

# WASHINGTON APPLE PRESS

Fall 2024 | Volume XXXV, Issue 1



*The mission of WSNA is to engage, educate and empower School Nutrition professionals to advance accessibility, quality and integrity of school nutrition programs.*

# WASHINGTON APPLE PRESS

10800 Gosling Rd  
PO Box 133301  
Spring, TX 77393

washingtonsnainfo@gmail.com  
www.washingtonsna.org

The official publication of the Washington School Nutrition Association.

**Content Editor**  
Patricia Barret  
Marketing Chair  
barret@skschools.org

**Advertising Contact**  
Julia Jarrell  
Executive Director  
washingtonsnainfo@gmail.com



Articles and columns printed herein may be divergent in view and controversial in nature. Materials published herein represent the ideas, beliefs, and opinions of those who write them, and are not necessarily the view or policies of the Washington School Nutrition Association. Neither the Association nor the editor assumes responsibility for the opinions expressed by the authors of the paper abstracts, quoted or published in this journal. NOTE: Tax laws state 35% of your WSNA dues are used for lobbying or other political action and that portion of the dues is NOT deductible on an individual's tax return.

Our potato growers  
**LOVE** our **KIDS**  
and the **WSNA**



Resources &  
Recipes!



# IN THIS ISSUE....



<b>4</b>	<b>PRESIDENTS MESSAGE</b>
<b>5-7</b>	<b>2024 STATE CONFERENCE RECAP &amp; FIELD TO FLAVOR TOUR</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>LEGISLATIVE UPDATE</b>
<b>9-10</b>	<b>SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>2024 VIRTUAL FALL WORKSHOP</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>FROM THE DESK OF WA CHIEF NUTRITION OFFICER</b>  Updates from OSPI's Chief Nutrition Officer, Leanne Eko
<b>16</b>	<b>BOOSTING PARTICIPATION IN YOUR PROGRAM</b>
<b>22-24</b>	<b>HELP! I'M A NEW DIRECTOR</b>
<b>26-27</b>	<b>2024-2025 PLAN OF ACTION</b>
<b>29-30</b>	<b>INCLUSIVE NUTRITION PROGRAMS</b>



# FALL 2024 PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

## Welcome back to a new school year!

*We are in a unique profession where each year we get to start over... sometimes with new staff and always with new kids. We also get to have the first day of school year after year. Maybe it involves new work clothes or new menu items, but it always involves reconnecting with kids and coworkers.*

*It was so good to see and learn with all of you in Spokane! We had a good assortment of classes, great speakers, and a lot of fun. I saw you all at the Night of Entertainment playing games and shopping for prizes. I saw you bidding on really fun auction items. And most of all learning and networking with people you may only see a few times a year.*

*The food show was a huge success thanks to our committed and supportive vendor partners. They host the Night of Entertainment. They partner with the Association to provide keynotes and breakout session speakers. They offer door prizes and delicious samples. We would not be who we are without them.*

*Speaking of not being who we are without them, I want all of us to give Wendy Weyer a huge thank you! She took on the role of President for almost two years. She led the Association through some really difficult situations and never gave up. She also put together a strong and experienced board to help make needed changes.*

*One of the biggest accomplishments was hiring our new Executive Director, Julia Jarrell. Julia jumped into the deep end of the pool in April and started swimming. In six months, she has transformed the website into something a little more modern and fun. She uses her creativity to work on getting our Facebook and Instagram pages going; to convert many things to electronic versions; and to help us all stay organized and on track.*



*Speaking of on track, we are on track to offer a virtual Fall Workshop this year! Believe me when I say we listened and heard you loud and clear when you said you wanted in person meetings to make connections with your friends and to meet new ones. We found that meetings that used to be able to be set up on a quick timeline, now take longer. We already set a goal to start planning Fall Workshop 2025 in the spring instead of waiting for the new board to take over. Check out the info on the classes in this issue. I'll be excited to see your faces when we kick off the meeting on Nov. 2!*

*And finally, thank all of you for continuing to be a part of our Association. The saying "Without you, there is no us," is so very true. We appreciate all of you! Let's have a great year and we'll see you soon!*

*Karen Brown, WSNA President  
kbrown@fpschools.org*





Thank you to our  
2024 WSNA Annual  
Conference  
Sponsors!

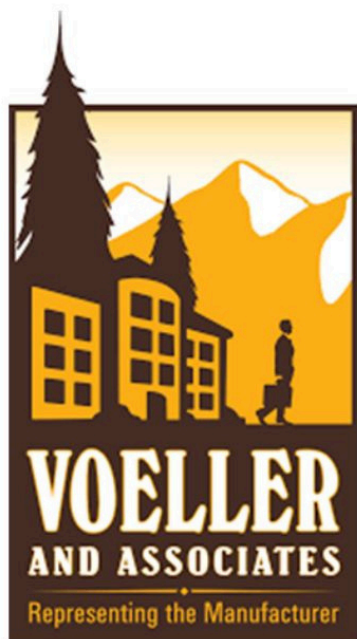
## Breakfast Sponsor



Wellness Event  
Sponsor



**MANUFACTURER PARTNER**  
Promotional Insert Sponsor



## Silver Education Fund Sponsors





Thank you to our  
2024 WSNA  
Platinum  
Partners!

**Auburn Dairy**  
PRODUCTS, INC.  
— EST. 1923 —



**ITW** FOOD EQUIPMENT GROUP



# FIELD TO FLAVOR TOUR: HOW LOCAL FARMS ARE TRANSFORMING SCHOOL MEALS ACROSS WASHINGTON STATE



“When asked how we could make a difference, the answer was clear: Farming.”  
— Madyson Versteeg, co-owner of Casa Cano Farm

This school year, when Washington students bite into crisp apples and crunch carrots served at their school cafeteria, there's a good chance it was grown just a few miles away by local farmers. More small farms are participating in farm to school programs, providing fresh, nutritious meals to students. Farm to school initiatives not only support local agriculture but also fuel students' learning and growth

To get a firsthand look at how the program functions and explore available food options, food service directors, school nutrition employees, and representatives from WSDA, SNAP-Ed, OSPI, and Educational Service District 101 visited Casa Cano Farms in Valleyford, WA.

