

TASN ews

Spring 2025, Vol. 21, No. 3

A Publication of the Texas Association for School Nutrition



WE'RE CORPUS READY!

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SEE PAGES 17 - 27





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[Contact TASN HQ](#) if interested in this role



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TASN News

Spring 2025

A Publication of the Texas Association for School Nutrition
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CONTENTS

REGULARS

- 2 Association News
- 2 President's Message
by Lacy Willey, Cleveland ISD
- 4 Headquarters Highlights
by Debbie Needham, TASN Interim Executive Director
- 5 Greetings from President-Elect
by Susan D'Amico, Aldine ISD
- 6 Important Dates & Deadlines
- 7 Greetings from Vice President
by John Ceballos, Klein ISD
- 28 Local News
- 34 Education
- 37 Legislative
- 42 Industry
- 47 TDA Update
by Lena Wilson, Assistant Commissioner,
Food and Nutrition, Texas Department of Agriculture

SPECIALS



- 7 WOW - 2025 PCS Wrap-up
- 16 TASN 2025-2026 Election Results
- 17 TASN 2025 Annual Conference



- 24 Call for Volunteers
- 25 Chapter Table Sales & Flags
- 37 2025 Legislative Action Conference
- 40 Leveraging Technology for More Efficient and Compliant School Nutrition Programs
by Mike Borges, LINQ Nutrition
- 42 Texas Traditions, Minus the Meat
by Liz Clark, ForwardFood.org
- 45 Announcing the Rising Stars Program
- 47 TDA Update: Plan Now for Success in 2025-2026
by Lena Wilson, Assistant Commissioner,
Food and Nutrition, Texas Department of Agriculture



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SPRING 2025



Spring is here, and with it comes a fresh season of growth, renewal, and reflection. In school nutrition, it's also the perfect time to celebrate the unsung heroes who keep our students fed, fueled, and ready to learn every single day—you!

Over the past few months, I've had the privilege of seeing so many of you in action. Whether it was at the Partnership Collaboration Summit (PCS), touring orchards in Mission, Texas, or making your voices heard at the Legislative Action Conference (LAC) in Washington, D.C. and to your local representatives, your dedication is inspiring. School nutrition is about so much more than serving meals; it's about advocating for our programs, growing in our skills, and ensuring every student gets the nourishment they need to thrive.

We also wrapped up National School Breakfast Week, and let me tell you, I loved seeing all the creative ways Texas schools got kids excited about the most important meal of the day. From fun decorations to special menu items, you all knocked it out of the park!

Speaking of incredible efforts, I just have to take a moment to appreciate our Texas food producers. The farmers and growers across our state work hard to bring fresh, high-quality ingredients to our school meals, and I got to see that firsthand during a trip to Mission, Texas. Walking through the citrus nursery and seeing where those juicy, flavorful Texas oranges and grapefruits come from was an

continued





experience I won't forget. We are so lucky to have such amazing producers right here in our backyard, and I'm beyond grateful for the role they play in feeding our students. I was happy to see all the support for our Texas agriculture during the Texas Fruit and Vegetable Day on April 4th and every day of the year.

Now, looking ahead—the [TASN Annual Conference](#) is right around the corner, and I hope you're as excited as I am! It's always such a great opportunity to connect, learn, and recharge with colleagues who share the same passion for school nutrition. If you haven't made plans to attend yet, now's the time. Trust me, you won't want to miss it!

As we step into this new season, I just want to say thank you. Thank you for your hard work, your passion, and the love you pour into feeding the future of Texas. You make a difference every single day, and I hope you take a moment to celebrate that.

See you all soon, and keep up the amazing work!

Lacy Willey
TASN 2024-2025 President

**Special thanks to
Cool Tropics and
Wonderful Citrus, LLC**





HEADQUARTERS HIGHLIGHTS

by Debbie Needham,
TASN Interim Executive Director
debbien@tasn.net



Hello TASN members! I want to share how excited I am to be working as the Interim Executive Director at TASN headquarters. TASN is very special to me. TASN is the heartbeat of Texas school nutrition, and I have served in various capacities within the

organization and grew professionally. I loved my career in the schools, and after 30 years decided to retire, but did not know how much I would miss the child nutrition staff and the rewards of feeding kids each day.

This opportunity to serve again in the industry is exciting, and it's refreshing to see it through a different scope of work. TASN is amazing and as schools continue to grow in Texas, TASN is the place to be a part of for up-to-date training needs, product information, and support. I encourage you to reach out to your [Area Representatives](#) or to the [headquarters staff](#) for information to guide your team. Please visit the TASN website for a complete list of contacts to assist.

TASN is a member organization with volunteer board members that support the headquarters team and the members. As an organization, the goal is to provide services for your professional development

and success in the future. With your success in mind, TASN will be updating [our website](#) with upcoming events and new procedures to expedite your service and help you meet the goals you wish to accomplish.

There are numerous opportunities for growth from training, volunteering at conferences, positions on the board and in chapters, and most of all in the knowledge shared with other child nutrition professionals allows for growth and friendships. I hope you will explore the endless opportunities with TASN and join us for our upcoming [Annual Conference](#) in Corpus Christi, June 22-25.

Thank you for your dedication and for all you do each day in serving the students of Texas.

Debbie Needham
TASN Interim Executive Director

Spring into Action with TASN!



I hope you all are doing well and get to enjoy some beautiful Texas bluebonnets or time outside with people you love. Spring is my favorite time of year because it is full of fresh starts and new beginnings in nature. I love to get some gardening in before it gets too hot

outside, and then watch the miracle of new growth.

In TASN, we are also seeing new growth. Our membership has increased, and we now have over 6,000 members! We also have a new Strategic Plan with very exciting possibilities. We will be sharing more about it with you soon. This spring's theme of renewal perfectly mirrors the energy surging through TASN. We're not just growing in numbers; we're blossoming with fresh ideas and strategic advancements designed to enhance your experience and empower your work.

Mark Your Calendars: Corpus Christi Awaits!

We are also gearing up for the [TASN Annual Conference](#) in Corpus Christi, June 22-25, 2025. If you have not already registered, please do so now! This year's conference theme is *High Tides and Good Vibes*, and we are looking forward to an unforgettable event.

We will have the engaging and funny Jeff Joiner as our keynote speaker, plus a dynamic lineup of classes, including several taught in Spanish. Our food and equipment show will be amazing, and our party on Industry Night will feature

the famous Spazmatics! It's time to break out your tropical attire and get into the rhythm of the beach. Or you can enjoy a nerdy theme inspired by the Spazmatics. Either way, we will all be having a good time.

Get ready for insightful sessions, networking opportunities, and a chance to recharge alongside your colleagues. From innovative workshops to the lively Industry Night, there's something for everyone.

Celebrating Your Impact

As always, I want to thank you for all that you do to have a positive impact on the lives of Texas students, staff, and fellow TASN members. Your commitment to excellence is the driving force behind TASN's growth and success. Whether you're a seasoned professional or a new member, your contributions are invaluable.

I look forward to seeing you in Corpus Christi! Let's ride the high tides and embrace the good vibes together.



IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

| | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------------------|
| TASN Annual Conference Early Bird Registration Ends | April 30, 2025 | see page 23 |
| Conference Exhibit Registration Ends | April 30, 2025 | see page 46 |
| Rising Stars Award Deadline | May 9, 2025 | see page 45 |
| TASN Annual Conference Regular Registration Ends | May 30, 2025 | see pages 17-27 |
| TASN 2025 Annual Conference | June 22–25, 2025 | Corpus Christi, Texas |
| SNA 2025 Annual National Conference (ANC) | July 13–15, 2025 | San Antonio, Texas |
| TASN 2026 Annual Conference | June 27–30, 2026 | Grapevine, Texas |

**IT'S TIME TO SPICE UP
YOUR PLANT-BASED MENU**



rebellyous
Spicy Kickin' Patties

rebellyous
foods

NO HARM. NO FOWL.

**FREE
SAMPLES!**

(Get 'em while they're hot)



WOW STARTS NOW:

REFLECTING ON AN INCREDIBLE PCS EVENT IN ROCKWALL

TASN MEMBERS FROM ACROSS THE STATE GATHERED in Rockwall, Texas, for an unforgettable PCS event, where collaboration, learning, and fun took center stage. From networking with industry experts to engaging breakout sessions and lively evening events, this summit provided countless opportunities to grow, share ideas, and strengthen our school nutrition community.

