

School Nutrition News

A Newsletter from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Division for Finance and Management

Vol. 12 No. 3

Spring/Summer 2020

COVID-19 Disruption



It may be an understatement that the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, disrupted our school year. In some cases, it closed down our food services and in others it caused us to serve students in ways we never thought possible.

The School Nutrition Team has been busy sharing communication from USDA with you and providing waivers to meet your needs. At the same time, countless hours are being spent by food service personnel and volunteers on the front line to feed our hungry children. We applaud all of your efforts and are here to support you in any way we can.

For your reference, there is a list of the USDA Guidance Memos related to this pandemic on pages 3-4 in this newsletter. Refer to our [COVID-19 webpage](#) for all of the latest information and resources available. There is a comprehensive [Q&A](#) to help with the questions you may have including claiming, meal patterns, procurement, and much more. If there are additional questions please send them to dpifns@dpi.wi.gov.

SNT is sharing the amazing work from out in the field on our social media accounts: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Please make sure to check out what other schools are doing and share your creative menus ideas. Tag WI School Nutrition or use #WISchoolMealsRock to show us what you're sending home to students in your communities.

Teaming Up to Increase Participation Workshop Cancelled



Out of concern for your health and safety, the 2020 Teaming Up to Increase Participation Workshop has been cancelled. Questions regarding the workshop can be directed to DPIFNSTeamNutrition@dpi.wi.gov.

Wisconsin School Breakfast Video Contest Winners

The third *Wisconsin School Meals Rock!* School Breakfast Video Contest wrapped up in March. Teams of students were invited to submit original videos telling us why their school breakfasts rock. The goal of the contest was to connect students with the school meals program and promote the positive practices of their schools' food and nutrition services.

- 🏆 First place was awarded to Sand Lake Elementary of Holmen School District (pictured)
- 🏆 Second place was awarded to Viking Elementary of Holmen School District
- 🏆 Third place was awarded to Grant Elementary of Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools



School Nutrition Skills Development Courses

Out of caution and in consideration of CDC guidelines related to COVID-19, all in-person School Nutrition Skills Development Courses (SNSDC) will be canceled. We recognize the interest and need for continuing education, therefore, we will do virtual learning using Microsoft TEAMS. This is the same technology that the School Nutrition Team uses to host our Lunchbox Webinars.

The SNSDC courses will be offered through a combination of pre-recorded and live presentations. The recordings of the courses will be available on a training webpage in mid-June. During July 6-24, the SNT trainers will host live summaries of the SNSDC classes with supplemental learning material. You may be required to attend the live portion of the training in order to receive a Certificate of Completion.

A course schedule and instructions for using Microsoft TEAMS will be available on the training webpage at a later date. There is no charge or need to register for these virtual learning opportunities.

Thank you for your understanding and support during this time.



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) in Wisconsin



A record-setting 71,000 elementary school students throughout the state of Wisconsin enjoyed fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) this school year! Students consumed common fruits and vegetables but also had opportunities to try unique varieties, such as persimmons, gooseberries, rutabaga sticks, and haricots.

When collecting feedback on the program after last school year (2018-19), about 69 percent of respondent schools were able to procure and serve local produce as a FFVP snack. Over 55 percent of schools reported an increased interest in fresh fruits and vegetables outside of the FFVP.

We asked schools to tell us about their successes. Here are some of the responses:

- "Our vegetable consumption at lunch has almost doubled!"
- Parents have shared that their kids are more willing to try more fruits and vegetables at home.
- Students are craving more variety with their daily fruit and vegetable offerings with school meals because they have been exposed to unique varieties of fruits and veggies through the FFVP.

The FFVP grant application period for SY 2020-21 closes on May 1st; schools receiving grant awards will be notified this summer.

Interested in learning more about the FFVP? Visit the [FFVP webpage](#) for program information, guidance, nutrition education materials, and more!

SNACS Updates

As many of you are aware, the SNT's School Nutrition Accountability Software (SNACS) is being utilized for the Administrative Review (AR). School Food Authorities (SFAs) scheduled for an AR will be required to use SNACS for review purposes. If your SFA is selected for an AR during the upcoming SY 2020-21, you will receive notification from SNT about the AR process in SNACS.