This visit was part of the Washington School Nutrition Association's annual summer conference, designed to excite attendees about local food and foster valuable connections to help implement these fresh, local options in their own school districts. The tour showcased a promising partnership model that is making farm to school possible for more school districts in the state.



[Read the full blog here.](#)



# State Legislative UPDATE

**IF YOU ATTENDED THE ANNUAL WSNA STATE CONFERENCE IN SPOKANE THIS SUMMER, YOU EXPERIENCED THE PASSIONATE WELCOME BY REPRESENTATIVE RICCELLI.**

**HE ENTHUSIASTICALLY THANKED EVERYONE FOR THEIR IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO ENDING CHILDHOOD HUNGER WITH SCHOOL MEALS. HE ALSO STATED HIS PLANS TO CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR UNIVERSAL FREE MEALS AND URGED EVERYONE TO GET INVOLVED WHEN THE BILL IS INTRODUCED.**

**MITCH DENNING, OUR LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANT GAVE AN UPDATE ON THE YEAR AND WHAT OUR PRIORITIES ARE MOVING FORWARD. HIS GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT IS SO APPRECIATED.**



Representative Marcus Riccelli welcoming WSNA Conference Members to Spokane at the Annual State Conference in July 2024



Presentation of Glass Apple to Senator Billig (L to R) Mitch Denning, Legislative Consultant, Kim Elkins WSNA PP&L Co-Chair, Senator Billig, Wendy Weyer, WSNA Past President

**WHEN LEGISLATORS WHO ARE MEALS FOR KIDS CHAMPIONS RETIRE FROM THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE, WE PRESENT THEM WITH A GLASS APPLE APPRECIATION AWARD TO THANK THEM FOR CHAMPIONING OUR PRIORITIES. THE FOLLOWING ARE LEGISLATORS THAT WE HAVE OR WILL PRESENT WITH AWARDS PRIOR TO JANUARY 2025. SENATOR SAM HUNT 2006-2024; SENATOR KAREN KEISER 2006-2024; SENATOR ANDY BILLIG 2011-2024; REP. J.T. WILCOX 2011-2018. IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE IN THEIR LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT, FEEL FREE TO DROP THEM A "THANK YOU" EMAIL! THEIR SUPPORT HAS BEEN INVALUABLE. CLICK [HTTPS://APP.LEG.WA.GOV/DISTRICTFINDER/](https://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/) TO FIND OUT IF YOU LIVE IN THEIR DISTRICT.**

**The 2025 session begins January 13, 2025 and is expected to end April 27, 2025.**

WSNA's priorities are:

- Universal Free Meals
- Changing RCWs' to allow for the donation of traditional foods to schools with safety guidance from Dept. of Health
- Request of .25 cents per meal served, to help offset unfunded State mandates from SEBB and unpaid meal debt.

If you would like to have an active role in supporting these requests send me an email at [kim.elkins@mead354.org](mailto:kim.elkins@mead354.org).



Presentation of Glass Apple to Representative J.T. Wilcox

(L to R) Mitch Denning, Legislative Consultant, Representative J.T. Wilcox, Sandy Conradi, Food Service Director, Yelm Community Schools

In January/February, we will have our WSNA Day on the Hill and Alliance of Educational Associations Day on the Hill. Information will be sent out as dates are set. Please consider joining us as we partner up, and talk about these important priorities with our legislators!

*Kim Elkins*  
WSNA PP&L Co-Chair





## STRENGTHENING SUMMER NUTRITION: HIGHLIGHTS FROM WA SFSP BY: MEGAN HARLAN

What a fast-paced and exciting summer it has been! OSPI would like to thank you for your hard work and dedication feeding the children in your community. Through your ability to embrace change and be adaptable, we are thrilled to report that over 150 sponsors chose to apply and operate the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for summer 2024! Although we will not have final participation reports until the end of 2024, most sponsors have indicated there was an overall increase in participation this year at their summer meal sites.

In addition, we have seen increased growth in permanent non-congregate meal service for rural areas. This summer, 16 school districts operating the SFSP operated this specific meal service option at over 26 sites across the state. Non-Congregate sponsors have overall reported an increase of participation, program growth in adding sites and partnerships, and increased programmatic satisfaction with the ability to have more options to better serve the needs of their communities.

SFSP program specialists were able to see many of the non-congregate meal service options through conducting administrative reviews and prioritizing technical assistance visits at these sites. In July, we had the opportunity to host representatives from both the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Western Regional Office (WRO) and from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Office on a week-long tour of non-congregate technical assistance visits. It was a resounding success, with SFSP sponsors and state agency SFSP staff receiving plenty of kudos for their implementation efforts and strategies.

We would like to highlight the districts included in this visit, along with some key takeaways that USDA was so impressed with:

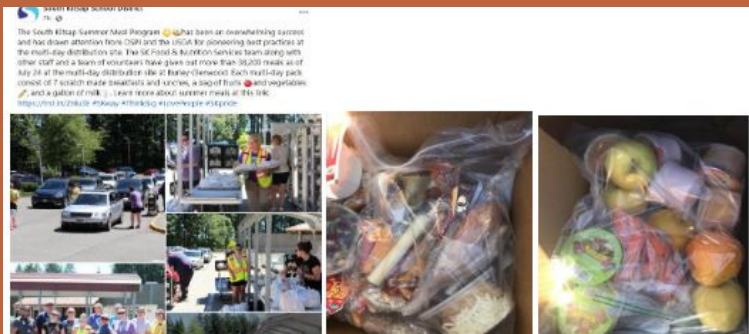
## SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Patricia Barret, the Food Service Director of South Kitsap SD, took the opportunity to utilize a variety of non-congregate meal flexibilities such as parent pickup and multi-day distribution to really elevate their summer meal service. They decided to utilize one elementary school in the district, have a single 1.5-hour weekly distribution with 14 meals provided. They had families in the district pre-register for production purposes. When we arrived, there was a line of cars waiting outside the parking lot and down the street! They had security staff directing traffic, and all food service/district staff on deck (some taking meal counts and verifying registration, others packing up the meals and handing them to the families). They were able to provide, on average, over 8,000 meals per distribution. WOW!