We kicked off the event with an exciting photo challenge, giving attendees the chance to jump right in and start connecting. Our new **Rising Stars** initiative launched, offering an incredible mentoring opportunity to support the future leaders of school nutrition. Whether signing up as mentors, catching up with colleagues from other districts, or making new industry connections, there was no shortage of meaningful interactions.

The welcome reception was the perfect way to settle in, featuring delicious food and lakeside games, setting the tone for an engaging and productive conference. The first full day began with Diane Darling, who shared powerful networking strategies and insights into intergenerational conversations—plus a few tips on how to avoid a hug, for those who prefer a handshake!

BY JOHN CEBALLOS
KLEIN ISD
TASN VICE PRESIDENT



TASN VICE PRESIDENT JOHN CEBALLOS

FIRST GENERAL SESSION SPEAKER
DIANE DARLING



One of the most memorable moments was when President Lacy Willey took the stage, showing us how leadership is bananas—a fun and insightful session that left a lasting impact. Attendees then dove into four breakout sessions covering essential topics like procurement and nutritional guidelines, equipment tracking and maintenance, and commodity management, sparking valuable discussions on best practices and innovative solutions.

Of course, no PCS event would be complete without an evening of music, laughter, and camaraderie. Our dueling pianos night had

continued on next page



**SECOND GENERAL SESSION SPEAKER
LENA WILSON**

everyone singing, dancing, and celebrating the amazing work we do in school nutrition.

On the final day, we wrapped up with a TDA update from Assistant Commissioner Lena Wilson, ensuring that we stay informed and empowered to make the best decisions for our districts.

This event was truly a team effort, and I couldn't have planned such a successful event without our incredible planning committee that included Kate Gillihan, Brandon Lee, Lally Carbajal, Aaron Wiley, Susan D'amico and our amazing board president Lacy Willey. Their dedication, creativity, and hard work made everything come together seamlessly, and I am beyond grateful for their support. Alongside the planning committee, we're also deeply thankful for the invaluable assistance of our HQ staff, Debbie Needham, Eric Vicharelli, and Kenitra Freeman, who played a vital role in making this event a success.

To everyone who attended—thank you for bringing your energy, ideas, and enthusiasm. We hope you left feeling inspired and ready to take on new challenges in school nutrition. Until next time—WOW starts now!



PCS ATTENDEES GATHERING THE WEALTH OF WISDOM



PHOTO BOOTH FUN AT THE RECEPTION

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 PCS SPONSORS

DIAMOND LEVEL SPONSORS



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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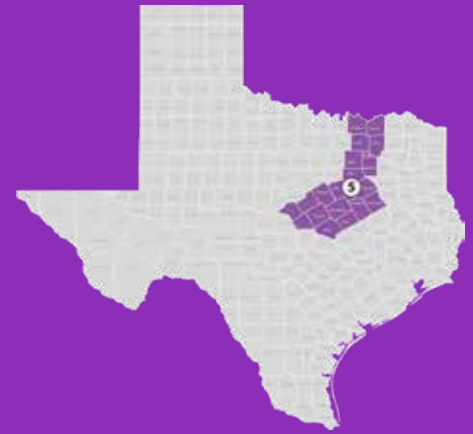
E-SOURCE MILLER
OAK FARMS DAIRY

Hello and welcome to Spring! Bring on the flowers, rain, and abundant sunshine! We are anxiously waiting a grandbaby in our family. We have much to do to get prepared for baby but it's also time to start planting. It is also time to start my planning for entries into the state fair canning and cooking competitions.

In the middle of all this planning at my house, **the TASN Board of Directors has been working diligently on planning for the Annual Conference.** This year it's in Corpus Christi! How exciting – being at the water's edge adds an extra element of fun and excitement.

I will be there. I will most probably be in purple. I hope that I get to see you there! Check out [pages 19-27](#) for full details.

Let's talk about starting or re-forming a chapter in your district. Don't think you have enough people? Give me a call. I have solutions. Need to know how? Give me a shout and I can help get you set up and on your way! Want an even easier way to join us? Visit the newly redesigned [TASN website!](#)



**Greetings from
Area 5
Representative
Suellen Atteberry
Garland ISD**



**STAY UP TO
DATE**

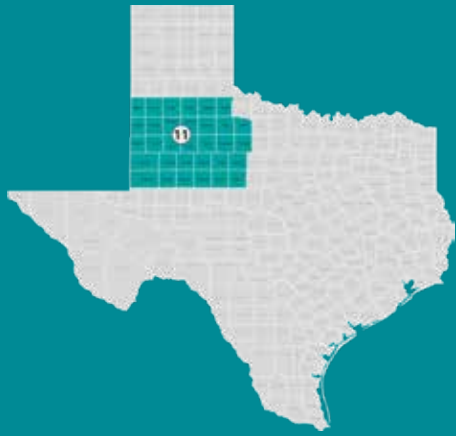


DON'T MISS OUT!

Make sure your contact info and membership are up to date - don't miss out on important TASN news and opportunities!

Click [here](#) to log in to your TASN account to update your info and verify your membership status.

One reason to log in to your account: you must have an active TASN website account in order to register for TASN events, like the Annual Conference!



**Greetings from
Area 11
Representative
Chris Campbell
Seminole ISD**



The Importance of Farm-to-School

Farm-to-school programs provide students with fresh, high-quality food while supporting local farmers and ranchers. By sourcing directly from nearby producers, schools can offer nutritious meals, strengthen communities, and teach students where their food really comes from.

One of the biggest benefits is quality. Locally sourced food is often fresher, tastier, and more nutritious than products shipped long distances. Fresh vegetables retain more vitamins, and locally raised meat is often processed with greater care. Instead of traveling hundreds of miles, these ingredients come straight from nearby farms and ranches.

Beyond nutrition, farm-to-school programs offer valuable education. Many students don't realize their food comes from hardworking farmers and ranchers, not just grocery store shelves. By incorporating local products into school meals, we help bridge that gap and give students a better understanding of agriculture.

Schools that partner with local farms and butchers also strengthen their local economies. Purchasing beef, pork,

continued on next page



and vegetables from nearby producers keeps money in the community and supports small businesses. These relationships create a win-win: schools receive top-quality ingredients while local farmers gain reliable customers.

Our school district, Seminole ISD, successfully embraced this approach by sourcing beef, pork, and vegetables from local providers. This commitment ensures students receive fresh, responsibly raised food while fostering relationships with area farmers and ranchers.

Farm-to-school programs continue to grow across Texas, improving school meals and reinforcing the connection between agriculture and education. By working together, schools and farmers can provide healthier meals, support local businesses, and invest in the future of Texas agriculture.

NEW!

TEXAS FARMS. TEXAS JUICE.

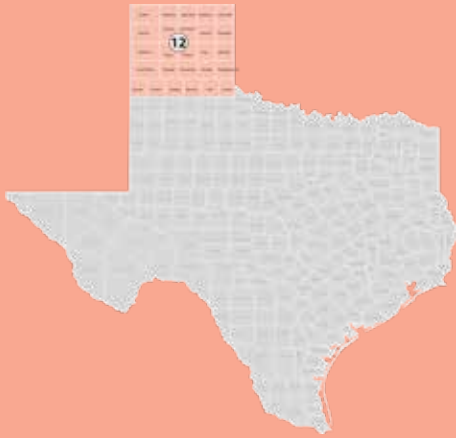
Individually Wrapped
1/2 Cup Serving of Fruit
Shelf Stable

Juice & Slush made with
Oranges from Mission, Texas!



For more information contact: Josh Miller
joshm@cool-tropics.com • 281-348-5009





Greetings from Area 12 Representative

**Tina Brooks
Stratford ISD**



Self-Care: Slowing Down to Stay Healthy

In the demanding environment of school cafeteria life, staff often find themselves juggling multiple responsibilities: ordering, serving, and cleanup or internships. This high-pressure lifestyle can lead to stress, burnout, and a decline in physical and mental health if not properly managed. Therefore, it is crucial to learn how to take care of oneself, slow down, and breathe.

