

TASN **ews**

Summer 2024, Vol. 20, No. 4

A Publication of the Texas Association for School Nutrition





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



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



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Homegrown & Healthy



School nutrition departments are working with Texas farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers to add Farm Fresh foods to their menus. Including local Texas foods in child nutrition programs ensures students receive nutritious, quality meals and supports Texas agriculture.

Join us in cultivating a Farm Fresh generation.



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Farm Fresh



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SUMMER 2024

A Fresh Start for a Nutritious Future: Embracing New Goals and Celebrating Our Community



Dear members of TASN,

As I step into the role of President for the upcoming year, I am filled with a deep sense of honor and excitement. Our association has long been a beacon of support, innovation,

and excellence in school nutrition, and it is with great enthusiasm that I look forward to building on the strong foundation of the past seventy years. The new 2024-2025 school year brings with it a host of opportunities and challenges, and I am committed to ensuring that we as an association



are well-prepared to meet them head-on. My primary goal remains unwavering: to lead with compassion, to inspire with resilience, and to ensure that every child in Texas has nutritious meals that

fuel their potential provided by the best-trained school nutrition professionals in the state.

This year, I am setting goals that reflect our commitment to continuous improvement and innovation. Among our key initiatives are:

Newly Redesigned Website

Discover resources and tools available at your fingertips in our newly designed webpage. Sign up for classes, academies, and conferences with ease.

Enhanced member experience: Dive into your member portal on the newly redesigned webpage for easy access to member status, payments, invoice history, and community groups, with more individualized member content coming soon.

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Building stronger partnerships within the association and between industry partners will be a priority. These collaborations help bring innovative

programs to Texas schools and support building the mission of TASN.



Advocacy and Policy Influence

Strengthening our advocacy efforts is crucial. We aim to work closely with state and federal policymakers to ensure that our members' voices are heard and that we influence policies that support healthy, nutritious school meals and school nutrition professionals.

Enhanced Communication

Improve communication channels to keep you informed and engaged. This includes the redesigned website and member portal, active social media presence, and building communities within the association.

Our members are the heart and soul of this association. Your dedication, expertise, and passion are what drive us forward. Above all, I want to celebrate and recognize each and every one of you. The dedication and hard work you put into ensuring that our students receive nutritious meals do not go unnoticed. You are the backbone of this association, and your contributions are invaluable. As we embark on this new year, please stay engaged, share your ideas, and take advantage of the resources and opportunities available to you. Together, we can achieve great things and make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of Texas students.

Thank you for your trust and support. Here's to a year of growth, innovation, and continued excellence in school nutrition.

Warm regards,
Lacy Willey
Cleveland ISD
TASN 2024-2025 President

HEADQUARTERS HIGHLIGHTS

by Karen J. Andrasi
TASN Executive Director
karena@tasn.net



TASN Annual Conference



Thank you for making TASN's 70th Annual Conference a huge success. It was great seeing many of you and catching up. For those who had to cancel, you and your families are in our thoughts. For those of you that did not register, we missed you. The TASN Annual Conference is a great place to network and keep up to date with the latest information, all while having fun. We are excited to host the 2025 Annual Conference in Corpus Christi, and I look forward to seeing you there. Registration will open in January.

TASN Board & Committee Meetings



The TASN October 2024 and February 2025 Board and Committee meetings will be held in Austin at the Austin Marriott South Hotel. This is a legislative year, and we are working on hosting the [Legislative Action Day](#) (LAD) in conjunction with the board and committee meetings. TASN values your input. You are welcome to join us in person or via Zoom for these important meetings. Check the [TASN website](#) for the meeting schedule and other info.

TASN 2025 Partnership Collaboration Summit



The 2025 PCS will be held at the Hilton Rockwall Hotel from January 27-29, 2025. Keep an eye out for [more information](#) about registration and sponsorship.

