



SNAPA HAPPENINGS

Fall 2025



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2025 - 2026 SNAPA Board of Directors

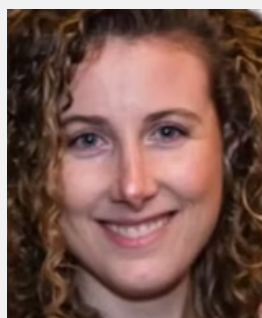
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“Adventure Awaits”: SNAPA 2025 Annual Conference

The 2025 SNAPA Annual Conference rolled into Altoona, July 28-31, at the Blair County Convention Center — and what an adventure it was! With the theme “Adventure Awaits,” attendees were invited to climb aboard for a journey filled with inspiration, professional growth, and plenty of fun. The train-themed event celebrated the spirit of discovery and teamwork that drives school nutrition professionals across the Commonwealth.

From the opening whistle to the final stop, the conference delivered four unforgettable days of connection and learning. Keynote speakers Chef Vanessa Hayes and Ryan Sheetz delivered energizing messages about leadership, positivity, and staying on track when challenges arise — reminding everyone why their work matters to Pennsylvania’s students each and every day.



The educational sessions offered something for everyone, from conductors of large operations to first-time travelers in the school nutrition field. Workshops explored scratch cooking, menu innovation, and local procurement, while others dove into workforce challenges, technology solutions, and creative marketing strategies. Culinary demonstrations, interactive discussions, and hands-on trainings ensured attendees left with fresh ideas ready to bring back home.

The annual food show served as a place to explore new products, taste-test student favorites, and connect with vendors and partners who keep school nutrition programs running. The excitement was matched only by the spirit of collaboration that filled every corner of the convention center. A special thank you to all of the partners that made this year's event possible!



The annual awards dinner provided a heartfelt pause along the route to recognize SNAPA members who go above and beyond in their schools and communities. Their achievements reminded everyone that the journey of school nutrition is one of service, innovation, and deep care for students.

Evenings were filled with laughter and camaraderie, from the lively Welcome Reception to the President's Dinner, where members relaxed and enjoyed time with colleagues before boarding back into another day of adventure. Each event — from tours and training to celebrations — reflected the dedication and enthusiasm that define SNAPA's members.

As the 2025 conference reached its final destination, the sense of momentum and shared purpose was unmistakable. Attendees departed Altoona inspired, recharged, and ready to take what they learned back to their districts. "Adventure Awaits" proved more than a theme — it was a reminder that every day in school nutrition offers a new opportunity to make a difference. With passion, partnership, and purpose, SNAPA members are on track for another remarkable year.



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K-12



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taste the world: your school LUNCH passport!

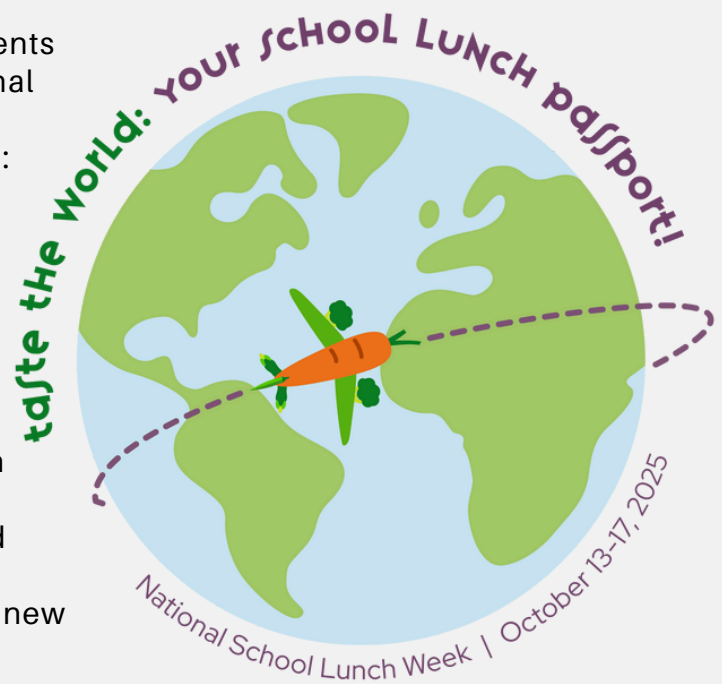


National School Lunch Week | October 13-17, 2025

TASTING THE WORLD: CELEBRATING SCHOOL LUNCH AND THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT POSSIBLE

School cafeterias across Pennsylvania took students on a global adventure this October during National School Lunch Week (NSLW), celebrated October 13-17, 2025. This year's theme, "Taste the World: Your School Lunch Passport," invited students to explore international flavors while celebrating the power of healthy school meals and the dedicated professionals who make them possible every day.

From Italian pasta bars to Asian-inspired rice bowls, Mexican street corn, and classic American favorites, school nutrition teams transformed cafeterias into lively global destinations. Themed menus, decorations, and student activities made lunchtime exciting while encouraging kids to try new foods and learn about different cultures.



Students at Colonial Middle School enjoyed global-inspired meals from China, Italy, Greece, and Mexico, collecting digital "passport stamps" along the way for a chance to win prizes. The cafeteria was decorated according to each day's global theme. Elementary schools also joined in the celebration by serving internationally inspired desserts alongside their meals. A big thank-you to our food service team for making this delicious and educational week possible!

Submitted by: Lori McCoy, Colonial SD

This year, for National School Lunch Week, Radnor Middle School hosted a "Design Your Own School Lunch" contest that inspired a wave of creativity and enthusiasm! Students submitted thoughtful and imaginative meal ideas celebrating the importance of healthy school lunches. Entries ranged from classic favorites like Fish and Chips, BBQ Chicken Kebabs, and Green Pesto Pasta to fun themed dishes such as Ghostly Grilled Cheese with Boo-melon Cups. And the winning lunch was:

- *Ramen Bowl (chicken or vegetarian)
- *Baby Carrots w/LF Dip
- *Fresh Cut Mellon Bowl
- *White or Chocolate Milk



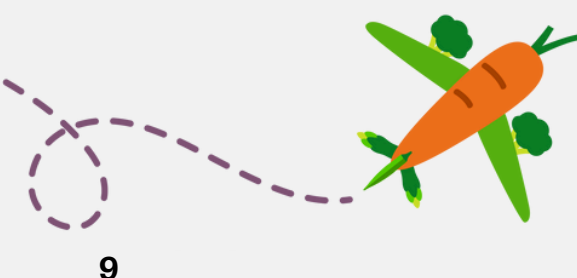
The Ramen bowls were a big hit! We plan to run this contest again next year due to the positive response we received from the students.

Submitted by: Tara Andrews, Radnor Township School District



The Lampeter-Strasburg School District had a great time serving new foods to students. They really enjoyed their Latin America day when they served empanadas & enchiladas. The high school assistant manager handmade all the empanadas with some help from the manager and others. The manager made chicken green chile enchiladas. The manager is from New Mexico and the assistant manager is Puerto Rican. The students also enjoyed trying new things and learning from 'flavor tips' that chatGPT helped create.

Submitted by: Amber Zimmerman, Lampeter-Strasburg School District



National School Lunch Week was so fun this year and so easy to celebrate! We had a week long celebration where we visited Japan, India, Germany and Italy with traditional dishes. We started in Japan featuring Teriyaki Chicken, Rice Noodles, Stir Fry Veggie Blend, and Fortune Cookies. Next up was India and we offered Chicken Tikka Masala, Rice, Naan Bread, Cucumber Raita, and Rice Pudding. We found out that our students really liked the Chicken Tikka Masala and they would like it added to our menu! Our passport took us to Germany next for lunch. We served Bratwurst, Potatoes and Cabbage, Pretzel Bites, and Warm Cinnamon Apples. Our last stop brought us to Italy where students enjoyed Chicken Parmesan, Rotini Pasta, Garlic Knots, Fresh Roasted Green Beans, and a Cherry Italian Ice. We couldn't just offer food for the week we had to give away some prizes too! Elementary Students were entered for a chance to win an international cookbook for kids and Secondary students entered a raffle for a change to win a food throw blanket. We also gave away some passports, notebooks, and stickers to the elementary students if they got a "lucky tray!"