Did you know that SNACS can also be used for much more? It is the perfect solution for smaller districts that currently manage their participation in school nutrition programs through manual processes. SNACS is free to use and users have access to the SNACS online free/reduced-price meal application. SNACS also provides assistance with the application approval and direct certification processes, offers step-by-step guidance through the annual verification process, and much more.

To learn more about using SNACS for the AR or any of the other features SNACS offers, visit the [SNACS webpage](#) and use the "Schedule a Demo" button to request a live demo of the software with a member of the DPI SNACS Support Team.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the SNACS Team at DPI SNACSSupport@dpi.wi.gov.



AmeriCorps

It is hard to believe that the 2019-2020 AmeriCorps Farm to School service year is already half way over! It has been an exciting



year for us so far with a new group of AmeriCorps members as well as a few new host sites. In comparison to the first half of last year, our 2019-2020 members have taught 500 more students so far (2,101 students have received at least one lesson). This is a huge accomplishment! Our members have also been busy implementing various Farm to School components (local procurement education, local food taste tests, menued local foods, farmer engagements, and school gardens) in schools across the state. In the first half of the school year, 62 local procurement education documents have been shared with school food service directors, 172 local food taste tests have been conducted, 58 local foods have been served as part of the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program, 6 farmers have given educational presentations to students, and students have spent over 1,600 minutes learning in school gardens. By the end of the school year, over 30 Wisconsin schools may have benefited from at least three different Farm to School components.

Interested in learning how your school could benefit from hosting an AmeriCorps Farm to School member too? Reach out to Kara Ignasiak (kara.ignasiak@dpi.wi.gov) today! It is never too late to apply. We are always looking to increase the number of Wisconsin students positively impacted by Farm to School programming.



Small Victories

Small Victories training will still be offered this upcoming fall. The training will be presented in an online format due to COVID-19. Please watch for more information regarding this training to be made available in early fall on our [Small Victories webpage](#).

[SP 05-2020: Questions and Answers Regarding Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Program Personnel, 01/14/20](#)

This Questions & Answers (Q&A) memorandum is designed to provide an overview of the policies related to the Professional Standards regulations (7 CFR 210.30 and 235.11(g)) for state and local school nutrition program personnel. The regulations seek to ensure that school nutrition program personnel have the knowledge and skills to manage and operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) correctly and successfully. This document includes responses to questions submitted by state agencies and program operators on specific aspects of the regulations. This memorandum rescinds and replaces SP 38-2016, "Questions & Answers (Q&As) on the Final Rule 'Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel as Required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.'" This document has been updated to include questions regarding the final rule titled *Hiring Flexibility Under Professional Standards* (84 FR 6953/8247).

[SP 06-2020: School Breakfast Program: Continuation of the Substitution of Vegetables for Fruit Flexibility, 01/22/20](#)

School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the SBP may continue to credit any vegetable offered, including potatoes and starchy vegetables, in place of fruit without including vegetables from other subgroups in the weekly menus, through June 30, 2021. This flexibility is based on Section 749 of Division B of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94) (the Appropriations Act), enacted on December 20, 2019. It is a continuation of the flexibility originally offered under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 116-6), enacted on February 15, 2019. This memorandum supersedes SP 16-2019, "School Breakfast Program: Substitution of Vegetables for Fruit, March 18, 2019."

[SP 07-2020: Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Year 2020-21, 01/22/20](#)

In Section 747 of Division B of the Appropriations Act, enacted on December 20, 2019, Congress provides that only SFAs that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of December 31, 2019, shall be required to establish prices for paid lunches according to the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) provisions in Section 12(p) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1760(p) and implemented in NSLP regulations at 7 CFR 210.14(e).

[SP 09-2020, CACFP 04-2020: Updated Instructions for the Recovery and Reallocation of State Administrative Expense \(SAE\) Funds in Child Nutrition Programs](#)

This memorandum provides information on changes to the State Administrative Expense (SAE) recovery and reallocation process that are new in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. These include updates to the carryover calculation, lifespan of SAE reallocation funds, and allowable use of SAE reallocation funds.

