Workshops and Menu Design



Dr. Derricka B. Thomas

Director of Child Nutrition
and Wellness
Simpson County (Miss.)
School District

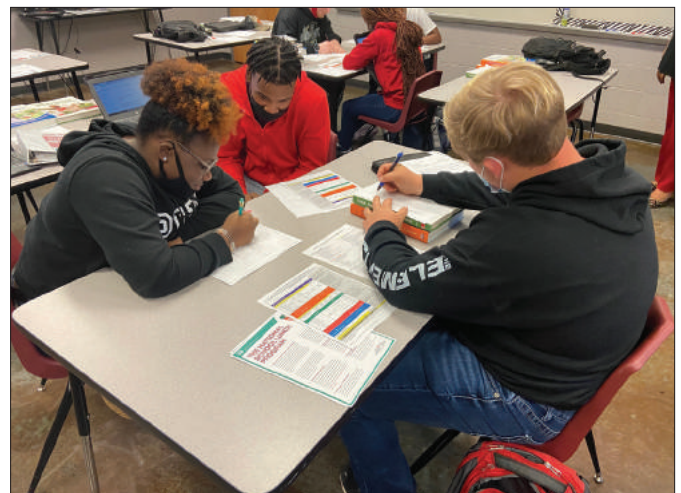
My career journey in the wonderful, challenging, fun and engaging world of school nutrition began with a bang. I was a brand-new director, SY2020-21 was beginning to wind down, we were still adjusting to serving students amid pandemic restrictions and we were undergoing an audit from the state agency. For 20+ years, my background had been on the academic and administrative side of the education coin. When working as a principal of a “Turnaround School” (a Mississippi Department of Education

program for at-risk schools) in another district, I was fascinated and inspired by the leadership of Child Nutrition Director Stephanie Hoze, who set an amazing example of team-building and collaboration between her department and different stakeholders at the school and district levels. She served as a mentor to me in my administrator role and even after her retirement, continued to support me through my transition to child nutrition, connecting me with new mentors who are still in the profession.

Over the last two years, I've been challenged to build my team, grow the

program and increase participation rates. Using valuable principles for effective team-building, generating and analyzing key performance indicators to make data-driven decisions, and setting and sharing goals, we've made great strides across all our school sites. But our high schools struggled. Although all students had access to free meals at this time, participation among our teenagers was discouraging—and the numbers had to grow.

My “Dream Team” of site managers and I shared strategies and best practices. We identified popular menu items.





Apples, as nature intended.



NON-GMO • National Distribution Network • Kosher, Parve and Clean Label • Pre-packaged for assured food safety • Buy American Act Compliant • USA Grown & Processed • Largest USDA Foods processor for Apples • DoD Approved • Commercial purchases always available



Visit us at Booth 1811



Not bio-engineered

For More Information Visit:
www.petersonfarmsinc.com/k-12





We made it easy for students to view daily menus and provided friendly customer service. But students were unhappy—sharing their dissatisfaction on social media—and the feedback from parents as well as high school staff was equally disheartening. An internal SWOT analysis confirmed that high school participation was a serious weakness in our program.

Leading into SY2021-22, I joined SNA and Mississippi SNA (accompanied by my managers, many who were happy to rejoin after some years). Membership has been an incredible learning and networking experience for me, and it led to an a-ha! realization. Our high school student customers, already frustrated at not having a voice in decisions about cafeteria meal service, were unaware of the many menu, nutrition, portion sizes and procurement rules, plus the tight budgets that dictate how the federal school meals programs must operate.

As a veteran educator, I know the power of giving students knowledge, ownership and a voice to change the culture of schools and districts, and I'd conducted past workshops to build this engagement around topics like kindness and discipline. I decided to create a workshop to provide them with agency in the school meal program, change their perceptions and increase their participation at lunch.

I proposed the workshops to the district's principals and assistant principals at the beginning of SY2021-22. Two

months went by, and I had no takers. I persisted, pitching the idea in monthly administrators' and managers' meetings. It got a plug in the district's staff newsletter. Still nothing.

Then, in November 2021, a conversation between one of my managers and an instructor of Nutrition and Wellness at one high school *finally* led to an invitation to conduct a workshop on child nutrition with her students. Saying I was excited can't begin to describe my emotions!

The 90-minute workshop was held December 6, 2021, at Magee High School. Thirty-two students participated. After an icebreaker that asked the students to share their favorite food item, I explained my goals and then launched into a crash course on the fundamentals of the National School Lunch Program, the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act and calorie requirements by grade level. Rather than lecture to them, I provided fact sheets and other materials and tasked them with a "Reading Scavenger Hunt" that led to an engaging conversation full of insightful questions.

From there, students were divided into small groups and charged with building their own lunch menus that complied with reimbursable meal requirements. A winner would be selected to be served in high school cafeterias across the district in February 2022. Participants were provided with an inventory of menu items/ingredients; the same menu grid my department

uses for our official breakfast and lunch menus; an organizational chart on key components; and a grocery menu that would be submitted to managers for ordering prior to service in February.

The students quickly understood the concept and discussed together why specific items might be good or poor fits in their menu design. Each group presented their menu and the entire class voted for one favorite. (Not surprisingly, Simpson County teens are the same as their counterparts across the country, and they selected a menu featuring hot wings, fries and ranch dip—along with fresh fruit and milk.)

The workshop was a win-win project. Our department gained more insight into student perceptions of school meals, and we gained new advocates and ambassadors who would promote the delicious and nutritious meals we provide to their peers—especially on the day their menu was served! Participation began to increase for both breakfast and lunch. Students now email me directly with questions and concerns. And even though we no longer serve all meals for free this school year, our high school participation continues to increase every month.

We've also had more requests to conduct this student workshop—including at the middle school level. What's next? We're working to create a Student Advisory Committee that will provide more opportunities for students to have a voice in the program. We're living our motto: "Our Mission Is Your Nutrition." **SN**

Thomas is scheduled to present "Increasing High School Students' Participation Through Student Workshops and Menu Design" on Monday, July 10, 8:00-9:00 a.m.. Her session will go into greater detail about the workshops and the value of collaborations with teachers and administrators.*

*ANC23 presentation schedules are subject to change. Check the SNA Conference app when you arrive in Denver for daily updates.



THERE'S A REASON THE NATION'S TOP SCHOOL DISTRICTS CHOOSE ACCUTEMP

NO DELIMING. NO DESCALING.
NO WATER FILTRATION. FEWER PARTS.
CONNECTED OR CONNECTIONLESS.
NATURAL GAS, PROPANE, OR ELECTRIC.



HERE'S SOME OTHERS:

3 YEAR
WARRANTY + **FREE**
STEAMERS IN STOCK!
FREIGHT

Valid 03/13/23-08/31/23. Cannot be combined with any
other offers or specials. Orders must ship by 09/30/23.

Rules and restrictions may apply.



accutemp.net | 800.210.5907

Making the Most of School Nutrition Messages



Kelli Cook

Strategic Marketing and
Communications Manager
Georgia Department of Education
School Nutrition Division

"The problem with communication is the illusion that it has already taken place."

While the attribution of this quote to George Bernard Shaw is debated, there's no denying the wisdom of its insight. As school nutrition professionals, certainly we communicate with one another about regulations, operations, problem-solving, staff management and even recipe and menus. However, we often neglect to prioritize the importance of *purposeful communications and marketing* of our programs to stakeholders in the community. We may even be guilty of assuming everyone already recognizes the impact the programs have on all children enrolled in our schools, as well as the efforts of dedicated and well-trained school nutrition professionals. The truth is that we're wrong to assume; far too many people remain ignorant about the value of school meals.

A purposeful, focused and collaborative approach to messaging efforts can support shifts in program perception and ultimately impact meal participation.

After all, isn't fueling students during the school day our primary goal?

The Georgia Department of Education School Nutrition Division is committed to setting the **P.A.C.E.** with school nutrition messaging. These steps can persuade your audience and engage your stakeholders. We had the opportunity to share this method during SNA's 2022 Annual National Conference (ANC) in Orlando, Fla., but for those *School Nutrition* readers who missed our session last summer, here is a quick overview of the fundamentals, so you can get a jumpstart on setting the P.A.C.E. in your own district.

Plan a concise message. **Align** and **amplify** your message with supporting facts and photos. **Control** the message by using a **core** set of terms and **consistent** language. **Evaluate** your message for alignment and impact to garner support and **expand** its reach. This proactive approach has proven successful in Georgia.

If P.A.C.E. is the "how," the "what" of your marketing messages should focus on one or more of the following three critical elements: *Quality School Meals*,

Professional Development and Student and Community Engagement. To raise the bar of your school nutrition messages, start the process by discussing the following questions with your team:

1. What is our primary message about school meals?
2. Can members of our staff echo this message?
3. Do we know the values and concerns of our stakeholders?
4. What are the influences that affect our stakeholders' perception of school meals?
5. Where do stakeholders go to access information about school meals?
6. When evaluating our current plan, can we identify where we can and should make improvements?
7. How can the information we share be used to make a difference?
8. Are we willing and prepared to prioritize our messaging efforts and track the impact of our plan?

Armed with the "what" and the "how," don't overlook the values of the "what else"—the underlying structure that give your message added dimension. You can do this with data, with examples, with strategy and with photos for visual storytelling. Here are some examples:

- Spotlight students with their school meal trays.
- Elevate your staff by highlighting their professionalism and expertise, including culinary skills.
- Share state and local data, especially money spent on local products and

Setting the P.A.C.E.

- P** Plan a concise message.
- A** Align and **amplify** messages with facts and photo.
- C** Control messages by using a core set of terms & consistent language.
- E** Evaluate messages for alignment and impact to garner support & expand reach.



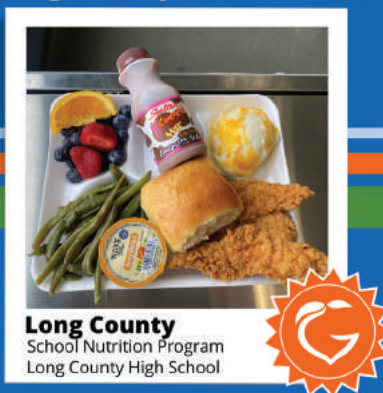
the impact of those dollars on the area economy.

- Highlight collaborations with vendors, community partners, allies and so on that have a positive impact on the quality of school meals served to students.
- Connect school nutrition messages to local and state education priorities.
- Connect messages to stakeholder values and concerns.
- Make important information easily digestible.

In the Georgia School Nutrition Division, our commitment to purposeful marketing and communications is paying off with greater traffic on our website and with increased numbers of visits to our resource pages and our training catalog. On Facebook, we gain an average of 300-400 new followers every month, reaching not only school nutrition professionals, but school administrators, school board members, business owners and citizens at large.

Let's look at one example of the many targeted campaigns our agency has implemented: the Georgia Tray of the Week, a year-long promotion that highlights the high-quality school meals served in districts across the state. Using all of our agency's social media platforms (and the hashtag #GATrayoftheWeek), we encourage the public to cast their votes on a limited number of school meal tray photos submitted by districts. It is part of our state agency strategy to promote uniform quality standards in Georgia school meals, ensuring representation

Georgia Tray of the Week



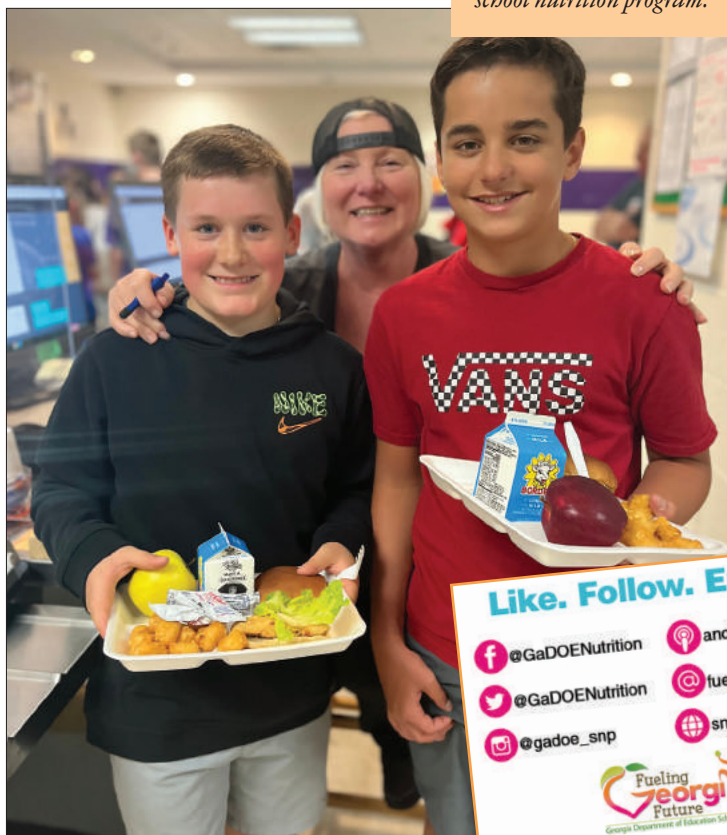
from a wide footprint of school districts. The campaign also provides an opportunity for all Georgia school nutrition programs, regardless of size, location or social media presence, to access an outlet that celebrates the amazing work of their team members—along with menu and presentation inspiration to other school nutrition professionals.

We launched this campaign in 2021 to highlight the high-quality school

meals being served despite pandemic, staffing and supply chain challenges. This proactive, visual storytelling approach garnered much feedback and general stakeholder interest and engagement. We've also seen shifts in the presentation of district school nutrition messaging and, in many cases, an improved perception of school meals resulting in increased participation in school meal programs.

Do you want to expand *your* reach? Do you want to change the narrative about school meals? Tap into the power of message alignment! Like, follow and engage with us on *all* of our platforms for inspiration on setting the P.A.C.E. for school nutrition messaging. **SN**

*Cook is scheduled to present "Reaching Higher: Purposeful, Focused and Collaborative School Nutrition Marketing and Communications Efforts" on Sunday, July 9, 9:15-10:15 a.m. * Her session will dive deeper into strategies to bolster communication efforts that result in positive outcomes, helping you learn how to raise the profile of your own school nutrition program.*



*ANC23 presentation schedules are subject to change. Check the SNA Conference app when you arrive in Denver for daily updates.

What's Your **Why?**

BY KELSEY CASSELBURY

Answer this question—and a few others—and begin a journey to develop, strengthen or refresh your school meal program's brand.

Among all the trivia and Wordle scores and political memes of various social media channels, it's possible to find a few treasures. Take, for example, @TSA, the official Instagram account of the Transportation Security Agency. Under the banner of "Travel Tips & Dad Joke Hits," this social media account broadcasts images and videos with hilarious, pun-riddled captions that provide practical advice for navigating airport security. It's a clear attempt to rebrand TSA from a stern, stodgy and, let's face it, fairly despised, government agency into an approachable organization that's allied *with* the traveler, not against them.

An organization's brand consists of its visual, written and spoken identity (a social media account such as TSA's is just one component of its brand). While you might cite a major corporate logo—the Target bullseye, the Nike swoosh, the NBC peacock—as brand examples, the truth is that a brand is so much more than its visual identity. A brand encompasses not only a name and logo, but also a tagline, other visuals and all written and verbal communications, including social media, websites, press releases, media statements, advertisements and more.

What's more, branding isn't a tactic suitable only for national and global businesses. Because the purpose of branding is to establish trust and loyalty among customers, it's a vital business practice for any organization, private or public, large or small—including school nutrition operations. Are you taking advantage of this critical marketing strategy in how you connect with customers and other stakeholders?

When you look at established brands in the foodservice niche, whether it's Starbucks and Chipotle or USDA Team Nutrition and Tips for School Meals That Rock, you might feel a little intimidated about where to begin. Developing your brand essentially starts with the answer to one key question: "What is your why?"

DEFINING YOUR BRAND

First, a point of clarification: When referring to a "brand" in this article, we're talking about how something—a product, a company, an event—is *perceived by those who experience it*. In this context, branding is the process of creating that perception,

rather than a particular product line (such as how DASANI bottled water is a brand within The Coca Cola Company). Now, let's get you started on the road to branding success.

What is your why? It's impossible to have a strong brand without a clear vision of why you're doing what you're doing. In other words, what is your purpose?

Don't settle for an obvious and somewhat ambiguous answer such as "feeding kids" or "serving healthy food." Those are both important facets of your program, but they lack the specificity of what makes your brand unique to your group. They don't drill down into the core identity.

Do you have a *mission statement*—that is, a formal summary of your aims and values as an organization? If you do, it goes to the heart of your brand identity. If you don't have one, make that your next step.

Consider SNA's mission: "We empower and support school nutrition professionals in advancing the accessibility, quality and integrity of school meal programs." If the mission ended after the first phrase, "We empower and support school nutrition professionals," the statement wouldn't be *wrong*. But it wouldn't get to the heart of the reason *why* SNA supports school nutrition professionals: "to advance the accessibility, quality and integrity of school meal programs."

As you consider a mission statement and deliberate on the answer to your "why" question, don't let it be a solo endeavor. Pick the brains of others who have valuable insights and opinions about the role of your program. This includes your foodservice team, of course, but also teachers, principals, the school district's marketing and communications staff and perhaps even a student advisory group.

BRANDING SNA'S CONFERENCES

Here's a case study in branding from your national Association HQ! Over the years, SNA's four main conferences have featured a variety of looks, as we changed colors, fonts and other graphic elements yearly to convey a particular theme or promote the host city or both—or just to have fun! While these conference looks had some memorable visuals—the conferences themselves lacked a brand identity.

In 2022, in tandem with the launch of the new award-winning SchoolNutrition.org redesign, SNA refreshed its brand visuals and developed complementary looks for each of its national conferences. Although the signature red, green and white colors in the official apple logo remain part of the brand, the deep purple for the website was applied as the main hue. Each of the conferences was assigned two secondary colors (see *SNA Style Guide on page 30*), giving them an independent look while still connecting with the main brand. We also introduced a brand font, which is now used in 90% of SNA's marketing and event materials.