Understanding Self-Care

Self-care refers to the deliberate actions individuals take to maintain their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It is not a luxury but a necessity, especially for those who face various stressors daily. By incorporating self-care practices into your routine, you can improve your resilience and ability to cope with challenges. Self-care can take many forms, including physical activity, proper nutrition, social connections, and mindfulness practices.

The Role of Mindset

To effectively practice self-care, cultivating the right mindset is essential. A positive mindset allows you to approach challenges with a solution-oriented attitude. When stress arises, it is vital to remind yourself that it's okay to take a step back. Recognizing the signs of stress and understanding that you cannot pour from an empty cup is the first step in adopting a healthier approach to your responsibilities.

Techniques for Self-Care

Slow Down and Breathe. One of the simplest yet most effective strategies for self-care is to practice deep breathing. When you feel overwhelmed, take a moment

continued on next page



to close your eyes and focus on your breath. Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four, hold for four, and exhale through your mouth for another count of four. Repeat this cycle several times. This technique helps reset your nervous system and promotes relaxation.

Physical Activity. Regular exercise is a powerful tool for managing stress and enhancing mental health. It releases endorphins, which are chemicals in the brain that act as natural painkillers and mood elevators. Whether it's a brisk walk, a yoga class, or a dance session, find an activity you enjoy and make it a part of your routine.

Healthy Eating. Nutrition plays a significant role in how we feel. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can improve your energy levels and mood. Avoid excessive caffeine and sugar, which can lead to crashes and increased anxiety. Instead, opt for snacks that provide sustained energy, such as nuts or yogurt.

Social Connections. Maintaining relationships with friends and family is vital for emotional health. Make time to connect with loved ones, whether through a phone call, video chat, or in-person meetups. Sharing your feelings and experiences can alleviate stress and foster a sense of belonging.

Mindfulness and Meditation. Mindfulness involves being present in the moment and accepting it without judgment. Practices like meditation can help calm your mind and improve your focus. Set aside a few minutes daily to meditate or practice mindfulness, allowing your thoughts to settle and your mind to clear.

Setting Boundaries. It is essential to set limits on your time and energy. Learn to say no when necessary, and prioritize your well-being. This may mean reducing your course load or limiting extracurricular activities if they become overwhelming.

Conclusion

In conclusion, taking care of oneself is paramount for school food service staffs who are navigating a challenging jobs or personal life. By learning to slow down, breathe, and implement self-care strategies, students can enhance their overall well-being and overall performance. Remember, self-care is not a selfish act; it is a vital practice that enables you to be your best self, both in your studies and in your personal life. Prioritizing your health will equip you with the tools needed to face your responsibilities with confidence and vigor.

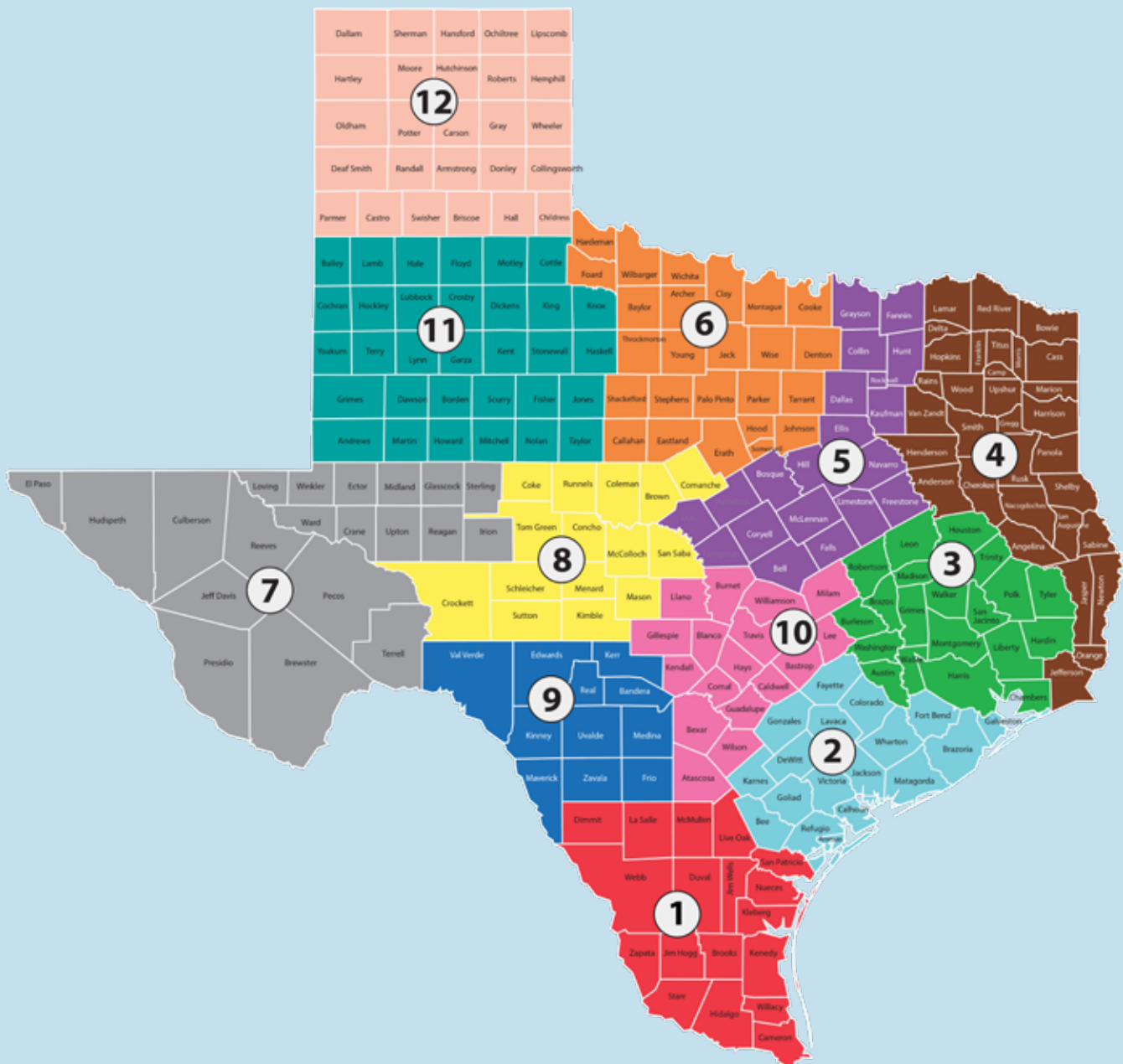


KNOW YOUR AREA REPRESENTATIVE

Do you know who your TASN Area Representative is? TASN Area Representatives are there to help you form and grow your chapter, connect you with resources, and answer any questions you may have about the association. They are your go-to people for all things TASN, so don't hesitate to reach out to them anytime!

Click below to find and contact your Area Rep!

2024-2025 TASN AREA REPRESENTATIVES





TASN 2025-2026 ELECTION

Thank you to everyone who participated in the TASN 2025-2026 election.

Voting is now complete and the results have been certified.

Please welcome the newly elected members of the TASN Board of Directors!

VICE PRESIDENT



JENNIFER MILLER
*Director of Student Nutrition Services
Garland ISD*

**SECRETARY/
TREASURER**



SAMANTHA MIMS
*Assistant Director of Child Nutrition
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD*

**PUBLIC POLICY &
LEGISLATIVE CHAIR**



DARIN CRAWFORD
*Assistant Superintendent for Support Services
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD*

**AREA 1
REPRESENTATIVE**



MARIO MONJARAS
*Food Service Director
Beeville ISD*

**AREA 3
REPRESENTATIVE**



TERESA EVANS
*Director of Child Nutrition
Crosby ISD*

**AREA 5
REPRESENTATIVE**



SUELLEN ATTEBERRY
*Supervisor Special Projects
Garland ISD*

**AREA 11
REPRESENTATIVE**



CHRIS CAMPBELL
*Director of Food Services
Seminole ISD*



TASN 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 22-25, 2025 | CORPUS CHRISTI

Good Vibes in Corpus Christi

**EARLY BIRD
REGISTRATION
ENDS SOON!**

**DEADLINE:
APRIL 30**



Join Us in Corpus!