TASN 2025-2026 Election



★★★★★

The [Call for Nominations](#) is included in this issue of TASN*ews*. Please take a moment to review the board openings and the commitment requirements. The deadline to turn in your nomination form is September 30, 2024. You all have done a remarkable job in making a difference in your schools and communities. Please join us to make a difference in TASN! If you are interested in a position and would like to learn more, please contact me at karena@tasn.net. The nomination information will also be on the [TASN website](#).

Greetings from TASN President-Elect Susan D'Amico



Dear TASN members,

As we embrace the warmer months and enjoy some well-deserved relaxation, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on our recent annual conference in San Antonio and share some exciting

updates with you all.

First and foremost, I hope each of you finds time to unwind and recharge, whether it's at home or on a blissful vacation. Our time together in San Antonio was nothing short of fantastic, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to connect with all of you once again.

Looking back on my 28 years in school nutrition, I'm reminded of the invaluable role that networking has played in my journey. Being part of TASN and attending our meetings has not only facilitated lifelong friendships but also bolstered my self-assurance, provided a platform for idea exchange, and enriched my knowledge base. As a member of the Executive Committee, I assure you that enhancing your TASN experience remains our top priority. We're committed to reviewing your feedback from the conference survey and identifying areas for improvement. Additionally, we're excited about the rollout of our new software, MemberClicks, which promises to streamline our operations and enhance member engagement.

With one successful conference behind us, we're already setting our sights on the next adventure: Corpus Christi! Our theme, *High Tides, Good Vibes*, embodies the spirit of relaxation and camaraderie. Picture yourself soaking in the ocean breeze, exploring local attractions, participating in enriching classes, and indulging in the delights of our food and equipment show. And let's not forget about our highly anticipated Industry Evening Event, complete with island-inspired décor. Yes, that means Hawaiian shirts, parrot heads, and grass skirts are encouraged! It's bound to be a night of laughter and memories that will last a lifetime.



Before I sign off, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the incredible work each of you does to make a difference in the lives of Texas children, school staff, and fellow TASN members. Your dedication and passion are truly commendable, and I feel honored to be part of such an inspiring community.

Wishing you all a rejuvenating summer filled with warmth, laughter, and endless possibilities.

Warm regards,
Susan

IMPORTANT DATES

TASN 2024 Administrative Academy	October 21–22, 2024	Austin, Texas
TASN 2024 Board/Committee Meetings	October 22–23, 2024	Austin, Texas
TASN 2025 Partnership Collaboration Summit (PCS)	January 27–29, 2025	Rockwall, Texas
TASN 2025 Administrative Academy	February 19–20, 2025	Austin, Texas
TASN 2025 Board/Committee Meetings	February 20–21, 2025	Austin, Texas
TASN 2025 Annual Conference	June 22–25, 2025	Corpus Christi, Texas

Greetings from TASN Vice President John Ceballos



As my term as Membership Chair wraps up, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has championed our TASN members. Hearing the dedication to our members at the core of every decision in every meeting fills me

with pride. In the last few months, I've witnessed the tremendous effort put into preparing a next-level experience for our members, highlighted by a newly designed website and membership portal. Being hands-on in the implementation, I am confident our members will find the new tools user-friendly and supportive in their TASN journey. Additionally, I've been thrilled to see our area representatives building strong rapport with members in their regions, ensuring their voices

are heard as we move forward as a board. I look forward to watching them continue to build on the relationships in their areas and allow all voices to be heard.

As I transition to my new role as Vice President, I am excited about the opportunities ahead. I've already had the privilege of attending the National Leadership Conference in Seattle with our President, Lacy, and President-Elect, Susan. Together, we've discussed a shared vision that will have a significant impact on our members and the association. One of my first responsibilities as Vice President includes planning the annual [PCS conference](#) in January. Inspired by our time in Seattle, I chose the theme "WOW Starts Now" for the January conference. I am eager to embark on this journey, collaborating closely with our board and members to keep focusing on making TASN the best association for everyone involved.