## HOQUIAM SCHOOL DISTRICT



We were able to visit two summer meal sites utilizing daily non-congregate meal service. We observed the use of mobile heating equipment to be able to provide warm meals for the children to pick up. This isn't common at sites outside of buildings, so it was awesome to see how they were able to utilize the equipment they already had to provide the kids some variety in hot and cold meals. Meals were provided in clear, plastic meal bags with hand holds that were purchased with Summer Meals for Kids Grant funding, which is a state grant that provides financial support to awarded SFSP sponsors to enhance their summer meal operations. Hoquiam SD also has a great relationship with a local non-profit organization that provides them with CSA style produce boxes to give to families for free when they come to pick up their meals. This is an additional service to help provide fresh fruits and vegetables to families in their communities. Food Service Director Christina Hansen did a great job utilizing funding and partnership opportunities –Way to Go, Hoquiam SD!



### WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT OUR DISTRICTS THAT PARTICIPATED IN FARM TO SUMMER WEEK –

- KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
- KLICKITAT SCHOOL DISTRICT
- AUBURN SCHOOL DISTRICT (SOCIAL MEDIA POST BELOW - ALSO A SUMMER MEAL FOR KIDS GRANT AWARDEE)



These districts pledged to service local foods during the week of July 10 through July 14 and featured educational activities to celebrate where their foods came from. They did a fantastic job promoting Farm to Summer and sharing pictures on their social media!

If you would like more information about the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) please check out our [SFSP webpage](#) or email the Summer Meals team at [summermeals@k12.wa.us](mailto:summermeals@k12.wa.us).

# 2025 WSNA ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE JULY 27 - 30TH, 2025

Mark your calendar and make plans to attend the 2025 WSNA Annual State Conference from July 28th to 30th. We will be returning to the DoubleTree by Hilton Spokane City Center & Convention Center as our conference hotel.

*“The Magic of Child Nutrition”* has been selected as the conference theme.



WSNA is currently recruiting individuals with an interest in being part of the conference planning committee, including a Chair. The conference committee typically meets (remotely) once a month starting in the Fall.

Please email [washingtonsnainfo@gmail.com](mailto:washingtonsnainfo@gmail.com) if you are interested in learning more.





WASHINGTON  
SCHOOL  
NUTRITION  
ASSOCIATION

# 2024 VIRTUAL FALL WORKSHOP

TOPICS INCLUDE



**CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION**



**CUSTOMER  
SERVICE**



**ADVOCATING  
FOR YOUR CN  
PROGRAM**



**GRANT  
WRITING &  
OPPORTUNITES**



**NUTRITION  
EDUCATION**



**CNS UPDATES WITH THE  
NEW MEAL PATTERN**



**Click here to Register**



**02 Nov,  
2024**

8:00 am PST



# From the **CHIEF NUTRITION OFFICERS DESK**

By: Leanne Eko, Chief Nutrition Officer  
OSPI Child Nutrition Services

**Greetings! It was wonderful to see so many of you at this summer’s annual WSNA Conference. Please join me in expressing gratitude to the conference committee and WSNA leadership team for organizing such a fantastic event!**

### **Summer Success!**

A big shout-out to everyone who supported the Summer EBT (SUN Bucks) program for Summer 2024. Washington issued over \$71 million in benefits to 597,580 children! Your efforts in uploading data, answering questions and responding to parent calls. S-EBT is just one more way you make a difference in the lives of children in Washington!

I’d also like to extend my thanks to those who operated summer meal programs this year, especially those who participated in the new non-congregate option. Check out this great [video](#) that describes our summer meal programs in Washington.

### **Meals for WA Students**

During the 2023 legislative session, the Washington State Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1238.

This bill initially required LEAs to provide meals at no cost to students enrolled at elementary schools where 40% or more of enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Starting in SY24-25 this will expand to schools where 30% or more of enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Thanks to the Meals for WA Students program and Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools over 690,000 students have access to school meals at no cost!



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Child Nutrition

### **Rule Making**

Many of you may recall that before the pandemic, OSPI was pursuing rule making regarding seated lunch time. That effort was halted due to COVID-19 but we are pleased to announce we have resumed rule making efforts. You can find information about the proposed rule here. This will also include details on the public comment period and public hearing date so please share this opportunity school staff and families.

### **Special Projects: Team Nutrition and Farm to School**

We are thrilled to announce that Washington has been awarded both a USDA 2024 Farm to School Grant and a USDA 2024 Team Nutrition Grant! The Farm to School Grant will focus on developing Harvest of the Month toolkits, while the 2024 Team Nutrition Grant will provide training and resources to help meet the new meal pattern requirements. Stay tuned for more details!

Best wishes for a successful school year. We look forward to continuing our partnership to support students.

# Save the Date – USDA Foods Show!

OPSI Child Nutrition Services (CNS), the Puget Sound Joint Purchasing Cooperative (PSJPC), and the Spokane Cooperative are hosting a USDA Foods Show for Washington state sponsors of school meal programs. The Food show will include education sessions on a variety of topics relevant to anyone who orders USDA Foods and a vendor floor where you can sample foods available for order.

## Dates:

January 27th – University Place School District, University Place, WA

January 31st – Spokane, WA ( Location TBA)

**Time:** 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM



*Introducing Our*  
**NEW PRODUCTS**

Innovative Meals for K12 Schools!

### LUNCH FAVORITES

*Speed Scratch*  
**MAC N' CHEESE STYLE RAVIOLI**



### BREAKFAST & BEYOND

*Savory Breakfast*  
**EGG STUFFED BISCUIT**



### CONVENIENCE

*No Refrigeration Needed*  
**ANYTIMERS PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY**



*Packed with Flavor*  
**WHOLE GRAIN PIZZA EGG ROLLS**



**A LA CARTE**



See the Full Lineup of  
Our New Products!