Join TASN, fellow ISD food service professionals, and industry partners as we come together to shape, build, and support K-12 child nutrition programs across Texas.

2025 Annual Conference sessions and exhibits will be located in the American Bank Center.

Who Should Attend?

The TASN Annual Conference is a valuable educational and networking opportunity for all ISD K-12 food service employees, specialist, managers, directors, supervisors, superintendents, stakeholders, and industry partners. We hope to see you there!

Why You Should Attend

During this four-day event, you'll experience inspirational keynote speakers and attend sessions designed to generate ideas you can implement in your district. You will also have the opportunity to meet our exhibitors and explore the exhibit hall, network with like-minded professionals, and take some time to enjoy the good vibes!

REGISTER NOW

American Bank Center

The [American Bank Center](#) will host the TASN 2025 Annual Conference exhibits and learning sessions.

The American Bank Center is the official convention center of Corpus Christi. This state-of-the-art convention center, featuring a total of 138,000 square feet of meeting and exhibit space, overlooks the sparkling Corpus Christi Bay.



Schedule at a Glance

(Tentative and subject to change)

SUNDAY JUNE 22, 2025

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Registration | 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM |
| SNS Exam | 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM |
| Rehearsals | 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM |
| Board of Directors Dinner | 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM |

MONDAY JUNE 23, 2025

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Scenic Walk from Omni Bayfront Hotel | 7:00 AM |
| Exhibitors Move in | 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM |
| Registration | 8:00 AM - Noon |
| Annual Meeting | 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM |
| First General Session | 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM |
| Lunch/Installation/Awards | 11:30 AM - 1:45 PM |
| Learning Sessions | 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM |

TUESDAY JUNE 24, 2025

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Second General Session: TDA | 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM |
| Exhibits Open for Decision-Makers | 9:15 AM - 1:00 PM |
| Learning Sessions for Non Decision-Makers | 8:00 AM - Noon |
| Exhibits Open for All | 1:15 PM - 4:15 PM |
| Learning Sessions for All | 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM |
| Industry Evening Event & Dinner | 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM |
| <i>Dinner</i> | <i>6:00 PM - 8:00 PM</i> |
| <i>Event</i> | <i>8:00 PM - 10:00 PM</i> |

WEDNESDAY JUNE 25, 2025

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Exhibits Breakdown | 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM |
| First Executive Committee Meeting | 8:00 AM - 9:30 AM |
| First Board of Directors Meeting | 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM |

Keynote Speakers

JEFF JOINER FIRST GENERAL SESSION

Jeff doesn't give "speeches." He shares stories, experiences, and examples that capture the imagination and attention of the audience. Jeff takes a humorous approach to serious workplace challenges. His stories and energetic delivery style often has the audience roaring with laughter. Jeff has worked with hundreds of organizations in dozens of industries, and can bring a unique perspective to your organization's challenges and goals. This leads to breakthroughs in learning, growth, and performance.



LENA WILSON SECOND GENERAL SESSION

Lena is the Assistant Commissioner for the Food and Nutrition Division at the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). She oversees all activities related to compliance with regulations for the 12 federal nutrition programs administered by the agency. Lena, a registered dietitian, has more than 20 years of experience with federal nutrition programs. She has worked at the state and local level with every USDA nutrition assistance program. Her background also includes 13 years as a director of school meal programs. Lena offers a practical look at operations from differing perspectives to apply a common-sense approach for program oversight.



Industry Evening Event

One of the most anticipated and memorable events at the TASN Annual Conference is the Industry Evening Event. The event will take place at the American Bank Center, where attendees will enjoy dinner followed by dancing the night away. We couldn't be more excited to be able to bring The Spazmatics as this year's entertainment. If you haven't yet experienced the energy, humor, and joy of the Spazmatics, you really don't want to miss this event. **The Spazmatics really know how to bring the good vibes!**

Spazmatics



Register Today



Early Bird registration ends soon! Take advantage of this discounted registration and receive a T-shirt, too!

THE EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT DEADLINE IS APRIL 30, 2025.

ACTIVE MEMBER REGISTRATION

RETIRED MEMBER REGISTRATION

Event registration requires logging in to your TASN account. Contact Eric Vicharelli at ericv@tasn.net for help logging in.

Calling all Volunteers!

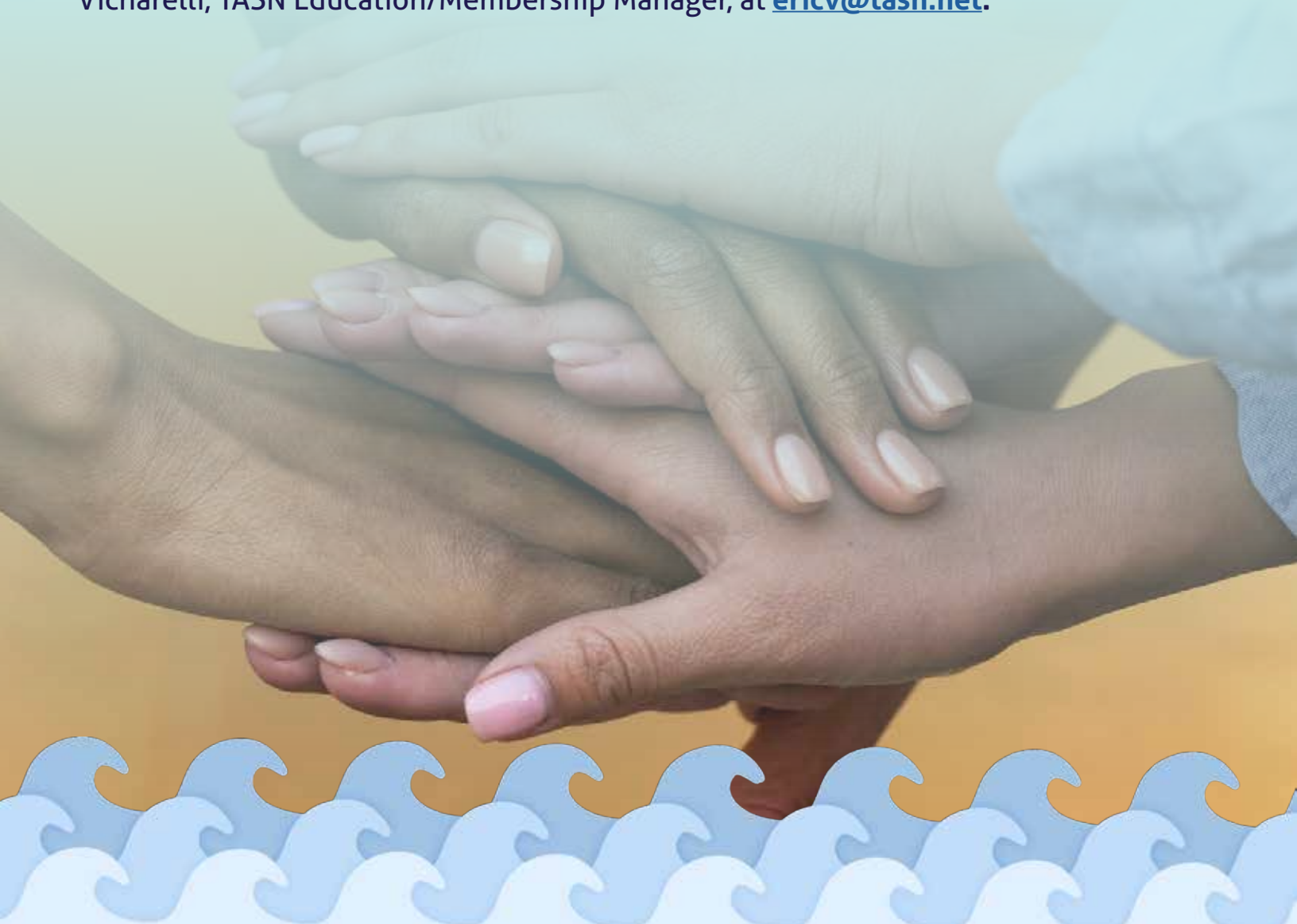
We can't wait for the *High Tides and Good Vibes* at the TASN Annual Conference this June in Corpus Christi – but we will need plenty of help!

THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN!