SECRETARY / TREASURER CORNER

by Christie Lammers, ESC Region 7



Hello TASN friends! Welcome back to the 2024-2025 school year. I hope that you have all had a wonderful summer and made memories with those you hold dear. The 70th TASN Annual Conference was a tremendous success. The '70s theme was a blast!

This summer has been a busy one for TASN. We had the Annual Meeting and first board meeting of the year. This summer was filled with learning opportunities at TASN, MegaCon, and SNA. I hope that you were able to take advantage of some of them.

TASN ended the 2024 year with a balanced budget. The budget for the 2024-2025 year was approved at the TASN board meeting in June. I hope that you all have an amazing school year. Please reach out to your Area Representatives for opportunities to connect and serve with other TASN members.



Greetings from Area 4 Representative

Tanya Davis, Henderson ISD

Fun Ideas to Increase Participation in School Meals



Keep Things Current:

WHAT DO THESE STUDENTS EAT

Students are constantly looking at the next trend and following whatever they see on social media. Make things hip. Look at trending restaurants or fast food for inspiration. There are

limitations with nutrition standards for child nutrition, but similar items can be incorporated into the menu.

Some examples:

Chipotle Bowl/ Burrito

Do a build-your-own burrito or bowl. Let students pick between two meats or meat alternates. Offer pinto or refried beans, corn, and homemade Spanish rice. Have pico de gallo, fresh salsa, and jalapeños available on the serving line.

Panda Express Orange Chicken Bowl

Offer orange chicken with homemade fried rice.

[Click here](#) for the recipe!

Whataburger Honey Chicken Biscuit

Offer breaded popcorn chicken on a biscuit with honey packets.

Know your Customer

STUDENTS, STUDENTS, STUDENTS!

Remember that the meal service is for students. Be intentional and menu choices that form a cohesive meal. Make sure that the choices are age/grade appropriate.

Fun Menu Ideas:

- Homemade grilled cheese & yogurt
- Build-your-own nachos with queso blanco
- Build-your-own pasta bar with choice of sauce, meat, and noodles



Greetings from Area 12 Representative

Tina Brooks, Stratford ISD

Exploring the Vital Role of the Summer Feeding Program in Transforming Our Small Rural Community



Hello, Tina Brooks from Stratford ISD here! It's wonderful to be able to discuss something that is dear to my heart: the significance of the Summer Feeding Program in our rural community. Let's delve into the vital role that this program plays in nourishing and

supporting the well-being of our residents. The profound impact of addressing hunger on a child's ability to learn resonates deeply. By providing essential nourishment through the Summer Feeding Program, you are not only filling stomachs but also creating a foundation for academic success and overall well-being. Our commitment to this cause is a testament to compassion and unwavering dedication to serving the community.

Discover the profound influence that the Summer Feeding Program on the physical, emotional, and

educational well-being of the children has had in our close-knit rural community.

For many children, the Summer Feeding Program serves as a lifeline during the extended school break, ensuring they have access to nutritious meals that are crucial for their growth and development. By alleviating food insecurity, the program not only addresses immediate hunger but also supports children's overall health, enabling them to thrive and reach their full potential.

Moreover, the program plays a pivotal role in reducing educational disparities by fueling children's learning and cognitive abilities. Research has shown that proper nutrition is linked to improved academic performance, concentration, and behavior in school. By providing consistent and balanced meals throughout the summer months, the program equips children with the

continued on next page



Continued from previous page

essential nutrients they need to stay focused, engaged, and ready to learn.

Beyond physical nourishment, the Summer Feeding Program fosters a sense of community and belonging among children, offering a supportive environment where they can socialize, build friendships, and feel valued. These social interactions not only enhance their social skills but also contribute to their emotional well-being, creating a positive and inclusive space for personal growth and connection.

In essence, the Summer Feeding Program has a profound and lasting impact on the lives of children in our small rural community, empowering them with the resources, support, and opportunities they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. By investing in our youth through this vital program, we are shaping a brighter future for the next generation and nurturing a stronger, more resilient community.