Submitted By: Jami Leisey, Eastern Lancaster County School District



Tulpehocken Area School District celebrated National School Lunch Week (NSLW) with a fun and flavorful event at our elementary schools. Students were invited to visit an international sample table, where they had the opportunity to taste dishes from around the world.

The featured samples included chicken tikka masala, a flavorful Indian-inspired dish, and bean and cheese pupusas, a traditional Salvadoran favorite. Students who tried the samples received special "I Tried It!" stickers to celebrate their willingness to explore new foods.

The event was a hit—chicken tikka masala was the clear fan favorite! The celebration encouraged students to be adventurous eaters while learning about global cuisines.

Submitted By: Jillian Bergman, Tulpehocken Area School District



Provident Charter School Celebrates NSLW with a Global Twist

For National School Lunch Week, Provident Charter School invited students to “Taste the World” with a four-day culinary tour. Each day featured a globally inspired entrée and sides, balancing nutrition with new flavors:

- India (Tuesday): Butter Chicken over Rice with cucumber salad, peppers, and fresh fruit

👉 <https://www.thelunchbox.org/recipes-menus/recipes/show/butter-chicken>

- Mexico (Wednesday): Beef Flautas with Mexican slaw, fresh veggies, and fruit

👉 <https://healthyschoolrecipes.com/recipes/beef-flautas/>

- Caribbean (Thursday): Jerk Chicken with Rice & Beans, plantains, and mandarin oranges

👉 Sweet Plantains: <https://theicn.org/cnrb/pdfs/schools/Sweet-Plantains.pdf>

| Jerk Chicken: <https://www.aspicyperspective.com/jamaican-jerk-chicken/>

- Hawaii (Friday): Pineapple Chicken with Fried Rice, broccoli, cucumbers, and grapes

👉 <https://veronikaskitchen.com/hawaiian-chicken-recipe/>

The goal? To expand student palates, celebrate cultural diversity, and keep nutrition at the center of every plate. The food service team worked creatively to adapt authentic recipes to meet school meal standards—turning the cafeteria into a passport to the world. 🍴🍴



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TRY A SAMPLE OF OUR NEW LINE-UP



LOCAL CONNECTIONS, LASTING IMPACT: HOW OUR FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM IS GROWING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Submitted By: Kelly R. Price MS, RD, LDN,
Manheim Township SD

Our Farm to School program is making a meaningful difference in both our classrooms and our local economy by strengthening the bond between local farms, local produce



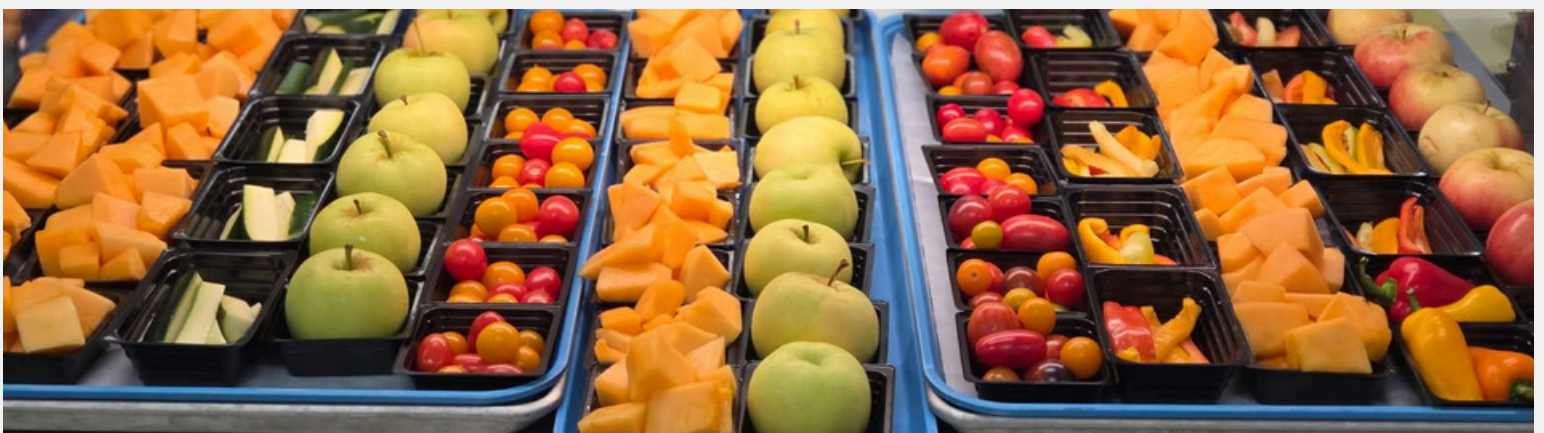
auctions, and our district. By sourcing fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats directly from local farms and produce auctions, we're not only serving healthier meals to students—we're supporting the families and communities that produce our food and live within our community.

This initiative has brought a noticeable boost to our food service program. Our community has taken notice of the positive changes that we have done this year and we continue to receive encouraging feedback from our community about the food service program.



Access to fresh, local foods has improved the quality of our school meals, encouraged better eating habits, and sparked excitement around nutrition. Signs are placed within the meal service lines with information about the farmers and in order to help kids understand where their food comes from and why it matters.

Together, we're building healthier students, stronger farms, and a more connected community—one meal at a time.



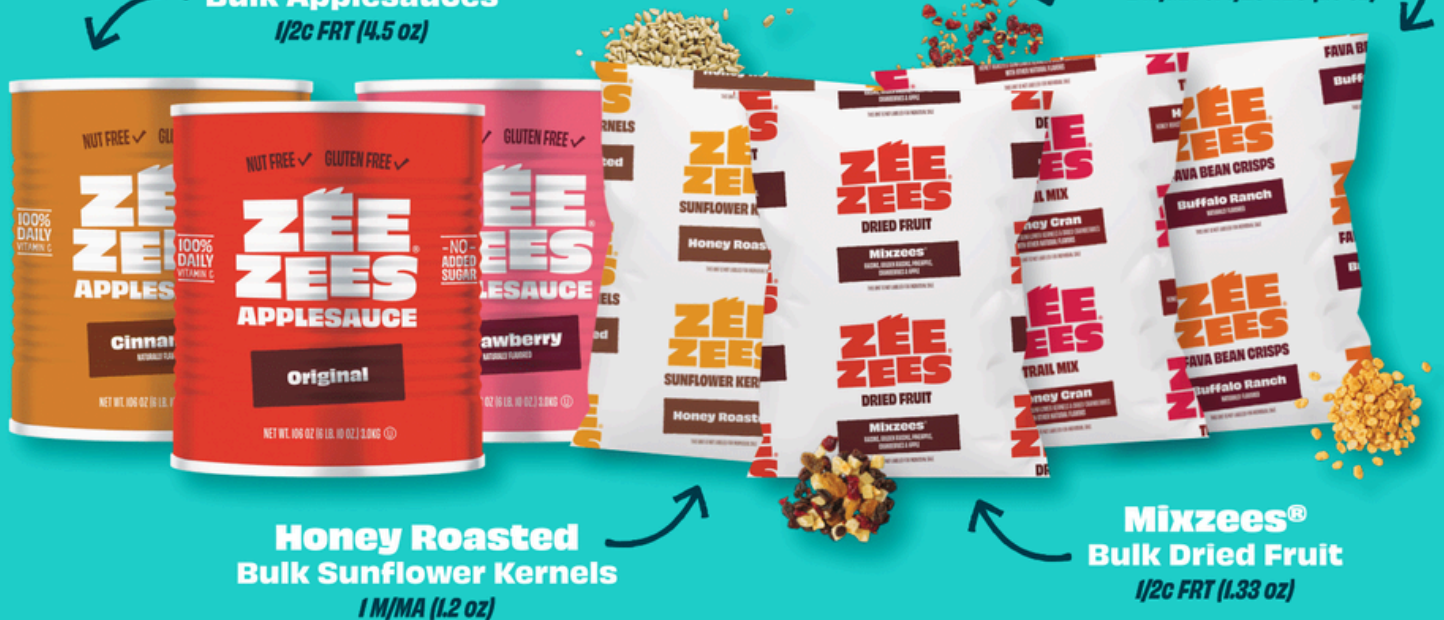
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**Buffalo Ranch
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2 M/MA or 1/2c VEG (1.5 oz)