Sign up to volunteer and play an important role in making the event a success. Some of the areas in which we need help are:

**Registration counter • traffic control • moderating • ribbon booth
learning session assistance • prepping • hand-outs • general assistance • and more!**

If you can offer your help, we can find a place to use it! Please reach out to Eric Vicharelli, TASN Education/Membership Manager, at ericv@tasn.net.





Chapter Table Sales

Is your chapter looking for a fun and effective way to raise funds? Reserve a sales table at this year's Annual Conference and turn your creativity into support for your local chapter! Whether you're offering custom crafts, branded merchandise, handmade goods, or unique keepsakes, a sales table gives your chapter the perfect opportunity to showcase your talents and engage with fellow attendees. With high visibility and steady foot traffic throughout the event, this is a prime chance to promote your chapter's mission while bringing in valuable funds—***just remember, no food or beverage items may be sold.***

RESERVE TABLE

You must be logged in to register

TABLE REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MAY 15



Chapter Flags

Be part of one of the most inspiring traditions of our Annual Conference—showcase your chapter's pride with our flag! This is a special moment during the conference where each chapter is recognized and celebrated for its unique contributions. By participating, your chapter will be honored during the conference and visually represented alongside peers from across the state. It's a powerful way to show unity, tradition, and the strength of our shared mission. Click below to fill out the required chapter flag release form. See you in June!

FLAG RELEASE FORM

You must be logged in to register

FLAGS ARE DUE TO TASN HQ BY MAY 15

For a full list of active local chapters that TASN has on file, click [HERE](#).



TASN 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

A great way to engage with our members and raise the profile of your company is to sponsor at the TASN Annual Conference. Available sponsorship packages can be viewed on the TASN website, where sponsorships can also be purchased securely online.

Your support of TASN is appreciated and we want to thank each sponsor for helping to make our event a success! It is because of your donations that members of TASN can continue promoting excellence in school nutrition for Texas children.

Please contact Shelley Livaudais at communications@tasn.net with any questions.

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Chapter News

Area 3

Galena Park ASN

This Jalapeno Corn Frittata was created by our talented dietetic intern, Jericho Aznar. This recipe is as efficient as it is delicious. It is perfect to assemble the day before service and bake fresh the next day.

Using the frozen Jalapeño and Corn mix from Simplot adds a vibrant twist on a classic frittata while considering practicality, cost, and labor.

Students across all grade levels, from elementary to high school, loved the unexpected pairing of ingredients and asked for it to be on the menu more frequently.

See recipe on next page.



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JALAPEÑO CORN FRITTATA WITH PANCAKE

Ingredients

| Ingredient | Quantity |
|--|---------------------------|
| Eggs, Liquid, Frozen, Brown Box SY 24-25, 12/2 lb cartons LI101117 | 4 Pound |
| Milk, White 1% Milk, 4/1 GALLON LI101682 | 1 Pound, 8 Ounce |
| Spice, Onion, powder DURKEE 1/20oz LI101346 | 1 teaspoon (0.11 oz.) |
| Garlic Powder, Traders Choice, 1/19 oz LI101551 | 1 teaspoon (0.11 oz.) |
| Spice, Pepper, White LI100556 | 2 tsp, ground (0.17 oz.) |
| Cheese, American, shredded, RF LI100222 | 1 Pound |
| Turkey Bacon Bits, Fully Cooked, 2/6 lb LI101738 | 4 oz crumbled (3.95 oz.) |
| Flame-roasted corn w/ jalapenos, Simplot, 6/2.5 lb bags LI101819 | 4 Cup (1 lb. 8.72 oz.) |
| Hashbrown Patty, 216 ea/cs, Simplot LI101651 | 3.1 Pound |
| Pancakes, Frozen, WG, Brown box SY 24-25, 144 count/case LI101838 | 64 Each (4 lb. 12.75 oz.) |

Preparation Instructions

The day before service: thaw hashbrown patties in the walk-in cooler. If no hashbrowns patties available, may use tater tots in the same weight when frozen.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Crumble the hashbrowns patties into small pieces.

If hash brown patties are not available, use tater tots (same weight when frozen)

Spray a full-size, 2 ½ inch deep hotel pan with pan spray.

Whisk eggs, milk, onion powder, garlic powder, bacon bits, and pepper in a large bowl.

Add crumbled hash browns, shredded cheese, corn, and jalapeno mixture. Stir gently to combine.

If corn and jalapenos mixture is not available, may use brown box frozen corn (same weight as corn and jalapenos mixture when frozen)

Pour the mixture into a sprayed hotel pan. Jiggle the pan to distribute the mixture evenly.

Cover the pan tightly with aluminum foil. Do not let aluminum foil touch the egg mixture. It will stick to the foil when baking

Bake for 40-50 minutes or until internal temp reaches >160F.

Recipe note: at this point, this can be covered and held in the refrigerator overnight. Increase baking time by 15-20 minutes if baking from refrigerated state

Remove from oven and let cool slightly before cutting.

Once cooked, cut the frittata pan into 32 portions (8x4). Each frittata portion should weigh at least 5 oz. Hold warm for service, above 135°F.

For pancakes: Pan out frozen pancakes the day before service, cover them, and leave them to thaw overnight in the cooler.

On the morning of service, move the thawed pancakes to the warmer until ready to serve or warm them in a 325-degree oven for 3-4 minutes before service.



[VIEW FULL RECIPE & NUTRITION HERE](#)

Chapter News

Area 5

Garland ASN

Garland ISD is enjoying some of the Harvest of the Month vegetables, like confetti beet salad made with fresh Texas beets and southern-style cabbage with fresh Texas cabbage.

Beets and cabbage are part of the Serve Local Produce and Harvest of the Month.

Garland ISD was “CLUEd” in as we celebrated National School Breakfast Week. We had fun

receiving coloring pages from SNA that we passed out to students. This week we have enjoyed a bacon & cheese frittata and blueberry cream cheese kolaches.

Our very own Chef Kevin developed these recipes. Chef Kevin will be at the TASN Annual Conference this year. Find him and ask questions – he will enjoy speaking with you!



Beeville ISD Celebrates 2025 NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK "Clue In to School Breakfast"



The Beeville ISD Child Nutrition Department would like to share our National School Clue into Breakfast Week 2025 with you!

Our campus HMD Trojan Grill (Pe-K and Kindergarten) used a Scooby Doo theme. Students used the Mystery Machine to find the healthy breakfast choices on the wall, and we showcased lots of hand-painted pictures and student colorings.

FMC Trojan Grill (1st-5th grade) celebrated with a Finding Waldo theme, and students loved searching for Waldo. The students and staff dressed up and are still looking for hidden Waldos today!

The RA Hall Trojan Grill (1st-5th grade) used Blue's Clues and student enjoyed finding Blue's paw print on healthy foods.

The Moreno Middle School Trojan Grill used the Show Your Emoji theme and AC Jones High School Trojan Grill went with the Mystery Breakfast in the Cafeteria theme.

The students and staff had a fun and healthy week, as we do all school year!



BREAKFAST BANANA SPLIT-STYLE!

Encourage students to pause for a complete breakfast with this new split on an old favorite!

Can a banana split become a nutritious, full breakfast item that students will seek out?

The answer is a resounding “yes” when that breakfast becomes a Yogurt Banana Split Parfait!

by Michael Straughter
Marketing & Communications Manager
Child Nutrition Services
Crowley Independent School District

In recognition of National School Breakfast Week Crowley ISD, in collaboration with Sodexo-At-School, hosted a series of taste tests of existing and potential menu items among students at all grade levels.

As the Crowley Middle School Student Advisory Committee members entered the designated meeting space, they were greeted by the sight and smell of plump strawberries, ripe bananas, crunchy honey oat granola, and delicious reduced-fat vanilla yogurt.

Even as Executive Chef Bernard Flanigan, Jr., Dietitian Angela Ridlehuber, and Crowley Child Nutrition Program Administrator Reginald Miles served the easy-to-make breakfast, the student committee members were ready to dig in—and promptly did so.