Unveiling the Transformative Power of the Summer Feeding Program: Stories of Impact from Our Small Rural Community

Delve into the heartwarming narratives that illuminate the profound impact of the Summer Feeding Program on the lives of our community members.

Meet Sarah, a single mother in our small rural community, who credits the Summer Feeding Program with providing much-needed support during challenging times. "Thanks to the program, I know that my children will have a nutritious meal every day, even when money is tight. It's a relief knowing that they won't go hungry," shares Sarah, reflecting on the program's invaluable role in ensuring food security for her family. "I am immensely grateful to Ms. Tina and Stratford ISD for making it possible for my children to have access to nutritious meals throughout the summer. Your dedication and commitment to ensuring that all children in our community are well-fed and supported are truly commendable. Thank you for your invaluable contribution to the well-being of our children and the strength of our community."



Mya, a new staff member at our school and cafe worker at the Summer Feeding Program, highlights the program's broader significance beyond food provision. "I've seen firsthand how the program brings people together, creating a sense of community and belonging. It's not just about the meals; it's about nourishing our spirits and fostering connections," remarks Mya, underscoring the program's role in strengthening social ties within our close-knit rural community.

These testimonials underscore the multifaceted impact of the Summer Feeding Program, showcasing how it not only addresses immediate needs but also cultivates a supportive environment where individuals can thrive and forge lasting relationships. Through these stories of resilience and gratitude, we witness the lasting imprint of the program on the fabric of our small rural community."

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the hard-working cafeteria staff who are tirelessly dedicated to providing meals this summer. Your love and care shine through in the nourishing meals you prepare and serve, ensuring that our community's children have access to essential nutrition. May you all be blessed abundantly for your selfless efforts. Wishing you all the best in your important work.

Tina R. Brooks
 Stratford ISD Child Nutrition Director
 TASN Area 12 Representative



The TASN 2024 Annual Conference in San Antonio was a smashing success as we celebrated 70 years! We were lucky to have Alex Weber, American Ninja Warrior, Award-Winning Leader & Entertainer, and Lena Wilson, Assistant Commissioner for the Food and Nutrition Division at the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), as our General Session Speakers! We were pleased to install our new 2024-2025 TASN Board of Directors and committee members, and members had a great time boogieing down at our '70s-themed, groovy Industry Evening Event! We can't wait to do it all again next summer in Corpus Christi. Thanks to all who attended, spoke at, exhibited, and sponsored the 2024 TASN Annual Conference!













THANK YOU TO OUR TASN 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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Save the Date

**TASN 2025
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JUNE 22-25, 2025
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS**

**The TASN 2025 Annual Conference
will take place next summer in
beautiful Corpus Christi, Texas!**

**We'll have all the education,
networking, and fun you expect
from the conference, in a beautiful
seaside environment. Stay tuned for
some high tides and good vibes!**

**Registration for the TASN 2025
Annual Conference will open in
January 2025. Please check the [TASN
website](https://www.TASN.net) for details!**





TASN 2025-2026 ELECTION

NOTE: THIS WILL BE CONSIDERED AN ODD YEAR ELECTION

The advancement of TASN depends upon good leadership. The TASN Nominating Committee needs membership assistance to help identify potential committee chairs, area representatives, and candidates for elected office.

Please review the following leadership positions and indicate whether you are interested in volunteering to serve in any of the positions listed, or if you can recommend a member whom you consider to be well-qualified for the leadership position. We also welcome anyone who has an interest in serving on any committee.

Leadership positions as per our current bylaws include:

Elected Officers:

Vice President – One-year term

Secretary/Treasurer – elected in odd years and serves a two-year term.

Qualifications for Vice President:

- Have served in a board position or standing committee.
- Have attended at least two TASN Annual conferences.
- Be a voting member of TASN and SNA.