[SP 10-2020, CACFP 05-2020: Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2020 Reallocation of State Administrative Expense \(SAE\) Funds in Child Nutrition Programs](#)

This memorandum provides the information needed to conduct the FY 2020 reallocation of SAE funds. Reallocation is a formal

process by which state agencies can: (1) request additional SAE funds above their initial authorized funding level; or (2) return SAE funds they do not need.

All state agencies must submit an SAE Funds Reallocation Report (FNS-525) to their respective USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional office by April 22, 2020, even if the state agency is neither requesting nor returning funds.

Memos Related to COVID-19

[SP 08-2020 Q&A \(SP 08-2020 A1\)](#)

This guidance memo required state agencies to submit to FNS an individual waiver request for statewide use prior to any COVID-19 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or Seamless Summer Option (SSO) operations. The Wisconsin School and Community Nutrition Teams requested permission from USDA to waive the requirements for serving meals in a congregate setting and the requirement to serve meals at a non-school site (for COVID-19 related meal service operations) for both the SFSP and the SSO.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #1 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Service Time Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs](#)

Issued on March 20, 2020, the USDA, in light of the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 public health emergency, this guidance memo waiving meal service time requirements to support streamlined access to nutritious meals.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #3 Nationwide Waiver of the Activity Requirement in Afterschool Care Child Nutrition Programs](#)

Issued on March 20, 2020, USDA FNS waived, for all states, statutory and regulatory requirements to serve afterschool meals and snacks in a structured and supervised environment, with an educational or enrichment activity.

A maximum of two meals can be claimed per day under SSO or SFSP. The snack would be claimed under NSLP. This would allow an SFA to have the ability to claim SBP, NSLP and Afterschool Snack on the same day. If the school(s) providing meals does not currently have the Afterschool Snack program indicated on their NSLP contract, an update will be required.

This waiver is effective immediately, and remains in effect through June 30, 2020, or upon expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #4, Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs](#)

Issued on March 25, 2020, the USDA announced this waiver which allows the state agencies to grant meal pattern flexibility waivers to SFAs experiencing disruptions to the availability of food products resulting from the impacts of COVID-19.

A [Meal Pattern Flexibility Waiver](#) should only be completed if your SFA is **currently** experiencing a difficulty procuring and serving one or more components per meal pattern requirements.

If your SFA is granted approval for a meal pattern flexibility, please keep in mind that it is always best practice to provide students with a variety of healthy options that aligns as closely as possible with the classic SBP and NSLP meal patterns. Please keep your students' health and well-being in mind.

We will respond to you in one to two business days. Approvals are valid until April 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is soonest. Following April 30, all meal pattern requirements are reinstated.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #5 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children](#)

Issued on March 25, 2020, the USDA FNS recognized that in this public health emergency, continuing to require children to come to the meal site to pick up meals may not be practical and in keeping with the goal of providing meals while also taking appropriate safety measures. Under this waiver, Program operators in a state with an approved waiver allowing non-congregate meal distribution during COVID-19-related operations may distribute meals to a parent or guardian to take home to their children. State agencies must have a plan for ensuring that Program operators are able to maintain accountability and program integrity.

The Wisconsin state plan for ensuring accountability and program integrity includes the following:

- **Maintain Accountability and Integrity:** The meals are to be provided to eligible children (18 years and under). Parents/Guardians are to share the school name where each child attends that they are requesting meals for, if the children are of school age;
- **Communication:** Post signage and update any existing communication (e.g., emails, web posting, social media) to include this information. The [Parent Pick Up State Policy sign](#) can be found on the [Child Nutrition Program COVID-19 Information webpage](#) under "DPI Guidance."

This waiver is effective immediately and remains in effect until June 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #6 Nationwide Waiver of Community Eligibility Provision Deadlines in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#)

Issued on March 25, 2020, the USDA FNS waived, for all states and LEAs, statutory and regulatory deadlines relating to Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) reporting and election during the public health emergency due to COVID-19.