**For More Information Please Contact:**

**Amy Winters** | Mountain West Regional Sales Manager | 816-387-7071 | awinters@tastybrandsk12.com

# Welcome New Members!!

## Do you know about these membership benefits?

- You'll have access to workshops, conferences, and other professional growth opportunities at reduced rates.
- You'll be eligible for educational scholarships.
- You'll have opportunities to network with others in your profession.
- You'll enhance your professional image.
- You'll receive the Apple Press (WSNA's newsletter).
- You'll receive information on current issues that affect child nutrition.
- You'll be able to enhance your career through SNA's certificate program.

To watch videos and learn more click [here](#).

National Dues

Member Categories	Individual Membership	School District/ State Agency Membership
SN Employee	\$40 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$40 <input type="checkbox"/>
Student	\$40 <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Retired	\$40 <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
SN Manager	\$42 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$42 <input type="checkbox"/>
District Director/Supv/Spec	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>
Major City Director/Supv/Spec	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>
State Agency Director and Staff	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition Educator	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>
Other	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$143 <input type="checkbox"/>
Affiliate Employee	\$20 <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Affiliate Retired	\$20 <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

⑯ Your STATE DUES are: (Record state dues in the space provided on right) \* Select one.

\$15.00 SNE/SNM/RET/STU/AFE/AFR

\$50.00 DDS/MCD/SDS/EDU/OTH



# Boosting Participation in Your School Cafeteria: It's Possible!

by: Samantha Starr



In my role, I connect with District Nutrition Departments from multiple states across the Pacific Northwest. Through these connections, I have learned about the challenges different district nutrition departments face. These challenges may include increasing costs, staff shortages, and menu item shortages, among others.

Many of these challenges cannot be resolved at the school level or within the cafeteria.

However, the tone challenge that each school and cafeteria can address is boosting lunch participation.



**According to RCW 28A.235.145, state funds received by school districts under this chapter for school breakfast and lunch programs shall be used to support the operating costs of the program, including labor, unless specific appropriations for nonoperating expenses are provided.**

By increasing lunch participation, each school has the potential to take small steps toward improving some of the other challenges they face. So, how can you boost participation despite a lack of district funding or staff shortages? You can achieve this by utilizing the tools you already have and approaching the situation with a fresh perspective.

## **Promote the Child Nutrition Eligibility & Education Benefits Application (CNEEB)**

Focus on promoting the **CNEEB** instead of the Family Income Survey. Parents who need assistance are more likely to fill out the form than parents who do not qualify. By promoting the **Education Benefit** portion of the application, your district may likely see an increase in submitted applications and may have more families qualify for free or reduced lunches. When parents see that completing the application also has the potential to help their children's school with technology funding, band instruments, classroom resources, etc., they will have more urgency to submit it. This is especially important given the budgetary cuts that parents are now experiencing in their communities. I suggest having your district create a visual aid that shows the benefits to families that complete and submit the form.



### **Create an Inviting Atmosphere**

- Get students more invested in 'their' lunchrooms by asking them for suggestions and listening to their responses. When adopting a student's suggestion, give them credit for it! This will encourage more engagement with students.
- Encourage students to decorate the cafeteria with their artwork. Get kids excited to come to the cafeteria, eat school lunch, and see their artwork displayed.
- Create theme days! Work with your school library to showcase a book in the cafeteria and incorporate Encourage students to read the book within a set time and celebrate the book by serving foods that tie into the book's theme on a specific day.
- Reward younger students with "I tried it" stickers when they venture out of their comfort zone and try new foods. Serve smaller 'tasting' portions of new foods and keep them separate from familiar menu items. Remind students that choosing to try new foods is a great way to learn what they like, and if enough students enjoy it, that food could be added to your menu.

### **Social Media Influence**

- Create Insta-worthy food presentations for daily menu options, showcasing them on your School's social media to entice participation before the start of lunch.
- Host a School Lunch Insta-worthy competition. Choose a day for the competition and have students upload their school lunch pictures, tagging your social media. Students can vote for pictures, and the winner(s) will receive a prize.

### **Incorporate Flavor Stations**

A flavor station is a designated spot in the cafeteria where students can add flavor to their meals. Basic herbs and spices, curated seasoning blends, flavored kinds of vinegar, hot sauce, and more can be included in a flavor station!

- The option to flavor foods to their tastes adds a sense of ownership to the meal. Students may be more likely to buy school lunches, potentially increasing revenues for the program.
- Flavor stations help schools stay current on trends (like Sriracha) and provide for students' needs and wants.
- Students can use seasonings on any part of their meal. However, herbs and spices can be particularly useful for adding flavor to vegetables (like garlic powder on broccoli), which may be bland due to sodium restrictions in school meals.
- Flavor stations can increase the amount of food eaten, decreasing food waste and helping students get the nutrients they need.
- Decreased waste as a result of more food being eaten means school nutrition funds are being used more efficiently.

## **RESOURCES**

Visit this website to learn more:  
<https://nxtgennetwork.serveddigizine.com/view/588574302/18-19/>

To download flavor posters visit:  
<https://theicn.org/cicn/flavor-enhancement/>

# *President Elect Message*

**By: Alexandra Epstein-Solfield**

**WSNA President Elect**

Dear Washington School Nutrition Association Members,

As the leaves change color and the air grows crisp, I'm excited to welcome you to a new season filled with opportunities for growth, collaboration, and fun! In Ellensburg we have some big goals to start the year. We just hired a school chef to ramp up the quality of our menus and we introduced a new menu planning software program over the summer. We are also preparing for an administrative review to take place later this year.

I am honored to be your incoming President Elect and I'm eager to work alongside all of you to make this year the best yet for our association. Together, we will continue to advocate for our profession, support our members, and promote the vital role of school nutrition in the health and well-being of our students.