Pre-branding Samples



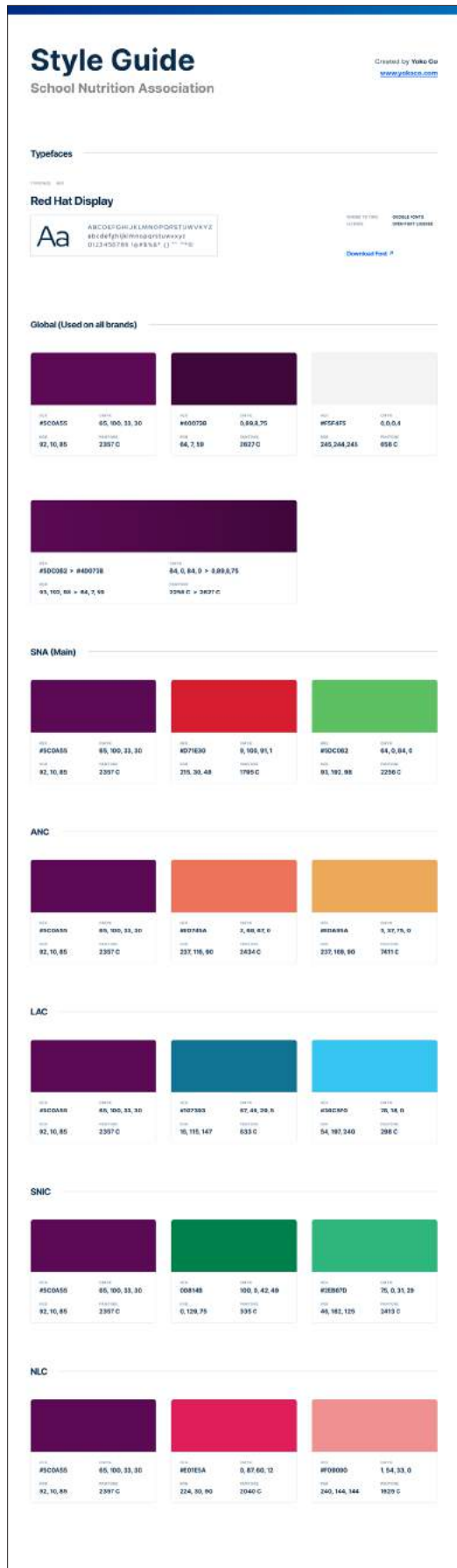
For example, the Annual National Conference (ANC) now uses a new main logo featuring SNA's new purple hue, along with orange and coral as secondary colors. A secondary logo features the conference theme, but applies the same colors and font as the main logo. For #ANC23's "Reach Higher" theme, there is a nod to the mountainous horizon of host city Denver in the graphic peaks of the design, but the overall look is tightly aligned with the ANC brand. The next plan is to develop a singular main logo for each of SNA's other national conferences, allowing for secondary theme logos that will be in the same family.

How do you want to be identified? What's in a name?

Well, a lot. Most school nutrition departments choose to be branded as part of the district. XYZ District School Nutrition (or Food & Nutrition Services or Student Dining or Child Nutrition and so on). This is a perfectly reasonable choice. Yours is, after all, a department within the district structure (in most cases).

On the other hand, there are advantages to setting yourself apart from the district identity, especially considering that most school nutrition operations are expected to be self-sustaining. If you seek to elevate perceptions about school meals, it can be helpful to untie yourself from expectations about a district department.

Consider, for example, **Minneapolis True Food**, the name of the school nutrition department at Minneapolis Public Schools. Its name emphasizes the program's focus on clean-label, locally sourced menu items. Similarly, the **Burlington School Food Project**, operating within Burlington (Vt.) School District, signals its mission to collaborate with community partners, especially for farm-to-school initiatives, in bringing healthy meals to students and families. In Alachua County (Fla.), the school nutrition department brand is: **Your Choice Fresh**, making its priorities abundantly clear. Meanwhile, **School Day Café** conveys a commercial feel for students in Santa Clarita Valley, Calif.



VISUAL CUES

What does your brand look like? While it's not the end-all, be-all of the brand, a logo *is* the most visible aspect of your brand along with its name. A logo should elicit immediate brand recognition, build an emotional connection with customers and showcase the organization's personality. Do you have a logo? When was the last time it was refreshed or redesigned? Give it a critical eye. Does it truly represent your program or is it somewhat generic, as if it could apply to any sort of food or health business? Is it easy to visualize or is it cluttered and complicated? You might find that it's time to reimagine that logo.

While SN could publish a whole *separate* article on how to create a logo, we'll just touch on some top tactics here. We are all working in an era of incredibly easy-to-use graphic design tools, such as Canva. Still, when it comes to something as public-facing and enduring as your brand's logo, you should resist the urge to create it yourself.

Find an experienced graphic designer. If your district is large enough to field a communications department, there may be a professional on staff or a go-to local resource. If yours is a small district, check in with visual arts instructors, especially those at the secondary level who may have expertise with digital media tools and experience in professional design applications. Still struggling to find a good fit? There are online resources that can connect you with low-cost freelancers or skilled volunteers willing to do pro-bono projects; look into Upwork.com and TaprootFoundation.org.

Why go pro? First, you want to meet accessibility standards—that is, ensuring that everyone can visually see and understand your logo. Fonts and colors play an important role here. Second, DIY design programs like Canva are great to design images for websites or small print jobs like menus and flyers, but they often can't provide the rigorous specifications required for large-scale printing, such as a cafeteria banner or a wrap for a food truck or bus. In addition, they often lack the requirements for printing on products like uniforms and aprons. Even when you work with a professional, be sure that person is aware of all the potential applications where your logo may appear, including those we've just referenced.

Logo elements include fonts (make sure they're licensed for commercial use!) and color palettes that can be components of related graphics. You might want branded PowerPoint presentations, digital video backgrounds, email signatures and other creative elements. Ask the designer to create a brand style guide, a document that ensures that all stakeholders showcase the visual identity properly (*see the box at left*).

GET TAGGED

Do you want a tagline? As SNA has updated its own brand identity across 77 years, it has matched new logos with different taglines to reinforce its "why." Past taglines have included "The Voice of Child Nutrition" and "Making the Right Food Choices, Together." The current tagline is "Feeding Bodies, Fueling Minds®." It's simple, to the point and conveys the mission of the organization—all key attributes of a good tagline.

Consider these taglines from school nutrition operations across the country. Many have similar themes and common words. Yet the specific choice of words and their order can change emphasis and nuance in conveying an overall message.

- Assabet (Mass.) School Nutrition Services: "Feed Your Mind"
- Alexandria City (Va.) School Nutrition Services: "Feed the Future"
- Baldwin County (Ga.) School Nutrition: "Empowering Our Future"
- Bozeman (Mont.) Food Service: "Fueling Quality Education"

- Crane Schools (Ariz.) Nutrition Department: “Leaders Educating Body & Mind”
- Edmond (Okla.) Child Nutrition: “Eat Smart. Be Smart.”
- Falmouth (Maine) Nutrition Program: “Healthy Food for a Healthy Future”
- Fayette County (Ga.) School Nutrition: “Be Smart. Eat Smart.”
- Fort Worth (Texas) Child Nutrition: “Powering Potential”
- Liberty (Mo.) Nutrition Services: “Feeding Dreams”
- Memphis-Shelby County (Tenn.) Nutrition Services: “Eating Well in the 901” (*the primary area code*)
- Minerva Local (Ohio) Nutrition Services: “Where Cafeteria, Classroom and Community Come Together”
- Orono (Minn.) Child Nutrition: “Fresh From the Heart”
- School City of Hobart (Ind.) Food Services: “Feeding Children Is a Work of Heart”
- Twin Rivers (Calif.) USD Nutrition Services: “Smart Eating, Active Living”
- West Clermont (Ohio) Child Nutrition: “Nourishing Tomorrow’s Leaders, Today”

When you read all these short phrases, there’s no doubt of the different departments’ goals. Adding a tagline to the logo can help to establish a stronger brand identity in the minds of students, parents, school staff and other stakeholders.

CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Perhaps the hardest part of developing a brand identity isn’t the actual creation—it’s sticking to it. If you consider yourself especially creative, you might soon get bored with your brand and feel tempted to update it within a year or two. Considering that the majority of your students and families are customers for a dozen years or more, you want to guard against changing your brand too often or it will lose its efficacy and become relatively meaningless.

Similarly, you must protect your brand against well-intended tweaks at the school level or by district staff. For example, maybe a principal and cafeteria site manager have colluded to replace the district-wide brand with one that connects more directly to their school’s nickname, mascot and colors. Perhaps the person in charge of the district website fails to integrate your branding on your department’s pages. Or maybe your own team is haphazard about remembering to use it on both digital and print communications. It’s up to you to explain the value of maintaining a consistent brand and promote—or enforce—its use. It’s your connection with your “why.” **SN**

Kelsey Casselbury is SNA’s Content Director, a position that includes strategizing, developing and implementing (and, yes, branding!) the marketing campaigns for Association programs and events.

More than 30% of
K-12 schools served

TOTAL SATISFACTION

When you need a partner you can trust with endless passion for helping you make the most of your food service budget, turn to **IPS Rebates** — the leading K-12 rebate processor in the U.S.

Visit Booth 1021 at ANC 2023



More Than Numbers. Partners.
ipsrebates.com

BY LIZ WHITEMAN ROESEL

Fear Not the Trolls!

You're not using social media to market your school nutrition program?! Why not? Maybe you hoped that social media would be a short-lived trend that wouldn't last. Perhaps you think you're not tech savvy enough to use social media for marketing. No doubt there have been days where you're convinced you simply don't have the time to manage one or more social media accounts. These are completely understandable reasons. But perhaps it's time to change your view and start looking at social media as an invaluable resource in your toolbox, instead of a mundane task on your ever-growing to-do list. Because when you do, you are sure to discover that social media can generate some surprising benefits that will ease frustrations in many areas of your program!

So if you don't have a Facebook, Twitter or Instagram account for your school nutrition department, read on as I do one of my favorite things: Debunk the myths, break down barriers that may be holding you back and offer some strategies to make the most of this resource!

EMBRACE THE "CONVERSATION"

Through my social media marketing business, SEA Level Social, the No. 1 one reason directors cite against establishing social media accounts for their program is that they "don't want to create a platform for parents to complain about their program." In fact, once, when working with a South Carolina district to launch their social media, the director told me, "Okay, we are excited to get started! When do the negative comments usually start?" She wasn't joking or being sarcastic. She just wanted to be prepared.

Negative comments should never be the reason you hesitate to use social media marketing! But don't just take my word for it. Let's talk numbers: In SEA Level Social's first year, we managed Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts for a dozen school nutrition operations. For each district, we posted four times per week on each social

platform. That's more than 5,600 posts—which provided more than 5,600 opportunities for the trolls to say something negative. Here's what happened: Fewer than 10 people, *total*, made a comment that was mildly snarky, rude or inaccurate. On behalf of the school nutrition department, SEA Level addressed the concerns and answered the questions; three times, this involved a multi-comment "dialogue." And that was it. Had those districts let fear of negative comments hold them back from social media, they would have missed 5,600 opportunities to promote their programs to their communities.

Personally, I *love* when there is a bit of conversation in the comment section, even if it starts with a negative comment or complaint. Why? It provides you with *another* opportunity to explain how your program works and address what is most likely a common misconception. Posts with comments are seen by more people, so remember that you're not just talking to that commenter. You're talking to everyone who reviews that comment section. It's a win-win!

On occasions when a commenter is determined to be difficult, my best advice is to take the conversation offline.



See social media through
a new lens, and put it
to work for your school
meals program.

In the comment section, ask them to call or email you (and here's my favorite tactic) *"to discuss their specific needs."* Publicly, this shows you care about everyone's concerns. Privately, you know this is likely an issue that can't be solved in social media comments. Plus, now the responsibility is on that "concerned citizen" to follow through and contact you. If they do, great! It shows they are genuinely engaged, and it provides you with the opportunity to dig into the heart of the issue, and, hopefully, win them over. Even if they don't come around, your social media audience witnessed your excellent customer service.

And remember that, in general, the type of parent who tends to comment is not just vocal with you—they talk to other parents! If you can improve their understanding of school nutrition program complexities, you may be able to convert these influential parents into advocates for school meals.

Be confident that you can handle any negativity that comes your way. As an SNA member with solid expertise, you have the knowledge base to correct misperceptions about school nutrition in general, as well as your specific program in particular. Be wary, however, of getting into the weeds of this complicated area of foodservice. Avoid acronyms and jargon like "component," "meal pattern," "NSLP" and even "reimbursable." Quite frankly, you should "dumb it down" for your audience, just as you might if you had only a few minutes to explain what you do to a distant relative at a family reunion.

Overall, stay friendly and professional; take care not to get defensive or to come off as patronizing. If your antagonist is really pushing your buttons, stay calm but don't take any abuse. End the conversation politely—and then find a safe outlet to vent your frustrations and express what you *really* want to say!

DISTRICT "DISCONNECT"

In some cases, the school nutrition department may be prohibited by the district administration from having its own social media accounts. *"Just send your campaigns or news to the district communications department, and we will post them on the district's accounts."* You can push back gently, but persistently here. They may not realize just how much content you have to share!

You know that the most effective social media posts are ones that educate *and* entertain an audience, and you have *plenty* of information to do both! Between menus, nutrition facts, behind-the-scenes photos, fun promotional activities, bulletin board and door displays, informational posts and spotlights on your team members, there is no shortage of content about the program that you can share on social media.

Send the district communications department *everything* that might help decrease parent phone calls and emails, as well as increase your participation. This influx may help persuade them that you have more than enough content to justify your own social media accounts—and that you will manage them in a responsible and professional manner.



Ardmore Farms Juice Boxes Come in a Variety of Flavors!

4.23 oz Flavors

Apple
Grape Blend
Orange
Orange Tangerine
Strawberry Kiwi
Tropical Fruit Punch



6.75 oz Flavors

Apple
Grape Blend
Orange Tangerine
Strawberry Kiwi
Tropical Fruit Punch



countrypure.com

GOOD GROUPS

Are you beginning to feel some intrigue about using social media to put your department in the spotlight? Let's talk about strategy. Posting on your own accounts is important, but sharing posts in **Facebook Groups** is one of the easiest and most effective ways you can organically get your posts in front of *more* people in your community. This includes parents, teachers, other school staff, government officials, other local influencers with a stake in child wellness, the media, potential partners and more. After being in some hot water in the past with how the company uses people's personal information, local Facebook is now more conscious about creating engaging and safe spaces for people to connect with others of similar interests. That means Facebook is investing a lot of effort in making Groups a success, which is great news for us!

Hopefully you are aware of the many Facebook Groups where thousands of school nutrition professionals share and collaborate with one another. Now, I challenge you to identify and participate in *local* Facebook Groups, using these forums to promote your program. With a little digging, you may find local Facebook Groups dedicated to community news and events, neighborhoods, parents, parent-teacher organizations and employment leads.

How do you find these Groups? It's so easy—I type the name of the city and state in the Facebook search box, then select "Groups" from the menu options and get a list of what's

available. Do the same using the county and school district names. (Another hint: Check out any Groups that follow your district or school nutrition accounts.)

Review the options, join the Groups that seem most promising and then start sharing your posts. Be mindful that the information you choose to share will be deemed appropriate and valuable to the members of a particular Group. I advise not posting more than once per week in a Group—this is to avoid being flagged as a spammer by the Group's administrators. Always be respectful of the Group rules. If you experience any pushback, message the Group admins and just let them know you are with the local school district and want to promote the school meals program to help feed more children in your community. (I have never had an administrator kick me out of a Group for wanting to feed kids!)

If your school nutrition department has its own Facebook Page, join the group *as your department page*. You can join as an individual, but that will open you up to interactions that may compromise your privacy. You can toggle back and forth between the Facebook page you administer on the job and your personal profile; be consistent about which one to use for sharing or replying to comments. (Need help with this? Contact requests@sealevelsocialmedia.com and my team will be happy to walk you through it.)

Your Group posts are likely to reach more people than the posts you make to your own page. This means the

Vegetable Options That Don't Taste Like Vegetables!



Ruby Rusher!
Berry Punch Flavor



Sunset Sip
Tropical Mix Flavor

BONUS BENEFITS

The most obvious benefit of social media marketing is, well, marketing! Digital media is the most effective way to reach an audience with your messages. But I've discovered some surprising benefits, too.

Of these, the most significant is the boost it can give to **team morale**. You know well how both front line and behind-the-scenes staff can feel underappreciated and overlooked. You can change that by showcasing their hard work on a public platform.

Start with a little credit. When members of your team—particularly staff at different school sites—submit photos for your social media, give them a “photo credit” on the post. This will help them to feel further appreciated.

“Meet Our Team” spotlights are an excellent means of recognizing your hardworking staff year-round. A simple photo plus some fun facts about the individual person is a powerful way to promote your people and your program simultaneously. Bonus: The comment sections of such posts are almost always overflowing with kudos and congratulations. Consider this true story: In one district, a few staff members who had been contemplating retirement were inspired to stick around longer after seeing their group featured in a “Meet Our Team” post on the program's social media account.

Social media is a great, proactive way to **get ahead of parent calls and emails**. Ask your managers and office staff to share the questions they field most frequently. *That's* your next marketing campaign! Blast it out to your entire audience and you'll see a measurable decrease in the queries made to your team.

We expect to educate parents, students and the community at large, but social media can be effective in **raising awareness about your program among other school staff**. One school nutrition team shared the compliments they have received for their social media presence from teachers, administrators and staff. They now enjoy a supportive environment throughout the district.



possibility of more negative commenters, especially from people with less direct engagement with your cafeterias. Be prepared for this. Keep an eye on your Facebook notifications to keep track of when someone engages with your post or comment. *Always* respond, because you don't want misconceptions and inaccuracies to live on social media unchallenged or uncorrected.

PRO TIPS

As you take your first steps into using social media for your school meal program, keep the following tips in mind:

Your audience is growing all the time—even if everyone doesn't see (or interact with) every post. You can use older photos on your phone for “Throwback Thursday” posts. These can be a **fun, fresh way to communicate “evergreen” information** about the wide array of activities that occur in the cafeteria.

