

MUSH-ON

Alaska School Nutrition Association

www.aksna.org



AKSNA Executive Board

President:

Sanie Ponte
sponte@cordovasd.org

President-Elect:

Trevor Bridgewater, SNS
trevor.bridgewater@k12northstar.org

Past President:

Sue Lampert
Susan.lampert@alaska.gov

Secretary:

Amber Colvin
acolvin@nwardtic.org

Treasurer:

Gavin NortheyMBA, SNS
northey_gavin@asdk12.org

**Public Policy & Legislation
Chair**

Jennifer Meiwes
meiwes_jennifer@asdk12.org

**Communications & Mush-On
News Editor:**

Debbie Soto
debbie.soto@alaska.gov

Member Services Chair:

Adrienne Schwartz, MBA, SNS
Adrienne.schwartz@juneauschools.org

Member at Large:

Rachel Spencer
rspencer@yksd.com

State Agency Director:

Jo Dawson, MS, SNS
Jo.dawson@alaska.gov

A Word from Our State President – Sandie Ponte

Happy Holidays!!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving, lots of great food, family, friends and fun.

With the coming holidays, I find myself thinking of all the wonderful people that have helped me move along in my career, not the least of which have been SNA, AKSNA and our wonderful AKSNA Board.

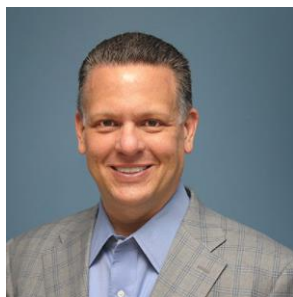
When I first started in Child Nutrition, I was so totally in the dark. I had no idea what was involved, as I believe most people not in our profession do not. We are the unsung heroes. We do what we do for the love of our children. It can be a thankless overlooked job. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each one of you and know that you are appreciated.

I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

Sandie Ponte, AKSNA President

AKSNA 54th Annual Conference – Coming to you Virtually!!

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN: Register now for the 54th Annual AKSNA Conference at <https://aksna.org/events/aksna-54th-annual-conference-2022/> – registration is FREE. **Deadline: January 15, 2022.**



Keynote Speaker: Jeff Joiner

Jeff Joiner combines his experience as a college professor, professional speaker, and foodservice consultant to provide relevant, useful training throughout our industry.

Jeff now runs his own company, specializing in helping school districts reach their goals. He has

worked with over 500 school districts and SNA organizations in 45 states, helping them improve their programs, teams, and workplaces.

Jeff's passion and purpose are to equip people to live victoriously and abundantly.

Dates: January 25-27, 2022

State Agency Updates

How is the school year half-way over already? Three cheers for everyone, as difficult as last school year was, it's hard to believe that this year has been equal in challenges. Thank you for everything you are doing to help keep children across Alaska fed and ready to learn.

Things to look for when school resumes in January:

- Sue Lampert and Tony Warren will have the USDA Foods ordering up in January for next school year. Remember that supply chain issues are sure to continue so please order more than your entitlement to allow for some cancellations. Contact Sue or Tony if you need to sign up for training on the ordering process and remember that we do have an eLearning training on the USDA Foods program which can be found at <https://education.alaska.gov/ELearning>
- Make sure to send in your Verification Summary report for October 2021 to Debbie Soto and/or Elizabeth Seitz; even if your school did not receive applications. Please contact Debbie or Elizabeth if you have questions on this.
- Pandemic EBT for last school year has finally started rolling, so do expect questions from families in your communities. Remember that we have a resource page for schools and families on our website at <https://education.alaska.gov/cnp/pandemic-ebt> and we will hold training on P-EBT in January.

For those of you who responded to USDA's Supply Chain survey, thank you, I am hopeful that this data will help USDA make some decisions that improve program operations moving forward.

Thanks again and have a wonderful holiday season!

Jo Dawson, MS, SNS | Child Nutrition Program Manager



SNA Member Awards: Nominate today!

Day in and day out all across our state school nutrition professionals have been going above and beyond to make sure students have access to nutritious meals. The extra hours worked and many hats worn to get the job done is nothing to be dismissed. AKSNA and SNA love to recognize members that are doing everything they can for their students. SNA Member Awards recognize achievements in school foodservice, leadership, membership recruitment, and professional development. Nominating categories include.

Employee of the Year, Manager of the Year, in honor of Louise Sublette, as well as Director of the Year. If you know someone who is making a difference in your district, we want to know! The recognition of our members is a great reminder that we are all in this together.

SNA Member Awards

An Exciting New Look!



SNA Awards
DIRECTOR
OF THE YEAR

Effective September 2021, the School Nutrition Association has made some major changes to the SNA Awards Program so all members can be recognized for their hard work to ensure well-nourished students across the country are prepared for success.

Nominations must be submitted online by Tuesday, March 1, 2022. There are SNA awards to recognize every member type:

- [Employee of the Year Award](#)
- [Manager of the Year Award](#), in honor of Louise Sublette
- [Director of the Year Award](#)
- [National Industry Member of the Year Award](#)



SNA Awards
MANAGER
OF THE YEAR

What's Changing?

When you nominate for an award, there will be many new changes we hope you'll enjoy! You will notice that the applications are now all digital and are supported through the awards platform, Submittable. This new platform will now give you as a nominator the:

- Ability to nominate an individual without completing the entire application;
- Ability to collaborate with your nominee(s) on the application (optional);
- A streamlined application form(s); and
- The timeline of activities for nominees and state affiliates.