**Honey Roasted
Bulk Sunflower Kernels**
1 M/MA (1.2 oz)

**Mixzees[®]
Bulk Dried Fruit**
1/2c FRT (1.33 oz)

Contact Taran Zackrison For More Information
tzackrison@nationalfoodgroup.com | 248.560.2343

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Harvest Pumpkin Overnight Oats



Ingredients:

6 lb 8 oz Old Fashioned Oats, Whole Grain
1/2c Ground Cinnamon
13 lb 4 oz Pumpkin Puree
6 qt 2 1/2c Water
10 lb Zee Zees Mixzees® Dried Fruit Cafeteria Case (#624809)
13 lb 4 oz Zee Zees Cinnamon Applesauce Cafeteria Case (#A3910)

Instructions:

Stir in oats, spices, and Zee Zees Mixzees® in a large bowl until combined. May reserve 6 1/4 cups of Mixzees® for additional garnish.

Add Zee Zees Cinnamon Applesauce, pumpkin puree, and water into the oats mixture. Mix well.

Cover and chill for a minimum of 4 hours or overnight at 41°F or below.

Portion mixture with two #10 scoops, for a total of 3/4 cup in portioned cups for service.

Optional: Garnish Mixzees® on top with #60 scoop or 1 Tbsp per serving. Enjoy!

Servings: 100 | **Serving Size:** 5.5 oz Finished

Contribution: 1 GRN, 1/2c FRT & 1/4c VEG (1/4c red/orange)

Read More In Our Latest Blog!



Fall For Speed Scratch

Fewer Steps, Faster Prep, and Flavors That Fill The Air

This fall, pumpkins aren't the only thing you can carve out. Speed-scratch helps carve out time, savings, and creativity!

Short staffing, and students who want meals that are colorful, flavorful, and fun are daily realities. Speed-scratch blends time-saving bulk items with scratch-style touches for big impact. Start with Zee Zees Cafeteria Case Applesauce Cans, Dried Fruit Mixzees®, Honey Roasted Sunflower Kernels, Buffalo Ranch Fava Bean Crisps, or Honey Cran Trail Mix, then add seasonal flair that brings excitement and nutrition to the tray.

Labor

Labor can make up to 50% of a school nutrition budget, so every saved step matters. Starting with Zee Zees kids favorites in bulk cuts recipe prep time and helps dollars stretch further while freeing staff to focus on other priorities.

Flavor & Nutrition

Adding Zee Zees to your recipe brings big flavor and nutrition while creating combinations unique to your program. Flexibility is key: adjust portions or swap in seasonal ingredients to make speed-scratch a true participation driver. Creating recipes with healthy building blocks, Zee Zees keep meals exciting and on track with nutrition goals.

Recipe Highlight!

The magic starts with Zee Zees Cinnamon Applesauce, adding natural sweetness, and Mixzees® dried fruit, bringing chewy bursts of flavor kids love. Paired with pumpkin and whole grain oats, this dish becomes a nutrition powerhouse; together they provide vitamin C, fiber, vitamin A, and whole grain energy that keep kids satisfied and smiling. It's an example of speed scratch in action, bringing Zee Zees favorites, seasonal, crisp ingredients into a dish that is labor-smart and kid-approved. Customizable for breakfast, lunch, or snacks.

How to Start: Speed Scratch 101

Speed Scratch helps districts:

- Keep students excited with Zee Zees favorites
- Lower labor costs
- Meet nutrition guidelines
- Create flexible, customizable menus

Start small by swapping one high-labor item for a Zee Zees base. Layer in other components, add seasonal touches, and track savings in labor or participation changes. Just one or two swaps can lower costs, free staff time, and keep kids excited with speed-scratch.

Want to see it in action? Kick things off with the Harvest Pumpkin Overnight Oats recipe for a speed-scratch win.

Looking for more information?

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MEMBERSHIP forward

Grow Together



Your membership isn't just about what you gain,
but also about what you can give.

From August 2024 through May 2025, take part in our exciting monthly drawings. Our membership campaign is not just about winning prizes – it's your chance to actively support SNA and the vital field of school nutrition. Each month, we'll randomly select winners to receive fantastic prizes.



Recruiting one new member automatically enters you into a random prize drawing for that month and the chance to win a \$25 gift card.

To be eligible for a monthly prize, you just need to recruit at least ONE new SNA member. Be sure that the member you recruit lists you as the referrer when they join SNA (online or using a print application). Winners will be selected through a random prize drawing each month.* In addition to winning a great prize, monthly campaign winners will be showcased on SNA social media platforms.

Help us grow by introducing new members to the School Nutrition Association!

For complete campaign rules, prizes and materials, visit www.schoolnutrition.org/membership-forward

*Void where prohibited or restricted by law.



MEMBERSHIP
forward
Grow Together

TOP REASONS TO JOIN SNA

When you become a member of SNA, you get access to a vibrant community dedicated to making a significant and enduring impact in the field of school nutrition.

HERE'S HOW SNA MEMBERSHIP CAN EMPOWER YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS:



EMPOWER YOUR GROWTH

Access to a library of 100+ educational webinars designed to quickly build your skills and knowledge on critical topics.



EXPAND YOUR NETWORK

Join a diverse community of nutrition professionals at our meetings and virtual events and gain fresh perspectives that will make an impact on the work you do.



AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE

Stand strong with us as we advocate for the critical issues impacting school meal programs at the state and national levels.



ADVANCE YOUR CAREER PATH

With SNA's Career Center, you'll stand out from the crowd, impress employers and find opportunities that will help you achieve your career goals.



CERTIFY YOUR EXPERTISE

Achieve recognition and validate your skills with our specialized certificate and credentialing programs.



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Utilize our comprehensive marketing and PR resources designed to promote and grow your school meal programs.



KEEP YOURSELF INFORMED

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SNA members always pay the lowest price and can find deep discounts on publications, conferences and courses.

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!



FOUR STEPS to a Smarter, Healthier, School Cafeteria

Presented by BradyPLUS

Running a school cafeteria is no easy task. Between planning menus, meeting nutrition standards, and keeping students happy, it's a daily balancing act.

At BradyPLUS, we understand the challenges you face—and we're here to help. **Our four-step framework** is designed to make your foodservice operation more efficient, more engaging, and more sustainable.

Step 1: Spot the Trouble Areas

It's never a bad time to ask: what's working, and what's not? Talk to your team. Are breakdowns happening more often? Is your equipment keeping up with the menu? Are students enjoying the meals? Honest feedback from your staff is one of the best tools you have for identifying areas that need attention.

Step 2: Upgrade with Smart Tools

Once you know what's slowing you down, it's time to **bring in solutions that make life easier.** High-efficiency equipment like combi ovens and blast chillers can speed up prep, improve food quality, and help you stay ahead of safety standards.