Let's make this fall a season to remember! Join us for our upcoming events including Fall Workshop in November and send us photos of your recipes and kitchens for our social media so we can connect and celebrate together.

Here's to a fantastic fall!

Sincerely,

**Alexandra Epstein-Solfield**

**President Elect**

**Washington School Nutrition Association**



# BETTER SCHOOL NUTRITION STARTS IN THE KITCHEN



We consider it an honor to support those who serve our future leaders as they learn and grow.



Contact us to learn more about our products:

**Allison Waldron**  
406-595-0361

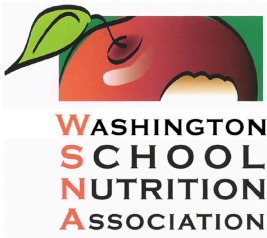
**Peter Moreno**  
206-247-4664



- July 31, 2024 Board Meeting, Doubletree Spokane, WA
- Oct 1-31, 2024 National Farm to School Month
- October 2, 2024 Taste Washington Day
- Oct 14-18, 2024 National School Lunch Week;  
<https://schoolnutrition.org/about-school-meals/national-school-lunch-week/>
- November 2, 2024 WSNA Fall Workshop
- November 4, 2024 Fall Board Meeting, Virtual
- Jan 19-21, 2025 SNA Industry Conference, Phoenix, AZ
- January 29, 2024 Washington State Commodity Show, University Place SD
- February 2, 2024 Washington State Commodity Show, Spokane SD
- March 1, 2025 SNA Award Entries due to State President (Employee/Mgr/Director of Year)
- March 9-11, 2025 SNA Legislative Action Conference, Washington DC
- March 3-7, 2025 National School Breakfast Week  
<https://schoolnutrition.org/about-school-meals/national-school-breakfast-week/>
- TBD Spring Board Meeting, Virtual
- TBD WSNA Spring Workshop
- April 25-27, 2024 SNA Leadership Conference
- May 2, 2025 School Lunch Hero Day
- July 13-15, 2025 SNA Annual Conference, San Antonio, TX
- July 28-30, 2025 WSNA Annual Conference; The Magic of Child Nutrition  
DoubleTree by Hilton Spokane City Center & Convention Center
- July 27-31, 2026 WSNA Annual Conference  
Greater Tacoma Convention Center
- July 26-29, 2027 WSNA Annual Conference



2024-2025  
**DATES TO  
REMEMBER**



## WASHINGTON SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION 2024-2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

<i><b>OFFICER POSITION</b></i>	<i><b>NAME &amp; ADDRESS</b></i>	<i><b>PHONE &amp; E-MAIL</b></i>
<b><u>President</u></b> Finance Committee Executive Team Executive Board	Karen Brown Franklin Pierce School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:kbrown@fpschools.org">kbrown@fpschools.org</a> 253-677-3931
<b><u>President Elect</u></b> Finance Committee Executive Team Executive Board	Alexandra Epstein-Solfield Ellensburg School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:alexandra.epsteinsolfield@esd401.org">alexandra.epsteinsolfield@esd401.org</a> 206-697-2442
<b><u>Vice President</u></b> Finance Committee Executive Team Executive Board	Juliana Fisher Northshore School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:jfisher@nsd.org">jfisher@nsd.org</a> 425-408-7656
<b><u>Secretary/Treasurer</u></b> Finance Committee Executive Team Executive Board	Alison Landry Kent School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:alison.landry@kent.k12.wa.us">alison.landry@kent.k12.wa.us</a> 253-373-7891
<b><u>Leadership Co-Chairs</u></b> Finance Committee Executive Board Executive Team	Hanahh Phillips Northshore SD  Denice Kwate (East) Central Valley School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:hphillips@nsd.org">hphillips@nsd.org</a> 208-520-7697  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:dkwate@cvsd.org">dkwate@cvsd.org</a> 509-315-7503
<b><u>Member at Large</u></b> Finance Committee Executive Board Executive Team	Kara Carlson Walla Walla School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:kcarlson@wwps.org">kcarlson@wwps.org</a> 509-232-6092
<b><u>Executive Director</u></b> (Non-Voting) Finance Committee Executive Board Apple Press Editor	Julia Jarrell PO Box 133301 Spring, TX 77393	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:washingtonsnainfo@gmail.com">washingtonsnainfo@gmail.com</a> 682-334-4135
<b><u>Northwest Region</u></b> <b>1 Lead</b>		E-Mail:
<b><u>Western Region</u></b> <b>2 Lead</b>	Mackenna Long North Mason School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:mglong@northmasonschoools.org">mglong@northmasonschoools.org</a> 360-277-2121
<b><u>Southeast Region</u></b> <b>3 Lead</b>	Stephine Burkett East Valley (Yakima) School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:burkett.stephine@evsd90.org">burkett.stephine@evsd90.org</a> 509-823-7694
<b><u>Eastern Region</u></b> <b>4 Lead</b>	Sheila Myrvang Newport School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:myrvangsheila@newportgriz.com">myrvangsheila@newportgriz.com</a> 509-447-3167 ext. 4521

<b><i>OFFICER POSITION</i></b>	<b><i>NAME &amp; ADDRESS</i></b>	<b><i>PHONE &amp; E-MAIL</i></b>
<b>Public Policy &amp; Legislative Co-Chairs</b>	Leeda Beha (federal legislation) Bethel School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:lbeha@bethelsd.org">lbeha@bethelsd.org</a> 253-219-9212
	Kim Elkins (state legislation) Mead School District	Email: <a href="mailto:Kim.Elkins@mead354.org">Kim.Elkins@mead354.org</a> 509-951-7462
<b>Membership / Certification Chair</b>	Melissa Erwin Kent School District	Email: <a href="mailto:melissa.erwin@kent.k12.wa.us">melissa.erwin@kent.k12.wa.us</a> 206-293-2419
<b>Education Chair</b>	Laurie Ozanich Selah School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:lauraozanich@selahschools.org">lauraozanich@selahschools.org</a> 509-698-8070
<b>Marketing Chair</b>	Patricia Barret South Kitsap School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:barret@skschools.org">barret@skschools.org</a> 360-528-1856 text 360-443-3667 office* *preferred # during workday
<b>Industry Chair</b>	Janel Rupp Performance Reps NW	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:Janelr@prnw.com">Janelr@prnw.com</a> 360-624-7097
<b>NON-VOTING BOARD POSITIONS:</b>		
<b>Parliamentarian</b>	Kameron Lott Bethel School District	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:klott@bethelsd.org">klott@bethelsd.org</a> 253-228-0631
<b>State Liaison</b>	Liz Beechler Director of School Meal Programs Child Nutrition Services, OSPI	E-Mail: <a href="mailto:elizabeth.beechler@k12.wa.us">elizabeth.beechler@k12.wa.us</a> 360-522-2103