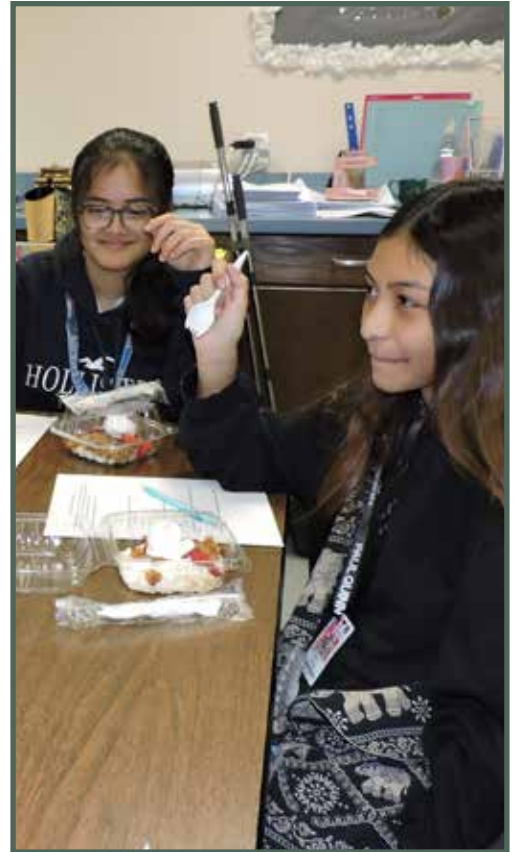
“This easy-to-make breakfast combines the fun of a dessert with all the components of a complete, healthy balanced meal,” said Administrator Miles.

Dietitian Ridlehuber added that she was pleased with the immediate response based upon visual appeal alone, and even more so with the written feedback submitted after the test had concluded. Written responses included “This is a perfect breakfast. I wouldn’t change a thing about it,” and “This is awesome. I would recommend it to my friends.”



And all affirmatively checked the box asking, “Would this make a good addition to the school menu?”

Ridlehuber emphasizes that not only is it easy to assemble as a grab-and-go item, “it also provides flexibility with ingredients to cater to various dietary preferences, including vegan and gluten-free options.”



**Top Left: Sodexo Executive Chef Bernard Flanigan, Jr. and Sodexo Dietitian Angela Ridlehuber, MS, RD, LD.
 Top Center: Sodexo Executive Chef Bernard Flanigan, Jr. and Reginald Miles, Crowley ISD Child Nutrition Program Administrator**

BANANA SPLIT PARFAIT RECIPE

Ingredients

- 1 fresh medium-size banana (7" to 7-1/8")
- ½ cup (4.38 oz) low-fat vanilla yogurt
- ¼ cup (0.95 oz) oats & honey granola
- ¼ cup (1.94 oz) whole, unsweetened strawberries (fresh or frozen)
- ⅛ cup (0.28 oz) whipped topping

Preparation Instructions

1. Split banana in half, lengthwise ("hot dog style")
2. Separate the banana and place corner-to-corner in a 6-inch clam shell (further cut the banana to fit if it is too long).
3. Using a #8 scoop, scoop yogurt on top of bananas, centering so it looks like scoops of ice cream.
4. Top the yogurt with granola.
5. Carefully spread strawberries over the top of the granola.
6. Garnish with whipped topping.

EDUCATION UPDATE

by **Kassandra Davis, MS, RD, LD**
Child Nutrition Director, Brenham ISD
TASN Education Chair



As spring arrives, it's not just a time for cleaning and new projects—it's also a chance for self-reflection and personal growth.

As we prepare for the season of renewal, let's take a moment to clear away the doubts, worries, and negative emotions that might be holding us back. What's a professional goal

you're aiming to accomplish this year? What steps can you take to ensure it happens, and how can TASN support you along the way?

TASN recently hosted our second Administrative Academy session in Austin, with 32 enthusiastic attendees. We're thrilled to announce that all 32 participants will graduate this summer at our Annual Conference in Corpus Christi! As Education Chair,

this has become one of my favorite events to both teach and attend. Not only are participants gaining crucial business skills for school food service administration, but they're also having the chance to collaborate, network, and learn from one another. Graduates of the Administrative Academy are eligible to apply for their Level 5 TASN certification.

This summer, TASN will also be hosting Managers Academies across Texas. If you're interested in participating or hosting an academy in your area, please visit the TASN website for more details. Managers Academy Graduates are eligible to apply for their Level 4 TASN certification.

Curious about the TASN Certification Program? It aligns with USDA Professional Standards and follows a one-year renewal cycle with randomized audits. Many Texas school districts have adopted the TASN Certification Program as a basis for job

continued



placement, advancement, and salary increases. If you've been considering a TASN certification, it's now easier than ever to apply!

I'm excited to see everyone at the TASN Annual Conference this summer! This year's theme, High Tides and Good Vibes, will set the tone for a great time of

learning and connection. I'm wishing you all a productive spring semester and encouraging you to take full advantage of TASN's resources to achieve your goals!



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LAC²⁰²⁵ LEGISLATIVE ACTION CONFERENCE

MARCH 9-11 WASHINGTON, D.C.



More than 65 Texans joined the 800-plus SNA members in Washington, D.C. this March for the Legislative Action Conference, meeting with legislators and advocating on behalf of Texas school nutrition. Thank you to the Texas LAC attendees for your dedication and being a powerful voice as we helped protect school meals for the children of Texas.

SNA EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Check out the Texas school nutrition professionals attending SNA's Executive Leadership Program ahead of the 2025 LAC!



Left to right: Georgia Lopez, YES Prep Public Schools; Sarah Mitchel, Traulsen; Melissa Martino, Dickinson ISD; Maggie Mae Kennedy, Spring Branch ISD; Susan D'Amico, Aldine ISD; Andrea Young, Gregory-Portland ISD; Jessiica Howell, PhD, YES Prep Public Schools; Lena Wilson, TDA Assistant Commissioner for Food & Nutrition; Naima Brown, KIPP Texas Public Schools; Maria Alvarado, YES Prep Public Schools

TASN members met with Senator Cruz and other legislators during LAC to advocate for school nutrition programs in Texas. Together we have a powerful voice!



TEXAS DELEGATES DINNER

On Sunday night, March 9, Texas delegates at the LAC gathered for a dinner at The Hamilton in Washington, D.C. to get ready for two days of advocacy work at the Capitol. Thank you to all our attendees and a special thank you to the sponsors who made the event possible!



THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 TEXAS DELEGATE SPONSORS

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: BILLS WE'RE WATCHING

With a change in the administration in Washington D.C. and the Texas Legislative session in full swing, there's a lot of school nutrition-related legislation to keep track of. Our Public Policy & Legislative Committee, headed by chair Jennifer Miller, has identified several bills of note, listed below.

We'll also be updating the TASN website with relevant legislative issues and bills, along with templates for communication and resources for our members. Please check the TASN website often to stay up to date!



FEDERAL BILLS TO WATCH

[HR 2680](#) seeks to eliminate reduced price meal category and change the income threshold for free breakfasts and lunches.

[HR 2530](#) The Healthy Lunch for Healthy Kids Act would prohibits schools from serving "ultraprocessed" foods and ban specific food additives and artificial dyes.

The SNA Bill Tracker allows members to view and research all pending federal legislation that directly affects our programs. For example, there are many different bills regarding types of milks served in school meals.

[SNA BILL TRACKER](#)

[FIND YOUR MEMBER](#)



TEXAS BILLS TO WATCH

[SB314](#) Prohibits certain food additives and artificial dyes from federally funded school meals.

SB314 has been referred to the Public Education Committee at the time of TASN news publication, and it's the furthest along in the legislative track, but these other pending bills also address additives in school meals: [HB1290](#), [HB3736](#), [HB3456](#), [HB3137](#), [HB2565](#), and [HB1637](#).

[HB3292](#) Prohibits "ultraprocessed" foods from being served in public schools.

[FIND YOUR TEXAS MEMBER](#)

Regarding bills that include changes in food regulations, TASN encourages legislators to use language that provides a defined implementation timeline to allow school districts time to update procurement processes, adjust menus, and work with vendors to ensure compliance.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR MORE EFFICIENT AND COMPLIANT SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

BY MIKE BORGES
PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER
LINQ NUTRITION



THE GROWING COMPLEXITY OF SCHOOL NUTRITION MANAGEMENT

Nearly 30 million U.S. students participate in school lunch programs daily, with school districts serving over 4.8 billion meals each

year.¹ These programs are essential to student nourishment, well-being and academic success, yet they are becoming increasingly challenging to manage due to rising food costs, evolving USDA compliance mandates, staffing shortages, and increasing meal debt.