Want to make lunch more exciting? Try adding action stations—like salad bars, pizza counters, or wok setups—that give students more choices. Ventless, high-speed models are easy to install and don't require hoods. These stations can be enhanced by impactful graphics and signage that add a fun, personalized element to each school.



Finally, grab-and-go kiosks and self-serve stations are great for cutting down lines and boosting student engagement.

Smart Equipment Highlights:

- + **Combi ovens** cook faster and offer multiple functions in one unit
- + **Blast chillers** cool food quickly and extend shelf life
- + **Action stations** add variety and visual appeal
- + **Grab-and-go** and **self-serve** options improve speed and hygiene



Step 3: Keep It Simple

If you're part of a smaller district, consider using a commissary kitchen

to centralize food prep. Cooking offsite and distributing meals to multiple schools can save time, reduce waste, and cut costs. **Explore sustainable strategies**, like switching to eco-friendly disposables, partnering with local farms, or joining farm-to-school programs. These changes support your nutrition goals and can help with grant eligibility, too.

Step 4: Stay Flexible

Consider how stations can serve different needs throughout the day. A coffee and pastry setup in the morning, a snack bar in the afternoon, and a sandwich or ice cream cart for evening events. Mobile refrigerated carts and **multi-use stations save space and money**, while adding some fun to a student's day.

Let's Build a Better Cafeteria—Together

BradyPLUS

BradyPLUS is a national, specialized distribution partner. We provide the right **supplies + support** for our JanSan, Foodservice, and Industrial Packaging customers to ensure their businesses are more successful every day.

Visit BradyPLUS.com to learn how to improve productivity, maximize space, and create a foodservice experience that keeps students happy and healthy.





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FUELING STUDENTS TO POWER THEIR POTENTIAL

It's the perfect time to refocus on what helps students thrive—starting each day with well-balanced school meals that are energizing, appealing, and fuel students through active learning, after-school activities, and everything in between.

To keep menus fresh and students engaged, Dairy Council has developed SMART SWAPS a growing library of school-tested, student approved recipes that fit seamlessly into breakfast and lunch programs. Options like Peaches & Cream Overnight Oats, Ham and Cheese Breakfast Panini, and breakfast smoothies or parfaits with fruit and yogurt—like the Perfect Yogurt Parfait and Chunky Monkey Smoothie—bring flavor, familiarity, and nutrition together in ways students enjoy. For lunch, recipes like the Pasta Bake with Garlic Bread, Chicken Salad Sandwich or Taco Bowl offer satisfying, kid-approved options that meet program guidelines.

“Dairy. Powered By Protein” supports growing bodies and active minds with high-quality protein and plays a crucial role in school meals, offering key nutrients like calcium, and vitamin D. Whether served in a smoothie, layered in a parfait, or paired with whole grains and fruit, dairy foods help round out a meal that keeps students satisfied and focused throughout the day. And remember, as dairy and plant-based foods go better together!

This year, we encourage more schools to explore Fuel Up! a free, student-focused initiative, that encourages healthy eating, movement, and leadership. Monthly challenges give students a chance to get involved and share ideas that make wellness fun and meaningful in their schools, and there are resources for school nutrition professionals, teachers, and more. Whether you're introducing new grab-and-go options or looking for ways to boost student engagement, turn to these resources to support success throughout the school year.

Every school day is an opportunity to help students thrive—one balanced meal at a time.



A LOOK BACK AT OUR 2025 SNAPA AWARD RECIPIENTS

2025 DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR GREG HUMMEL

SNAPA proudly recognizes Greg Hummel as the 2025 Director of the Year, honoring his outstanding leadership and unwavering dedication to the students and families of his district.

With over 29 years of service, Greg has built a nutrition program centered on relationships, student voice, and community trust. Known for saying “It’s all about the kids,” he has transformed his district’s food service program into a model of fiscal responsibility, innovation, and student engagement. After being recruited to revitalize a struggling operation, he collaborated with principals, hosted student focus groups, and connected directly with families at PTO meetings and school events to create a sustainable, student-focused dining experience.

His leadership extends beyond the lunch line. From organizing annual staff trainings and bringing national speakers to his district, to mentoring Penn State dietetic students through classroom-based culinary education, he’s committed to building the next generation of school nutrition professionals. A former SNAPa board member and active voice in SNAPA, SNA, and PASBO, Greg exemplifies what it means to lead with heart, vision, and purpose.



2025 MANAGER OF THE YEAR YVONNE WESTLAKE

SNAPA is proud to recognize Yvonne Westlake as the 2025 Manager of the Year, for her exemplary leadership, creativity, and compassion in school nutrition.

As kitchen manager at Great Valley High School, Yvonne has transformed the cafeteria into a welcoming, inclusive, and efficient environment for students and staff alike. She introduced bilingual signage to better serve Spanish-speaking students and team members, restructured the serving area for improved flow and service speed, and partnered with school nurses to ensure no student starts the day hungry.

Yvonne is a passionate mentor who invests in her team’s success through hands-on training in culinary skills, food safety, and kitchen equipment use —always adapting her approach to meet the needs of each team member. Her enthusiasm for learning is contagious; she actively participates in SNA programs and encourages others to do the same. Through school-wide outreach, multicultural events, and student engagement, she has elevated the perception of school meals and fostered a stronger connection between the cafeteria and the broader community. Congratulations to Yvonne on this well-earned honor and thank you for your outstanding dedication to students, staff, and the profession.



Congratulations

2025 E.J. SCHINDEL INDUSTRY MEMBER OF THE YEAR

JEFF WISNIEWSKI

SNAPA proudly recognizes Jeff Wisniewski as the 2025 E.J. Schindel Industry Member of the Year for his exceptional leadership, collaboration, and dedication to school nutrition.

A true partner and advocate, Jeff goes beyond the role of vendor—working hand-in-hand with districts to introduce student-approved, innovative products that meet nutritional standards and reflect student tastes. Known for his hands-on approach, Jeff supports schools with product testing, menu development, and procurement solutions that improve participation and satisfaction.

Jeff's leadership shines in his role as Business and Industry Partner on the SNAPA Board, where he helps strengthen connections between industry and school nutrition professionals statewide. His consistent presence at SNAPA events, support for training opportunities, and collaborative spirit have made a lasting impact across Pennsylvania.

Passionate, reliable, and community-focused, Jeff Wisniewski is a champion for school nutrition and a deserving recipient of this distinguished award.



2025 PA SCHOOL NUTRITION ALLY AWARD

BRYANT MCCOMBS

SNAPA proudly honors Bryant McCombs as the recipient of the 2025 School Nutrition Ally Award.

A trained chef and Johnson & Wales University graduate, Bryant brings over a decade of industry experience to his work supporting K-12 foodservice programs. He is known for creating culturally responsive, student-centered recipes that are both compliant and community-focused, helping schools serve nutritious and appealing meals tailored to their students' needs.

Bryant is a highly engaged SNAPA member, active in the Annual Conference, local chapter meetings, and buy group gatherings. As a member of SNAPA's Industry Advisory Council, he is a collaborative and thoughtful voice, always working to support his colleagues and advance school nutrition across the state.

Outside of work, Bryant serves as a girls' basketball coach, using the role to promote healthy habits and lifelong wellness. His commitment to students, innovation, and community makes him a true ally—and a deserving recipient of this recognition.

2025 SNAPA SPOTLIGHT AWARD

JILLIAN BERGMAN

SNAPA is proud to recognize Jillian Bergman as the 2025 SNAPA Spotlight Award Winner. Jill is passionate about connecting kids with fresh, local food! She turned what once felt like an intimidating and overwhelming task—bringing fresh food from the farm to her students—into a powerful, pause-worthy moment. She described it as a "glimmer," of joy, hope, and excitement.

Jill created a Farm to School action plan with the help of a PA State Farm to School Grant, USDA Produce University, Farm to School Institute, PA Beef to Schools and Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program.

