



2025 NSNA FALL NEWSLETTER

SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION



LET'S CONNECT

➔ Message from the President - John Ahlers

Greetings fellow NSNA members. School will soon be in session again and we will be serving **5 STAR** meals to our students with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, proteins and milk! Where else could you go to the largest restaurant in the nation than our school cafeteria and receive so many choices for the amount! You are a **HERO** to your students! Next year's theme is – School Nutrition Hero's, solving nutrition one bite at a time.

I hope that those of you that attended conference enjoyed it and were able to take something from it. Thanks to all that made the conference what it was from the speakers to the volunteers, and everyone in between. Also, a HUGE thank you to Mary Pat for all she does behind the scenes!!! One of the sessions that we had was recipe sharing. The recipes that were shared can be found on the webpage under the BLOG section, there are over 50 recipes shared. If you haven't had a chance to check out the webpage now would be a great time to do so. Mark your calendars for next years conference June 28 – July 1, 2026.

The food show was moved this year to the Younes Center which was walking distance from the conference. We received lots of compliments on the new setting. Our commodity food show will take place on October 9 from 2-5. Look for more details in the Let's Connect.

Some goals that I hope NSNA achieves this year are growing in membership numbers and conference attendance. Our attendance was down slightly this year, about 215 attended. Being a member of NSNA offers benefits such as discounts to conference, School Nutrition magazine and a place to go to earn CEU's. All of this information can be obtained on the webpage.

Maybe this next year will be a good time for you to look at where you are in your career. Is this the time to step up and become more active in our organization of NSNA? This could be at the district level or the state level. Serving on a committee, hosting a district meeting are just a couple of ways to get more involved. Just stepping out of our comfort zone can really make a difference. Maybe you have ideas for conference next year and would like to be part of the planning committee? It can be a small step that leads to bigger and better things! We are always looking for assistance in our districts and the state level. It really isn't that hard and the people that you work with are great! And working with Mary Pat is something all by itself!! You can also ask past presidents questions as well, there is a wealth of information to be used, we just need to ask.

Finally, as the school year goes on and we become buried with regulations and job duties, remember to take a breath, relax for a moment and remember we serve 5 Star meals one meal at a time with fruits, vegetables, whole grain, proteins and milk! You are a hero - everyday to your students!! Until we meet again.....

➔ CONFERENCE RECAP

BALANCING SCHOOL NUTRITION

5 STAR MEALS ★★★★★

- FRUITS
- VEGETABLES
- WHOLE GRAINS
- PROTEINS
- MILK



SAVE THE DATE
2026 CONFERENCE

JUNE 29 - JULY 1
KEARNEY, NE



Thank you 2025 Conference Platinum Sponsors

Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.™



BALANCING SCHOOL NUTRITION™

Congrats!

FREE 2026 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION WINNERS

**Heather Gilliland
Grand Island Public Schools**

**Jessica Bollig
Omaha Public Schools**



Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.™

Thank you 2025 Conference Gold Sponsors



"BALANCING SCHOOL NUTRITION"

NSNA Commodity Food Show

October 9, 2025

HolidayInn 110 Second Ave. Kearney NE

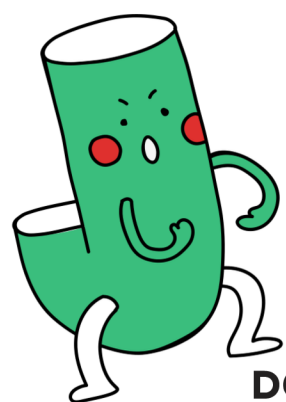
Seminar at 1 pm

Food Show from 2 pm-5pm

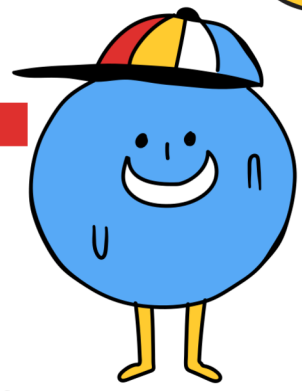
Please plan to attend the seminar at 1 pm prior to the Commodity Show. Brian Gerkenmeyer from DHHS and Eric Sweeney from US Foods will be reviewing how to set up your accounts and will address any questions you may have regarding the Commodity Program.