Reminders are your friend. Campaigns like meal benefit applications, meal debt angel fund donations, hiring calls and summer meal details should be repeated frequently.

Finally, managing your department's social media can (and should) be a team effort, especially if you have other members of the team who really enjoy taking pictures, creating graphics in Canva and posting different types of content on social media platforms. Empower them to tap into their creativity and watch their job satisfaction increase—your entire program will benefit! **SN**

Liz Whiteman Roesel is president and co-founder of SEA Level Social, providing social media services and strategy exclusively to school nutrition programs. This article is based on an #ANC22 presentation and SEA Level Social will be in Denver for #ANC23 as both speakers and exhibitors. Learn more about their team and services, plus access free downloadable resources at www.sealevelsocialmedia.com and contact Whiteman Roesel directly at liz@sealevelsocialmedia.com.



BONUS WEB CONTENT

Fear Not the Trolls!

Many school nutrition departments continue to struggle with staffing shortages. Social media can boost your hiring efforts! This issue's online extras include some helpful tips. Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/bonuswebcontent/#articles

Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/snmagazinebonus to access.



The Fresh-Baked Idea Company®



Quality Ingredients & Versatility

Bridgford high-quality, great tasting products are versatile for endless recipe possibilities. Available in bulk and a selection of individually wrapped (IW), use Bridgford Bread & Roll Dough for sandwiches, sliders, pizza varieties, and more!

Visit bridgford.com/school for menu ideas.



MADE
IN THE USA

Order Bridgford "Better for You" products from your Favorite Frozen Food Distributor Sales Representative. Call us at (800) 527-2105, or visit us at bridgford.com/school for recipes and other information.



For product information and more recipes, visit bridgford.com/school

Let's *TOK* *About*

BY DYLAN ROCHE



SCHOOL NUTRITION

UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN COMPLETELY UNPLUGGED for the past few years (and in that case, more power to you!), you've probably heard about TikTok, the popular social media platform that has quickly grown to dominate online sharing. A place for education as much as it is for entertainment and self-expression, TikTok provides an endless stream of short-form videos that can safely be described as downright addictive for just about anyone who has opened the app.



Learn why and how to tap into TikTok for next-level social media marketing.

School nutrition professionals should take particular note—this is a platform that can help you pursue many of the goals that are likely on your to-do list. Need to find new recipe ideas? You can do it on TikTok. Want to promote the benefits of healthy eating to students and their families? You can do it on TikTok. Have a fun promotion or new product sample activity planned for your cafeteria that you want to share? You can do it on TikTok.

Your curiosity might be leavened with a little hesitancy. Many find it a bit daunting to learn a new app. And you'd be well within your rights to question whether you really *need* to join one more social media platform. So, whether you have reservations or are intrigued to learn more, read on—we have an in-depth look at how you can use TikTok to take your school meals program to the next level, including promoting your expertise, innovations and achievements in a powerful way that resonates with your target audience.

SHORT-FORM VIDEOS, BIG OPPORTUNITIES

There are two major facets of TikTok that make it different from other popular social media platforms: first, the content, and second, the algorithm. TikTok's content is 100% video, and it's short-form video at that. While most vids are between 30 seconds and a minute, some are only a few seconds, and very few go up to the 3-minute maximum.

Unlike Twitter and Facebook/Instagram, where much of the content you see in your feed comes from other users you actively follow, TikTok features a dedicated feed it calls the "For You Page," in which the platform's algorithm shows you content that will likely interest you, based on your viewing history and engagement. (It's worth noting, however, that the other social media giants have begun moving in this direction. More on this in a bit.)

The algorithm is what makes TikTok especially appealing, according to Karsyn Skuter, who, along with husband Ben, runs TikTok marketing company Skuter Social (skutersocial.com). "It curates content specifically tailored to each individual user, based on the type of videos they prefer to watch and engage with," she notes, explaining that creators don't have to painstakingly build a huge following in order for their videos to reach the audience with the greatest potential interest. That said, TikTok creations follow the course of many social platforms: as content gains more user interactions in the form of likes, comments and shares,

it's pushed to a broader and broader audience, potentially reaching millions of viewers. Is it any wonder that TikTok has exploded in popularity and become a model that is propelling change among competitors?

Although the platform has existed in some form since 2016, it didn't go international until 2017, and it didn't become the TikTok we know today until it merged with the video-sharing app Musical.ly in 2018. Many people first turned to TikTok for entertainment and to develop connectivity with others during pandemic lockdowns and restrictions throughout 2020 and 2021. Today, TikTok boasts approximately 1 billion users around the world; an estimated 150 million are in the United States.

And most of those users are teenagers and young adults, aka Gen Z, born between 1997 and 2012. According to a survey by social media scheduler Hootsuite, some 60% of TikTok's audience is under age 30. It's easy to see why—young people like the dynamism of video, and they gravitate to having curated content pushed to them. This is also the generation arguably most prone to self-expression, thanks



TIKTOK IN ACTION

How can you use TikTok to benefit your district's school nutrition program? Here are a few ideas of the types of short-form videos you can create and share:

- 😊 **Post a recipe:** Highlight prep elements of popular entrées or side dishes on your menu.
- 😊 **Share healthy eating advice:** Talk about different nutrients that kids need for a productive day and the different food sources that deliver those nutrients in abundance.
- 😊 **Discuss food sustainability:** Give a rundown of your district/school's school garden, farm or orchard. Highlight ways your program supports local agriculture or reduces food waste.
- 😊 **Watch and learn:** It's okay if you don't feel like creating your own content—you can always find something fascinating to watch on TikTok.

If TikTok is the purview of the young, what does it mean for most school nutrition professionals, who are members of older generations?



to a lifetime of social media engagement. TikTok boasts easy and intuitive recording and editing capabilities within its app, allowing anyone to create publishable content. In a matter of mere minutes, you can capture video, edit clips, splice them together, add text, music and stickers and then post.

If TikTok is the purview of the young, what does it mean for most school nutrition professionals, who are members of older generations? Remember, 40% of users are *not* under 30, and this is not an insignificant ratio. There *is* a place for you—and many reasons to climb on the bandwagon.

CURATED CONTENT

After you install the app on your phone or tablet, scroll through TikTok's content. If there's an area of interest you want to learn more about, you'll find videos catering to that niche. What's more, there are entire communities built around these interests connected via hashtags. For example, content creators in the #BookTok community talk about what they're reading, and #FoodTok community members share what they're cooking. Once you click on one of the relevant hashtags, you can find thousands of other videos generated by members of that particular community.

Vanessa Hayes, Chief Nutrition Officer for **Tift County (Ga.) Schools**, first started using TikTok (@chefvee768) during the pandemic when she was delivering meals to students learning (and eating) remotely. She saw TikTok videos as a way to stay connected with her customers. "I would stay in my van and share what I was doing or what we were celebrating and all of that. It was just a way to make people aware and keep them engaged in our program," Hayes explains.

Although she posts less frequently today, Hayes still makes a point to upload videos of dancing and other high-spirited activities that highlight how the cafeteria is a welcoming place, busting negative stereotypes. "The cafeteria's been portrayed as a kind of stoic, starchy place where kids can't enjoy themselves. It's important for them to know they can come to the cafeteria and have fun," she says.

Bobbie Guyette, Supervisor of School Nutrition for **School District of New Richmond, Wis.**, started using TikTok (@real_school_food) a little more than a year ago. "It was at the top of my mind to let communities, families and legislators know what school meals *really* are—not just pretty pictures, but the reality," she explains. "Most of my content is about being proud of what we do as school nutrition professionals. I show a day in the life, slimming it down to 30-second videos, so people can stay engaged while learning something about our programs."

Guyette's videos of behind-the-scenes cafeteria life have garnered her 1.2 million likes and more than 16,000 followers, showing that there is, indeed, interest in school nutrition topics among the greater TikTok community. While Guyette admits that Facebook and Instagram are generally better places to turn for school meal inspiration (for now), she still finds TikTok to be a solid educational resource.

Juan Zamorano, Food Services Program Specialist for **San Diego Unified School District**, is drawn to TikTok's educational role and seeks to take it beyond raising awareness about school meals. "All my content is geared toward teaching people *something*, whether it's a cooking technique or a background story on ingredients or how to handle food safely," Zamorano (@chefzzamo) says. It's a unique challenge, he concedes, given TikTok's length restrictions. "Within that one-minute window, you have to pack a lot of information," he explains. "You have to make it engaging. And you have to make it make sense."

Feeling intrigued by the opportunity to use TikTok as a platform to reach students and others in your school and district—and beyond? There's no shortage of ideas that school nutrition teams can run with. One expert, Michael Smith, who runs the blog iTechHere.com, encourages a multi-pronged approach. "By sharing videos about the meals that are being served in schools, professionals can create excitement and generate interest in the meals they are serving," he says. "They can also use TikTok to share recipes and cooking tips that students can try at home. Second, school nutrition professionals are using TikTok to find ideas and inspiration for their menus. By following other creators in the same field, they can get new ideas for healthy school meals and snacks."

COURTING CONTROVERSY

You may be hesitant to tackle the TikTok learning curve thanks to news headlines that warn the platform may soon be banned in this country. Let's unpack what's going on behind those reports.

It's true that there are a number of lawmakers—from both sides of the political aisle—who see TikTok as a potential threat to national security. This is because TikTok's parent company, ByteDance, is based in China. Under

Remember, 40% of users are *not* under 30, and this is not an insignificant ratio. There *is* a place for you—and many reasons to climb on the bandwagon.

Chinese intelligence laws, ByteDance could be compelled to surrender data about TikTok users to the Chinese government, which could use it to engage in espionage or as part of misinformation campaigns, among other ill intents.

Many countries, including the United States, have restricted use of TikTok on government-issued phones and devices. India has placed a national ban on the platform and Pakistan has issued temporary bans, citing immoral content sharing. Some U.S. politicians are advocating for a national ban here, as well. TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew recently testified before Congress to assure lawmakers that there are no serious safety concerns and to describe options his company is exploring to move storage of all American data to U.S. soil.

Nonetheless, the Biden Administration is calling on ByteDance to sell TikTok or face a national ban here. How such a ban would manifest itself is difficult to predict. It might be that app stores could no longer carry it, and users who already have it installed would no longer be able to get software updates. A more sweeping restriction would be requiring internet providers to block access.

At this point, it's anyone's guess what will happen to TikTok in the future. The practicalities of a ban seem logistically difficult to implement and enforce. Certainly, such a move would be unprecedented—and likely to face a fair share of legal challenges. Still, it's unusual to see such bipartisan support in the current Congress, and pundits don't believe Chew's reassurances changed any opinions on Capitol Hill.

THE SHORT-FORM VERSION (BEFORE YOU SWIPE)

What is most fundamental about the controversy—if you're interested in using TikTok to promote your district's school nutrition program—is that it's likely to be a while before any

definitive action is taken. This means your personal education investment of time in learning the app is very likely to pay off.

This is in part because other social media platforms are starting to imitate what TikTok has to offer. Instagram and YouTube have both launched their own short-form video features in recent years. Twitter has separated its feed into two parts, one for accounts you follow and another for content the algorithm thinks you'll be interested in (the conspicuously titled "For You" feed). Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, is working to change its own algorithm to provide broader content access.

At the very least, joining TikTok will provide you with plenty of inspiring content for your own engagement. Plus, it will help you learn how to make short-form videos to entertain and educate. And with the growing popularity of short-form video, this could soon become a marketing must. **SN**

Dylan Roche is a contributing editor to School Nutrition based in Arnold, Md. TikTok logo by Vecteezy.com



STITCH? DUET? HUH?

When you're creating content on TikTok, you'll have the option of interacting with or using another creator's material as part of your own. But some of the app's jargon and features can be confusing to a newbie. Here are a few terms you should know:

Sounds: You can record your video in sync with sound from another video. TikTok is full of trending sounds that millions of

creators use in all kinds of ways to fit their niche or brand.

Stitch: You can select five seconds from another video to begin your original video. This is a great option if you want to reply to somebody's video, provide further information or even offer a different point of view.

Duet: You can record your video to appear alongside somebody else's video so both can be watched

simultaneously. This is a great way to show your reaction to something another creator posted.

Reply with Video: Want to reply to a comment on a video (yours or someone else's)? A video reply may be more effective than text. This feature lets you record a new video, with the comment you're replying to appearing as an icon in the top corner of the screen.

SNEAK PEEK

Start planning now for next year's national celebrations of school lunch and breakfast.

As a school nutrition professional, you flex your creative muscles all year long. Twice a year, however, there's an opportunity to *really* have some fun: National School Lunch Week (NSLW) and National School Breakfast Week (NSBW)!

Getting an early start on planning for #NSLW23 in October and #NSBW24 next March is essential for truly successful campaigns that achieve your goals. Organizing a memorable celebration for each event takes coordination among frontline foodservice staff, teachers, school administrators, local community partners and other stakeholders. Advance preparation also helps ensure that you can budget appropriately and secure the supplies you'll need (special menu items, decorations, giveaways, activity resources, etc.) to execute your creative campaign.

This sneak peek is only the first step. With the generous support of official NSLW/NSBW campaign partner Kellogg's, SNA will be developing various resources to make your workload a little lighter. This includes toolkits to guide you through your planning, activity and coloring sheets to

give to students, social media assets to help you market your event and much more. Also, turn to the SNA Shop (www.schoolnutrition.org/snashop) for themed decorations and merchandise, such as posters and banners, as well as cups, water bottles, stickers and more.

As this school year winds down, set aside a little time to gather your team and start brainstorming. The #NSLW23 dates are hot on the heels of back-to-school season, so start outlining your ideas early to make these campaigns exceed all expectations!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#NSLW23: October 9-13, 2023

#NSBW24: March 4-8, 2024

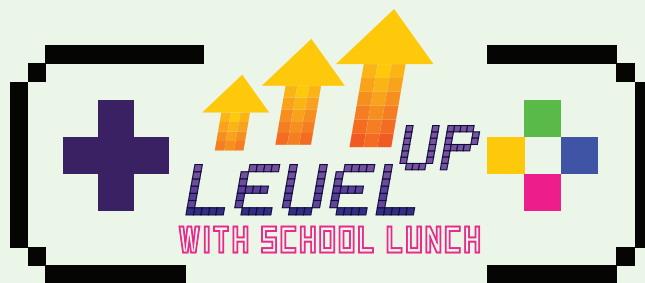
#NSLW23: LEVEL UP WITH SCHOOL LUNCH

Facts are facts: Kids (and many adults) *love* video games, and #NSLW23's theme, "Level Up with School Lunch," is designed to take full advantage of that passion. The wordplay also sends positive messages about the value of school meals. Eating a balanced and delicious lunch at school gives students the fuel they need to take their achievements to the next level. This theme also promotes the fact that school meals are continually improving, with trending flavors, globally influenced menu items, scratch/speed-scratch preparations and farm-to-school partnerships.

It's easy to make a link between nutritious foods and video games, too!

In many gaming scenarios, a character low on energy or health powers up by finding food items. (Super Mario fans know that mushrooms make Mario grow big and strong!) And while video games are often unfairly associated with sedentary behavior, #NSLW23 can help dispel those perceptions. There are

many video games that feature various levels of activity, from Pokémon Go, which emphasizes a *ton* of walking, to the upbeat, motion-heavy Just Dance and Dance Dance Revolution to the exergaming modules of Nintendo Switch Sports.



In developing your celebration plans, you can focus on a generic video game aesthetic (taking cues from the retro style of the official #NSLW23 logo), but consider doing some research into games and characters that are popular with your students. Conduct a poll, asking students as they come through the serving line or while they're dining in the cafeteria to share their favorites. With this insight in hand, you can lean into those games with your decoration and celebration ideas. It can help the students feel involved in the event and make it more relatable to your school site.

One word of caution about artwork: Remember that most games and characters are protected by copyrights

and trademarks. Be sure you use officially licensed merchandise to stay in the clear!

As always, we encourage you and your coworkers to go all in and dress up—or, as the video game community might say, cosplay! Serve lunch dressed up as popular characters, and encourage students to join in doing the same. It could make for fun photo opportunities if a group represents all the characters from the same game!

To add more “players” (aka students eating school lunch!), get creative with your menu. Milk and fruit and vegetable juices can become “health mana potions.” Grab ‘n’ Go items can become “XP boosters” (XP=experience points), entrées and sides can be “main quests”

and “side quests.” A simple name change creates a playful atmosphere for this gaming theme!

Your celebration can also draw a link to video games as a door into a computer science career. Partner with the school librarian or with IT instructors to highlight video game-themed books, lesson plans on coding and other ways to create a more holistic and engaging approach to maximizing the #NSLW23 theme with students and the school community.

Remember, when you finish this article, it's not “game over.” It's just the first round of your journey as you “Level Up with School Lunch!”

#NSBW24: SURF'S UP WITH SCHOOL BREAKFAST



Say “Aloha” to the 2024 National School Breakfast Week theme! “Surf’s Up with School Breakfast” is here to deliver some much-needed warmth at the end of a long winter, before eagerly anticipated Spring Break plans. The theme is designed to bring the

excitement and energy of surfing culture to your cafeteria, while keeping a focus on healthy and delicious breakfast options.

At its core, NSBW is about promoting, in an engaging way, the value of eating breakfast at school. This starts, of course, with the menu. With this beach theme, you can seamlessly integrate a number of nutritious, tropical breakfast options into your daily offerings. Take a cue from Hawaiian food favorites. *[Editors’ Note: SN will provide an overview of Hawaiian cuisine, including recipes, in its September/October issue.]* Plan a breakfast beach party, complete with a special menu that might feature breakfast sandwiches made on Hawaiian rolls, tropical fruit salads, yogurt parfaits, coconut or banana pancakes, pineapple smoothies, banana bread or tropical fruit-studded oatmeal. California cuisine can also be an inspiration here—think avocado toast, açai bowls and sourdough bread, for example.