Jill's Farm to School Action plan helped her integrate curriculum, local procurement, youth voice, and strong family and community connections.



Our New Flavor Lineup Is Here!

Two new innovative paths. One Delicious Future.

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NEW



Baked Ziti

NEW



Pizza Poppers

NEW



Tasty Water

Tastybrands Breakfast & On-the-Go

NEW



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Croissants**

NEW



**Canadian Style
Sandwich**

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**TASTE FOR YOURSELF WHY SERVING DOMINO'S SMART SLICE IS SUCH
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Brandon Kennedy - Pennsylvania Account Manager Brandon.Kennedy@dominos.com

CULTIVATING THE FUTURE: STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT HOSTS HANDS-ON GARDEN CLUB FOR FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

Submitted By: Travis Folmar, MPS, SNS, SCASD Food Service Supervisor

Nutrition education is at the heart of our programs and The PA Farm to School Grant helps school districts achieve this through funding educational programs that benefit students. This year, through a PA farm to school grant, the State College Area School District is hosting a year-long Elementary Garden Club for fourth grade students at Park Forest Elementary. Through collaboration from the Pennsylvania State University's Student Farm Youth Education Team, the club meets once per month after school and focuses on all things garden and farming. Each month, students learn different topics, including pollinators, bugs, dirt composition, germinating seeds, planting in the school garden and the benefits of composting. We also took all fourth grade students at this school on a field trip to the Penn State Student Farm where they did a scavenger hunt, learned about farming techniques and made a nature collage.

I hope to continue this next year through the PA Farm to school grant and expand this club to other schools that have a school garden where other students in the district can get hands-on experience working in a garden and understanding how to grow your own healthy food. This is a really fun club with students who are excited to be there. I have the ability to make a lasting impression on their lives by giving them access to hands-on learning. School gardens are great, but what is even better is having thirty sets of hands to help maintain it and eat from it.



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K-12 FOODSERVICE EQUIPMENT BIDS: HOW TO WRITE A CLEAR SPECIFICATION

Submitted By: Jeanine Lopez, Director, K-12

For K-12 foodservice operators the process of researching new equipment and writing specifications for a bid can be a daunting process. While the end result is exciting – the opportunity to own and operate new equipment that’s equipped with new features and technology – the road to that point is paved with stress of having to do research, writing a specification for bid, and meeting with school officials and school board members to get the purchase approved.

How to Write a K-12 Bid Specification

Understanding the process and having clear guidelines to follow to write a successful K-12 bid specification can go a long way in making the task less stressful. And keep in mind you don’t have to go through the process alone. Boelter’s team of K-12 school equipment specialists can help you navigate the steps to writing a specification bid and procuring the equipment your school system needs.

Step 1: Identifying Your School’s Foodservice Equipment Needs

Step 2: Consulting K-12 Equipment Experts and Conducting Research

Step 3: Writing a Comprehensive K-12 Bid Specification

Step 4: Planning a Timeline for K-12 Foodservice Equipment Bids



Health & Safety Compliance

Health and safety are critical in any school setting, especially in foodservice. Bid specifications must include requirements that ensure all equipment complies with relevant health and safety standards. For example, the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certification is a widely recognized standard that confirms equipment has been tested and approved for use in commercial foodservice environments. Schools should specify that all equipment must have NSF certification or equivalent, ensuring that it meets strict hygiene and safety requirements.

Tips for Writing Effective Bid Specifications

1. Be Clear and Specific
2. Consider Future Needs
3. Engage Stakeholder

Contact our K-12 Equipment Experts

If you’re in the market for new school foodservice equipment, contact our K-12 equipment experts at Boelter today. We can help connect you with the right people and work with you to write a bid specification to ensure you get the equipment you need to continue serving great meals to all your students.

[Read More About Boelter’s K-12 Expertise](#)



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School Nutrition Professionals are on a mission to make school meals the **BEST EVER!**

How?

By offering meals that meet top notch nutrition standards and help boost your kids' health and overall well-being!

What is the Healthy Eating Index (HEI)?

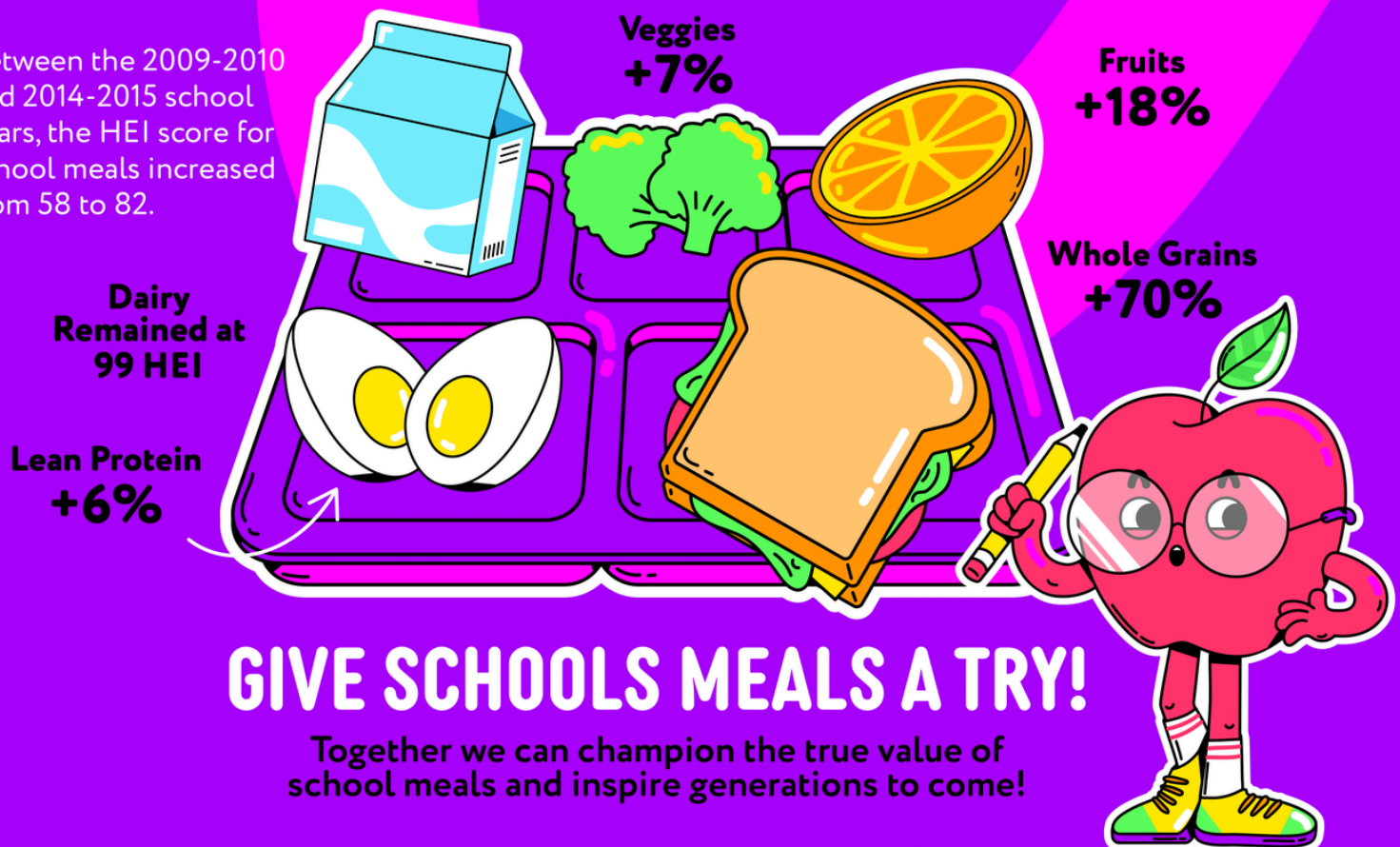
HEI is a scoring system that assesses the nutritional quality of food based on a scale of 0-100. **Higher HEI means healthier food!**

Today's school meals are prepared with:

- A rainbow of fruits and veggies
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- Lean protein
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- Less sodium
- Lots of love!