Please RSVP by September 26th @nebraskasna.org



KIDS ART CONTEST



DO YOU HAVE STUDENTS WHO LIKE TO DRAW WORD DOODLE?
DO YOU KNOW A TEACHER LOOKING FOR A PROJECT?

The 2026 Nebraska School Nutrition Association

Art Contest is HERE!

There are four grade categories for the contest: K-1, 2-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Four winners will be chosen, and each will receive a \$50 check from the Nebraska School Nutrition Association.

Contest Rules:

1. All entries must be the student's original artwork on an 8 1/2 x 11 inch sheet of unlined white paper. Do not use white plain poster board or larger paper size as it is not allowed.
2. The theme "**School Nutrition Heroes- Solving Nutrition, One Bite at a Time**" must be printed on the artwork.
3. The student's name, address, grade, and school must appear on the back of the artwork.
4. Each entry must be accompanied by a completed entry form signed by the principal and cafeteria manager.
5. Each school district will be allowed to submit four entries for the competition: one for each grade category.
6. Entries must be postmarked by December 12, 2025.
7. If any of the above rules are not followed, the entry will be automatically disqualified.
8. Entries will not be returned unless requested.

Send your school district's entries to:
Nebraska School Nutrition Association
P.O. Box 45527
Omaha, NE 68145-0527



KIDS ART CONTEST

NEBRASKA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION ART CONTEST ENTRY FORM

"SCHOOL NUTRITION HEROES- SOLVING NUTRITION, ONE BITE AT A TIME"



Mail this entry form with student's artwork to: Nebraska School Nutrition Association,
P.O. Box 45527, Omaha, NE 68145-0527

Contest Deadline: December 12th, 2025

Please fill in the following information:

Student's Name: _____

Home Address: _____ Home Phone: (____) _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Grade: _____ Age: _____ Circle One: Male / Female

School: _____ School Phone: (____) _____

School Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Principal: _____ Cafeteria Manger: _____

(Principal's Signature)

(Cafeteria Manger's Signature)



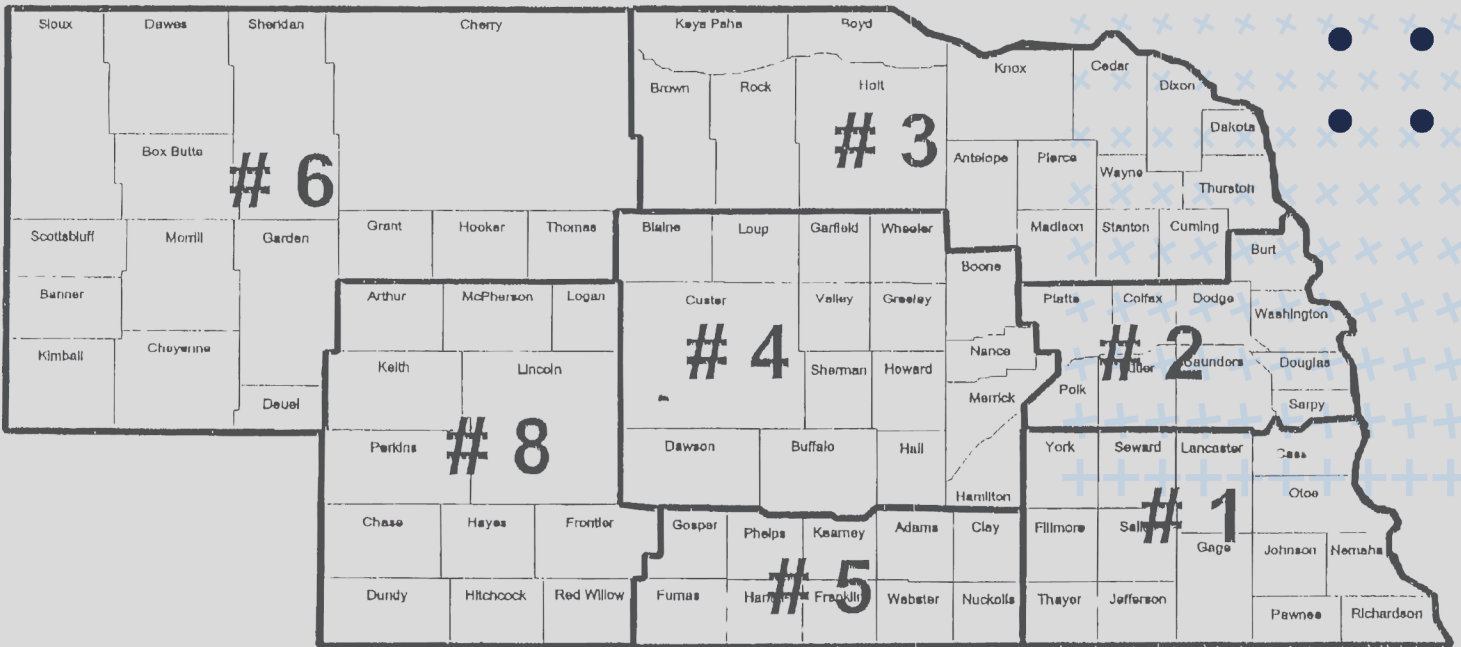
For State Associate Use Only – PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN BOX