If this kind of meal prep is time-prohibitive for breakfast, focus your attention on themed decorations, costumes and activities. You might already have everything you need! One easy-breezy idea for you and

your coworkers is to break out your summer wardrobe and come dressed up in (work-appropriate!) beach attire. Accessorize with Hawaiian leis, snorkels/goggles, fun sunglasses, beaded necklaces, lifeguard whistles and floppy beach hats. Decorate with colorful pool floaties, beach balls, umbrellas, sand buckets, beach blankets and towels and so on.

Feeling more ambitious? Tropical fruits such as whole coconuts and pineapple could also be used as decoration, then later made into yummy treats! Create mini cardboard surfboards that can be distributed to each student to decorate and then display these on a wall in the dining area. If time permits for activities, get creative with other organized crafts, such as simple DIY leis assembled from cut paper flowers, straws and string.

In surfing culture, the shaka hand gesture (curling your three middle fingers while extending your thumb and pinky) means “right on,” “thank you” and “take it easy.” Get ready to show us your shaka sign! Don’t worry about wiping out—with all this time to plan, “Surf’s Up with School Breakfast” is “shore” to prompt students to hang loose and bring beachy vibes to your cafeteria! **SN**



School nutrition professionals prepare to gather in Denver to “Reach Higher” at #ANC23, connecting, learning and growing toward new heights—together.

Sometimes the school nutrition business seems like a never-ending hike up a steep and winding trail. Just when you think the summit will come into view around the next bend, you encounter another daunting incline (such as new regulations, staffing shortages or unsupportive administrators). But you keep pressing forward, because the goal is worthwhile, because each new milestone is a satisfying achievement in its own right and because you’re in great company along the way. **#ANC23, July 9-11**, celebrates the collective perseverance of school nutrition professionals at all levels. Even with obstacles in your way, you keep striving toward ambitious new goals, always reaching higher, making this year’s conference theme right on point.

You can look to #ANC23 to provide the “climbing gear” you need in many forms: inspiration and information, innovative ideas in action, new products, unparalleled networking and a joyful spirit! No other child nutrition-centric event rivals the sheer scope of this national conference. This year’s Exhibit Hall is expected to feature more than 800 booths bursting with solutions developed specifically to address today’s school meal challenges (*learn more on page 54*). #ANC23 Co-Advisers Kristen Hennessey, SNS, and Michael Francis helped

guide the development and selection of 100+ education programs (*see page 47*). Thousands of school nutrition professionals and vendor partners will fill the meeting spaces of the Colorado Convention Center, all eager to connect in a shared passion for feeding children in school.

There’s still time to count yourself among the seekers of new summits at #ANC23! Check out the program highlights on the pages that follow and then visit anc.schoolnutrition.org for registration details.

Opening Keynote: **Heather Younger**

Sunday, July 9



A culture focused on the power of listening

can transform a workplace, leading to better engagement by staff, improved customer satisfaction, higher revenues, lower turnover and brand loyalty. Don’t miss **Heather Younger**, founder and CEO of employee engagement and consulting firm Employee Fanatix, who’s on a mission to help organizations and leaders understand the benefits and rewards of active listening for their organizations. She’s a best-selling author and host of the “Leadership with Heart” podcast.

A diversity, equity and inclusion strategist and the world’s leading expert on listening at work, Younger will share actionable insights gained from thousands of employee engagement surveys. Attendees will leave with an inspired understanding of how to practice active listening, positioning them to better understand their team, partners or students, while working to ensure everyone feels heard, valued and appreciated. Discover how a culture of listening can benefit your workplace, your coworkers and, ultimately, yourself.

Sponsored by PrimeroEdge + SchoolCafé

Closing Keynote: Sonia Manzano

Tuesday, July 11



#ANC23 is all about inspiring and educating,

and this year's Closing Keynote Speaker has a long history in doing just that! Sonia Manzano—perhaps better known as Maria on America's preeminent children's television show "Sesame Street"—broke new ground as one of the first Hispanic characters on national television, earning her such honors as being named one of the 25 greatest Latino role models ever by *Latina* magazine and receiving a Lifetime Achievement Daytime Emmy Award in 2016.

In addition to Manzano's 44 years on "Sesame Street," she's also the author of multiple books and developed the animated children's TV series, "Alma's Way," which revolves around a 6-year-old Puerto Rican girl as she ventures out into her neighborhood to demonstrate problem-solving and social awareness skills. In her keynote presentation, Manzano will engage the audience with her life story as a boundary-breaking actress, producer and author.

Sponsored by LINQ

Traulsen

COLD MILK IN A COOLER CABINET

Support your serving line line with
Traulsen's RMC Milk Cooler!

- Top-Mounted Forced Air Sytem
- All Metal Construction
- Low Access Height
- Easy to Clean
- Heavy Duty Dunnage Racks + Reinforced Bottom



COVERING ALL YOUR K-12 REFRIGERATION NEEDS



www.traulsen.com | 4401 Blue Mound Road, Fort Worth, TX 76106 | Traulsen © All Rights Reserved

A colorful advertisement for the 2023 Traulsen & Hobart Save Your Kitchen (SYK) Patrol. It features a red helicopter, a snow-covered mountain, and three cartoon characters in winter gear. One character is holding a flag, another is holding a clipboard, and a third is holding a sign. The text includes "2023 TRAUlsen & HOBART SAVE YOUR KITCHEN SYK PATROL", "ENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN BY JULY 14", "SaveYourKitchen.com", and "ENTER TO WIN". A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.

EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT TO EXTEND YOUR REACH

With 100+ educational offerings packed into four days, SNA's ANC is unmatched for delivering top-notch professional development. In fact, the conference will earn attendees 12.5 CEUs (more if you also attend eligible pre-conference workshops)! When you select sessions with care, you can meet all of your USDA Professional Standards Training requirements for the year at this single event. Of course, your training will also count toward SNA's certificate program and credentialing renewal. RDNs and NDTRs in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics also can earn 12.5 CPEUs, depending on specific choices.

Expect to make some difficult choices among topics that explore cutting-edge insights or dig into the nuts and bolts of school foodservice. These are offered in a wide array of formats, including:

- **Pre-Conference Workshops:** Held Saturday, July 8, these sessions require additional registration. Topics include building an accountable, solutions-oriented team, data-driven decision-making, a visit to Denver Public Schools' commercial greenhouses, a three-stop district tour of Aurora Public Schools, USDA Foods and more!
- **Game-Changers:** Back for a second year and designed to accommodate larger audiences. Three thought leadership presentations tackle some of the hottest topics in the business.
- **Ideas@Work** and **Learning Bursts** are fast-paced, 30-minute sessions focused on singular innovations and critical topics, respectively.
- **Culinary Demos** (at press time, sponsors include E S Foods, Huhtamaki, Land O'Lakes and Schwan's Food Service) and two **Culinary Skills Labs** presented by the Institute of Child Nutrition will showcase important techniques to help you up your flavor game without stretching your staff resources.

A number of sessions are especially appropriate for those new to the school nutrition profession—and those new to the role of director/supervisor won't want to miss "Running a School Nutrition Program 101," a four-hour interactive pre-conference workshop back by popular demand! Also, look out for sessions that are part of SNA's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access series. Two LEAD™ to Succeed sessions are particularly appropriate for managers. USDA will be on hand to update attendees on new regulatory changes. Responding to today's top shortages, the program lineup also includes tactics for coping with staffing shortages.

The Josephine Martin Leadership Series

Sunday, July 9

Don't miss this spotlight session made available with funds provided by the Georgia School Nutrition Association (GSNA). Recently rebranded to honor the legacy of SNA Past President Dr. Josephine Martin, the Series has provided inspirational and thought-provoking presentations at ANC for more than a decade.



"GSNA is proud to continue supporting this Series, first launched in 2010, to financially support speakers who bring vital leadership training to attendees of SNA's ANC each year," says Alyssia Wright, EdS, 2022-23 GSNA President. The Series was originally named for Sen. Richard B. Russell, author of the National School Lunch Act, but was changed with approval by the GSNA Board to demonstrate the profession's commitment to creating inclusive environments and honoring a school nutrition pioneer who made an enduring impact on GSNA, SNA and the profession at large. "Dr. Martin was an icon in school nutrition, and her contributions set the foundation for excellence that we all continue to strive for each day," Wright says.

SNA CEO Patricia Montague, FASAE, CAE, applauds the decision: "Today, as more states consider proposals to provide school meals for all students, thanks to the dedicated advocacy of state legislative teams, I am reminded of those members, including Dr. Martin, who were early change agents in advancing school meal programs. Sharing and honoring her legacy each year at ANC through this Speaker Series will inspire future leaders of the profession."

STEPS STRIVE TO THRIVE WELLNESS EVENT

Tuesday, July 11



While ANC is an incredible experience full of learning and connecting, it can also be quite overwhelming! Those jam-packed days of sessions and Exhibit Hall time can leave you feeling a bit depleted. But the annual STEPS Strive to Thrive Wellness event can replenish your energy! Start your final day of the conference on the right foot with some low-intensity movement with old friends and new connections, and you'll be refreshed, recharged and ready to make the most of the remaining learning and networking experiences on tap in Denver! The STEPS event is included in your full conference registration.



Member Section Meetings

While all school nutrition professionals share a common goal to provide children with access to healthy school meals, they take on very different roles and responsibilities. SNA's membership sections reflect the broadest job categories in the profession, and ANC features an opportunity for members in these sections to come together as a group for education and networking tailored to their unique needs.

Employees/Managers:

Tuesday, July 11

District Directors/Supervisors:

Sunday, July 9

(Back by popular demand: Breakout meetings based on student enrollment totals.)

Sponsored by PrimeroEdge + SchoolCafé

Major City Directors/Supervisors:

Sunday, July 9

Sponsored by Arctic Apples

State Agency: Monday, July 10

College: Monday, July 10

Refer to the SNA Conference App for schedule, topic and speaker information for each meeting.



HACCP in Action!

School food service is unique, so are your food safety SOPs and operational needs.

SFSPac® is here to design and help you manage a personalized HACCP food safety plan.

CUSTOM
HACCP
PLAN

SFSPac® Verification with
Customized School Food
Safety Management:

Identify Potentially
Hazardous Foods

Controlled
Chemical
Inventory

Manage
Food
Allergies

NSF
Registered
Cleaners

Temperature
Documentation

Professional Standards
Required Education

Cleaning Processes
and Schedules



SFSPac® ©2023 All rights reserved.

Visit us at

ANC Booth 1901

or contact us to get started!

800-289-7725 or info@sfspac.com

HAVING ABSENTEEISM & LABOR ISSUES?

We have solutions for you, all day long!



- ANYTIMERS®, IW sandwiches & wraps
- Made for K12
- Frozen for longer shelf life
- Easy prep & serving
- Available with commodities

- Stuffed pastas
- Pastabilities:
 - Printable recipe cards
 - Instructional videos
- Available with commodities



ADDING SPEEDSCRATCH TO YOUR MENU?

The pastabilities are endless!



EXPECT MORE
VISIT US AT ANC,
BOOTH 1823!

Check out our new website!



Closing Event: '80s Dance Party, featuring The Spazmatics

Tuesday, July 11

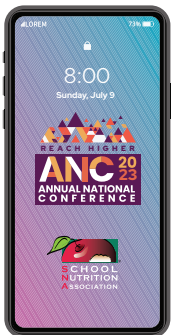
Attention, all you totally tubular dudettes and dudes! End your #ANC23 with an unforgettable nostalgic journey back to the era of neon fashions, outrageous hairstyles and iconic music. With live music from The Spazmatics, "The Ultimate '80s New Wave Tribute band," you won't be able to resist the dance floor thanks to their exceptional musicianship and onstage creativity—including costumes and stylings that evoke '80s favorite "The Revenge of the Nerds."

But don't let the band have all the fun! All attendees are encouraged to pack their favorite gear and come to the party straight from a time machine. Don legwarmers and sweatbands or ripped jeans, lacy gloves and a feathered roach clip for your hair, and be prepared to unleash your inner Madonna, Michael Jackson, Cyndi Lauper or Prince! The event promises to be an explosion of energy and entertainment that you won't want to miss. Let's party like it's 1989!

Sponsored by PrimeroEdge + SchoolCafé

GET THE APP!

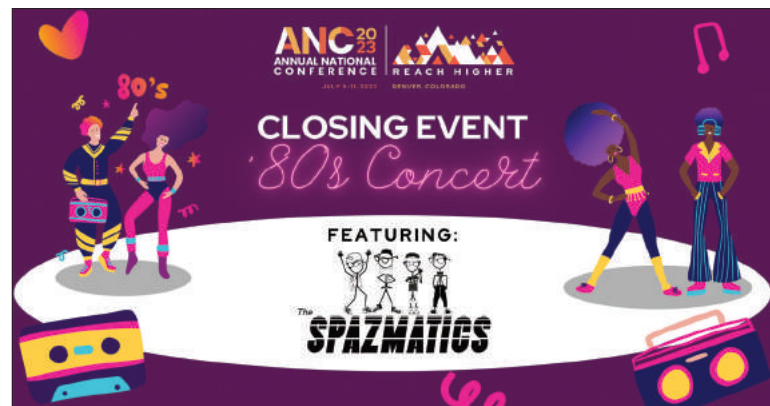
Make the most of your #ANC23 experience with a tool you already have: your phone! The SNA Conference App delivers an all-inclusive guide to help you navigate your days in Denver. While you'll receive some print resources onsite, the App is your most complete and current source for schedules, locations, session descriptions, speaker bios, Exhibit Hall booths and late-breaking news and notifications.



If you've used the App at SNA national conferences in 2022 and 2023, you should be all set to log in once you've registered for #ANC23. If not, search "SNA Conferences" in Google Play or the Apple App Store to download the App on the SwapCard platform. Create or update your profile and start building your personal agenda.

Before heading to Denver, make time to familiarize yourself with the App's features and begin to connect with other attendees, including scheduling meet-ups for in-person networking. Bookmark the sessions and events that intrigue and excite you. Create a list of the exhibitor booths that you're certain you don't want to miss. The SNA Conference App is a must-have and must-use in Denver!

Sponsored by Tyson Foods



MAKE THE HQ CONNECTION

Got questions about LEAD to Succeed™ training? Ready to take the next step in the School Nutrition Certificate Program? Want to learn more about School Nutrition Foundation (SNF) scholarships for tuition assistance? Ready to make a donation to the SNA PAC to support legislative advocacy efforts? Have a suggestion for a future article in *School Nutrition* magazine? Need to update the contact details on your membership records? Staff managing a wide range of SNA/SNF programs and services will be on hand in Denver, eager to connect with you and help you get the answers you need to make the most of your SNA membership. Don't hesitate to stop by official Association booths with your questions—or just to say "hello" to our staff. (Note that the magazine's booth is located on the Exhibit Hall floor and only open during Exhibit Hall hours; see page 53.) **SN**



SNF
SCHOOL
NUTRITION
FOUNDATION



Six key categories. One trusted source.



Roasted Vegetables & Fruit

Our best-selling RoastWorks® flame-roasted items deliver flavors kids will love—without the extra work.



Vegetables

Choose from more than 100 high-quality vegetable products, available in straight pack and blends.



Potatoes

First to commercialize the frozen french fry in the 1950s, Simplot has been a leader in the category. We offer a wide range of fries, formed and recipe potatoes.



Grains

Our Good Grains™ line of nutritious whole grains and colorful vegetable blends offer simple prep with less labor and waste.



Avocado

Serve the satisfying goodness of pure Hass avocado pulp, guacamole, dices and halves.



Fruit

Enjoy your bright, colorful favorites, picked and frozen at the peak of maturity. A smart option to reduce the spoilage and waste of fresh.



potatoes | avocados | fruits | vegetables | grains

www.simplotfoods.com/k-12

LET'S
MAKE
SOMETHING
GREAT
TOGETHER.™



PRODUCT SOLUTIONS AT THEIR PEAK

Visit the ANC Exhibit Hall for unparalleled access to the largest K-12 foodservice marketplace in the country.



Innovative product solutions to address your top school meal challenges are within your reach! The ANC Exhibit Hall is a one-stop shop of food, beverages, equipment, technology, supplies and resources—in short, every product category related to the K-12 school foodservice segment can be found under one roof! The Hall will be open several hours on both Monday and Tuesday, July 10-11, for you to maximize the opportunities of this must-visit destination.

Planning ahead, especially if you're an ANC first-timer, is critical. Whether you are a purchase decision-maker or a decision-*influencer*, you won't want to risk missing that one

essential product solution that could more than cover your registration fees in increased participation, decreased expenses or both! Start by reviewing the exhibitors listed in the pages that follow. Mark those whom you know or whose products you currently use; you'll surely want to see what new offerings they will have on display this summer.

Next, connect with key team members in your own operation to assess what's working, what's not working and what could be working *better*. This leads to a wish list for all areas of your program: food, beverages, a la carte items, equipment, supplies, uniforms, safety/sanitation, technology,

PHOTOS: EZ EVENT PHOTOGRAPHY

EXHIBIT HALL ETIQUETTE

While the Exhibit Hall is an undeniably *fun* place to be during ANC, it's important to remember it is primarily a place where **business** is the top priority. Games, giveaways and samples are marketing tactics intended to entice you to learn more about a company's product—and for industry to learn more about *your* needs. So, be prepared to do *your* part!

- Take time to listen to what exhibitors have to say about their offerings.
- Don't take advantage by collecting extra giveaways or samples. If you want to bring samples back home to test with other team members, wait until the last hours to ask vendors if they have excess to spare.
- Be aware of your district's policy for personal acceptance of contest prizes from exhibitors.
- For safety reasons, rolling carts and children under age 16 will not be allowed on the show floor **at any time for any reason**.
- Always be sure to thank the vendors for attending ANC, supporting SNA and partnering with you to serve children.

No matter your specific job title and responsibilities, *all school nutrition team members* are expected to be ambassadors of their profession and experts in the business of feeding kids. Exhibitors understand the benefits of this unique opportunity to meet with decision-makers *and* decision-influencers. With your help, they'll continue to see exhibiting at ANC as a worthwhile investment, ensuring that it's the best national resource available to you every summer!

training support, marketing, nutrition education resources and so on.