How much healthier are school meals?

Between the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 school years, the HEI score for school meals increased from 58 to 82.



GIVE SCHOOLS MEALS A TRY!

Together we can champion the true value of school meals and inspire generations to come!



Findings are from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Detailed reports, other infographics, webinars, and a video of key study findings are available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-nutrition-and-meal-cost-study>
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Registration Open for 2026 SNAPA Commodity Food Show!

Attention Directors! Join us January 20, 2026 at State College High School for the annual Commodity Food Show!
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CALORIES
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SODIUM
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McCain®
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4 rings = 2 grain +
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Saturated Fat: 1g
Trans fat: 0

SODIUM
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Product Description	Serving Size	Piece Count/ Pound	Pack Size	Case Wt. (lbs)		Cooking Methods	Temp	Time
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Scan to learn more
about these great new items.



INNOVATION IS CRITICAL TO MAKING FOODS THAT STUDENTS LOVE TO EAT

By: Bryant McCombs

As a regional sales manager, I'm proud to be part of a team that's been bringing delicious, nutritious meals to students across the country for 50 years.

CJ Schwan's Foodservice first began delivering pizza to schools in 1975. Today, we offer a broad range of foods to schools in several categories, including pizza, Asian-style products, handheld items and breakfast foods. In fact, we offer more than 60 K-12 items that include round and sheeted pizzas, dumplings, egg rolls, Asian sauces and breakfast items.



With all of these offerings, it's our goal to provide school food-service directors with products that are affordable, meet child nutrition standards and are easy to make. And, just as important, we also work hard to offer foods that students love to eat. Because, ultimately, if we don't deliver on taste, we know students won't eat what we have to offer. If they don't eat, it's possible they won't get the nutrition they need to fuel their day.

Innovation is critical in this process. Our marketing, manufacturing, and research and development teams work closely together to make sure our foods reflect changing student palates, culinary trends and nutrition science.

Our new product process starts with listening to our customers, which includes food-service directors across the country. We work hard to learn about their greatest challenges and opportunities, and this will often generate an idea for innovation.

Once we have a great concept, our cross-functional teams will begin to evaluate the idea and see if they can build a solid business case for launching it as a new product.

For example, our chefs and culinary experts will create "gold standard" recipes for an item to make sure we're delivering the best flavor and highest quality. Our teams will then use student evaluations and taste-testing to ensure the items will be well-received. Additionally, our R&D and manufacturing teams will collaborate on how to produce the new item on a large scale, and our marketing teams evaluate demand and build a business case for launching the product to our customers.

In the end, only the best of our new product ideas survives our evaluation process and enter the market. We are excited to introduce our new MINH® Whole Grain Breakfast Egg Rolls, CHEF ONE® Whole Wheat Beef Dumplings and bibigo TM Korean-Style BBQ Sauce just in time for school year 2026-27.

Our new product launches must meet the highest of standards. Because, in the end, we know this important work can make a difference for children and their success at school.



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THE PIZZA THAT'S BEEN TRANSFORMING SCHOOL LUNCHES SINCE 2001 IS FINALLY ROLLING INTO THE KEYSTONE STATE!

Meet Smart Mouth — the game-changing, restaurant-quality pizza program made exclusively for middle and high schools. Already a hit in over 600 schools across 17 states, Smart Mouth is now bringing its bold flavors and big mission to Pennsylvania!

BOOSTS PARTICIPATION AND REVENUE

Smart Mouth pizza has met USDA's school nutrition standards for 24 years, while making school lunch programs more profitable by increasing student dining frequency in the cafeteria.

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Our freshly-baked pizzas are made with a signature honey-wheat crust, 100% mozzarella cheese, and sauce from fresh, whole tomatoes — never canned paste.

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Designed for fast prep, easy service, and high student demand — up to 150 pizzas per hour per oven!

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Designed to meet the needs of a broad range of socio-economic communities, our innovative, turn-key program provides all equipment, training, and ongoing support at no upfront cost.

MORE THAN JUST PIZZA

From our STUFFED product line, choose from calzones, oven-baked sandwiches, and stuffed cheesy bread. Every bite is crafted to satisfy!

EAT GOOD. DO GOOD.

For every 10 pizzas sold, we donate 1 meal to a hungry child in need. With a mission to Feed More Kids, we believe no child should go hungry and we have worked alongside our nonprofit partners to distribute more than 7 million meals to feeding children domestically and abroad.



SNAPA Leaders Represent Pennsylvania at Farm to School Summit



PA Secretary of Agriculture- Russell Redding, Brittany Frazer, Past President Mimi Barrios, Jeni Lee, SNA PPL Chair- Nicole Melia, SNAPA Vice President Kelsey Gartner, Elaine McDonnell, President-Elect- Kristan Delle, Cathy Murse, and Karen Schmertz.



President-Elect- Kristan Delle, Past President Mimi Barrios, SNA PPL Chair- Nicole Melia, SNAPA Vice President Kelsey Gartner, Brittany Frazer, Jeni Lee.

SNAPA members proudly represented Pennsylvania at the American Dairy Association North East's 2025 Farm to School Summit. The event brought together school nutrition professionals, educators, and agricultural partners to strengthen connections between local farms and school meal programs.

SNAPA members joined leaders from across the region to share best practices, discuss local food sourcing, and explore innovative ways to bring fresh, dairy-rich, and Pennsylvania-grown foods to students' trays. Their participation helped highlight SNAPA's ongoing commitment to supporting nutrition education and promoting partnerships that connect students to where their food comes from.

Through events like the Farm to School Summit, SNAPA continues to champion programs that celebrate local agriculture, support healthy eating, and strengthen community ties — one meal at a time.

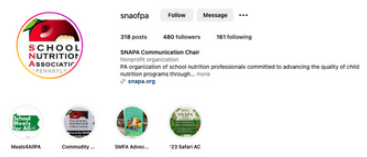
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School Nutrition
Association of Pennsylvania
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www.snapa.org





As a food service operator, the goal isn't just to satisfy hunger — it's to nourish growing minds and bodies. For some students, a school lunch may be the only reliable source of protein they receive in a day, which is a sobering reminder of the importance of every meal served.

At Mickey's Brands Pizza, we haven't forgotten that responsibility. That's why we keep our ingredient lists short, simple, and pronounceable — because real food should be made from real ingredients. Every K-12 product we ship is crafted with care, supporting the health and well-being of America's youth, one slice at a time.

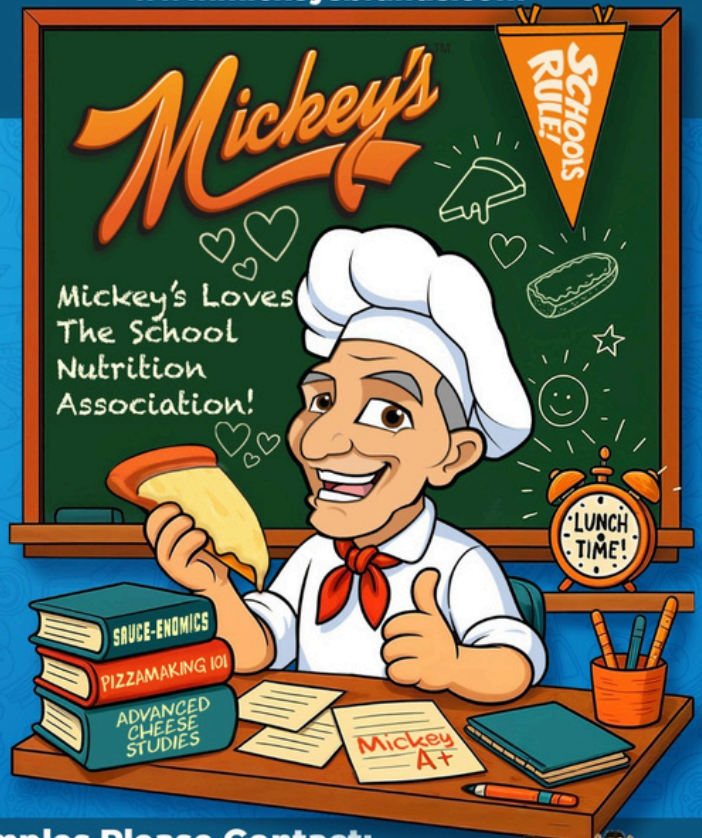
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BREAKFAST PIZZA

SNAPA is excited to introduce **SNAPA SHINES: Spotlight of the Month**, a revamped version of our “Tray of the Month” program! This new initiative highlights both **innovative school meal trays** and the **dedicated professionals** behind school nutrition in Pennsylvania.