Date Received: _____ Initials of Recipient: _____

Check Entry Category:

Grade K-1 (____) Grade 2-4 (____) Grade 5-8 (____) Grade 9-12 (____)

➔ UPCOMING DISTRICT FALL MEETINGS



District 1 - Saturday, October 18th - Wilber Clatonia Public Schools

District 2 - September 27th - Ashland Greenwood High School

District 3 - October 18th - West Point High School

District 4 - Boone Central High School

District 5 - October 12th @ Nelson School

District 6/8 - September 27th - Wallace High School

Be on the look out for your invitation to your District Meeting. If you don't receive your invitation please reach out to your District President.



NATIONAL AND STATE NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

Member ID _____

- ① Have you ever been a SNA member? Yes No
- ② First Name _____ Last Name _____
- ③ Email _____ Job Title _____
- ④ School District _____ ⑤ School Name _____ ⑥ Chapter No. _____
- ⑦ Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____
- ⑧ Work Mailing Address (Please indicate preferred mailing address Work Home)
 Address _____ Suite _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
- ⑨ Home Mailing Address
 Address _____ Suite/Apt _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
- ⑩ Who referred you to SNA? First Name _____ Last Name _____ (Optional) Member ID: _____
- ⑪ Membership Category (Check either individual membership or school district/state agency membership (SDM). See back for description)

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 |

- ⑫ Employed by? Public School Private Management Company
 Private School CACFP
- ⑬ Does your employer pay your dues? Yes No
- ⑭ Are you responsible for school nutrition operations in your school district? Yes No

National, State Dues and Processing Fee are required.

⑮ NATIONAL DUES \$ _____ . _____

⑯ STATE DUES* \$ _____ . _____

⑰ PROCESSING FEE \$ _____ 3 . 00

⑱ TOTAL DUES \$ _____ . _____

⑲ Tax-deductible contribution to SN Foundation
 ___\$10 ___\$25 ___\$50 ___Other _____

⑳ TOTAL PAYMENT \$ _____ . _____

⑩ Your STATE DUES are: (Record state dues in the space provided on right) * Select one.

⑲ Tax-deductible contribution to SN Foundation

㉑ For credit card payment, please visit www.schoolnutrition.org

㉒ Individual Membership Signature _____ Date _____

For SDM multiple applicants, you may use a spreadsheet found at www.schoolnutrition.org/sdm.

See reverse side for important information.