Once you're onsite in Denver, you will receive the official *#ANC23 Exhibit Hall Discovery Guide*, which features brief descriptions of each company. A separate product category list allows you to search for vendors with potential solutions to specific problem areas in your operation. Many veteran ANC attendees advise sitting down together with team members and reviewing information about the exhibitors on Saturday or Sunday evening in order to map out your plan before the Exhibit Hall opens Monday.

Take time to speak with the vendor representatives you meet in each booth. Share your specific needs and challenges. They may be able to report strategies and ideas they've heard

EXHIBIT HALL HIGHLIGHTS

Exclusive Directors-Only Access. On Tuesday, July 11, 9:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., a special exhibit period has been set aside for SNA director-level members to walk the aisles at your own pace and network with individual exhibitors. (*Note: To participate, you must be a dues-paying SNA national member at the director level or a state agency member. Directors/supervisors may be accompanied by one manager or employee from the same school district, but you must enter together at the same time.*)

Directors' All-Access Pass. Directors who visit all 15 of the sponsoring companies' booths on Tuesday and complete the details on the card will be entered into a drawing to win free registrations to all three of SNA's national conferences. *Entries must be submitted Tuesday, July 11, at the official close of the Exhibit Hall. Look for drop-off boxes near the Hall exit.*

SNF Match Game. Visit all sponsors booths and return your card to the SNF booth in the SNA Marketplace before the end of the conference. Ten lucky winners will be selected to receive a free #ANC24 conference registration.

Catch the Moment! Photo Booth. Grab your friends for a unique conference memorabilia opportunity in this fun 360° photo/video (Booth #2121). *Sponsored by Cool School Cafe*

School Nutrition Magazine. Look for SN's booth near the front entrance of the Exhibit Hall. We want to hear your feedback about how we're doing and are always in the "market" for new ideas, leads and resources. Interested in volunteering as a Secret Shopper on the Exhibit Hall floor, helping to scout out many of the most innovative, must-have products? We'd love to have your participation and can supply you with details and feedback forms onsite.

Other special features are still in development! Be sure to consult the ANC App and your onsite *Discovery Guide* for updates.

from other customers, plus your insights help them in future product development efforts. K-12 operator-industry partnerships are unique among business relationships. Vendors in this segment share your passion for serving America's kids and truly want to help you find the *right* solutions to your challenges.

2023 ANC EXHIBITORS

Current as of April 26, 2023



A

Exhibitor Name	Booth
AccuTemp Products	1337
Action for Healthy Kids	132
Albie's Food Products	945
Alpha Techs USA	620
The Amazing Chickpea	509
Amazing Fruit Products-US	400
AmeriPak	320
AmTab-Furniture and Signage	1263
Apple & Eve	1863
Arctic Apples	1146
Arlington Valley Farms	723
Aspire Bakeries	1029
Atlas Metal Industries	1012

B

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Bake Crafters Food Co.	335
Baker Boy, Inc.	308
Barfresh Food Group	2014
Basic American Foods	1101
Before the Butcher, Inc.	1745
Ben's Original	1228
Big Spoon Yogurt	617
Blodgett Oven	2038
Blue Triton Brands (formerly Nestle Water NA)	1057
Bongards Creameries	622
Boxed Water Is Better	522

Brakebush Brothers, Inc.	1120
BrandArmor Technologies	334
The Brenmar Company	225
Bridgford Foods	1222
Brigaid	1051
Brookwood Farms	1671
BSI Designs, LLC	856
Buddy Fruits	1958
Buena Vista Foods	907
Burru Foods	1850
Bush's Best Beans	1842
Butter Buds Foodservice	1013
Butterball Foodservice	1645

C

Exhibitor Name	Booth
C.H. Guenther & Son, Inc./ Pioneer Flour Mills	401
Cambro Manufacturing	637
Campbell's Foodservice	1701
Cargill	1035
Carl Buddig & Company	623
Carter-Hoffmann	2040
Cavendish Farms	1232
Champion Industries	632
ChemxWorks	944
Cherry Central Cooperative	1843
Chortles	1930
Cintas Corporation	441
ClearVu School Services	1939
Cloverdale Food Company	712

Cofresco Foodservice	2012
Cold-Sell Systems	2033
Conagra Foodservice	1545
Consolidated Catfish	616
Consultants on Tap	2028
Continental Refrigerator	962
Cool School Cafe/ Real Time Solutions	1615
Cool Tropics	1829
Corbett Brothers Farms	325
Country Pure Foods	1112
Cres Cor	707

D

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Danone North America	1707
Darlington Snacks	612
Dave's Baking	915
David's Cookies	634
De WafelBakkers	1845
Deeply Rooted Farms	615
The Delfield Company	313
Del Real Foods	1862
Democook Productions-- Scott's Free Lunch	1956
Descon Signage Solutions	1040
Diversified Foods, Inc.	341
Dole Packaged Foods	722
Domino's Pizza, LLC	1315
Don Lee Farms	1738
Dr. Schar USA, Inc.	525
Duke Manufacturing	1721
DYMA Brands	1119

E

Exhibitor Name	Booth
E S Foods	1309
EATS by Riviera	2116
Edlund Company	628
Educational Biometric Technology	912
Ekon-O-Pac	846
Envy Foods	841

F

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Fat Cat Bakery	1962
The Father's Table	1059
Federal Industries	1020
Fermod, Inc.	402
Flowers Bakeries Foodservice	101
Foodservice Sustainability Solutions	928
Foodworks Technologies, LLC/MenuLogic K12	328
Fork Farms	2124
Form Plastics Company	607
Foster Farms	855
Freezing Point/Frazil	406
FWE/Food Warming Equipment	1115

G

Exhibitor Name	Booth
G.A. Systems	747
General Mills Convenience & Foodservice	1563
Genovation	1921
Global Food Solutions	435
Gold Creek Foods	1755
Golden Malted-New Carbon Co.	1220
Gordon Food Service	921
Great Northern Baking Company	517

H

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Harris School Solutions	1715
Harvest Food Group	1940
Harvest Hill Beverage Co.	1849
Health-e Pro	535
Healthy Solutions 4 Kids	2017
Heartland Food Products Group (Java House)	506
Heartland School Solutions	1801
Hershey's Ice Cream	940
High Liner Foods	1571
Hiland Dairy/Prairie Farms Dairy	2128
HMC Farms	2020
Hoffmaster/Solo Cup Co.	750
Home Market Foods	1230
HPS	941
Hubert Company	1952
Huhtamaki	741



I

Exhibitor Name	Booth
i3 Education/PaySchools	2101
Idahoan Foods	201
Image One Corp.	2113
Imagine Your Space	1733
Impossible Foods	1049
Innoseal Systems	423
Institute of Child Nutrition	138
inTEAM Associates, LLC	1828
The Integra Group	533
Integrated Food Service	801
Interflex	1739
International Food Solutions	817
IPS Rebates	1021
Irinox North America	1144
ITD Food Safety	606
ITW/FEG: Hobart	1535
ITW/FEG: Vulcan	1529

J

Exhibitor Name	Booth
J&J Snack Foods Corp.	1329
J.S.B. Industries (Muffin Town)	1663
The J.M. Smucker Company	901
J.R. Simplot Company	951
J.T.M. Food Group	1555
JA Foodservice Corporation	608
Jack Link's Protein Snacks	917
Jackson WWS	1838
Jennie-O Turkey Store	1501
Juice Alive/Trident Beverages	816

K

Exhibitor Name	Booth
K12 Services, Inc.	129
Kari-Out (formerly Specialty Quality Packaging)	1019
Kellogg's	1345
KeyImpact Sales & Systems	601
Kikkoman Sales USA	1728
KIND Snacks	507
Kraft Heinz Co.	1107

L

Exhibitor Name	Booth
LaCroix Sparkling Water	1732
Lakeside Manufacturing	2106
Land O'Lakes	1609
Lesaffre Yeast Corporation	1763
Life Time Foundation	307
Lindy's Homemade	1931
LINQ	1229
LTI, Inc.	1201
LunchAssist	1053

M

Exhibitor Name	Booth
M & B Products	814
Magic Seasoning Blends	950
Maid-Rite Speciality Foods, LLC	541
Marson Foods—Waffle Envy	1837
McCain Foods USA	1001
McCormick for Chefs	309



PrimeroEdge + SchoolCafé	1211
Product Evaluations' Food Forum	850
Promotion In Motion—PIM Brands	1923
Pro-Team Foodservice Advisors	1123
ProView by Tasty Brands	1817
Pulmuone Foods USA, Inc.	619

Q

Exhibitor Name	Booth
QNC, Inc./Quik 'n Crispy	1746
Quantum Foodservice	540

R

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Raisels	1932
RATIONAL USA	1140
Rebelloys Foods	523
Red Gold, LLC	701
Renfro Industries	443
Rich Chicks, LLC	1133
Rich Products	1521
Rich's Ice Cream Co.	2112
Robot Coupe	542

S

Exhibitor Name	Booth
S.A. Piazza & Assoc., LLC	1769
Sara Lee Frozen Bakery	1929
School Food Handler	1024
Schwan's Food Service	1301
SEA Level Social	1045
SFSPac Food Safety & Sanitation System	1901
Shoes For Crews	1743
SICO America	1913
Skechers	863
Sky Blue Foods, LLC	1859

MCI Foods	1907
McKee Foods/Fieldstone Bakery	1633
Meal Manage	613
MEDIFOOD.IO LLC	521
MEIKO	715
Metro (InterMetro Industries)	729
Mexilink Inc./Tajin International	1957
MIC Food	1047
Michael Foods	1212
Mission Nutrition—Mello Smello	963
MJM Marketing	1751
Mondelez International	649
Mrs. T's/Ateeco, Inc.	2117
Multiteria	2100
Mushroom Council	913

N

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Nardone Brothers Baking Co.	1353
National Dairy Council	1515
National Food Group	1007
Nature's Bakery	1944
New Age Industrial	719
Norris Products Corp.	1941
NuFood Consultants	1846
Nutrislice	207

O

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Ocean Spray Cranberries	1742
Oliver Packaging & Equipment Company	2107
OneEvent Technologies	851
Optimum Foods	1639
Ovention Ovens	421

P

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Pacific Coast Producers	1857
Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service	1125
Pactiv Evergreen	2001
Palmer Hamilton	407
Palmetto Gourmet Foods	925
Panasonic	1910
PanSaver	937
PASCO Brokerage	1643
PATH	1216
PCS Revenue Control Systems	735
The Peanut Institute	1041
PepsiCo Foodservice	1509
Peterson Farms Fresh	1811
Pilgrim's Pride Corporation	1369
PLZ Corp, formerly Par-Way Tryson	1730
Plas-Tique Products, Inc.	1865
Polar King International	2039
Poppi-VNRG Beverages	1942
Post Consumer Brands	501
Preferred Packaging Sales & Service	646
Premier, Inc.	1649



LOUISIANA **STYLE** FILLET

LOOKING FOR A
**DELICIOUSLY
CRISPY FILLET**
THAT **LOOKS LIKE
IT IS FRIED,**
BUT IS ACTUALLY
BAKED?

This solid muscle, no soy, non whole grain breaded fillet has the crispy, crunchy texture and familiar flavor students love - without being fried. Serve these fillets simply on a bun with mayo or spicy mayo, and topped with pickles for a crowd-pleasing sandwich.



#60438

MINI

CORN DOG NUGGETS



LOOKING FOR
VERSATILE ITEMS FOR
YOUR **BREAKFAST**
AND **LUNCH** MENU?

Enjoy mini corn dogs anytime of the day. Coated in whole grain batter, these nuggets are also available NAE (#64007) and Nitrate/Nitrite Free (#64011).

Try our Mini Maple Pancake Chicken Bites (#64014) for breakfast!

#64009

ProView
by Tasty Brands

**Visit Us at ANC,
Booth 1817!**

proviewfoods.com

SmartSense by Digi	318
Sourcewell	1124
Starkist	1936
Sterno Delivery	429
SunButter	1015
Suncup Juice	1935
Sunkist Foodservice Equip.	2023
Sun-Maid Growers of California	1938
Super Bakery, Inc.	1363

The Sunsof Corporation	716
Swan Solutions	306
Sysco Corp.	807

T

Exhibitor Name	Booth
T. Marzetti Foodservice	835
Tabatchnick Fine Foods	2007

TabletKiosk	413
Talking Rain Beverage	222
Tarrier Foods Corp (Rockin' ola)	636
Tasty Brands	1823
Taylor Farms Tennessee	2022
Taylor Precision Products— Lifetime Brands	748
TekVisions, Inc.	206
Tetra Pak, Inc.	718
Texas Pete Hot Sauce	1864
ThermoWorks	948
Tree Top	1036
Trident Seafoods	1629
TriMark	751
Tyson Foods	1320

U

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Unified Brands/Electroux	1063
United Sorghum Checkoff Program	1055
UNOX USA	301
Upstate Farms	336
USDA—Farm to School Program	130
USDA Foods	128
USDA/FNS/CN/Team Nutrition	134

V

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Vend-ucation	852
Vollrath Company	1947

W

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Wawona Frozen Foods	1928
Welbilt	629
Welch Foods	923
What Chefs Want	2021
Whoa Dough	520
Winston Foodservice	929
WNA Atrium Packaging	1912

Y

Exhibitor Name	Booth
Yang's 5th Taste	329

FIELDSTONE BAKERY

One Snack, Endless Possibilities

**AVAILABLE IN
1 GRAIN PACKETS & BULK**

*Pair with yogurt
for a grab n' go snack*

PREMIUM GRANOLA

ORIGINAL

*Serve as cereal
with milk + fruit*

*Make a tasty pie
crust or topping*

*Create delicious
granola bars*

Premium Granola Bulk #09799
Servings per case - 100 | Serving size - 1/2 cup
Cast Ct. - 4 bulk bags | Shelf Life 270 Days

**Premium Granola
1 Grain Packets #09788**
Net Wt. 1.0 oz | Case Ct. 144
Shelf Life 270 Days

McKeeFoodservice.com | FoodService@McKee.com
©2023 copyright

McKee
A FAMILY BAKERY

iHola! Churros™



Crave the Joy

Say Hello to ¡Hola! Churros™!

An exciting new name in the food world that captures the playful magic and simple cinnamon flavor that only churros bring. Born from the colorful streets of Spain, churros are a global treat that inspire curiosity and create memories. We are proud to present a variety of delicious 51% whole grain churros to reimagine your menus.

If you would like to add churros to your menu, please contact your local J&J Snack Foods Representative or call us at 800-486-9533.



NEW!

TWIST & Go SMOOTHIES

by **bar
fresh**

THE PERFECT PORTABLE
SOLUTION FOR YOUR SCHOOL
FEEDING NEEDS!

- ✓ Each bottle contains 4 ounces of yogurt + 1/2 cup of fruit juice, providing two reimbursable elements in school feeding (fruit & protein)
- ✓ USDA reimbursable meal program compliant and Smart Snack compliant
- ✓ Contains live and active probiotic cultures
- ✓ Are a good source of protein, calcium, and vitamin C
- ✓ Are fat free and cholesterol free
- ✓ Contain no preservatives, artificial flavors, or colors
- ✓ Are OU Certified Kosher Dairy
- ✓ Made in the USA



BARFRESH IS A PREMIUM SUPPLIER OF
BEVERAGE OPTIONS THAT ARE TASTY, FUN,
AND MEET SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS.
CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OTHER
PRODUCTS WE OFFER.

PEACH
SMOOTHIE

STRAWBERRY BANANA
SMOOTHIE

MANGO PINEAPPLE
SMOOTHIE

NO
ADDED
SUGAR

ONLY
125-130
CALORIES

5g
OF PROTEIN

Contact your Barfresh Business Development Manager
at info@barfresh.com or call 888-328-6170

Distributed by Barfresh Corp, Inc., Los Angeles, CA 90010

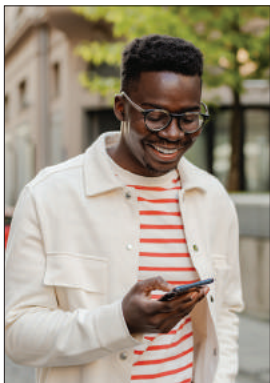


focus on » Gen Z Grows Up

The youngest have entered their teens. You've watched the older ones grow into young adults as they moved through your serving line (and through a pandemic). Now, some of them are becoming parents themselves! In this issue, we take a closer look at Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) and consider how to boost participation and engagement at the secondary school level.

Where R U, *Gen Z*?

Despite ages spanning 20+ years, you will find the majority of your Gen Z audience in one important place: online.



74%

of Gen Z spends their free time online



54%

reports social media influences them more than any other marketing strategy



61%

is willing to pay more for ethically/sustainably produced products



68%

expects brands to contribute to society



71%

wants to see more diversity in advertising



77%

feels more positive about brands that promote gender equality on social media

Onsite



Insights

Especially for school nutrition managers, assistant managers and employees

Who Is Z?

They came on the scene in the mid-90s, following the Millennials. “Gen”erally speaking, Zs are digitally proficient and according to Pew Research, a better educated and more racially and ethnically diverse generation than their Millennial predecessors. While it would be a mistake to see Gen Z as a monolithic unit with a rigid set of preferences, behaviors and values, we can do our best to “Be Gen Z” and try to see the world through their lens. Gen Zers are:

Influencers:

More than 70% reports influencing family purchasing decisions.

Loyal and Price Conscious:

Product discount and reward programs matter.

Socially Conscious:

They respond to ethically made, sustainable practices and prefer to buy local.

Mobile:

They use their smartphones for five or more hours each day.