Qualifications for Secretary/Treasurer:

- Have served on a committee or sub-committee of TASN.
- Have attended at least two TASN Conferences.
- Be a voting member of TASN and SNA.
- Must have financial experience.

Elected Committee Standing Chair:

Education Chair – elected in even years and serves a two-year term.

Membership Chair – elected in even years and serves a two-year term.

Public Policy & Legislative Chair – elected in odd years and serves a two-year term.

Chair of Area Representative – elected in even years and serves a two-year term.

Qualifications for Standing Chairs:

- Have held membership in TASN for at least two years.
- Have attended at least one TASN Annual Conference.
- Be a voting member of TASN and SNA during the entire term of office.
- Have served on a committee or sub-committee.

Area Representatives:

Area 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 are elected in odd years and serve a two-year term.

Area 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 are elected in even years and serve a two-year term.

Qualifications:

- Have held membership in TASN for at least two years.
- Have attended at least one TASN Annual Conference.
- Must be a voting member of TASN.

The Past President serves as the Chair of the nominating committee and issues this call for nominations to encourage members to run for office. The president selects the remaining committee members. The committee may also solicit candidates for office.

**NOMINATION DEADLINE:
SEPTEMBER 30, 2024**

Qualifications will be verified through TASN headquarters. Consenting nominees are to submit the following documents to TASN headquarters for verification.

- Professional Biography
- Resume
- Photo (headshot)
- Letter from your immediate supervisor approving that you run for the position

This information will be forwarded to the Nominating

Committee for the interview process.

Candidates will be selected on their professional competency, achievement in association work, and goals for the position.

Consideration will be given to present a balanced ballot, representative of the state.

The nominating committee shall report the slate of candidates to the Board of Directors at the February Board meeting. There shall be no nominations from the floor.

Please return the completed form to:

TASN
 5910 Courtyard Drive # 230
 Austin, Texas 78731
 Fax: 512-371-0125

Name of Nominee: _____ School District: _____

Elected position: _____

Phone number of nominee: _____ Email of nominee: _____

Address of nominee: _____

Person submitting the nomination: _____

Phone # of person submitting nomination: _____

TASN Annual Conference (June)	4-5 days
TASN Board of Director Meeting (Oct & Feb)	2 X 2 = 4 days
TASN PCS (Jan)	3 days
TASN Board Training (May)	2 days
SNA Annual Conference (July)	4-5 days
SNA Legislative Action Conference (Feb or March)	<u>3-4 days</u>
Minimum of	20-23 days
SNA Leadership Conference (Only Vice President) (April)	<u>3-4 days</u>
	26-27 days

Committee Chairs and Area Representatives:

TASN Annual Conference (June)	4 days
TASN Board of Director Meetings (Oct. & Feb)	2 X 2 = 4 days
TASN Board Training (May)	2 days
TASN Leadership Camp (Sept or Oct. or Nov.)	<u>1 day</u>
Minimum of	11 days

Chapter News

Area 3

Pasadena ASN

It was an eventful and successful school year for our staff. After enduring challenges these past few years due to COVID-19, our team was thrilled to finally come together and hold our meetings in a more comfortable and familiar setting. The turnout for our meetings was impressive, and we welcomed new members to our organization while raising funds to support families in need during the holiday season. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the staff who joined us this year and helped encourage others to participate in our PASN meetings.

Our first meeting occurred in November in the old PISD administration building. We had a large participation of managers and staff. After proceeding with our standard order of business agenda, staff



members participated in fall decorations and had a wonderful time with their co-workers.

In February, managers and staff enjoyed fellowship while working on Valentine's decorations along with their snacks. Smiles were had, valentine cupcakes were enjoyed, and all staff had a great time.

March was memorable as a supervisor surprised everyone by dressing up as the Easter bunny, adding a touch of fun to the gathering. Attendees had the opportunity to take photos to commemorate the event. This lighthearted moment brought a sense of joy and camaraderie to our professional meeting, setting a positive tone for the remainder of the school year.