## Help! I'm a New Director, and I Don't Know What I Don't Know

### *Where to Start in Your Child Nutrition Journey*

By Juliana Fisher, MS, RDN, CD, SNS  
WSNA Vice President

Feeling overwhelmed as a new Child Nutrition Director? You're not alone! Many directors have experienced the same challenges. In this three-part series, we'll provide practical steps and best practices to help you run a successful child nutrition program.

As you start, remember that OSPI (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction) is your key resource for navigating USDA Child Nutrition Program regulations. Familiarize yourself with their website and resources, as they offer everything you need to meet program requirements.

This series is designed to help you navigate your new role with confidence. Instead of focusing on the long list of rules and regulations (again, refer to OSPI!), we'll concentrate on gathering useful data, setting up effective systems, and identifying gaps in your program. With these tips, you'll feel more prepared to tackle the challenges ahead.

#### **Connect with Your Resources Early**

While diving into regulations is essential, knowing where to find help is even more crucial. One of your most valuable resources is your OSPI Program Specialist. Introduce yourself early and reach out for guidance on USDA regulations, deadlines, and policies. Attend the monthly OSPI webinars to stay updated on changes.

Also, don't hesitate to connect with your peers. Fellow directors are an incredible resource. Join or create director networking groups that meet regularly around the state to build relationships. Reach out to seasoned directors, those from districts of similar size, or those with comparable free/reduced meal populations. Connecting with neighboring districts can also be beneficial since they're often more accessible.

Initiating site visits to other districts can provide great insights into their operations and foster idea exchange. If you're having trouble making connections, contact the Washington SNA Board—they're eager to help link you with experienced directors across the state.

#### **Financial Tracking: A Critical First Step**

Effective budget management starts with financial tracking. Review past financial performance to understand your program's current standing. If your predecessor didn't leave behind a system, collaborate with your business office to develop a monthly tracking document. This tool should offer a clear overview of revenues and expenditures without getting bogged down in details. The goal is to track trends over time, enabling you to identify areas needing attention before they escalate.

Use the OSPI 1800 Report to benchmark your program's financials against similar districts, which can reveal potential areas for improvement. If your district charges indirect costs, document and

track these consistently throughout the year to avoid surprises later.

# Help! I'm a New Director cont.

## Revenue and Expenditure Insights

Understanding your revenue sources is equally important. Child nutrition programs vary based on their structure and student population. Districts participating in CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) rely on meal reimbursements, making high participation rates essential for maintaining revenue. In contrast, districts with less free & reduced status families often depend on full-pay students and A la Carte sales to help supplement program income in addition to meal reimbursements.

Expenditure management also differs by setup. Centralized kitchens benefit from economies of scale, reducing labor and food costs but may struggle with food quality. Conversely, districts with multiple on-site kitchens may face higher labor costs yet enjoy greater flexibility in menu adjustments. Recognizing where your program's costs are concentrated will help inform smarter budgeting decisions.

## Staffing and Labor Management

Managing staffing in a unionized setting can be complex, but starting with a solid understanding of the basics will set you up for success. Familiarize yourself with the district's Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which governs critical aspects like work hours, wages, and disciplinary procedures.

It's wise to meet with union representatives early on. Ask them what has been working well and where they see opportunities for improvement. This approach shows your willingness to collaborate and can yield valuable insights into potential challenges.

Tracking labor efficiency is another priority. Meals per labor hour (MPLH) is a useful metric to assess whether your staffing aligns with student participation. Monitoring this can help improve efficiency without overburdening staff. If you lack a mechanism to track MPLH, consider building up to that alongside your participation tracking.

## Master Meal Counts & Participation Tracking

Accurately tracking meal counts and participation is vital for understanding your program's performance and identifying areas for growth. Develop a system for monitoring participation rates as well as revenue from A la Carte sales monthly. This data will help you evaluate year-over-year trends and adapt your program to better meet your district's needs.

Start with a simple monthly tracking document for Total Breakfast Meals, Total Lunch Meals, and Total A la Carte sales. As you become more comfortable, expand to include detailed metrics, such as meal counts by school and labor hours, and meals per labor hour. This enhanced tracking provides a clearer picture of operational efficiency.

Add data points to deepen your insights into participation trends. Track total participation percentages and break them down by categories like free, reduced, or paid meals. Recording daily participation alongside specific menu items can offer valuable feedback. For example, if Mondays show consistently lower participation, consider serving higher-cost items to balance food costs.

The key is to start somewhere. A basic tracking system is better than none and can be as simple as tracking your data on a printed menu. This will give you a foundation to build upon as you refine your approach.

## Conclusion & Key Takeaways

Starting as a Child Nutrition Director can be daunting; focus on your core priorities and you'll quickly build confidence. Establish effective financial tracking, understand your district's revenue and expenditure dynamics, and don't forget to connect with resources like your OSPI Program Specialist and local directors, child nutrition is a team sport!

We'll continue exploring key topics like projections & procurement, professional standards and preparing for audits in future articles. As you settle into your role we will ensure you're prepared to tackle the complexities of managing a successful child nutrition program with confidence.

