



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ALASKA SCHOOL NUTRITION REPRESENTATIVES TO SUPPORT SCHOOL MEALS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

BETHEL, AK – FEBURARY 21, 2019 –This week, Marybeth Whalen, Food Service Director, Lower Kuskokwim School District; Jennifer Meiwes, Program Specialist, Anchorage School District; and Chris Johnson, Nutrition Director, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, will join approximately 850 school nutrition professionals from across the nation at School Nutrition Association’s (SNA) 47<sup>th</sup> annual Legislative Action Conference (LAC) in Washington, D.C.

During the conference, 23 – 26 February, Whalen, Meiwes, and Johnson will join colleagues in discussing current priorities in school meal programs including:

- Continue and increase USDA Foods (commodities) support for the School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Support USDA’s ongoing effort to simplify child nutrition programs
  - Encourage USDA to return to the five-year Administrative Review (AR) Cycle for School Food Authorities (SFAs) that consistently operate in compliance
  - Encourage USDA to modify the Smart Snacks in School rule to allow all menu items that are permitted to be served as part of a reimbursable meal to be sold at any time a la carte
- Urge USDA and the US Department of Education, in collaboration with SFAs, to develop best practices and guidance to ensure school schedules provide students adequate time to eat healthy school meals
- Oppose any effort to block grant school meal programs.

LAC’s “Charge to the Hill” will allow attendees to meet with their members of Congress to discuss these topics and urge their support for school meal programs, which serve over 50,000 Alaskan students each school day.

Meetings are scheduled with all of Alaska's Delegation to discuss the critical role that school meals have in Alaskan children's lives and education.

- Rep. Don Young, 5:00 p.m., 25 February
- Sen. Lisa Murkowski, 12:30 p.m., 26 February
- Sen Dan Sullivan, 4:00 p.m., 26 February

All times are Eastern Standard Time

"At this year's conference, we hope to facilitate critical discussions about the national trends that are shaping school meal programs," said Gay Anderson, SNA President, "as well as offer attendees opportunities to learn how to be the best advocates for their programs."

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*AKSNA is the state affiliate of the School Nutrition Association (SNA), a national, nonprofit professional organization representing more than 58,000 members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the country. Recognized as the authority on school nutrition, SNA has been advancing the availability, quality and acceptance of school nutrition programs as an integral part of education since 1946.*