In April, it was a delightful day when managers and staff came together for some team-building

activities, including playing Loteria. The positive atmosphere provided an opportunity for everyone to unwind and enjoy each other's company.

Finishing the school year in May, we had a ZUMBA dance instructor. Managers and staff were very excited to participate and would like to have more events like this.



Our gatherings were both productive and enjoyable, with each meeting offering unique activities and opportunities for fellowship. From fall decorations and Thanksgiving-themed crafts to Valentine's Day decorations and a surprise appearance by the Easter bunny, our meetings were filled with moments of joy and camaraderie. As we look ahead to the next school year, we are eager to continue organizing engaging activities such as ZUMBA and Loteria, based on the feedback we received from our staff.



We also had a great time at the TASN Annual Conference in San Antonio, where we connected with child nutrition services staff from other districts. We are excited for the future and enjoyed seeing everyone at the conference in June!

To our PASN officers and board members: we are so grateful for all our staff at Pasadena ISD. Also, thank you to our director who always motivates us to take care of our staff.



PASADENA ISD CULINARY CAMP

District News

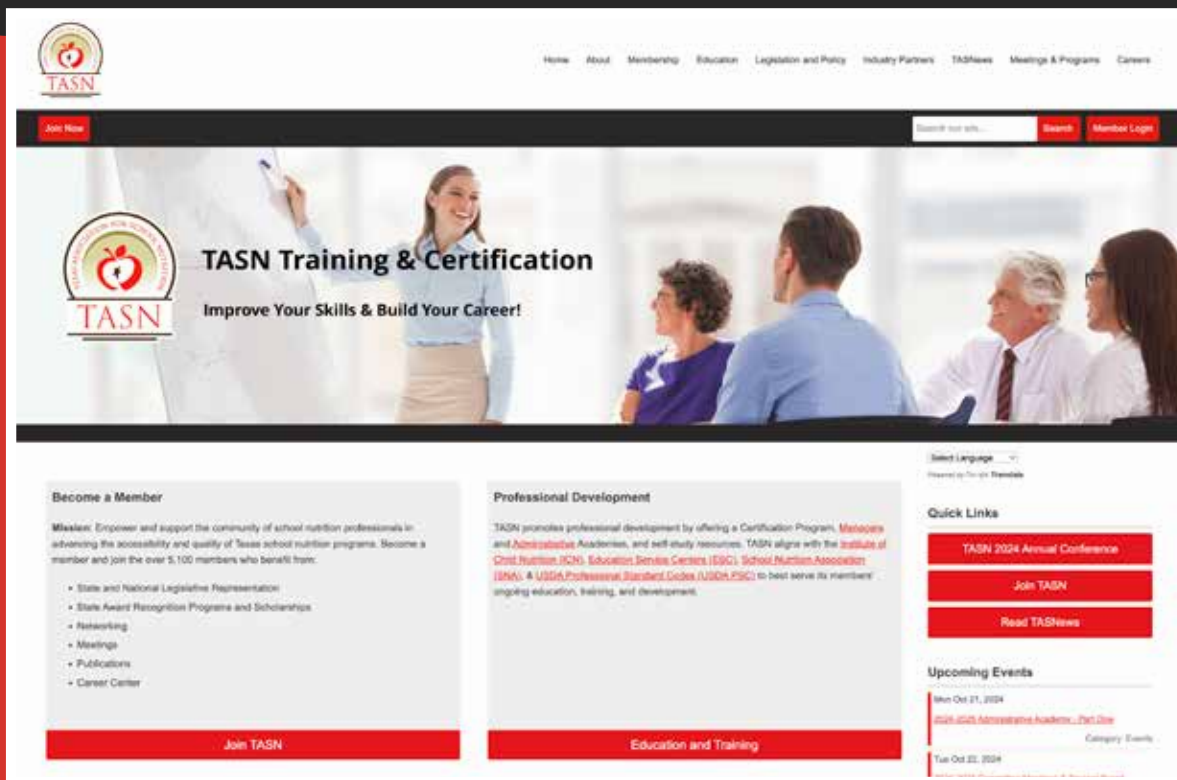


Pasadena Independent School District (ISD) Nutrition Services Department held its first ever student Culinary Camp May 28-31. Our culinary cadets learned basic cooking skills, worked together as a team, and had fun in the process. Our trainers included Area Supervisors Martin De Santiago, Reyna Hernandez, Rose Campbell, and Laura Rodriguez. Exciting recipes like cantaloupe aguas frescas, BBQ chicken, and fresh green bean tomato salad were just a few of the delicious foods our students cooked up in our newly renovated test kitchen. Our camp focused on general kitchen skills, fresh cooking from scratch and includes fun team building exercises. The week ended with a parent luncheon where our kids showcased what they learned from the four-day camp.



TASN LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

MEMBERCLICKS SOFTWARE OFFERS ENHANCED MEMBER EXPERIENCE



If you've logged on to the [TASN website](https://www.tasn.net) lately, you probably noticed a new look! In June we finished migrating the association website over to a new platform powered by the MemberClicks software. In addition to the new website, the software offers improvements in the member experience, including membership renewal, payments, and event registration.