# Help! I'm a New Director cont.

## Action Steps You Can Take Now:

- Connect with OSPI: Your Program Specialist is a vital resource; engage early and attend webinars.
- Network with Peers: Join or create director groups for support and share ideas.
- Track Finances: Implement a simple monthly tracking document to monitor revenues and expenditures.
- Understand Revenue Sources: Different districts have unique revenue dynamics; tailor your strategies accordingly.
- Monitor Participation: Regularly track meal counts and participation for insights into program performance.
- Know Your CBA: Familiarize yourself with the Collective Bargaining Agreement to navigate staffing complexities.



**Yami.**  
lowfat yogurt

Grade A milkfat  
**Yami.**  
lowfat yogurt  
Strawberry-Banana  
NET WT 4.25oz (119g)  
with other natural flavors

Gelatin | Gluten | Lactose  
FREE | FREE | FREE  
VITAMINS A & D3

*Crafted in the Northwest*

LACTOSE-FREE | GELATIN-FREE | GLUTEN-FREE | VITAMINS A & D3

Yami lowfat yogurt Strawberry-Spinach  
Yami lowfat yogurt Strawberry-Banana  
Yami lowfat yogurt Raspberry-Raspberries





**WASHINGTON  
SCHOOL  
NUTRITION  
ASSOCIATION**

*Agenda*  
**WSNA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**  
July 31, 2024, 12:30 p.m.  
Doubletree Hotel, Spokane, WA

Call to Order Meeting was called to order by President Karen Brown at 12:49 pm.	Karen Brown
Call for Quorum A quorum was present.	Kameron Lott
Approval of Minutes from 7-28-24 <b>A motion was made to approve the Meeting Minutes from 7-28-24. Motion approved.</b>	Karen Brown
Approval of Agenda <b>A motion was made to approve the agenda. Motion approved.</b>	Karen Brown
<u>Information Only</u> BOD Training BOD Google Drive	Karen Brown Karen Brown
<u>Action Items:</u> Appoint Kara Carlson as Member at Large <b>A motion was made to appoint Kara Carlson as Member at Large. Motion approved.</b>	Karen Brown
Appoint Hannah Phillips as Leadership Co Chair <b>A motion was made to appoint Hannah Phillips as Leadership Co Chair. Motion approved.</b>	Karen Brown
Update BOD contact info Fall Workshop Discussion <b>A motion was made to host a virtual fall workshop</b> <b>The motion was amended to host a virtual fall workshop on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Amended motion approved.</b>	Karen Brown Alexandra Epstein-Solfield
Financial Reports	Julia Jarrell
New Business	
Good of the Order	
Adjourn <b>A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved.</b> Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.	



**WASHINGTON  
SCHOOL  
NUTRITION  
ASSOCIATION**

## **2024-2025 Plan of Action**

**Karen Brown, President**

WSNA's Annual Plan of Action is designed around the School Nutrition Association's four (4) Core Areas of Focus as defined in the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. It is through coordinated efforts by each state that we support the national association in achieving their mission of empowering and supporting school nutrition professionals in advancing the accessibility, quality, and integrity of school nutrition programs.

### **Core Area of Focus**

#### **Voice of School Nutrition**

##### **Objective:**

- We advocate for feeding children who attend school in the State of Washington.
- We are recognized as school nutrition experts.
- We highlight the image of all school nutrition programs.

##### **Over the next year, success will look like:**

- We have an active Public Policy & Legislative Action Committee that monitors and acts on behalf of the association in support of school nutrition programs at the state and federal level.
- We worked to educate and build relationships with legislators, superintendents, school boards, advocacy organizations, Industry, and members through monthly meetings.
- Our members are comfortable being recognized as school nutrition experts within their community.
- We used our online presence and social media platforms to promote the efforts of school nutrition programs across the state both at the district level and the state level.
- We promoted the SNA scholarship programs to recognize excellence within our state.

#### **Career Development**

##### **Objective:**

**School nutrition professionals will continually increase their knowledge and skills to administer, manage, deliver, and sustain successful school meal programs.**

##### **Over the next year, success will look like:**

- Through Workshops and the Annual State Conference, we have offered high quality, multilingual education sessions for all member segments.
- We actively promoted the Certification and Credentialing program with an emphasis on career path opportunities and professional growth.
- We effectively promoted and used the Education Fund to add more scholarship opportunities for conferences and workshops, particularly for first-time attendees.

- We increased the use of our online and social media presence to advertise and showcase the successes of our members. We also enabled a chat feature on our website to allow more communication and collaboration among our members.
- We have evaluated and implemented options to offer education sessions in a virtual format for those unable to attend meetings in person.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

### **Objective:**

WSNA will identify and foster relationships with current and potential stakeholders.

### **Over the next year, success will look like:**

- We identified and connected with current and potential stakeholders and/or champions of school meal programs in the state of Washington whether at the district level or on a legislative level.
- Our industry partnerships have been strengthened through a vendor roundtable to discuss barriers to workshop and conference participation. And what support they need from us as an Association.
- We planned and recorded WSNA commercials to showcase our Association and to increase our engagement with all stakeholders.

## **Thriving Organization**

### **Objective:**

WSNA will look for ways to be innovative while being fiscally responsible.

### **Over the next year, success will look like:**

- We grew membership in all member segments of the Association.
- We continued to engage non-members on the benefits of membership and the benefits they received when they joined or renewed.
- Our Executive Director used creativity to highlight the Association to members and other stakeholders via our website and social media.
- We strengthened the Association by ensuring that all workshops and conferences continue to be fiscally responsible.
- We developed new revenue opportunities to support Association activities, such as increasing the number of Platinum Partners and resurrecting meetings and workshops that have not been held lately.

Guaranteed Washington  
apple slices for  
Washington schools!



We believe in creating a product we would be proud to serve our own family. That's why Peterson Farms offers only Non-GMO Apple Sauces & Slices, in BPA Free packaging. Our new 108oz applesauce bag is equal to a #10 can and comes in 3 flavors. As always, we never use sweeteners or artificial flavoring. We also use only Washington grown apples for all slices for Washington schools!