Connected:

Streaming an average of 23 hours of video a week,

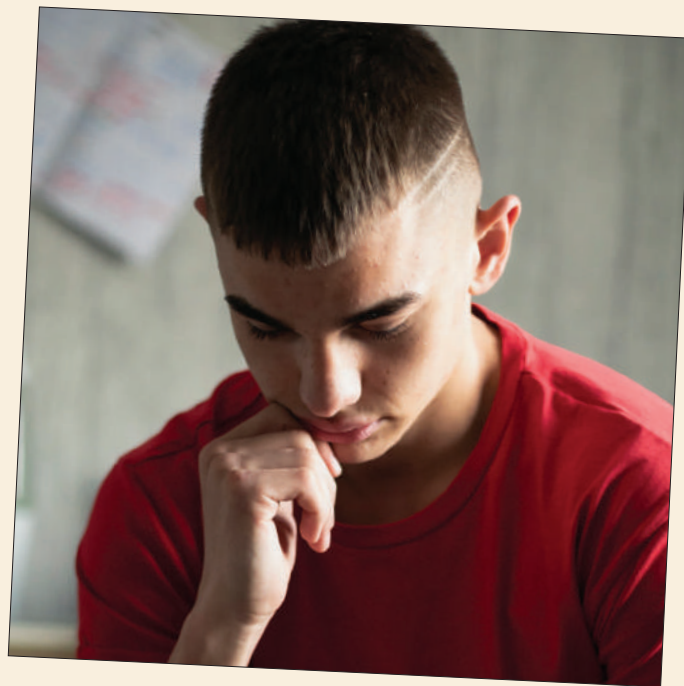
Gen Z is often using more than one screen/device at a time.

Make the Mental Health Connection

For some students, the cafeteria provides a welcome break in their school day. But for others, it's fraught with social and emotional tension. As school nutrition professionals, you know that food and mental health are deeply connected, and you can work to make kitchens and cafeterias safer spaces for the mental health of students (and staff!).

Studies show that Gen Z battles anxiety and depression at higher rates than previous generations, with less than half (45%) reporting that their mental health is "very good" or "excellent," according to the Anne E. Casey Foundation. The Food Research and Action Center confirms that school meal participation contributes to positive health outcomes for students. You can elevate this impact with creative programming, such as a "Food for Mood" or "Brain Food" campaign that makes the connection between learning, mental health and nutrition for your students.

Also consider partnering with student groups, the principal and the school counselor to help you implement an anti-bullying campaign in the cafeteria. Another good resource to tap is Beyond Differences (www.beyonddifferences.org), which sponsors the No One Eats Alone Day® campaign.



I'll Have *What They're Having*

The numbers don't lie—Gen Z loves a good referral! More than half (52%) reports that they trust social media influencers for brand advice, while 82% looks to friends and family more than anyone else. That means you have access to the widest network of influencers surrounding your Gen Z audience—their peers. There are many ways you can tap into this wealth of information for feedback that can help boost participation and engagement in your school meals program.

SURVEY parents and teen students about their favorite apps, communication preferences and online habits.

ASSEMBLE focus groups of teen students to share opinions on everything from taste testing to cafeteria décor to branding advice.

LEVERAGE Gen Z's digital affinities. Create eye-catching social media content featuring

photos and videos of school meals, students enjoying meals, special events and so on. Bring together a group of engaged students to be trusted "school meal influencers." They can create and share their own school meal program content, while also interacting and sharing your posts.

ELEVATE food and beverage brands (including condiments) that



are already popular with students and parents by featuring them on menus and in marketing materials.

CREATE unique branding for your cafeteria/school nutrition program.



The Apps Menu

Gen Z is often referred to as the first generation of “digital natives,” but what does that mean? Like their Millennial predecessors, they grew up steeped in technology (smartphones, computers, tablets), including social media and the internet. They’ve never *not* had immediate access to information.

Gen Z is heavily engaged on video platforms (e.g. YouTube, TikTok), favoring social media apps that allow them to consume, as well as create, content. Instagram remains popular as well, but it’s clear that video is king. Keep your eye on BeReal, which is on its way to becoming the go-to social app for this demographic.

Beyond social media, Gen Z is likely to prioritize delivery apps over streaming services! In fact, nearly 80% of Gen Zers are more likely to order takeout from a restaurant now than they were before the COVID pandemic.

In general, Gen Z expects apps to be **fast!** They have little patience for waiting on an app to load. Instant gratification is a hallmark of this generation. Apps should also work smoothly and provide quick content sharing. **Personalized digital experiences** are another must. This means apps must include geolocation information and have saved login features. **Opportunities to be creative** are highly valued. Gen Z enjoys spending free time creating memes, making videos and editing photos.



Heather Perry, SNS

SNA School Nutrition Employee/Manager Representative

Meeting Gen Z Where They Are and Where They’re Going



When asked to write about my impressions of Gen Z for this issue, I struggled. I don’t work in a secondary school or have any coworkers who are in their early or mid-twenties. My daughter and her friends are Gen Z, but it’s difficult for me to see them as anything but individuals. I don’t see them as representing a group.

It was suggested that I interview my daughter, but she was reluctant to participate. I could compare what I see in her and her friends with how I and *my* friends were when we were that age, but many of the differences are about how technology has changed the world. She watches TV streaming instead of via cable. She orders food through an app. I had headphones, she wears earbuds. Chatting with friends for hours at a time was and is a priority for both of us, but I did so using a phone on the wall and she doesn’t make calls at all! Instead, she uses her phone for texts, Snapchat and BeReal (which I am not “allowed” to join, by the way). So much of what I see is typical young adult behavior filtered through different technology.

Digging a little deeper into Gen Z, I’m aware that young adults today are diagnosed with anxiety and depression more than when I was that age. It’s hard to know whether there are actually more cases now or whether it’s become easier for health professionals to recognize and treat the symptoms. Some research points to the COVID pandemic as increasing these mental health concerns among young people. That may be true, but I am also impressed with the perseverance I saw in this age group during those stressful years. They really pushed through all that COVID threw at them and learned to adapt.

Why is it important to learn more about Gen Z? Like *every* generation that has come and gone before, Gen Z will make its own mark on school meals. But in a world where competition for attention and participation is greater than ever, we need to understand what makes them tick, so we can respond to their wants and needs in impactful ways. This may mean menu changes—Gen Z has greater exposure to multicultural meals, and they like spicy food with robust flavors. They also choose to eat less meat and seek out more vegetarian options. We may need to change how meals are served, with cafeterias using ordering apps or self-serve merchandisers. We may need to promote the cafeteria with video messages. I think the short articles in this section are going to be a good first step in guiding us to the future! **SN**

Gen Z really pushed through all that COVID threw at them, and they learned to adapt.

Create + Connect



When you know what drives your audience, you can create content that connects. The great news is that Gen Z is more than happy to share what they care about! Connecting your product (school meals) with what resonates with them will catch their attention (engagement) in real life (participation), as well as online (content).

Let's use sustainability as an example. As a generation, Gen Z has a strong awareness of and concern about climate change and the environment. How can you connect your product with their concerns in a positive (influential) way?

On the Menu

- Serving locally sourced foods
- Meatless/flexitarian menus
- Bulk condiments, milk dispensers

Operations

- Food waste reduction strategies
- Eliminate single-use packaging
- Consolidate food deliveries

Outside the Box

- Rewards for biking/walking to school
- Recruit an influencer team to help you create and share content
- Give Gen Z agency to advocate for what matters to them while staying engaged with your program

Catering to Gen Z



How can your meal program meet the needs and wants of Gen Z students and their parents? Consider factors and trends that influence their current dining choices and brainstorm ways to adapt and adopt them in your operation.

The Trend: *Trust & Transparency*—Gen Z considers themselves savvy about food and nutrition, but values information from trusted sources.

Your Strategy: If you have a registered dietitian or nutritionist on staff, invite them to participate in marketing projects; their expertise provides added credibility that will help you influence your audience.

The Trend: *Eating Patterns*—Gen Z is more likely to follow a particular eating “pattern” than previous generations. They report calorie counting, “clean eating” and “mindful eating” in the top three.

Your Strategy: Make calorie and nutrition information about menu items available to students. In your marketing, include language designed to appeal to your clean-label and mindful eaters.

The Trend: *Fast Casual Dining*—According to *Food Business News*, Gen Z prefers fast casual dining to the tune of 4.3 billion restaurant visits (out of 5 billion total) between July 2021 and July 2022.

Your Strategy: Great news—you're already a fast casual dining specialist! Consider ways to make improvements that matter to your Gen Z audience, highlighting efficiency, value and sustainability. This could mean anything from advance and/or custom ordering options to implementing or expanding grab 'n' go service to using compostable and recyclable foodservice ware and establishing share tables.

FIND US IN THE CAFETERIA

LUNCHABLES®



Fuel your school with the NEW Lunchables NOW meeting NSLP requirements! Turkey & Cheddar Cracker Stacker and Extra Cheesy Pizza are available for the 2023-2024 School Year! They're refrigerated and never frozen for great tasting flavor!

BUILT TO BE EATEN. NOW BUILT FOR SCHOOLS

CONVENIENT. EFFICIENT. RELIABLE.

REACH HIGHER
ANC 2023
ANNUAL NATIONAL
CONFERENCE
**BOOTH#
2039**



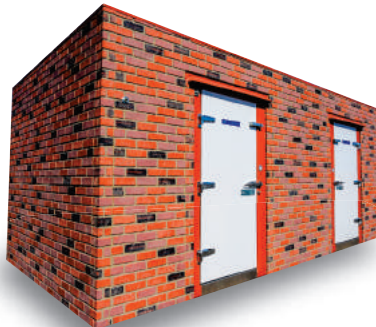
MOBILE



▶ 866-816-4625
▶ POLARKINGMOBILE.COM



CUSTOM



▶ 866-730-2618
▶ POLARKING.COM



RENTAL



866-636-6874 ◀
POLARLEASING.COM ◀

We have **all** of your refrigeration needs covered.
Visit our websites or call one of our sales representatives for more information.



Things We Love

EAT YOUR GREENS

For decades, school cafeterias have been preparing green eggs to celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday in March. "I always cringed when we added all that dye to liquid eggs—and was usually disappointed with the final color. Plus, I thought I could taste the dye, so I decided this year would be different—and healthy," says Kelly Renard, SNS, Director of School Nutrition Services, **Dover Area (Pa.) Schools**.

Inspired by the memory of a Universal Studios' Seuss Land chef, who spoke at a kids marketing conference she attended years ago, Renard developed her own bright green slurry made primarily of spinach and parsley, adding it to liquid eggs along with diced turkey ham (for some smoky flavor) and American cheese (for a creamy texture).

"Parsley and spinach are both super high in chlorophyll, so they deliver a bright color without being overbearing," explains Renard. "It did change the flavor of the eggs a little bit, but onion and garlic powder helped to offset the 'grassy' notes. I felt there was a brightness to the eggs that traditional scrambled eggs lack—there was definitely a health boost!"

The all-natural green eggs were served across the district, and the younger students loved it, she reports. "I sat with several who were cautious in tasting the bright green eggs, but as they realized it was delicious, they said so and stuffed forkfuls in their smiling faces." But testy teens were decidedly less enchanted, Renard concedes. Going forward, "High school students will have eggs and ham that are not green, because they are too big and just a little bit mean," she declares in Seussian fashion.



Kudos to the Food and Nutrition Services team at **Everett (Wash.) Public Schools** for remembering the value of caring for the caregiver. As SY2022-23 begins to wind down and teams get busy with end-of-the-year chores and celebrations alike, we urge readers to make time for personal wellness activities: moving regularly, mindful meditation, proper sleep and healthy eating!



Good Buddy

We've seen many costumed mascots visiting kids in the cafeteria over the years, but we were delighted to be "introduced" to our first school nutrition-specific mascot! For the past five years, Chef Buddy has been a popular figure with children in the school cafeterias of **Calcasieu Parish, Lake Charles, La.** Jacqueline Richards, MS, RD, LDN, SNS, School Nutrition Program Director, credits the idea to an assistant superintendent who spoke of the energy a school mascot brought to encounters with high school students. "We decided to look for a costume we could use to create similar excitement around school meals," she says. Custom mascot costumes don't come cheap, but Richards found a company in Canada who provided some designs and allowed them to incorporate their department logo.

Dietetic interns are assigned to wear the Chef Buddy costume and visit schools at least once during their two-week rotation and visit schools. "They start out a little nervous, but eventually have the best time! When the students scream with joy, hug and high-five them, they feel like rock stars," reports Richards. But some occasions are a little more challenging than others. During the pandemic, the team created a face mask for Chef Buddy to show students that he was following the same safety precautions that they were. Unfortunately, the mouth is the area of the costume where its wearer sees from, and the face mask left them completely blind! "Chef Buddy was knocking into equipment and students before we all agreed that he should rest during the pandemic," Richard laughs. *SN* is delighted to see that he's back in action today.

Things We Love

DIG IN TO SCHOOL BREAKFAST™

Breakfast Builders

Wearing hard hats, safety goggles and reflective vests, breakfast crews from around the country marked off cafeteria work zones where they constructed amazingly creative student engagement activities in celebration of **National School Breakfast Week 2023** in March!

School nutrition teams totally dug the official “Dig In to School Breakfast” theme, setting out safety cones and applying copious amounts of caution tape. Toy construction equipment made for clever breakfast item merchandisers, while life-size equipment rolled up to school grounds in several communities. Backhoes, bulldozers and dump trucks provided truly unique selfie stations! Construction crew members judged student art contests, while students judged clever dioramas built by cafeteria teams. Family members in the trades were invited for breakfast. Even Bob the Builder made a special appearance!

The photos here are a mere sampling of reports we received or viewed on social media. We don't have space to identify all the contributors by school or district, but we hope you see faces you recognize in these images from cafeterias in Alabama, California, Georgia, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.





FRESH TAKES ON FAVORITE BAKES



Let comfort classics and contemporary creations earn a place on your menu.

Bakes, those hearty, singular, multiple-ingredient dishes cooked in an oven, are the epitome of comfort food. Every cuisine has iconic dishes that fall into this category, often handed down from one generation to the next, making them familiar and relevant even to Gen Z and Gen Alpha (aka your student customers). Think Nonna's lasagna. Abuela's enchiladas. Granny's shepherd's pie. Yaya's moussaka. Ouma's bobotie. Bubbe's kugel. Obachaan's yaki kare. Nana's green bean casserole. They aren't fancy or particularly trend-forward, but every bite is full of flavor—and these dishes are reliably belly- and soul-filling.

Broccoli and Cheese Hash Brown Casserole

12 cups tater tots
6 cups broccoli florets
3 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
24 eggs

1 Bake tater tots on a parchment paper-lined sheet tray at 400°F for 12-15 minutes or according to package instructions. **CCP:** Hold at 140°F.
2 Blanch the broccoli by pouring water into a pot, adding salt and bringing the water to a boil. Submerge the broccoli in the pot, wait 50 to 60 seconds, remove the broccoli and submerge in a bowl with iced water to stop the cooking process. Broccoli will be vibrant green. Alternate cooking method: Cook in a steamer for 4 to 5

minutes or until bright green and tender, then immediately cool in ice water. Drain.

CCP: Hold the broccoli at 40°F or below until ready to use.

3 Whisk the eggs in a bowl, then mix in the cheese.

4 Preheat the oven to 350°F.

5 Place the tater tots in a parchment paper-lined 2-in. full-size steamtable pan. Add the broccoli florets and the egg-and-cheese mixture. Cover with foil and bake for 40 to 45 minutes. **CCP:** Cook until an internal temperature of 160°F or higher is reached. Remove the foil and bake for another 5 minutes, or until golden brown.

6 Remove from the oven and let cool.

CCP: Hold at 140°F or higher until service.

Serves 24

Per Serving 219 cal., 12 g pro., 12.9 g fat, 4.7 g sat. fat, 15.4 g carb., 2.3 g fiber, 347 mg sod., 1.3 g sugars

Meal Pattern 2.5-oz.-eq. meat/meat alternate, $\frac{3}{8}$ cup vegetables ($\frac{1}{4}$ starchy, $\frac{1}{8}$ dark green)

7 To serve, cut the casserole into 24 equal 6x4-in. pieces.

Recipe and Photo: Potatoes USA, www.potatogoodness.com

Nutritional and Meal Pattern Analyses: Rebecca J. Polson, CC, SNS, Instagram: @ChefRebeccak12

Cheesy Baked Beans & Sausage Potato Pie

#10 can baked beans, vegetarian, reduced-sodium*
2 Tbsp. olive oil
2 Tbsp. thyme, fresh
2 lb. turkey sausage, crumbled, cooked
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Worcestershire sauce
5 lb. mashed potatoes, prepared
8 oz. cheddar cheese, reduced-fat, shredded

Serves 18 (9.5 oz.)

Per Serving 480 cal., 23 g pro., 15 g fat, 4 g sat. fat, 65 g carb., 10 g fiber, 1,200 mg sod., 20 g sugars

Meal Pattern 1.5 oz.-eq. meat/meat alternate, 1 cup vegetables ($\frac{5}{8}$ cup beans-pulses-legumes, $\frac{3}{8}$ cup starchy)



1 Pre-heat a convection oven to 350°F.
2 Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium-low heat. Add onions and thyme and sauté until onions are translucent.
3 In a 2-in. full-size steamtable pan, combine the baked beans, sautéed onion mixture, cooked turkey sausage and Worcestershire sauce.

4 Spread mashed potatoes over top of the beans mixture, then cover evenly with cheddar cheese.

5 Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 45 minutes. Remove aluminum foil and bake uncovered for an additional 15 minutes.

6 Portion 9.5-oz. servings.

***Note:** Bush's Best® Reduced Sodium Vegetarian Baked Beans can be used in this recipe.

Recipe, Photo and Nutritional Analysis: Bush's Best Foodservice, www.bushbeansfoodservice.com

Meal Pattern Analysis: Rebecca J. Polson, CC, SNS, Instagram: @ChefRebeccak12

Baked Chicken Bolognese



Serves 24

Per Serving 316 cal., 22.2 g pro., 9.9 g fat, 3.7 g sat. fat, 33.3 g carb., 2.1 g fiber, 397 mg sod., 1 g sugars

Meal Pattern 2.5 oz.-eq. meat/meat alternate, 1.25 oz.-eq. grains, ⁵/₈ cup vegetables (¹/₂ cup red/orange, ¹/₈ cup additional)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 lb. whole-grain penne, dry* | 4 oz. carrots, diced |
| ¹ / ₄ cup olive oil | 5 lb. tomatoes, canned, diced |
| 8 cloves garlic, minced | 1 ¹ / ₂ lb. provolone cheese, grated |
| ¹ / ₄ oz. thyme, minced | 2 lb., 4 oz. chicken, diced, cooked (USDA Foods) |
| 3 Tbsp. parsley, minced | 8 oz. onions, diced |
| 2 tsp. black pepper | 1 cup tomato paste |
| 4 oz. celery, diced | 2 bay leaves |
| 1 cup chicken stock | 1 tsp. salt |
| ¹ / ₂ cup Parmesan cheese, grated | |

1 Bring water to a boil in a large pot and cook the pasta for half the time indicated on the manufacturer's instructions. Drain the pasta.