At the same time, boosting meal participation presents an additional challenge as students have more options than ever. As Joy Peters recently highlighted at the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) Annual Conference, many districts are implementing smart solutions to promote school meals, increase participation, and improve program sustainability.³

In Texas, the Texas Department of Agriculture oversees school nutrition programs to ensure that millions of Texas students have access to low-cost nutritionally balanced meals daily.² Given the scale and complexity of these programs, school districts are continuously evolving their processes to manage costs, meet compliance, and optimize resources to deliver nutritious meals. Despite these challenges, school nutrition professionals have remained dedicated to supporting student health while balancing operational efficiency. Yet, many school districts still rely on fragmented or manual systems, which have proven to create inefficiencies

in tracking, compliance reporting, and financial management.

By leveraging modern technology, automation, and data-driven insights, school districts can streamline operations, ensure compliance, and maximize resources—allowing nutrition professionals to focus on their core mission: feeding students.

THE EFFICIENCY IMPERATIVE: REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

One of the most pressing challenges in school nutrition management is the time-consuming nature of administrative tasks. From manual purchasing processes to paper-based production records and inventory reconciliation, nutrition teams often spend hours each week on processes that could be automated. Real-world examples from school districts highlight the impact of digitizing and integrating operations:

- Automated production records save at least two hours per week in individual cafeterias.
- District-wide digital production records have been shown to reduce administrative work by 20 hours per week.
- At St. Vrain Valley Schools in Longmont, Colorado, digitizing procurement, inventory, and meal tracking reduced 38 separate manual tasks to just seven (7), saving field supervisors over 17 hours per week.⁴

By automating routine tasks and ensuring connectivity, schools can redirect valuable staff time

continued

to student-focused initiatives, such as promoting nutrition education, meal engagement, and wellness programs.

MAXIMIZING RESOURCES: DATA-DRIVEN COST CONTROL IN AN ERA OF TIGHT BUDGETS

With tight budgets and runaway food costs, school nutrition programs must maximize every dollar while ensuring student meal accessibility. Innovative technology solutions provide real-time data and automation that help schools make informed financial decisions:

- Forecasting demand accurately
- Optimizing procurement and inventory
- Enhancing nutritional compliance and reporting

In addition to financial optimization, school nutrition programs are adapting to evolving student preferences and operational trends to sustain participation. According to LINQ's 2023 Nutrition Report, schools are expanding menu options to include international cuisines, plant-forward meals, and grab-and-go options to better meet student needs. However, rising food costs and declining participation remain persistent challenges.⁵ By automating meal application processing and digital payment systems, schools can reduce errors, accelerate eligibility determinations, and increase meal program participation—ensuring that more students have consistent access to the nutrition they need.

BOOSTING PARTICIPATION: IMPROVING STUDENT ACCESS & ENGAGEMENT

Technology does more than enhance efficiency—it plays a critical role in improving student access to healthy meals. Across the U.S., over 95,000 schools and institutions participating in school meal programs serving millions of meals each day, including:

- 20.4 million free lunches
- 0.9 million reduced-price meals
- 8.3 million full-price meals¹

In Texas alone, three million students receive school meals daily provided by the National School Lunch Programs.²

To keep up with this scale, school nutrition teams are expanding how they leverage technology to

integrate systems, enhance efficiency, and improve student participation. Modern solutions also allow schools to enhance communication with families. Mobile meal applications give families real-time access to menus, meal balances, and allergen information—ensuring transparency and helping families make informed meal choices. By making school meal programs more accessible and user-friendly, technology has increased participation rates, ensuring that students—especially those facing food insecurity—have access to healthy, balanced meals every day.

BUILDING A FUTURE-READY SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM

The challenges facing K-12 nutrition programs will continue to evolve, but technology has provided a clear path forward. Now, with cloud-based automation, predictive analytics, and integrated compliance tools, school districts streamline workflows, reduce administrative burden, and focus on their mission: nourishing students.

Moreover, districts embracing digital transformation today are better positioned to adapt to future changes in school nutrition policy, funding, and student needs.

As school nutrition professionals in Texas and across the nation continue their vital work of feeding the next generation, leveraging modern technology ensures that meal programs are efficient, compliant, sustainable, and student-centered.

SOURCES

1. USDA School Meals Program Data (2024)
 - a. [Child Nutrition Programs - National School Lunch Program](#)
 - b. [Biden-Harris Administration Announces New School Meal Standards to Strengthen Child Nutrition](#)
2. Texas Department of Agriculture – School Nutrition Programs – [SquareMeals.org](#)
3. Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) – [Funding & Reimbursements](#)
4. [SchoolNutrition.org](#) – [Technology & Cost Savings in School Nutrition](#)
5. LINQ's [2023 Nutrition Report](#) – Back-Office Operations & Digital Transformation

TEXAS TRADITIONS, MINUS THE MEAT

A NEW TAKE ON TEXAS COMFORT FOOD



BY LIZ CLARK

FOODSERVICE INNOVATION COORDINATOR
FORWARDFOOD.ORG, HUMANE WORLD FOR ANIMALS

TWO BEAN CHILI

PHOTO CREDIT: MICHELLE RILEY FOR
HUMANE WORLD FOR ANIMALS

Texas flavors are celebrated across the country and the world, and for good reason—from Tex-Mex to BBQ to good old-fashioned grits and gravy, our cuisine is a bold, comforting blend of history and heritage, passed down through generations.

With regard and respect for that legacy, school districts around Texas often aim to build their menus around dishes that students may already be familiar with at home—think mac ‘n’ cheese, fried chicken, tacos, or casseroles. But what if we could keep the bold flavors we love while better nourishing our students? Some of our staple dishes are not known for being especially healthy, and more and more young people, like their parents, are open to new and nutritious options. Shifting tastes are transforming the foodservice universe. What if, instead of cutting back on some of the old favorites,

we leaned into the challenge of evolving our menus to meet the demand of the modern market?

Today’s students are more aware than ever of what they’re eating, and many are seeking meals that align with their health goals, cultural traditions, and personal preferences. Taking a 21st-century approach to foodservice means offering a variety of meal options. This is also an approach that respects tradition while adapting to the needs of today’s students. That’s where plant-based comfort foods come in.

BIG FLAVORS, BETTER NUTRITION

Plant-based meals offer a way to preserve the richness of Texas cuisine while delivering healthier options to students. Many of the ingredients that

define our dishes—spices, slow-simmered sauces, smoky seasonings—can shine just as brightly in veggie-forward meals. The deep savoriness of chili doesn't come from ground beef alone, but from layers of seasoning, fire-roasted tomatoes, and a full serving of beans. Top off your tacos with crema, salsa, avocado, and coleslaw, and students will be falling in love all over again with familiar flavors cast in a whole different light through plant-based menus.

THE HEALTH ADVANTAGE

A growing body of research shows that eating more plant-based foods can improve heart health, reduce inflammation, and support long-term wellness. According to 2022 studies by the Physician's Committee of Responsible Medicine, one in three children will develop type 2 diabetes during their lifetimes, and one in four children ages five to ten years show early warning signs of heart disease, including high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Schools have a critical role to play in shaping lifelong eating habits, and offering more plant-based options is a simple, effective way to support student health.



TASTY TACO FILLING

PHOTO CREDIT: AMANDA TRENCHARD FOR HUMANE WORLD FOR ANIMALS

Plant-based proteins—like beans, lentils, and tofu—are packed with fiber, essential vitamins, and minerals that help growing bodies thrive. Unlike many animal proteins, they contain no cholesterol and are naturally low in saturated fat, making them an ideal choice for school menus. By offering veggie-forward options, schools can set their students up for a lifetime of healthier eating and commitment to good food habits.

A BALANCED APPROACH TO SCHOOL MENUS

Beyond health benefits, plant-based meals can also ease food costs and reduce waste, helping schools make the most of their resources while serving meals that benefit both students and the planet. Whole-food ingredients like legumes and grains are often more affordable (and shelf-stable!) than animal proteins, making it easier for schools to stretch foodservice budgets without compromising nutrition. Meals without animal products typically have a smaller environmental footprint, requiring less land and water to produce, as well as generating less greenhouse gas emissions. With all these positive effects, it's difficult to find a reason not to serve more plants!