We'll be rolling out new features in the coming months, such as the ability for industry partners to register for booth exhibits and sponsorship, and

a new portal for tracking your TASN Certification progress!

If you haven't yet logged in to activate your web account, please click below to do so. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions. See you online!

Quick 'Get Started' Instructions:
Your username is the email TASN has on file for you. Select "reset password" when logging on for the first time.

[REGISTER / LOG ON NOW](#)

TASN 2024 AWARDS

We were proud to honor all of our award and scholarship recipients at the TASN 2024 Annual Conference!

GOLD MEMBERSHIP AWARD

BRIDGETTE YOUNG, FRANKLIN ISD

SILVER CERTIFICATION AWARD

SUSAN D'AMICO, ALDINE ISD

PARTNERSHIP IN NUTRITION AWARD

BRANDY COPPIN, COPPERAS COVE ISD
SONYA MORGAN, YES PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
JERRY SAQUITON, KLEIN ISD
SUSAN SEEGARS, GARLAND ISD
VIRGINIA VAZQUEZ, ALDINE ISD

LUNCH PARTICIPATION AWARD

CARLETTE DRABEK, NAVARRO ISD
TERESA EVANS, CROSBY ISD
JESSICA HOWELL, YES PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WHITNEY JOHNSON, TOMBALL ISD
STEVE LISBONY, LITTLE CYPRESS-MAURICEVILLE ISD

BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION AWARD

JESSICA HOWELL, YES PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STEVE LISBONY, LITTLE CYPRESS-MAURICEVILLE ISD
GRACIE LOPEZ, NAVARRO ISD

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

ROSA MENDIOLA, KLEIN ISD

SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR

ADRIANA VIRAMONTEZ, ALDINE ISD

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

WENDY HEWSON, TOMBALL ISD

DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

SUSIE LITTLE, CLEVELAND ISD

NUTRITION EDUCATION

BRITTANY FRASER, COPPERAS COVE ISD
WENDY FUNUG, COOPERAS COVE ISD
LESLIE FRASER, COPPERAS COVE ISD
JESSICA HOWELL, YES PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PLAN OF ACTION AWARD

AMY REYNOSO, ALDINE ISD

TASN 2024 SCHOLARSHIPS

• GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP •

MICHELE ALBIERO, CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD

WIPARAT HAYES, CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD

• COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP •

YURI CARRASCO, WHITE SETTLEMENT ISD

ADRIAN HANSELL, KLEIN ISD

ANGELICA JIMENEZ, ANGLETON ISD

SANDRA MORENO, GALENA PARK ISD

MARITSA TOVANCHE, GALENA PARK ISD

VANESSA VALDEZ, ANGLETON ISD

ELIZABETH VASQUEZ, GALENA PARK ISD

**Congratulations to all of our
2024 award & scholarship recipients**

TO LEARN ABOUT APPLYING FOR TASN SCHOLARSHIPS, CLICK [HERE](#)