2 Purée the onions, carrots and celery and set aside.

3 Heat the olive oil in a large pan and add the vegetable purée. Add the salt and garlic and cook until the mixture begins to brown. Stir in the tomato paste and cook for one minute. Add the chicken stock, canned tomatoes, thyme and bay leaves and simmer for 20 minutes.

4 Remove the bay leaves from the pan and add the chicken. Simmer for another 15 minutes.

5 Preheat the oven to 350°F.

6 Spread the cooked pasta in a 2-in. full-size steamtable pan. Add the sauce and mix well to combine. Top with the provolone and parmesan cheese, then bake until golden brown.

7 To serve, cut the pan into 24 equal portions.

***Note:** Barilla Whole-Grain Penne can be used in this recipe.

Recipe and Photo: Barilla Foodservice, www.barillafoodservicerecipes.com

Nutritional and Meal Pattern Analyses: Rebecca J. Polson, CC, SNS, Instagram: @ChefRebeccak12

On the popularity scale, bakes are unlikely to appear on student lists of top five favorite school meals. Most bakes fall into the gap between so-called “carnival food” favorites (pizza, burgers, tenders) and current trends like bowl builds, sophisticated salads and spicy heat. They’re familiar (sometimes a plus) but not “cool” (sometimes a negative). “Bakes are old-school,” says Rebecca Polson, CC, SNS, chef consultant for *School Nutrition*. “But they are solid comfort food, and they have a time and a place—especially in fall and winter or for brunch at lunch.”

Bakes may not boast a high craveability factor, but many recipes perform rather well when it comes to taste satisfaction. (Baked pasta for the win!) They provide menu variety and opportunities to lean on what’s familiar to some, while introducing something brand-new to others. They provide

school chefs with new areas for flavor exploration, as well as exposing students to signature dishes from different parts of the U.S. and around the globe.

Many baked dishes are also well-suited for catering service, holding and traveling well, while appealing, in that comfort way, to an array of taste preferences, including vegetarian. During pandemic lockdowns, some school systems, like Cobb County (Ga.) School District and Grapevine-Colleyville (Texas) Independent School District, enjoyed wild success providing take-and-bake meals to families for dinner (*“Mastering the Meal Kit,”* October 2020).

How can you make the most of baked dishes on your own school menu? Let’s take a look at some ways you can work to freshen up the flavor, the format—and even the marketing.

Serves 96

Per Serving 223 cal., 8.1 g pro., 4.2 g fat, 1.2 g sat. fat, 40.3 g carb., 5.5 g fiber, 232.4 mg sod., 16.9 g sugars

Meal Pattern 0.5 oz.-eq. meat/meat alternate, 1.25 oz.-eq. grains, ¼ cup fruit

Highlight a Favorite Ingredient.

Tater tots, pasta, cheese, mini meatballs and mac & cheese are all popular with youngsters, and each can easily serve as the anchor ingredient for a baked dish. Keep recipes simple, allowing these flavors and textures to lead.

Look for easy elevations that will appeal to teens. For example, for a next-level baked mac & cheese or mini meatballs in tomato sauce with mozzarella, each might be topped with flavored bread crumbs or a simple drizzle of balsamic glaze just before service. A tater tot casserole sprinkled with scallions or chives and a dollop of sour cream might evoke a loaded baked potato.

Meatless Mondays. If your district is participating in this campaign, adding veg-centric bakes to the menu cycle is an easy way to inject variety—and the dish doesn't have to be full-on vegetarian or vegan, if you want to feature cheese or eggs. Think meatless lasagna, veggie pot pie, chili bakes or an umami-rich mushroom and cheese casserole. If it's fall, try maple baked beans topped with chunks of roasted butternut squash.

Fusions. Bakes are a fun way to merge global flavors and regional signatures. For example, stuff a manicotti shell with enchilada ingredients for a Mexican-Italian mash-up that may find favor with teens or on your catering menu. Ideas suggested on school nutrition Facebook Groups include adding curry seasonings to chicken pot pie and combining chicken, waffles, eggs, cheese and syrup in a casserole. Take inspiration from mash-ups found on HealthySchoolRecipes.com, which include such items as Taco Pasta and Mexicali Chicken Casserole.

"I like to put an international twist

Baked Oatmeal with Pears



24 eggs

2 gal. milk, 1%

¼ cup vanilla extract

16 lb. pears, fresh, diced

6 lb. oats, rolled,
old-fashioned

7 Tbsp., 1 tsp. baking
powder

4 tsp. salt

½ cup cinnamon

1 lb. brown sugar

1 Preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly spray four 2-in. steamtable pans with a pan release.

2 In a large bowl, combine the eggs, milk and vanilla. Add the diced pears.

3 In a separate container, mix the rolled oats, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and brown sugar.

4 Add the dry ingredients to the liquid ingredients and gently mix until the oats and pears are evenly distributed.

5 Divide the mixture evenly into the four prepared steamtable pans. Bake for 40-50 minutes or until set. **CCP:** Heat until 165°F or higher for at least 15 seconds. **CCP:** Hold for hot service at 135°F or higher. Cut each pan 4x6, producing 24 even squares.

Recipe and Photo: USA Pears, www.foodservice.usapears.org

Nutritional and Meal Pattern Analyses: Rebecca J. Polson, CC, SNS, Instagram: @ChefRebeccak12

on bakes, like a tamale pie" says Polson. "At one school district, I added pastisio to the menu. It's a Greek lasagna layered with bechamel and beef, along with warming spices, tomatoes and cheese. Since no one can pronounce the dish, I suggested we call it Greek Mac 'n' Cheese. It was very well-received by the students, but too labor intensive to menu regularly."

Make Use of National Observances. If you are wary of adding bakes to your menu cycle, consider leaning on them for special occasion menus. For example, shepherd's pie is a natural choice for St. Patrick's Day. A Mexican-inspired bake could be a good fit for Cinco de Mayo. National Pasta Day (October 17) and National Tater Tot Day (February 2)

Green Chili Turkey Enchilada Bake

Serves 100 (3x4 in. serving)

Per Serving 292 cal., 26 g pro., 11 g fat, 3 g sat. fat, 25 g carb., 3 g fiber, 1,462 mg sod., 2 g sugar

Meal Pattern 2-oz.-eq. meat/meat alternate, 1.25-oz.-eq. whole grains, 1/4 cup vegetables



20 lb., 14 oz. turkey breast, sliced*

9 sprays nonstick pan release

23 lb., 12 oz. green chili enchilada sauce, canned

3 lb., 2 oz. pepper jack cheese, shredded

3 lb., 2 oz. green chiles, canned, drained

7 lb., 15 oz. yellow corn tortillas

1 In a large pan or bowl, mix enchilada sauce and green chiles.

2 Spray eight 2-in. full-size steamtable pans and one 2-in. 1/3 steamtable pan with pan release.

3 For each full-size steamtable pan: Spread 2 cups enchilada-green chile mixture on the bottom of each pan. Place 1 1/4 lb. of turkey slices over top, followed by a layer of eight corn tortillas. Evenly

sprinkle 3 oz. of cheese over the tortillas. Repeat all steps for a second layer, and then top with 2 more cups of enchilada sauce and 3 more ounces of cheese.

4 For the 1/3-size steamtable pan: Spread 2/3 cup enchilada-green chile mixture on the bottom of each pan. Place 7 oz. of turkey slices on top, followed by a layer of three corn tortillas and then a sprinkle of 1 oz. cheese. Repeat for a second layer, then top with 2/3 more cups of enchilada sauce and finish with 1 oz. of cheese.

5 Preheat the oven to 350°F. Cover the pans with foil and bake for 25 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for 25 more

minutes or until the sauce is bubbling and the cheese is golden brown.

CCP: Heat enchiladas to 165°F or higher for 15 seconds.

6 For the full steamtable pans, cut into 12 even pieces (3x4-in.). For the 1/3 steamtable pan, cut into four even pieces.

CCP: Hold at 140°F or higher.

***Note:** Butterball Foodservice Slice-N-Tact Oil Brown Turkey Breast-Frozen can be used in this recipe.

Recipe, Photo and Nutritional and Meal Pattern Analyses: Butterball Foodservice, www.butterballfoodservice.com

are just two examples of the l-o-n-g list of food-specific observances that can be good opportunities to feature bakes with spotlighted ingredients. You can also piggyback on cultural heritage observances, such as Italian American Month or Greek Easter. [Editors' Note: Look for the SY2023-24 Promotion Calendar to be available online sometime in late June.]

What's in a Name? The category of bakes encompasses a variety of dish types (casserole, strata, pot pie, lasagna),

specific recipes (stroganoff, enchilada, kugel) and regional colloquialisms (hot dish, covered dish). Do some marketing research with a focus group of students about menu names that will resonate in positive and negative ways.

For example, "casserole" and "hot dish" may be terms that mean something to your generation, but that may be the very reason kids might be less enthusiastic to select the dish. "Bakes" is a good category definer, but you could also create a name that simply highlights the key ingredients, such as "Cheesy

Chicken and Pasta" or make it a signature dish tied to the identity of your specific school or café, such as "Wildcat Special."

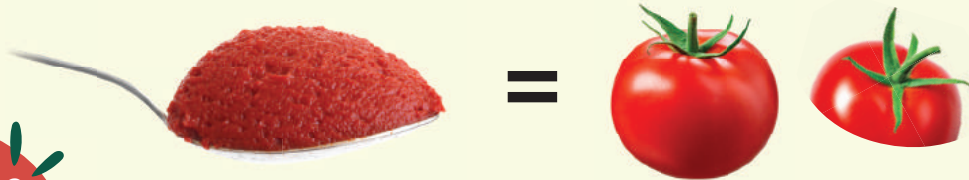
Sometimes a baked dish may get a whole new and somewhat unexpected identity. Some school districts menu certain baked dish recipes—especially those that lean on a melty, gooey profile—paired with chips and marketed as a "dip"! Think baked ground beef + salsa + sour cream + cheese for a Southwest Dip or shredded chicken + hot sauce + cheese for a Buffalo Chicken Dip.

Shelf-Stable Tomato Products are Packed with Goodness

One tomato is
94% water
The rest is made up of
vitamins and nutrients

Tomato paste,
found in shelf-stable products, is
more concentrated

It contains
**1.6 whole
tomatoes**
for each tablespoon



**THE VITAMINS &
NUTRIENTS OF
TOMATOES!**

Tomatoes are rich in
key nutrients like
potassium

And an excellent source of
vitamins A, B & C

Lycopene
is a powerful antioxidant
that's in tomatoes

But it's 20Xs
more bio-available in shelf
stable tomatoes like
sauce & salsa
than in fresh tomatoes!



**Red Gold Marinara Cups (2.5 oz.),
Redpack Nutritionally Enhanced™
Marinara Sauce (3 oz.) and
Salsa Cups or #10 Can (3 oz.) offer
2 tablespoons of tomato paste
in each serving.**



Scan to learn more &
download usable PDF
TomatoTriton document.



**Better
Nutrition**
made simple.™



Learn more about tomato nutrition
and Red Gold products at K12tomatoes.com

Red Gold is a registered trademark of Red Gold, LLC, Elwood, IN

Downsize. Certainly baking recipes in large pans and then cutting or scooping even portion sizes for service is a prep plus. But one way to appeal to kids is to make miniature, single-serve versions of savory pies or casseroles, filling muffin pan cavities or ramekins with the ingre-

dients—providing, of course, that you have sufficient labor to manage this format efficiently. For example, smashed tater tots or mashed potatoes make easy “cups” to hold minimal ingredients like egg, cheese and a little bit of chopped spinach and onion.

Hidden Veggie Mac & Cheese with Chicken Sausage

Servings 24 (1 cup)

Per Serving 387 cal.,
28.1 g pro., 14.8 g fat,
6.5 g sat. fat, 36.5 g carb.,
2.6 g fiber, 437.8 mg sod.,
2.9 g sugars

Meal Pattern 1.5 oz.-eq.
meat/meat alternate, 1.25
oz.-eq. grains, 1/4 cup other
vegetables



48 chicken sausage links (0.75 oz. each),
sliced

2 lb. pasta shells, cooked, drained*

2 cups butternut squash, peeled, cubed
into 1/2-in. pieces*

1 small head cauliflower, cut into 1-in.
pieces*

1 yellow onion, diced

3 cups milk

4 Tbsp. butter

4 Tbsp. flour

4 cups sharp cheddar cheese,
shredded*

1 Place the butternut squash and cauliflower in a pot with 1/2-cup water. Cover and simmer (or use a steamer) until the vegetables are tender. Do not drain.

2 Transfer contents, including water, to a blender (or use an immersion blender), and purée until smooth.

3 While the vegetables are steaming, heat the milk in a saucepan on low, being cautious not to let it scald.

4 While the milk is heating, melt the butter in a separate large pot. Add the onion and sliced chicken sausage and cook over low-medium heat until the onion is soft and translucent, and the chicken sausage is hot and starting to brown, around 5-6 minutes.

5 Sprinkle flour over onion/chicken mixture and whisk continuously for about 1 to 2 minutes to form a roux. Slowly add in the hot milk, whisking continuously until all milk is added. Add the shredded cheese, one cup at a time, whisking as it melts. Once the cheese has been completely added and melted, add the puréed vegetables and mix until completely incorporated.

6 Add the cooked pasta into the cheese mixture and mix well, so that all the pasta is coated with the chicken-onion-cheese sauce.

7 To serve, portion 1 cup.

***Notes:** The squash and cauliflower can be substituted with peeled and diced zucchini, carrots and other vegetables; the total amount should add up to 6 cups.

Pumpkin puree and butternut squash with a touch of cinnamon would be appropriate for a fall menu.

Use any style of pasta shape and any flavor of shredded cheese.

After preparing as directed, mixture can be placed in a steamtable pan and baked in a 350°F oven for 15 minutes. Cut into portions after removing from oven. This step ensures a more set, less runny mac & cheese and reduces the risk of over- or under-serving.

Recipe and Photo: Jones Dairy Farm,
www.jonesdairyfarm.com/foodservice

Nutritional and Meal Pattern Analyses:
Rebecca J. Polson, CC, SNS, Instagram:
@ChefRebeccak12

HYDRATION ROLL CALL.

NEW!
Talking Rain AQA™
1L Bottles
▼

EVERY STUDENT.
EVERY OCCASION.



**TALKING RAIN® BEVERAGE COMPANY OFFERS
REFRESHMENTS FOR YOUR A LA CARTE PROGRAM.**



**USDA SMART
SNACKS
COMPLIANT IN
HIGH SCHOOLS**



**ELIGIBLE
FOR
CAFÉ
POINTS**

For information contact foodservice@talkingrain.com
Check out our **NEW** Foodservice website: foodservice.talkingrain.com

Don't Force It. In a few illuminating threads in Facebook Groups like Tips for School Meals That Rock, there was general agreement that tuna casserole has been a consistent fail among students in many schools and districts. Although participation regularly tanked when it was offered, it inexplicably continued to show up on menus. Were the adults convinced kids would learn to love it as much as they did? Was there an abundance of tuna in the pantry? Was there ever thought about swapping in a different baked dish?

Also keep in mind the fact that younger children often demonstrate an aversion to foods touching on the plate. Bakes with proteins, grains and vegetables mixed together might be met with suspicion.

The moral to the story here is that (like most school menu items) bakes are worth trying, but acceptance will vary from school to school and even among grade levels. If it doesn't appeal, ask students to tell you why! Is it the taste? The visual appeal (or lack thereof)? The smell? The textural contrast? Might it work better with a few recipe adjustments, or do you need to let that item go and focus on an entirely different one the next time?

Timing Is Everything. Fresh takes on favorite bakes may be a successful strategy to inject more scratch-prepared items and more overall variety in your menus, but they require thoughtful planning. Depending on the number of ingredients, bakes can range from moderate to minimal prep. Polson

advises menuing them the day after an easy handheld, like a sandwich or pizza, to allow staff to prepare the dish ahead of time, finishing it in the oven on the day of service and pairing it with a side that can be prepared in a steamer or served cold.

Plan also for when bakes might naturally be met with customer acceptance, if not downright enthusiasm! Special promotions and Meatless Mondays, as described earlier, are potential fits. Fall and winter are typically good seasons to menu these dishes. Look at your cycle menu for a "special meal" rotation to try different recipes. What's at stake? The success of delicious bakes! **SN**

Patricia Fitzgerald is Editor of School Nutrition.

Recipes published in School Nutrition have not been tested by the magazine or SNA in a school foodservice settings. When available, nutrient analyses are provided by the recipe source. The specific brands used may make a difference in nutritional breakdown and meal pattern crediting. Required ingredients, preparation steps and nutrient content make some recipes more appropriate for catering applications or adult meals. Readers are encouraged to test recipes and calculate their own nutrition and cost analyses, meal patterns and HACCP steps.

NO SUGAR ADDED	SOUR	SPICY
		
 <p>1 Bag = Full Serving of Fruit *For Child Nutrition Meal Pattern Requirement</p>		<p>Rick Olson 800-892-6224 rickolson01@metrocast.net</p>



**SCHOOL
NUTRITION
ASSOCIATION**

SNA FOOD ALLERGY RESOURCE CENTER

Your Resource Center for tools, information, training and more to safely manage allergies in school cafeterias.