While you are encouraged to maintain current CEP reporting and election deadlines, we understand that this may not be possible. Therefore, Wisconsin has elected to participate in this nationwide waiver. More information will come out about this shortly from the DPI School Nutrition Team.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #7 Nationwide Waiver of Monitoring Requirements for Sponsors in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)

Issued on March 27, 2020, the USDA FNS waived, for all Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsoring organizations, CACFP monitoring requirements at 7 CFR 226.16(d)(4)(iii) as follows: a) CACFP sponsors may conduct two reviews of their CACFP facilities; b) only one CACFP facility review is required to be unannounced; c) FNS waives that at least one unannounced review must include observation of a meal service; d) FNS waives the requirement that not more than six months may elapse between reviews; e) allows sponsoring organizations to review new CACFP facilities as a desk audit. This waiver applies automatically to all states and sponsoring organizations that elect to use it through June 30, 2020.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #8 Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State Agencies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)

Issued on March 27, 2020, the USDA FNS waives, for all state agencies, that CACFP monitoring requirements included at Section 17 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as amended [42 U.S.C. 1766], as well as regulations at 7 CFR

226.6(b)(1) and 226.6(m)(6) be conducted onsite. To ensure program integrity during this time, state agencies should, to the maximum extent practicable, continue monitoring activities of program operations offsite (e.g., through a desk audit). This waiver is effective immediately, and remains in effect through June 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #9 Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements in the School Meals Programs](#)

Issued on March 27, 2020, the USDA FNS waived, for all state agencies and school SFAs, school meals onsite monitoring requirements included at 7 CFR 210.8, 210.18 and 220.8(h). To ensure program integrity during this time, state agencies and SFAs should, to the maximum extent practicable, continue monitoring activities of program operations offsite (e.g., through a desk audit). In instances where an SFA is closed, the state agency may postpone the administrative review until SY 2020-21. This waiver is effective immediately, and remains in effect through June 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #10 Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements for Sponsoring Organizations in the Summer Food Service Program](#)

Issued on March 27, 2020, the USDA FNS waived, for all SFSP sponsoring organizations, that SFSP monitoring requirements included at 7 CFR 225.15(d) be conducted onsite. To ensure program integrity during this time, SFSP sponsoring organizations should, to the maximum extent practicable, continue monitoring activities of program operations offsite (e.g., through a desk audit). This waiver is effective immediately, and remains in effect through June 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #11 Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements for State Agencies in the Summer Food Service Program](#)

Issued on March 27, 2020, the USDA FN waived, for all state agencies, that SFSP monitoring requirements included at 7 CFR 225.7(d)(2)(ii) be conducted onsite. To ensure program integrity during this time, state agencies should, to the maximum extent practicable, continue monitoring activities of program operations offsite (e.g., through a desk audit). This waiver is effective immediately, and remains in effect through June 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #12 Nationwide Waiver of 60 Day Reporting Requirements for January and February 2020](#)

Issued on April 1, 2020, the USDA FNS waived, for all state agencies, SFAs, and CACFP and SFSP sponsoring organizations, the 60 day claims for reimbursement deadlines for claims covering operations in the months of January and February 2020. Deadlines for these two claims months are extended for 30 calendar days from their original required date of submission. This waiver is effective immediately. Please note that SFAs are encouraged to complete their 60 day reporting requirements in a timely fashion in cases where waiver flexibility is not needed, and to the extent practicable.

Please refer to the [SNT COVID 19 webpage](#) for the most current published USDA Guidance Memos. There is also a link to the [School Meals News: School Nutrition Bulletins](#) found on the COVID-19 webpage which supplies additional guidance.

USDA Foods Direct Diversion Carryover and Sweep Policy

The Wisconsin USDA Foods Direct Diversion Processing and Cheese Processing Inventory Carryover and Sweep Policy has been modified for SY 2019-20 and 2020-21. The policy is available on the Direct Diversion tab of the [USDA Foods webpage](#).

Highlights of policy include:

SY 2019-2020

June 30, 2020 –remaining pounds will be carried over into SY 2020-21.