For product information or samples please contact:  
**AnMarie Davis - Regional Sales Manager, North West**  
adavis@petersonfarmsinc.com 925-918-3339 www.petersonfarmsinc.com

# TO ALL OUR CHILD NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS

IT TAKES A  
*big heart*  
TO HELP SHAPE

*little minds.*



# THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO SUPPORT THE STUDENTS OF WASHINGTON

# Fueling Every Student: The Importance of Inclusive Nutrition in School Meal Programs

**PATRICIA BARRET**

WSNA MARKETING CHAIR



School meals have long played a vital role in student health and academic success. Research consistently shows that well-nourished students perform better academically, maintain better attendance, and exhibit improved behavior in the classroom. However, providing balanced and nutritious meals in schools today is no longer just about meeting traditional dietary needs. As student populations become more diverse, so do their dietary requirements. It's no longer enough to offer one-size-fits-all meal options. Schools must adopt inclusive nutrition practices to ensure that every student—regardless of their dietary restrictions or preferences—has access to healthy meals that fuel their learning potential.

## Why Inclusive Nutrition Matters

The term "inclusive nutrition" refers to the intentional effort to meet the dietary needs of all students, regardless of medical conditions, allergies, cultural or religious restrictions, or personal preferences. In today's school environments, special diets are increasingly common. Whether due to food allergies, intolerances, or conditions like diabetes or celiac disease, more students than ever before require modifications to standard meal offerings.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 8% of children in the U.S. have food allergies, which means one or more of the "big eight" allergens—milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soy—could pose serious health risks. Additionally, conditions like lactose intolerance, gluten intolerance, and religious or cultural dietary practices are becoming more prevalent in school settings. With students spending a significant portion of their day at school, the meals they consume there can greatly impact their well-being.

When school meal programs adopt inclusive nutrition practices, they help students stay healthy and energized, enabling them to focus on learning rather than hunger or discomfort caused by improper nutrition. For children with dietary restrictions, inclusive meals can be life-changing. They help students feel safe, cared for, and, most importantly, included.

## Meeting Special Dietary Needs

Providing inclusive nutrition in school meals programs requires careful planning and collaboration between food and nutrition services staff, school administrators, parents, and health professionals. The first step is understanding the dietary needs of the student population. Schools often gather this information through health forms, direct communication with families, or by keeping detailed records of medical conditions or allergies.

Once these needs are identified, school nutrition teams must work to create menus that are not only nutritious but also adaptable. This can involve offering alternative meals that are free from common allergens, using gluten-free ingredients, or ensuring plant-based options are available for students who follow vegetarian or vegan diets. For many schools, this means rethinking traditional recipes and exploring creative ways to deliver flavor and variety without compromising on dietary restrictions.



# Fueling Every Student Cont.

## Collaboration is Key

Inclusive nutrition isn't solely the responsibility of the school nutrition staff. It requires a collaborative effort across the entire school community. Teachers, administrators, and parents all play a role in making sure students are not only well-fed but also educated about the importance of nutrition and how to make healthy choices.

For example, open communication between parents and school nutrition staff is critical to understanding each child's dietary needs. When parents feel confident that their child's health is being taken seriously, they can rest assured that their child will be safe at school. Likewise, it's important for school staff to receive proper training on how to identify and respond to food allergies and intolerances to ensure student safety.

Additionally, student engagement is crucial. When students understand the importance of nutrition and the variety of options available, they are more likely to participate in school meal programs and make informed food choices. Schools can incorporate nutrition education into the classroom by teaching about healthy eating habits and how different foods fuel the body in different ways.

## Overcoming Challenges

Despite the clear benefits of inclusive nutrition, implementing these practices is not without its challenges. School meal programs often face budget constraints, and preparing meals that meet diverse dietary needs can increase food and labor costs. Sourcing specialized ingredients, such as gluten-free bread or plant-based proteins, may require additional financial resources. However, investing in inclusive nutrition can help prevent costly medical emergencies related to food allergies or intolerances and reduce absenteeism, which can affect overall school performance and funding. Staff training and kitchen resources are also critical factors. School nutrition teams must be equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to safely prepare allergen-free meals while avoiding cross-contamination. Ongoing professional development and partnerships with registered dietitians can help school districts meet these needs.

## The Future of Inclusive Nutrition in Schools

As dietary needs continue to evolve, the future of school meals will increasingly depend on the ability to provide inclusive and adaptable nutrition. With more attention being paid to student health and wellness, it's likely that schools will continue to expand their offerings to accommodate the wide range of dietary needs.

Advances in food technology and sourcing will make it easier for schools to access ingredients that meet the needs of all students, while policy changes at the state and federal levels could help alleviate some of the financial pressures. In fact, many school districts are already seeing success by partnering with local farms and vendors to source fresh, local, and allergen-friendly ingredients. These partnerships not only support inclusive nutrition but also strengthen the local economy.

Inclusive nutrition is more than a trend—it's a necessity. In the increasingly diverse world of school nutrition, offering inclusive meals is essential to ensuring that every student can thrive. By providing meals that meet the dietary needs of all students, schools promote health, safety, and a sense of belonging, creating an environment where students are empowered to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. Ultimately, inclusive nutrition is about more than just food; it's about making sure every student feels seen, valued, and cared for. After all, when students are well-nourished, they're ready to learn, grow, and reach their full potential.



# MORE THAN MENU PLANNING



## **FLEXIBLE MENUS**

Need flexible menus to accommodate supply chain challenges? Health-e Pro can help with that.



## **POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS**

Integrate Health-e Pro data with label printing, digital signage, inventory, POS, and your distributor. Health-e Pro can help with that.



## **INSTANT PUBLISHING**

Looking to offer beautiful menus online with nutrient and allergen information? Health-e Pro can help with that.



## **HELPFUL SERVICES**

Want help with data entry or preparing for an Administrative Review? Health-e Pro can help with that.