Dues: subject to change.

㉒ FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP (SDM) ONLY

SDM Main Contact Name _____

(Optional) SDM Main Contact Member ID _____

Email _____

Business Phone Number _____

Return this form with your check or money order made payable to SNA.
 Mail application to SNA Depository PO Box 719297, Philadelphia, PA 19171-9297

SNA National and State Membership Application Guidelines

Membership Application for Individual and School District Memberships.

Instructions for completing the front of this application:

1. Please indicate if you have ever been a SNA member.
2. Print your full name as you would like it to appear in your membership record and on your membership card.
3. Print your email address and job title. **All SNA members automatically receive e-mailed information related to the organization.**
4. Print your current school district.
5. Print your current school name.
6. If you know your local chapter number, please fill in.
7. Print your work and home phone number.
8. Print your work mailing address.
9. Print your home mailing address.
10. Print full name of member referrer who introduced you to SNA (only needed for new members). This will give the person credits for Star Club and annual membership campaign drives. Optional: Include referrer's SNA member ID.
11. Please review the membership categories listed. Check one that best describes your position. **School District/State Agency Membership (SDM) is a membership managed or coordinated by the school district/state agency and can be transferred to another individual in the same membership category. Please check with your district to see if you are eligible for SDM.**
12. Please check if you are employed by public school, private school, or private management company.
13. Please indicate if your employer pays your dues.
14. Please indicate if you are responsible for school nutrition operations in your school district.
15. Record your national dues based on membership category checked.
16. Record your state dues based on the dues listed on left side of application under "Your state dues are:"
17. All applications must include the processing fee.
18. Please add national, state dues and processing fee amounts. This is the total dues amount to be paid. Applications with incorrect total amount will be returned resulting in a delay of member benefits.
19. Record your optional contribution to the School Nutrition Foundation. The School Nutrition Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax deductible. Your contribution of \$10 or more will be acknowledged by the School Nutrition Foundation.
20. Add national dues, state dues, processing fee and any optional contributions. This is the total payment.
21. If paying by credit card, please visit www.schoolnutrition.org.
22. This box must be completed for SDM applicants.
23. Please sign and date your completed application. Required for individual membership only. Mail your application and payment to SNA, SNA Depository PO Box 719297, Philadelphia, PA 19171-9297

Membership dues cover a full year of member benefits. Processing of application takes approximately two to four weeks from receipt of payment.

Once application is processed, new members will be able to access and print their membership card by logging in at www.schoolnutrition.org.

| Dues | | | Individual | School District/ State Agency |
|----------|---|---|------------|----------------------------------|
| Category | Membership Category | Description | Membership | Membership |
| SNE | School Nutrition Employee | Cooks, chefs, bakers, bookkeepers, technicians, assistants, etc. | \$40 | \$40 |
| STU | Student | Full-time students enrolled in post-secondary nutrition, health or other food related program. Does not include right to vote. | \$40 | N/A |
| RET | Retired | Retired Members. | \$40 | N/A |
| SNM | School Nutrition Manager | Managers, head cooks, head chefs, assistant managers. | \$42 | \$42 |
| DDS | School Nutrition Director, Supervisors, Specialist, Executive Chefs | Working in a school nutrition program at the school district level. | \$143 | \$143 |
| MCD | School Nutrition Director, Supervisor, Specialist (Major City) | Working in a school nutrition program where the school district enrollment is 40,000 or more or city population is 200,000 or more. | \$143 | \$143 |
| SDS | State Agency Director, Supervisor, Specialist | Working in state office for child nutrition programs, including nutrition education. | \$143 | \$143 |
| EDU | School Nutrition Educator | Faculty working in a college/university setting. | \$143 | \$143 |
| OTH | Other | Principals, Superintendents, Teachers, etc. Does not include right to vote. | \$143 | \$143 |
| AFE | Affiliate Part-Time Staff (less than 4 hours daily) | Optional membership category for retired or part-time school nutrition staff. Does not include a subscription to SN magazine or the right to vote in the annual SNA election. | \$20 | N/A |
| AFR | Affiliate Retired | | \$20 | N/A |

Note: Contributions or gifts to SNA are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions to the Foundation are deductible for IRS purposes. \$2.00 of your national dues is used for your subscription to the SN magazine.