MAC AND CHEESE

PHOTO CREDIT: CHAT PHOTOGRAPHY FOR HUMANE WORLD FOR ANIMALS

continued on next page

TEX-MEX CORN

PHOTO CREDIT: MARY BONSAALL FOR HUMANE WORLD FOR ANIMALS



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LOOKING AHEAD

The future of school food isn't about taking anything away—it's about offering students more. More choices, more flavors, and more ways for them to enjoy the comfort foods they love, with the added benefit of better nutrition. Schools that have embraced plant-based meals have seen their students respond with enthusiasm, and the demand for these options continues to grow. This willingness to meet changing preferences and tastes is central to the development of a successful foodservices program.

If you are interested in introducing more plant-based meals at your school, the key is to start small: swap ingredients, offer taste tests, and engage students in the process. Get your staff on board by communicating these plant-forward benefits, and encourage adults to keep an open mind when it comes to getting our children excited about new fruits and veggies. Success in this space comes from creating familiar, flavorful dishes that students can't wait to try.

To learn more about implementing plant-based options in your district, reach out to Liz Clark for support at lclark@humaneworld.org, or visit ForwardFood.org for more recipes.



CONFETTI COLE SLAW

PHOTO CREDIT: AMANDA TRENCHARD FOR HUMANE WORLD FOR ANIMALS

NACHO CHEESE SAUCE

PHOTO CREDIT: CHAT PHOTOGRAPHY FOR HUMANE WORLD FOR ANIMALS





TASN is excited to announce a brand new award and mentorship program, the Rising Stars! Check out the details below and nominate yourself or another TASN member.

The application deadline is Friday, May 9, 2025.

- ★ **Mission/Vision of the organization:** Providing support, direction, education and community to the newest individuals of the TASN family ensuring their path to growth within our industry
- ★ **Who are Rising Stars:** TASN members that have been in the industry for fewer than 5 years or are in the beginning stages of their school nutrition career
- ★ **Benefits of being a Star:** Community within TASN for those that are new and unfamiliar with all the inner workings where you can network with other Rising Stars and pair up with a mentor to help further your career and gain a better understanding of TASN
- ★ **Mentors:** TASN members at the executive director, director, assistant director, and retired levels, plus industry leaders
- ★ **Benefits of being a mentor:** The rewarding opportunity to give back to the industry and help up and coming industry leaders reach goals they did not know existed while enhancing your own network with the next wave of TASN Stars
- ★ **Meetings / events:** Networking and educational events at PCS and Annual Conference, plus other events to be determined by the committee
- ★ **Costs:** Nada, Zip, Zilch, Zero, \$0.00!
- ★ **Rising Star of the Year awards:** One Rising Star award given to a TASN child nutrition member; One Rising Star award given to a TASN industry member
- ★ **What happens after my Star tenure ends:** You are now eligible to become a mentor, have an engaging network of industry associates to grow with, career opportunities

AWARD APPLICATION

Click below to nominate yourself or another TASN member for the Rising Star Award! Applicants are required to upload or type a personal statement in the application form. Email [TASN Industry Chair Duane Guidry](#) with any questions you might have, or for more information.

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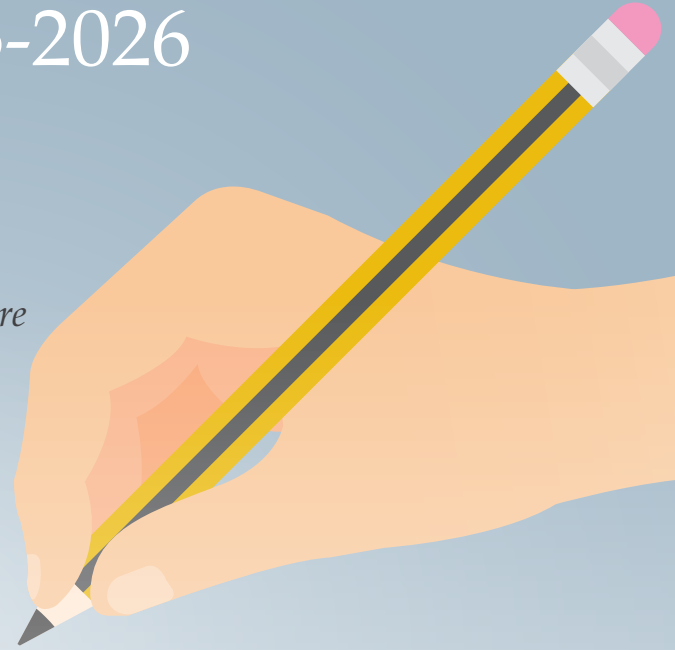
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PLAN NOW

FOR SUCCESS IN 2025-2026



By Lena Wilson
*Assistant Commissioner for
Food and Nutrition
Texas Department of Agriculture*



The academic year ends soon, and your primary focus will turn to the 2025-2026 school year. If you are preparing to serve summer meals ... thank you! Students should anticipate the start of summer with excitement for carefree days, rather than uncertainty about having enough food to eat. Summer meal programs ensure that children continue having access to healthy meals and can enjoy an active and fun summer in 2025.

Summer operators will benefit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 3.6 percent increase to reimbursement rates for 2025. This summer, options in rural areas have increased to allow non-congregate meal service that may include multi-day bundles for families that have difficulties attending a site daily. Serving summer meals brings an important federal resource to your community and you have until May 31 to apply to participate.

[Click here](#) for more information about supporting the Summer Meal Programs in your community.

TDA Releases New Version of the Administrator's Reference Manual

To help you prepare for the 2025-2026 school year, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) recently

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released a new version of the [Administrator's Reference Manual](#) (ARM) with 21 sections updated. You will find helpful guides at the beginning of each section and changes highlighted in yellow. Updates include changes made to 2 CFR 200 that increase the equipment-purchase threshold from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and increase the single-audit threshold from \$750,000 to \$1 million. Other updates include adding provisions from the [Final Rule to Revise Nutrition Standards](#) released last spring.

Final Rule provisions include flexibilities such as allowing you to substitute vegetables for fruits in the School Breakfast Program and simplifying the vegetable variety requirement. Another flexibility allows nuts and seeds to be credited for the full meat/meat alternates component. Also, beginning July 1, 2025, you will have new limits on added sugars in breakfast cereals, yogurt, and flavored milk.

The Food and Nutrition support staff at your Education Service Center (ESC) can assist with any additional guidance or clarification you may need. If you are considering employing a consultant, confer with your specialist at the ESC to assess that the consultant will not be duplicating services already funded by TDA. ESCs can assist with any procurement necessary so that you follow the necessary guidance to comply with regulations.

New System Coming Soon

Texas will be moving to a new web-based system for supporting the administration of federal nutrition programs. Efforts are in full swing towards a transition to the Texas Automated Nutrition System (TANS). We want to ensure a smooth implementation process full of training resources that will make the launch successful. Until we launch TANS, TX-UNPS will continue providing online interfaces for managing your programs.

Training and Engagement Prepare You for Success

Effectively navigating any changes in the National School Lunch Program begins with attending the ample training available between now and the fall. [TDA's MegaCon](#) will kick off the training season on May 21-23 in Austin. TDA will also



contribute multiple training opportunities to the [Texas Association for School Nutrition Annual Conference](#) June 22-25 in Corpus Christi. These events coupled with the ESC summer workshops should give you all the preparation you need for a successful 2025-2026 school year.

The success you realize in 2025-2026 will depend on many factors. Training and technical assistance top the list, but student and community engagement are close behind. Make this the year you have students participating in TDA's [Health Ambassadors for a Ready Texas](#) (HART) initiative. We are accepting HART applications now. You can also generate student involvement by serving more local foods and participating in the [Farm Fresh Challenge](#).

Texas school nutrition has many resources available, but you are the most valuable. As you plan for training, summer meals, fall menus, and so much more, take time this summer to relax when you can. You deserve a break, and I hope you find time to take it. Thank you for joining me on this exciting journey; there is no greater reward than seeing the faces of the children as they come to the cafeteria to enjoy a freshly prepared meal during the school day.



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