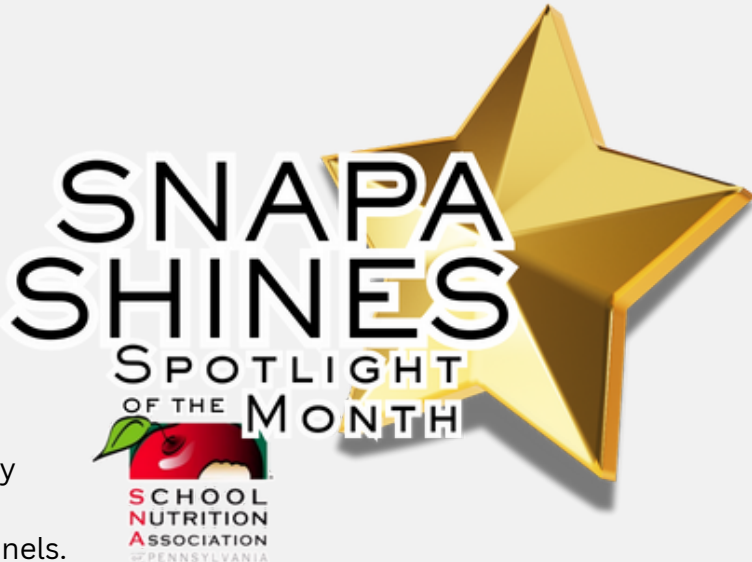
How it works:

Tray of the Month

Submit a photo and detailed description of your tray [HERE](#).

Entries will be shared on SNAPA’s social media channels.

The tray with the most interactions (likes, comments, shares) at the end of the month will be named the winner!



Employee Spotlight

Submit a short video of a school nutrition professional answering at least one of the following questions:

- What meal does your kitchen serve that brings the most joy to students?
- Tell us about an encounter with a student that you’ll always remember.
- If you could change one thing about school food service, what would it be?
- If you could prepare and serve any meal—without cost or regulation limits—what would it be?
- What is your favorite memory so far as part of your district’s Food Service team?

A brief description explaining **why this employee was chosen to be spotlighted** is also required.

✨ **Our goal:** To shine a spotlight on the creativity, dedication, and impact of school nutrition professionals—the unsung heroes who nourish Pennsylvania students so they can focus on learning instead of hungry tummies.



NATIONAL
FARM *to* SCHOOL
NETWORK

FY 2026 PATRICK LEAHY FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM

USDA awards competitive Farm to School grants that support planning, developing, and implementing farm to school programs. USDA's Farm to School grants are an important way to help state, regional, and local organizations as they initiate, expand, and institutionalize farm to school efforts.

The request for applications (RFA) for the fiscal year 2026 Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program is now open. To learn more, click [HERE](#).



C.W. LONGER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS BLEND FUN AND NUTRITION WITH SMOOTHIE BIKE LESSON

Submitted by: Betsy Snyder,
Hollidaysburg Area School District

Students at C.W. Longer Elementary School recently enjoyed a hands-on nutrition lesson that got everyone moving and blending! The highlight of the day was the unveiling of the school's new smoothie bike, an exciting tool that combines physical activity with healthy eating.

Led by Food Service Director Betsy Snyder and Penn State intern Jacob Pence, students explored MyPlate concepts. They learned the importance of making lifelong healthy choices which includes choosing a variety of foods in their diets. To bring the lesson to life, students took turns pedaling the smoothie bike to power a blender filled with fruit, yogurt, and juice. As they pedaled, they saw how their energy could create a healthy, delicious smoothie, showing that good nutrition and physical activity go hand in hand.

The smoothie bike will continue to be used in future classroom nutrition lessons, health fairs, and special events, helping students make the connection between healthy choices and an active lifestyle in a fun, memorable way.

A special thank you to American Dairy Northeast for sponsoring the smoothie bike and to the Junior High Fuel Up Team for helping with this activity and supporting our school's nutrition education efforts!



☒ A FULL LINEUP OF K-12 REGULATION READY CEREAL



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TULPEHOCKEN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT TO FEATURE LOCAL BEEF AND APPLE CIDER WITH PA FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT

Submitted By: Jillian Bergman, Tulpehocken Area School District

Tulpehocken Area School District is excited to announce the upcoming use of PA Farm to School Grant funding to bring fresh, local flavors to our students this fall. As part of the district's ongoing commitment to nutrition, agriculture education, and community engagement, the Food Service Department has planned two delicious events featuring Pennsylvania-grown and raised products.

On Wednesday, October 29th, students at Penn-Bernville and Bethel Elementary Schools will enjoy local beef Salisbury steaks sourced from Happy Valley Meat Company, a business known for partnering with family farms across the state to bring ethically raised, high-quality beef into school cafeterias. This special lunch offering gives students a chance to taste a classic comfort food prepared with fresh, local ingredients — and it supports our regional farming economy at the same time.

In November, students across all Tulpehocken schools will be treated to fresh, locally pressed apple cider from Frecon Farms, a family-owned orchard and farm market in nearby Boyertown. Nothing says “fall in Pennsylvania” quite like the crisp, sweet taste of cider — and our students will experience it straight from the source.

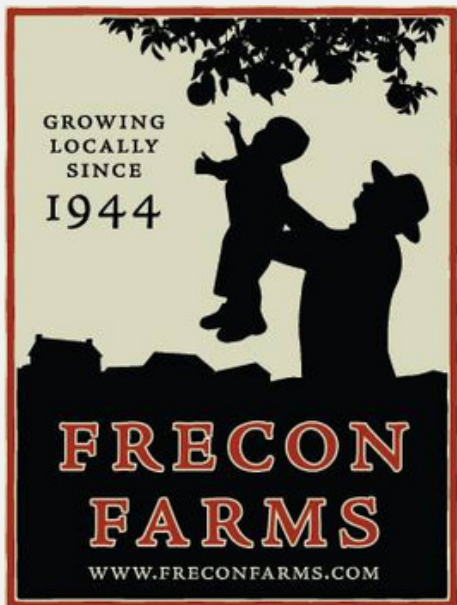


These efforts are a reflection of Tulpehocken's active Farm2School initiative, which is guided by the following mission:

“Through the Portrait of a Trojan and the Tulpehocken School District mission statement, the Farm to School team seeks to utilize our elementary and secondary agriculture programs, local farmers, local businesses, and community to positively impact student nutrition while seeking learning opportunities in the agriculture and science fields.”

What makes the Farm to School program truly successful is the dedicated team behind it — a collaboration of administrators, teachers, and food service staff who work together to plan meaningful and nutritious experiences for students. Their teamwork ensures that farm-fresh food and hands-on agricultural learning are both part of the school day.