SNA Awards
EMPLOYEE
OF THE YEAR



(Amy Rouse, Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District Child Nutrition Director - named SNAs Northwest Regional Director of the Year 2020)

We have also made some changes to make the awards more inclusive and accessible, so with that we are excited to announce we:

- Allow self-nominations.
- Will use an ad-hoc committee of volunteers for regional judging.
- Removed certificate requirement for the Employee of the Year (EOY) and Manager of the Year (MOY) Awards, and will Use points in the scoring rubric to give the nominee credit for having the certificate.
- Removed requirements for a certificate or credential and service on state or national committee or board for the Director of the Year (DOY) Award, and use points in the scoring rubric to give the nominee credit for having these qualifications.
- Shortened the membership requirement to three (3) years for the DOY Award.

Trevor Bridgewater – AKSNA President - Elect

IN THE SPOTLIGHT!

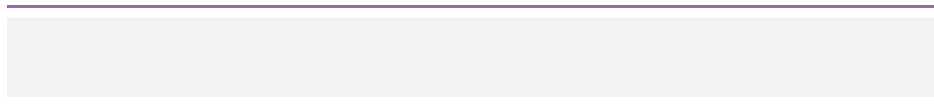


Juneau School District Food Service Program – Application-Blitz Week

In an effort to get the word out that Juneau School District students can eat for free this year, the food service program sent out a survey asking for feedback. This survey was sent to all district families and had an added bonus at the end of it – the parent could enter to win \$100 worth of groceries. The district got over 400 responses! This was the first time the program has gotten so many responses. A winner was drawn randomly, and Adrienne Schwartz and Catherine Pusich delivered groceries to the family. The Juneau Empire covered the quick delivery: <https://www.juneauempire.com/news/family-wins-free-groceries-as-school-district-promotes-free-student-meals/>.

The Juneau School District has seen a lower number of families applying for meal benefits this year. Flyers were mailed and emailed to all families who had expired benefits which announced an “Application Blitz Week” for the week of October 25-29. Applicants that were approved during this week were entered to win a Thanksgiving food basket. The program extended benefits to 41 households that week. The food was delivered on November 22 to the winning family.

If your district has something exciting to share, please email it to me at Debbie.soto@alaska.gov to be included in the next Mush On!



More Than Just Lunch

One in seven, or 11 million, children in America live in households without consistent access to adequate food. Every Monday morning, school nutrition professionals witness this hunger on the faces of students eagerly waiting in line for a school breakfast after a long weekend without enough to eat.

Armed with scientific research linking school meals and healthy diets to academic success, school nutrition professionals have worked to expand breakfast programs, launch summer and afterschool meal programs to meet students' nutritional needs.

Expanding the School Breakfast Program:

On average, students who eat school breakfast have been shown to achieve 17.5% higher scores on standardized math tests and attend 1.5 more days of school per year ([No Kid Hungry](#)). Unfortunately, tight school bus timetables, late student arrivals and early class schedules can limit participation in traditional cafeteria breakfast programs.

Fortunately, school nutrition professionals are finding creative ways to overcome these barriers. School breakfast participation is increasing through innovative delivery methods, such as grab-and-go service options, which allow students to quickly pick up their meal from the cafeteria or a hallway kiosk on their way to class. Many schools are even serving breakfast in the classroom so students can enjoy a healthy meal during morning announcements.

Summer Meals:

Every child deserves a carefree summer vacation, but for many kids, summer break means an end to the free and reduced-price school meals they depend on during the school year. Thankfully, in many communities across the nation, school nutrition programs are stepping up to make sure children don't go hungry this summer.

Through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Summer Food Service Program](#), schools serving low-income communities can provide free meals and snacks to children at school cafeterias, parks, playgrounds, public housing complexes, summer camps or churches.

Afterschool Snacks and Meals:

Through NSLP, nearly 23,000 schools and institutions serve healthy snacks to children participating in afterschool activities. Click on the links for [more information on afterschool snacks](#), including a [fact sheet](#) detailing reimbursement rates, eligibility and menu requirements. Under the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), eligible sites serve a snack or a meal to children as part of afterschool activities. Visit USDA's [CACFP page](#) for more information.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program:

The [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#) provides free fresh fruit and vegetable snacks to students during the school day in elementary schools with high free and reduced-price eligibility rates. Participating schools receive between \$50 to \$75 per student each year.

[More Than Just Lunch \(schoolnutrition.org\)](http://schoolnutrition.org)

SNA Supply Chain Resources

SNA Supply Chain Video Series

- [Video 1](#): Share this animated video on **Supply Chain Disruption in School Cafeterias** with K-12 foodservice staff and stakeholders to explain how and why school nutrition programs are struggling to secure the necessary food and supplies needed to feed students due to disruptions in the supply chain.

- [Video 2](#): Share this animated video on **Supply Chain Issues & School Meals – What Parents Need to Know**, with parents and student caretakers to help share the challenges school meal programs are experiencing in light of supply chain disruption. Also available in [Spanish](#).

[SNA Supply Chain Resources \(schoolnutrition.org\)](https://schoolnutrition.org)



The SNA's Learning Center - where SNA members can regularly access new learning resources and opportunities to earn CEU's. The Learning Center resources are designed to support you in your school nutrition journey and help you to grow in the field.

Upcoming Webinars:

[January 12, 2022, 11:00am - 12:30pm AKST](#)

"What in the World is GDSN? Supply Chain Challenges Made Simpler with Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN)

[February 2, 2022, 11:00am – 12:30pm AKST](#)

"Breakfast trends that will help POWER UP your program!

[The Learning Center \(schoolnutrition.org\)](https://schoolnutrition.org)