LEARN MORE AT:

[SCHOOLNUTRITION.ORG/FOODALLERGY](https://www.schoolnutrition.org/foodallergy)



SUPPORTED BY THE

National 
Peanut Board



The SNA Patron Program is composed of the School Nutrition Association's most loyal and active industry supporters. These vendors demonstrate an unparalleled commitment to strengthening school nutrition operations in districts all across the country. SNA Patrons provide quality goods and services to the K-12 school foodservice segment, while also going the extra mile in different areas of engagement with the national Association and its state affiliates. We are grateful for the support these companies provide our organization and its members, as well as the profession at large. Please join SNA and *School Nutrition* in thanking the 2023 Patrons for their time, dedication and enthusiasm.

- AccuTemp Products
- AmTab Manufacturing
- Aspire Bakeries/Otis Spunkmeyer
- Bake Crafters Food Co.
- Basic American Foods
- Ben's Original
- Bridgford Foods
- Buena Vista Foods
- Butterball Foodservice
- Campbell's Foodservice
- Cargill
- Cavendish Farms
- C.H. Guenther & Son, Inc./
Pioneer Flour Mills
- Conagra Foodservice
- Cool School Cafe
- Cool Tropics
- Corbett Brothers Farms
- CORE Foodservice
- Danone North America
- Dole Packaged Foods
- Domino's Pizza
- Duke Manufacturing
- E S Foods
- Form Plastics
- Foster Farms
- General Mills Convenience &
Foodservice
- Gold Creek Foods
- GS Foods Group/Gold Star Foods
- Harris School Solutions
- Heartland School Solutions
- High Liner Foods
- Home Market Foods
- i3 Education/PaySchools
- International Food Solutions
- Imagine Your Space, formerly
LoveYourLunchroom.com
- inTEAM Associates, LLC
- Integrated Food Service
- IPS Rebates
- ITW/FEG
- J&J Snack Foods Corp.
- Jennie-O Turkey Store
- The J.M. Smucker Company
- J.R. Simplot Company
- J.S.B. Industries (Muffin Town)
- J.T.M. Food Group
- Kellogg's Away From Home
- KeyImpact Sales & Systems
- Kraft Heinz Co.
- Lakeside Manufacturing
- Land O'Lakes
- LINQ
- LTI, Inc.
- McCain Foods USA
- MCI Foods
- McKee Foods/Fieldstone Bakery
- Michael Foods
- Mondelez International
- Mott's
- National Dairy Council
- National Food Group
- Pacific Northwest Canned Pear
Service
- Pactiv Evergreen
- PepsiCo Foodservice
- Pilgrim's Pride Corporation
- Post Consumer Brands
- Premier, Inc.
- PrimeroEdge + SchoolCafé
- Red Gold, LLC
- Rich Chicks, LLC
- Rich Products
- S.A. Piazza & Assoc., LLC
- Sara Lee Frozen Bakery
- School Food Handler
- Schwan's Food Service
- SFSPac Food Safety & Sanitation
System
- Sourcewell
- Sysco Corp.
- Tasty Brands
- Tetra Pak, Inc.
- Trident Seafoods
- Tyson Foods
- Uno Foods
- Waypoint
- Winston Foodservice

This & That

▶ CHECK THAT OUT



Veggie Orange Medley | JUICY JUICE | A new flavor from kid-favorite Juicy Juice combines sweet potato and carrot juices from

concentrate for a veggie-licious drink that delivers more than half a child's vitamin C needs in every 4.23-oz. juice box. Like other Juicy Juice products, **Veggie Orange Medley** has no added sugar and it's available in 40-, 32- and 24-oz. cases for your school's meal program. www.juicyjuice.com/school-program

▶ LOOK AT THAT

Silver Plate Award | IFMA SILVER PLATE AWARD | *SN* congratulates **Jessica Shelly, SNS**, Director of Student Dining Services for Cincinnati Public Schools, named the **2023 Silver Plate Award** winner in the Elementary and Secondary

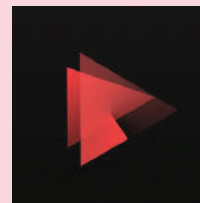
Schools category. The awards, presented by the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association (IFMA), recognize standouts in nine areas of the foodservice industry.

Winners are selected by a panel of trade press editors and previous winners. Shelly was nominated by Nestlé Professional and P&G Professional. www.ifmaworld.com



▶ DOWNLOAD THIS

Rewind: Music Time Travel | ZIAD AL HALABI | If you had a great time during last fall's National School Lunch Week playing tunes from the '60s and '70s in the spirit of the "Peace, Love and School Lunch" theme, then **Rewind: Music Time Travel** is the app for you. Pick a single year or a decade and discover the greatest hits, top artists and rising stars of the time. It's great for creating a fun work environment for your cafeteria team while they prep meals, or for playing music for students on themed days and celebrations. *Available on iOS and Android*



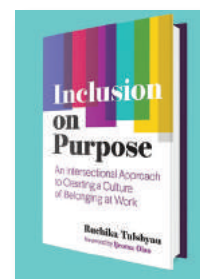
▶ ENTER THIS

Orchard Grant | FRUIT TREE PLANTING FOUNDATION | Here's the perfect opportunity to kick up your district's school garden program, courtesy of the **Fruit Tree Planting Foundation**. A grant makes it possible for recipients to plant (and care for) trees in places where they'll best serve the surrounding communities, not just today but for generations to come. School recipients can participate in a "Fruit Tree 101" program that creates outdoor edible orchard classrooms supported by activities and lesson plans. www.ftpf.org



▶ READ THIS

Inclusion on Purpose | RUCHIKA TULSHYAN | Based on the concept that a diverse and inclusive workplace isn't something that just happens by accident, **Inclusion on Purpose: An Intersectional Approach to Creating a Culture of Belonging at Work** by Ruchika Tulshyan provides practical guidance on how you as a leader, and your entire organization, can work to make your workplace a more inclusive environment for all. The book focuses on the experience of women of color, who are subject to both racial and gender bias, and offers approaches for dismantling structural bias. *Available from major book retailers.*



This & That

▶ ENTER THIS

Equipment Sweepstakes | **TRAULSEN & HOBART** | The annual **Save Your Kitchen equipment sweepstakes** is back! "The Syk Patrol is dedicated to rescuing K-12 kitchens from the mountain of challenges caused by unreliable, inefficient

equipment under-serving the needs of nutrition staff and students."

The first two giveaways are complete, but you have two more chances to win. Submit your entry before **July 14** and **October 13**, and your school nutrition operation could be the lucky recipient of your choice of select kitchen equipment from **Traulsen and Hobart**. Visit www.saveyourkitchen.com for details and the entry form.



▶ CHECK THAT OUT



Powerful Proteins | **CLOVERDALE FOODSERVICE** | From beef and pork franks to lower-sodium sliced ham to tangy summer sausage, you'll find more than a dozen fully cooked and seasoned **meats** ideal for the K-12 school meal segment from Cloverdale Foodservice. This fourth-generation, family-owned company crafts premium bold flavors in ready-to-eat products you can use for sandwiches, pigs-in-a-blanket, tacos and nachos, plus toppers for baked potatoes, pizzas, quesadillas and more. www.cloverdalefoodservice.com

▶ CHECK THAT OUT

Grab 'n' Go Packaging | **FORM PLASTICS** | The many shapes and sizes of single and multi-compartment **packaging options** from Form Plastics provide school meal operations with plenty of flexibility to find the best solutions for serving up an array of individually packaged items ranging from sandwiches to salads to vegetable sides. Lightweight and recyclable, the packaging uses a film seal application process that keeps items fresh and safe from tampering. They're ideal for grab 'n' go merchandising and service. Custom designs are available. www.formplastics.com



TURNIP THE BEET

▶ LOOK AT THAT

Turnip the Beet Winners | **USDA** | You might say these outstanding 2022 Summer Meal Program sponsors are tough to "beet!" USDA recently announced 98 recipients of gold (31), silver (54) and bronze (13) awards in the agency's annual **Turnip the Beet Awards**, which recognize sponsors of Summer Meal Programs who dial up efforts to provide quality meals for students that are appetizing, appealing and nutritious. Summer meals are a critical child nutrition safety net during the off-school season when many children from food-insecure households no longer have access to school meals. www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/turnip-the-beet

▶ CHECK THAT OUT

Cereal Bars | **FIELDSTONE BAKERY** | **Grains 2 Go cereal bars** from the Fieldstone Bakery division of McKee Foods make fueling up for a big day taste pretty delicious. With kid-approved flavors like Apple Cinnamon and Chocolate Chip, these bars each provide 16 grams of whole grains and are Smart Snacks-compliant. Individually wrapped, they are easily portable for breakfast on the run or an easy snack. www.mckeefoodservice.com/segment/school-nutrition-food-service



Disclaimer: Information published in This & That has been fact-checked on company/organization websites at press time, but still may be subject to changes and/or errors.

SN AD LIST

AccuTemp Products, 25
Barfresh Food Group, 60
Bridgford Foods, 37
Congra Foodservice, 13
Cool School Cafe, 15
Country Pure, 34-35
E S Foods, 8, 9
FWE/Food Warming Equipment, C2

General Mills Convenience & Foodservice, 3
Heartland Food Products Group, C3
Huhtamaki, 7
IPS Rebates, 31
J&J Snack Foods Corp., 59
J.R. Simplot Company, 51
J.T.M. Food Group, 5

Kraft-Heinz Foods Company, 65
McKee Foods/Fieldstone Bakery, 58
National Food Group, 1
National Raisin Company, 78
Peterson Farms Fresh, 23
Polar King International, 66
ProView Foods by Tasty Brands, 57
Red Gold, 75

School Nutrition Association, 79
SFSPac Food Safety & Sanitation System, 48
Talking Rain Beverage Company, 77
Tasty Brands, 49
Traulsen, a div. of ITW/FEG, 46
Tyson Foods, C4

Last Word



» meet *Robin Proffit*

FOODSERVICE DIRECTOR » CLEARBROOK-GONVICK (MINN.) SCHOOL

Q Do you have good memories eating school meals as a student?

A I still remember my elementary school cook, whose name was Ann. She made the best homemade wheat, pull-apart rolls, *ever*.

Q Please share a little of your K-12 school nutrition journey.

A When the head cook position opened in our small district—enrollment is under 500—several people approached me about applying, and I did. Now, I'm the director, but the best part of my job is when I get to serve the students. Nothing beats that!

I've been a member of SNA since 2009 and have attended eight Annual National Conferences. The first—and my favorite—was in Nashville. So many wonderful people took me under their wings. Each year, we reconnect and make more memories.

Q What are your favorite TV series to binge-watch and why?

A I love medical dramas like "The Good Doctor" and "Chicago Med." When I was in high school, I had planned to go into health care. Now, I've recently completed an EMT course, and I look forward to serving my community as a volunteer first responder.

Q Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give your 18-year-old self?

A As a teenager, you know *everything*! But I would tell my younger self to listen to her parents—they truly *do* know everything. I'd also advise her to cherish her family, while making time for herself.

Q What would you put in a time capsule to be opened in 100 years?

A I've never created a time capsule—that would be something fun to do! I'd put in pictures, an iPhone, school menus, news articles about COVID-19, popular candy and music CDs.

Q If you didn't need sleep, what would you do instead?

A I'd spend more time with my new granddaughter! I also enjoy crafting with my Cricut cutting machine.

Q If you couldn't work in school nutrition, what would be your next dream job?

A I'd still love to be a part of the school world. My top pick would probably be working in mental health and creating bonds with those students who are struggling.

Q What three wishes would you ask a genie to grant?

A First, I'd asked to meet my grandma, who passed way before I was born. Next, I'd want everyone to have equal opportunities for health and happiness. No one in the world should ever have to starve or go without health care. Finally, I'd wish to never worry again about all the things I have no control over!

Q Is there someone famous who inspires you?

A Actually, the people in my life are the ones who inspire me the most! The local church ladies who create a giving tree at

Christmas, the administrators in my district who pick up weekend backpacks full of food for students in need, the ladies in my kitchen who work hard, but still volunteer to raise funds for our Angel Care program, the teachers and paras who spend extra hours of their own time to change a life—these are my people!



Promo Planner ▶▶▶

Celebration Opportunities for School Cafeterias

June 2023

- » Great Outdoors Month
- » National Dairy Month
- » National Soul Food Month
- » National Pollinator Week (June 19-25)
- » Flag Day (June 14)
- » National Smoothie Day (June 21)

July 2023

- » Eggplant Month
- » National Blueberries Month
- » National Picnic Month
- » National Day of Rock 'n' Roll (July 7)
- » **National Macaroni & Cheese Day (July 14)**
- » World Emoji Day (July 17)

August 2023

- » International Pirate Month
- » National Panini Month
- » National Farmers Market Week (Aug. 6-12)
- » National Watermelon Day (Aug. 3)
- » National Waffle Day (Aug. 24)
- » National Trail Mix Day (Aug. 31)

GET READY: JULY 14 IS *National Macaroni & Cheese Day!*

Everything Mac & Cheese with Chicken

- 5 lb. whole-grain elbow pasta
- 16 1/2 oz. instant non-fat dry milk
- 1 1/4 qt. evaporated milk, low-fat, 2%
- 2 1/2 qt. vegetable stock, unsalted
- 10 Tbsps. everything bagel spice blend*
- 5 tsp. paprika*
- 5 tsp. ground mustard*
- 3 3/4 lb. cheddar cheese, sharp, low-fat, shredded
- 1 1/2 lb. mozzarella, low-moisture, skim, shredded
- 3 1/2 oz. cornstarch
- 3 lb. chicken, cooked, diced
- 1 3/4 lb. carrots, small diced
- 1 1/3 lb. onions, small, diced
- 1 lb. celery, small, diced

- 1 Preheat the oven to 350°F. Cook the elbow pasta until al dente, then drain. Do not rinse. Set aside.
- 2 In a bowl, whisk together the instant dry milk, vegetable stock, evaporated milk and dry seasonings* until fully combined. Set aside.

Serves 50 (1 1/2 cups)

Per Serving 393 cal.,
31 g pro., 9 g fat, 3.8 g
sat. fat, 47 g carb.,
5 g fiber, 645 mg sod.,
9 g sugars

Meal Pattern 2.5 oz.-eq.
meat/meat alternate,
1.5 oz.-eq. grains, 1/8 cup
additional vegetables

3 In a large bowl, toss the cheddar and mozzarella cheeses with the cornstarch until evenly coated.

4 In a large tub or pan, combine the cooked pasta, the liquid mixture, cheeses and remaining ingredients (chicken and vegetables). Mix until well-combined.

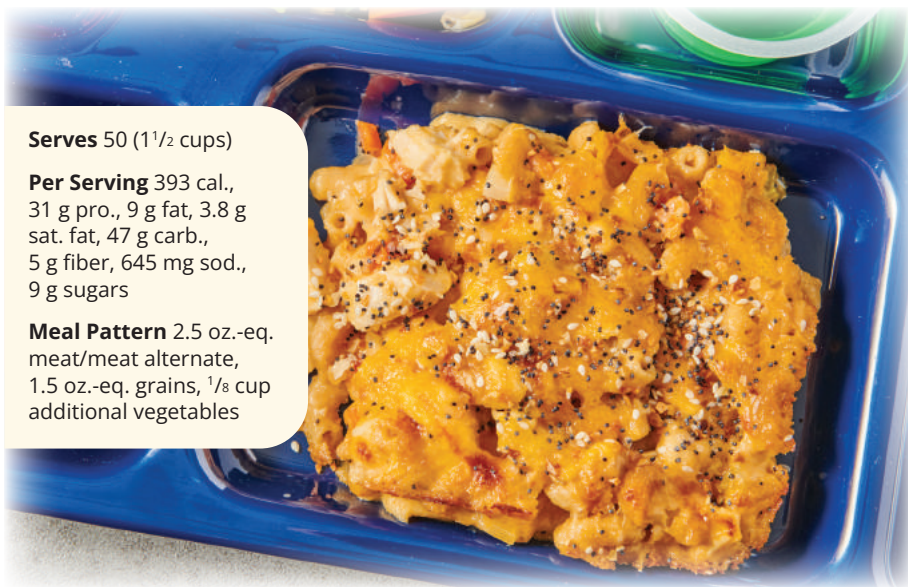
5 Divide the mac & cheese into two 2-in. full steamtable pans and one 2-in. half pan. Bake for 20 minutes uncovered. Stir and bake for an additional 30 minutes, uncovered. Hold hot for service.

6 To portion, cut each full pan into 4x5-in. squares and the half pan into 2x5-in. squares. Each portion should be about 1 1/2 cups.

***Note:** McCormick Culinary® Everything Bagel Seasoning, Paprika and Ground Mustard can be used in this recipe.

Recipe, Photo and Nutritional Analysis: McCormick for Chefs,
www.mccormickforchefs.com

Meal Pattern Analysis: Rebecca J. Polson,
CC, SNS, Instagram: @ChefRebeccak12



For more holidays and promo ideas, SNA members can visit www.schoolnutrition.org/promocalendar



Where Did They Go?

Keep Students On Campus with Java House Cold Brew Coffee!

Let's face it. If students aren't enjoying coffee on campus, then they are visiting their favorite local coffee shop. Java House ready-to-drink and concentrate are great-tasting and can provide a new revenue stream for your operation.



WE KNOW
THEY'LL
LOVE THE
TASTE!



WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED



CHICKEN

Pierre

INDIVIDUALLY
WRAPPED SANDWICHES



STUFFED BREADSTICKS



SCAN ME

Not sure what you can menu? Rest assured Tyson K-12 is ready to fill your orders with an extensive portfolio of **Tyson**® bone-in chicken products your students will love. We're also ready to go with other student-favorites like **Bosco**® Stuffed Breadsticks and individually wrapped sandwiches from **Tyson**®, **Jimmy Dean**®, **Ball Park**® and **Pierre**™ brands.



Follow Us @TysonK12Schools



Contact your Tyson Foodservice Representative or visit tysonK12.com for product information, resources and market-relevant solutions backed by our trusted brands.

*Minimally processed. No artificial ingredients.

©2023 Tyson Foods, Inc. Trademarks and registered trademarks are owned by Tyson Foods, Inc. or its subsidiaries, or used under license.