September 30, 2020 –remaining pounds carried over will be swept to state account.

Please note: Due to the COVID-19 events, the September 30 sweep will be modified. The new date for the sweep of remaining SY 2019-20 pounds is yet to be determined. When this date is determined schools participating in the direct diversion program will be notified via email.

SY 2020-21

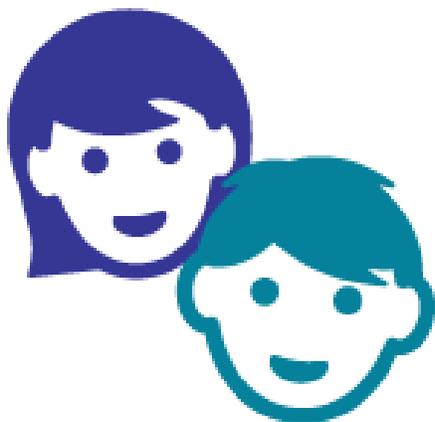
June 30, 2021 –remaining pounds will be swept to state account (no carryover will be allowed). Exceptions will only be allowed if circumstances occur during the SY that limits the use of pounds at the processors such as recalls, shortages, etc. DPI will have the final say on any and all exceptions.

The policy changes reflect the regulations stated in the USDA policy 7 CFR 250.30 for direct diversion; the processor is accountable to maintain not more than a six-month supply, based on the processor's average monthly usage. Allocated pounds are to be utilized in the year they are allocated.

Any questions or concerns regarding this policy can be directed to Claire Nagel at claire.nagel@dpi.wi.gov

Infants and Preschool in the NSLP and SBP

Check out the new Preschool Meal Pattern webcast and learn more about feeding preschool students in the School Nutrition Programs. This webcast discusses the preschool meal pattern, including portion sizes and creditable food items as well as meal service styles, such as Family Style Dining. The Preschool Meal Pattern webcast can be found on the [Infants and Preschool in the NSLP and SBP](#) webpage under the Infant and Preschool Meal Pattern Training heading.



Farm to School in Action

While conducting administrative reviews, SNT members are able to see Farm to School efforts in action! This school year, the DPI SNT saw one school taking action with notable F2S efforts. Staff at Atonement Lutheran School in Milwaukee not only take strides in Farm to School and



nutrition education, they also have admirable determination to teach their students about food in its whole, true form. Staff understand the food environment of their local area and are highly aware of the potential lack of food literacy among students. Atonement Lutheran School's staff view their cafeteria as an invaluable classroom shaping the future of their children and community.

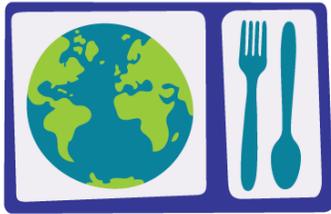
Staff hope to get a school garden up and running in the next school year. Check out their snack poster highlighting Golden Delicious apples served in their Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Keep it up!

Do you have a story or photos you would like to share? Click the "share" button at the top right of the [SNT homepage](#) and you may be featured on our social media.

Professional Standards Reminders

As you are ready to finish the school year, this is a reminder to participate in and track any job-specific trainings by June 30, 2020. The Professional Standards rule requires a certain number of training hours to be completed in the 2019-20 school year. If staff have some training needs to fulfill, feel free to browse through the DPI [Training webpage](#). Many webcasts are available on varied topics and are usually less than 30 minutes long – perfect for a quick training! Topics like civil rights, Offer vs. Serve, food safety and menu items may be covered at the Back-to-School meeting for food service staff. The [professional standards webpage](#) includes training requirements, suggested training topics and training tracker options.

If your district will be recruiting for a new food service director for next school year, please review the [hiring requirements for new food service directors](#). New directors hired on or after July 1, 2015 are required to meet minimum education standards and have relevant food service experience. These hiring standards vary based on the enrollment of the SFA. In addition, at least **8 hours of food safety training** are required to be completed for all new food service directors within 30 days of or not more than five years prior to their start date. A [food manager certification](#) is strongly encouraged to meet this requirement since the person overseeing the school meal program must hold this certification to meet [the requirements of 2015 Wisconsin Act 46](#). SFAs with an enrollment of 2,499 or less that cannot recruit a candidate who meets the minimum hiring requirements may be eligible for an exemption.