School Nutrition Association * 2900 S Quincy Street, Suite 700 * Arlington, VA 22206

Phone: 800-877-8822 * Web site: www.schoolnutrition.org * E-mail: membership@schoolnutrition.org



BENEFACTOR PROGRAM

Have you ever wanted to attend the Nebraska School Nutrition Association State Conference or perhaps a continuing education class but affordability is a problem? You will be glad to know there are scholarship funds available for you through our benefactor program. For several years, the NSNA benefactor program has been raising funds to provide scholarships to NSNA members for conference registration and other educational funding. At the NSNA 2025 State Conference, approximately \$660 was raised towards the Benefactor Program. Contact Tara Brooking if you are interested in receiving a scholarship application. All applications must be approved by the Executive Board before money can be awarded.

Donations range from \$10 - \$50+. You can contact Tara Brooking at: tbrooking@gpsne.org for more information. Donations from members such as you and I help our members achieve their educational dreams.

Tara Brooking – Vice President & Benefactor Chair





➔ NEBRASKA SCHOOLS

Nebraska schools continue to lead the way in providing nutritious meals to students through USDA-supported programs. This school year: 51 school districts are implementing the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) at 200 schools, allowing all students to enjoy free breakfast and lunch without the need for individual applications.

The Local Food for Schools Program will award \$455,176.49 to Nebraska schools, empowering them to purchase fresh, locally grown items for school meals—supporting both student health and local agriculture.

166 schools across the state will participate in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, offering students a variety of healthy snacks and helping build lifelong healthy eating habits.

Behind the scenes, the School Nutrition Programs team—currently a dedicated group of six—will soon grow to seven as we fill the vacancy created by Laura Lutz’s retirement. Her contributions have been deeply appreciated, and we look forward to welcoming a new team member to continue this important work.

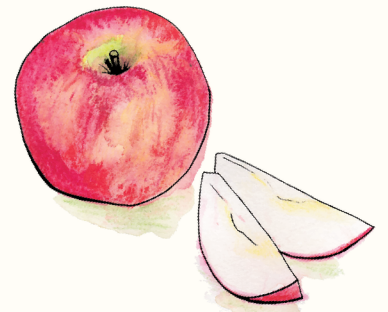


Nebraska Department of Education Nutrition Services

500 S 84th Street 2nd Floor PO Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

- ☎ Central Office - 402-471-2488
- ✉ www.education.ne.gov/contact-us
- 🌐 www.education.ne.gov/ns

2025 Nebraska CRUNCH Planning



August

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24/31 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

- **Register your CRUNCH event.** Visit www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/mountain-plains-crunch/ to find the registration link.
- **Create your CRUNCH planning team.** Ask administrators, teachers, food service personnel, parents, and students to help plan the event.



September

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | |

- **Source your CRUNCH-y fruit or vegetable.** Research your area for local producers, talk over your CRUNCH plan, and settle logistics.
- **Promote your CRUNCH event!** Send home newsletters, share on social media, and build excitement around CRUNCH in your community.



October

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

- **CRUNCH!** Join in Celebrating Farm to School Month by biting into local, crunchy fruits or vegetables on a date of your choice during the month of October.
- **Share your Crunch.** Communicate with your community and share your event through photos, social media, and newsletters.