The Tulpehocken Area School District is proud to support local agriculture while enhancing the school nutrition program and promoting real-world learning opportunities for all students. We thank the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for supporting our mission through the Farm to School Grant Program.



**Happy Valley
Meat Co.**

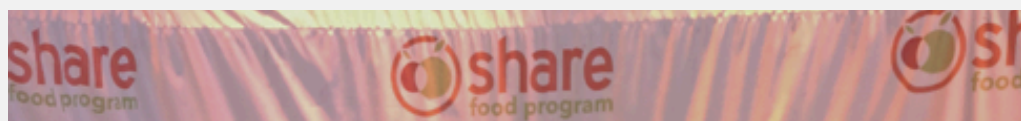


SNAPA Leaders Represent Child Nutrition at Region 3 SHARE Annual Dinner

SNA Public Policy and Legislation Chair Nicole Melia and President-Elect Kristan Delle proudly represented child nutrition professionals at the Region 3 Commodity Distributor SHARE's Annual Dinner at the Warehouse. The event brought together school nutrition leaders, distributors, and industry partners to strengthen collaboration and celebrate shared successes in supporting nutritious, high-quality meals for students.

Nicole and Kristan's participation highlighted SNAPA's commitment to partnership and advocacy on behalf of Pennsylvania's child nutrition programs. Their attendance ensured that the voices of school food professionals were heard and recognized among key partners who help make school meals possible every day.

Together, events like SHARE's Annual Dinner continue to build connections that keep our programs running smoothly and our students well-fed across the Commonwealth.



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BLENDING LEARNING AND NUTRITION: DIETETIC INTERNS BRING FRESH IDEAS TO PERKIOMEN VALLEY

Submitted By: Natalie Gerhart, Thomas Jefferson University Dietetic Intern

My name is Natalie and I'm a dietetics student at Thomas Jefferson University. As part of my first internship rotation, I've been interning at Perkiomen Valley School District to learn about food service. I've been working under the Food Services Director, Kelsey Gartner, for a couple of weeks now and have been able to see many aspects of school nutrition.

The highlight of my experience so far has been a project I completed to demonstrate my learning in food service. I organized a taste test at Evergreen Elementary School for a cherry blueberry smoothie. We had a few boxes of brown box commodity cherries that we were not sure what to do with. We picked out a recipe for the students made with ingredients that would boost the nutritional value, such as spinach and yogurt. Conducting the taste test was a huge success, but it came with a few



challenges. On the day of the event we had planned to use an immersion blender to make the smoothie, but we found that it wasn't blending everything together, especially the spinach. I knew that a lot of children wouldn't try the smoothie if they could see green spinach in it, so we were going to try straining the smoothie, but we decided to get an industrial blender from another school. This turned out to be a great decision because the smoothie turned out even better than we had hoped. Another challenge we faced was that a few of the students were allergic to milk and were not able to taste the smoothie. We decided that the next time we taste test a smoothie at an elementary school, we will make a few allergy friendly smoothies using just fruit and spinach.



We had taste testing during each lunch period, and I did a presentation for the students about cherries and antioxidants to incorporate some nutrition education. Most of the students in each lunch tried the smoothies, which was exciting to see. Even better, so many of them said they loved the smoothie. A lot of the kids went home with the recipe and now have a new, nutrient-dense food to be excited about. We also marketed the taste testing event by posting about it on social media around lunchtime so that parents could see what their students tried so they could talk about it once they got home.



Being a dietetic intern at Perk Valley has continued to increase my excitement about entering the field of dietetics and my interest in child nutrition. School nutrition is important to the success of children in the classroom, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn about it here at Perkiomen Valley School District!

Perkiomen Valley School District also hosted another intern last month who made greek inspired chicken salad wraps with hummus (Chicken Souvlaki). We used the classic Greek Flavors of red onions, parsley, greek yogurt, dill and lemons to make a tzatziki sauce. We started off calling it "Chicken Souvlaki" but quickly learned that students did not know what it was and were hesitant to try it. Once we changed the name to "Greek Chicken Salad Wrap", students started to try it. We made a QR code and a student survey on Google Forms where students voted to have it on the menu lineup. We got very good feedback and will have it available next month.



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"TEAMWORK & TATER TOTS: A FUN WAY TO ENGAGE STAFF AND STUDENTS"

Submitted By: Kelly Renard, Dover School District

Is your team of leaders, cooks, and servers feeling burned out, stuck in a rut, or just plain "over it"? If the answer is a resounding "YES," here's an idea that can help spark excitement, build buy-in from your team of professionals, and maybe even win over your students!

Invite your team to share their favorite homemade recipes. To make it even more interactive, host a potluck where each person brings their prepared dish along with the recipe. Set some fun guidelines—for example, each recipe should include at least one commodity item, a vegetable from a specific subgroup, or a whole grain.

When tasting or discussing the recipes be sure to:

- Check for places to utilize commodity products.
- Look for ways to introduce flavor with herbs and spices.
- Highlight and recognize the employees whose recipes are used.
- Modify recipes to meet guidelines with minimal changes when possible.

While it takes a bit of work and organizing, there are plenty of positive outcomes that can come from this idea.

- You'll build ownership and excitement in your team.
 - "We selected these items together to offer to our students. I played a part in the process, which makes me feel included and valued."
- It's an easy way to create a recognition program for your staff.
 - "Wow, that is my recipe on the district menu this month. I feel valued and respected for my skills in cooking."

- It's a built-in marketing campaign for customers from K-12 who have built relationships with the students we serve.
 - "Today's recipe for Chicken Vegetable Pasta is brought to you from Mr. Hendry!"
 - This is from Mrs. Miller's home to your tray!"
 - "Made with love from Miss Natalie!"
 - "This meal is right from Mr. Paul's kitchen."
- Students often respond positively and form bonds with their favorite team members.
 - Miss Natalie is my favorite lunch lady and this is her recipe. I buying lunch!!

Publicize the special recipe a few days ahead to create excitement with the students and generate interest in buying a meal on that special day. Here is an example you can use:

"On Wednesday, November 12th we are featuring a recipe straight from the home kitchen of Mr. Hendry, our Kitchen Supervisor at Sunrise Elementary. Mr. Hendry likes preparing Chicken Vegetable Pasta for his own family on busy evenings after basketball practice. He hopes you love it as much as he and his family does."

This is a simple way to create a positive, supportive environment for the nutrition team and the students they serve.

Happy Cooking and Creating!



TULPEHOCKEN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT CELEBRATES "FALL SPORTS DAY" WITH SPIRIT AND SERVICE

Submitted By: Jillian Bergman, Tulpehocken Area School District

Homecoming Week is a time of pride, tradition, and celebration at Tulpehocken Area School District — and one of the most heartwarming traditions is "Fall Sports Day," a special event that brings together students of all ages through food, fun, and school spirit.

Each year during Homecoming Week, senior athletes from the district's fall sports teams make a meaningful visit to the elementary school cafeterias during lunchtime. Donning their team uniforms and big smiles, these student-athletes don aprons and gloves to serve lunch alongside the food service team, offering younger students a moment of excitement and connection.

In addition to serving meals, the seniors also hand out ice cream treats to all elementary students as a festive way to celebrate the

season. The visit creates a strong sense of community while reinforcing positive role modeling between grade levels.

The excitement doesn't stop there — elementary students get involved by creating colorful posters and artwork to decorate the cafeterias in honor of the athletes. The hallways and lunchrooms are transformed into spirited displays of school pride, filled with messages of encouragement, drawings of favorite sports, and hand-crafted signs welcoming the visiting seniors.

"Fall Sports Day" is a shining example of how school nutrition and student life work hand in hand to support a vibrant, inclusive school culture. It's a day that students — both big and small — look forward to each year. By fostering connections across grade levels and showcasing the importance of school meals as part of the broader educational experience, Tulpehocken's tradition embodies the best of what school nutrition programs can offer.

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