Around the World in 80 Trays

Success from Schools

Thank you to all schools that participated in DPI's first annual "Around the World in 80 Trays" campaign, which aimed to increase more international flavors in school meals. Different cuisines from all over the world were prepared and served, highlighting the unique heritage of students across Wisconsin. Check out the highlights below!

Mayville School District went around the world to Israel where they sampled homemade falafels, hummus, and pita bread.



The School District of Slinger celebrated one of their own food service personnel, Sook Hee Kang, by serving Korean BBQ Meatballs. Kang, who works at the high school, is from Gwangju, South Korea.

Today's Lunch:

- Korean BBQ Meatballs
- Mashed Potatoes
- Steamed Corn
- Diced Pears
- Gripz
- Carton of Milk

Lunches must include at least 3 components and at least 1/2 cup fruit and/or vegetable

Tomorrow's Lunch: No School

Wisconsin Heights School District was on standby and caught a flight to Thailand for Sweet Thai Chili Chicken from the On, Wisconsin! cycle menus, served with brown rice, garden bar, choice of milk, and sunshine.



Elmbook School District celebrated cultural diversity by serving Greek Gyros, Mexican Tacos with a Churro, Indian Chicken Chana Masala, and sampled curried potatoes.



Oak Creek-Franklin School District grabbed their passports and traveled with guest chefs to Vietnam, Mexico, Wisconsin, Italy, and Australia. Students got to experience menu items like Ravioli and Bindi Bite Wing Sauce with boneless wings. Yum!

Our Lady Queen of Peace in Milwaukee visited Poland, Thailand, and Ireland. Each meal included a flyer with information about each country and at the end of the week they surveyed students to determine their favorite meal. Due to the high number of responses, Our Lady Queen of Peace now plans to make Thai food a regular part of the menu!



Hungry for more? Pack your bags and mark your calendars for next year's "Around the World in 80 Trays" event, **January 18-22, 2021**. Closer to the date, the SNT will publish a link on their [NSLP webpage](#) encouraging SFAs to take the pledge and create at least one international meal during the week. Help us reach our goal of 80 SFAs. Ciao!



Research Shows That School Breakfast Can Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

Nearly eight million students a year are considered chronically absent. School officials around the nation are focused on finding ways to reduce this number. Many schools, however, already have an effective, powerful tool at their disposal: school breakfast. A [recent study](#), conducted by University of California researchers on behalf of Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign, found:

- Serving breakfast as part of the school day can reduce chronic absenteeism by an average of six percentage points.
- "Breakfast After the Bell" led to improvements in "internalizing behaviors" such as anxiety, loneliness and sadness among students.
- Exploratory analysis also found that students saw a 1.5 percentage point improvement in reading achievement.

The report also states, "Serving breakfast as part of the school day is an effective way to build increased equity in schools. When all students start the day with breakfast, including those with the fewest resources and the highest hurdles to education, it can help level the playing field."

It is a win-win! School Breakfast can improve rates of chronic absenteeism and overall equity for students in Wisconsin.

Do you have questions on either starting a new breakfast program at your school or improving an existing one? Contact the School Breakfast Specialists at DPIBP@dpi.wi.gov.

Did you know?

New research shows that when schools adopt "breakfast after the bell" programs, they can potentially see chronic absenteeism rates drop by 6 percentage points.

SNT Member Updates

Welcome to...

Lera Karns

USDA Foods Team, Contracts Specialist-Senior



Favorite School Meal: Coming from the Philippines, I'm used to warm rice and a delicious meal cooked by my mom, so I would say something with rice makes me happy.

Hobbies and Interests: Spending time with my girls and husband, planting flowers and veggies in my mini garden and listening and dancing to music.

Most Recent Vacation: I went to visit my family in the Philippines last year.