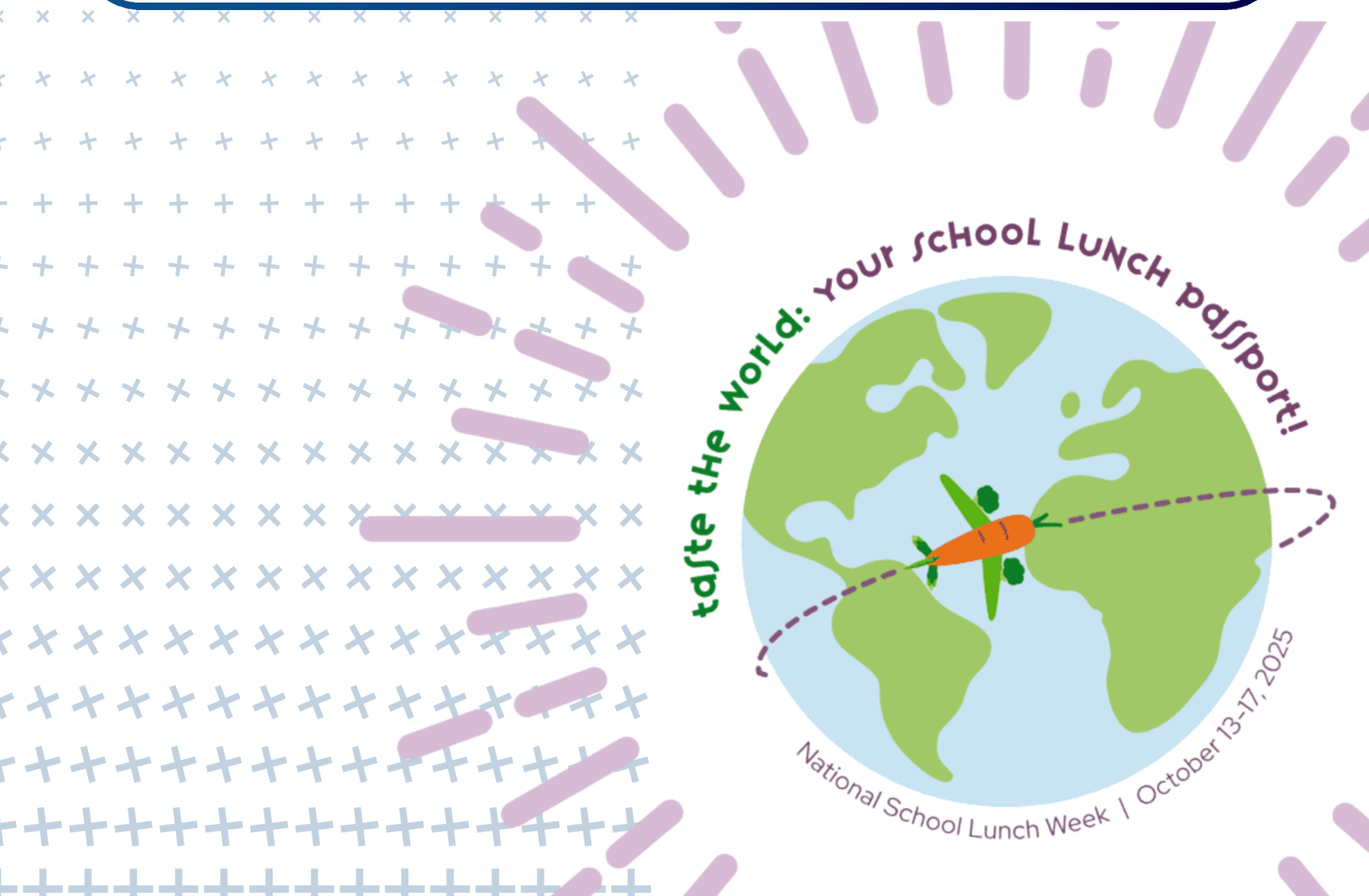
LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Welcome to the 25-26 School Year all you Amazing School Nutrition Professionals!

I am looking forward to being NSNA's Legislative Chair for the next few years. With that being said I am a little nervous following in the footsteps of such an Awesome lady, Judy Poehlman! But I am also very thankful to have the opportunity to ask Judy questions as I will be learning a lot!