Favorite Part of Your Job with SNT:

I feel so lucky to be a part of a very supportive team. Knowing that the things we do help the future generation makes me motivated to learn more and do more.

Laura Paella

USDA Foods Team, Contracts Specialist



Laura transferred to the USDA Foods Team from her previous position of Operations Program Associate. You may have spoken with her via phone or email from our office, or gotten a "School Meals News" update from her in years past.

Jessica Oele

USDA Foods Team, Procurement and Contracts Specialist



Jessica transferred to the USDA Foods Team from her previous position of Nutrition Program Consultant. You may have seen her around at your schools on Administrative Reviews in years past.

Congratulations to...

Kara Ignasiak and family, who welcomed a healthy baby boy on March 30!

Farewell and Best Wishes to...

Loriann Knapton, Nutrition Program Consultant, who retired in April after 15 years with the DPI. She looks forward to spending more time her with family and traveling.

"A Message to my Fellow School Nutrition Professionals:

After almost 23 years in school foodservice, seven as a director and 15 plus years at DPI, I am officially retired as of May 1, 2020. Reflecting on what has been an amazing career, I want to say thank you for the incredible memories I take with me. It is true that the most beautiful people in schools wear hair nets (or sometimes even hats). I have met wonderful people in districts large and small, schools with 40,000 students and schools with 16 students. I have watched you arrive at your job at dawn, work short-staffed, make last-minute substitutions when something doesn't come in on the truck, and enter 476 students from a checklist into the computer after hours because the system went down five minutes before lunch. I've witnessed staff taking money from their own pocket to feed a child, stop a serving line to encourage a student to successfully enter their PIN number, praise a child for finally trying the broccoli after the 15th time it's served, and dig through a trash barrel to find a seventh grader's lost retainer. I have observed cafeteria dress up days, silly hat promotions and beautifully decorated cafeterias created with little funds but great imaginations. I have had little children tell me "my lunch lady is the best and makes the bestest food," watched middle schoolers confide their troubles to the person managing the dish machine, and high school students tell me "don't mess with our lunch people - they are awesome!" Most importantly, I have entered your schools to review your programs as "the auditor" and left as a friend. It's a journey I won't forget.



Thank you for serving children - you make a difference everyday. Best, Loriann Knapton"

Mark Your Calendar!

National F2S Month –
October 2020

farmtoschool.org/our-work/farm-to-school-month



National School Lunch Week
October 12-16, 2020

2016 Team Nutrition Training Grant Summary

Wisconsin Team Nutrition recently wrapped up activities associated with the 2016 Team Nutrition Training Grant. The goal of the grant was to provide training and technical assistance to school nutrition professionals to enable them to prepare nutritious meals, increase nutrition education to students, and help build support for healthy school environments. The following is a summary of projects and best practice strategies that were identified as a result of these activities.



Smarter lunchroom trainings were provided to school nutrition professionals in which participants were trained on strategies that encouraged students to select healthier food options in the cafeteria. Survey data revealed that those school nutrition professionals who received training went on to implement strategies in their cafeteria. The most popular strategies implemented were the installation of decorative containers for fruit, offering a variety of fruit in attractive stands, and offering fruit in multiple locations. Results indicated that the number of fruit servings selected by students increased after the implementation of these strategies.

Nutrition education opportunities offered to schools also produced desired results. Students that received nutrition education, along with taste testing, demonstrated an increase in MyPlate nutrition knowledge as well as a positive change in attitudes and selection of foods from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas subgroups. Likewise, students that participated in nutrition education, along with taste testing and gardening activities in the classroom, were effective in improving student nutrition knowledge as well as attitudes and behaviors towards vegetables. Furthermore, students that participated in hands-on cooking activities reported an increase in confidence with using basic cooking techniques and improved attitudes towards targeted vegetables. The combination of nutrition education along with taste testing and other hands-on learning opportunities, such as gardening and culinary programs, can increase student nutrition knowledge and positively influence their dietary habits. To view current nutrition education opportunities available for schools, please visit the [School Nutrition Teams Grant Opportunities](#) webpage.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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