On July 28th, I was on a zoom meeting with many School Nutrition Professionals from across the country listening to what SNA is watching and concerned with due to the FY2025 Reconciliation Bill. The top concern right now for SNA is the provision of SNAP cost share for states. This does not begin until FY2028, which is Oct 1st, 2027 so there is time that we can learn and communicate what we feel would be best for our youth with our NE legislatures. Another concern is the USDA reorganization from 7 regions to 5 hubs, moving these offices out of DC would make it harder for our SNA organization to work with officials closely there in DC. With this reorganization the idea of Block Grants has been mentioned, but SNA has a meeting to learn more information about the reorganization. I would highly recommend you join one of the SNA Advocacy in Action webinars. They are going to do monthly webinars and it is an opportunity for all of us to hear some great information. I also want to remind you to reach out to our Nebraska Representatives and let them know now what you may have concerns about. Let your voice be heard!

As you head into this School Year I wish you much joy and luck! Our students are going to be excited to see their favorite Lunch Hero!!!





2025 Position Paper

The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (NSLP/SBP) fuel academic achievement, support millions of America's working families burdened by high food prices and inflation, and provide a crucial market for U.S. grown foods. [Research](#) shows school meals are the healthiest meals America's children eat, making these programs a critical asset in chronic disease prevention. *To ensure the financial sustainability of school meal programs, the School Nutrition Association (SNA) urges Congress to:*

Increase NSLP/SBP reimbursement rates by 40 cents per lunch and 15 cents per breakfast

School meals must meet calorie, sodium and fat limits and offer students fruits, vegetables, milk and entrees made with lean proteins and whole grains. Healthy meals cost more to prepare – NSLP/SBP funding must cover the added expense of meeting nutrition standards and other complex regulatory requirements.

In a recent [SNA survey](#), virtually all meal program directors cited challenges with the cost of food (97.9%), labor (94.9%) and equipment (91.4%). Only 20.5% reported the [federal reimbursement rate](#) is sufficient to cover the cost of producing a lunch. As a result, 92.1% expressed concern about their program's financial sustainability three years from now.

When asked about resources necessary to comply with [forthcoming limits](#) on added sugar and sodium, 96.8% of directors indicated their programs require increased funding, with 69.5% citing an "extreme need" for more funds. *Congress must raise reimbursements to help schools cover costs and invest in staff and equipment needed to expand scratch cooking and meet new standards.*

Protect Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and expand access to healthy school meals for all students

School meals are a smart investment in the health and future of America's children. These meals are [proven](#) to support obesity prevention, student health and academic achievement by improving children's diets and combatting hunger. In schools that offer free meals to all students through [CEP](#), all children are nourished for success, students face less stigma, and schools have less paperwork and administrative burden.

School districts that must charge for meals confront a wide range of consequences: 89.3% [report](#) challenges with families in need not receiving free or reduced-price meals, and 73.5% cite that students are going hungry or choosing not to eat. *Congress should ensure every student has access to free, nutritious school meals as part of their education.* SNA supports federal and state proposals to advance this goal, including increasing the CEP multiplier, eliminating the reduced-price category and raising the free meal eligibility threshold.

Address unpaid school meal debt

Free and reduced-price meal applications only collect income data, so families burdened by high health care costs, rent increases or emergency expenses often fail to qualify for assistance. When families cannot pay, meal debt rapidly accumulates, forcing many cash-strapped school districts to divert education funds to cover meal program losses.

In SNA's [survey](#), 96.8% of school districts that must charge for meals reported challenges with unpaid meal debt, with over two-thirds citing meal debt as a "significant challenge." Alarming, the amount of debt is climbing. The median reported district debt as of November 2024 was \$6,900, which is 25.6% higher than the year prior and 102.9% higher than the median debt reported at the end of School Year 2017-18. *Congress must assist schools and families burdened by school meal debt.*

Visit [SchoolNutrition.org/PositionPaper](https://www.schoolnutrition.org/PositionPaper) for fact sheets and data.

→ NSNA Executive Board

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GOODS & GIFTS

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I am proud to be a

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HERO**