TO LEARN ABOUT TASN AWARDS & NOMINATIONS, CLICK [HERE](#)

2023 SUMMER MANAGERS ACADEMY GRADUATES

Leticia Andrade, Brenham ISD
 Tammy Ault, Texarkana ISD
 Judy Babbitt, Bridge City ISD
 Amanda Banks, Texarkana ISD
 Linda Bledsoe, Texarkana ISD
 Alma Bousquet, Klein ISD
 Bernadette Brown, Texarkana ISD
 Vanessa Carter-Black, Texarkana ISD
 Tiffany Chamrad, Klein ISD
 Melinda Christman, Bridge City ISD
 Monique Clark, Texarkana ISD
 Amy Collins, Bridge City ISD
 Jay Collins, Brazosport ISD
 Jana Cursh, Texarkana ISD
 Shelley Fisher, Pleasant Grove ISD
 Folasade Franklin, Texarkana ISD
 Glenda Granger, Bridge City ISD
 Brittnii King, Texarkana ISD
 Judy Kizer, Texarkana ISD
 Ernestina Kliewer, Texarkana ISD
 Stormy Lawson, Texarkana ISD
 Kimberly Lewis, Crosby ISD
 Leigh Mata, Franklin ISD
 Lindsey McCallum, Texarkana ISD
 Nancy Melendez, Brazosport ISD

Linda Moore, Texarkana ISD
 Angela Morales, Klein ISD
 Melinda Morton, Texarkana ISD
 Rachel Nichols, Brazosport ISD
 Judi Nixon-Blair, Texarkana ISD
 Michelle Ordonez-Chavez, Klein ISD
 Elba Perez, Klein ISD
 Kenneth Pratt, Texarkana ISD
 Olivia Reini, Texarkana ISD
 Korey Richardson, Texarkana ISD
 Michelle Ridgeway, Klein ISD
 Reyna Rodriguez, Klein ISD
 Christal Rose, Texarkana ISD
 Gabrielle Salazar, Brenham ISD
 Armishia Sapp, Texarkana ISD
 Teresa Scott, Pleasant Grove ISD
 Maira Sequera, Crosby ISD
 Bianca Simmons, Klein ISD
 Shalonda Simmons, Texarkana ISD
 Kandis Skibo, Bridge City ISD
 Dian Taylor, Texarkana ISD
 Elizabeth Thornton, Texarkana ISD
 Krista Venne, Brazosport ISD
 Keon Wells, Franklin ISD
 Tonya Whitecotton, Texarkana ISD

2023-2024 ADMINISTRATIVE ACADEMY GRADUATES

Carlos Arujo, New Caney ISD
 Mary Boyd RD, LD, Corpus Christi ISD
 Cameron Burns, Klein ISD
 Ashlee Clark, Lake Worth ISD
 Naomi Diaz, South San Antonio ISD
 Katina Frey, Aldine ISD
 Abelardo Garcia, Southside ISD
 Blanca Iglesias, South San Antonio ISD
 Vanessa Jimenez, Uplift Education ISD
 Kelsey Jones, Klein ISD
 Ti'Tiaia Jones-Jackson, Klein ISD

Ivonne Mendoza, ESC Region 19 ISD
 Lauren Munguia, Corpus Christi ISD
 Elsa Perez, Southside ISD
 Brenda Rodriguez, Fort Sam Houston ISD
 Meredith Rokas, East Central ISD
 Joe Sanchez, North East ISD
 Danielle Tank, Katy ISD
 Stephanie Trevino, Sweeny ISD
 Kaley Van Ness, Corpus Christi ISD
 Lionel Vega, Harlingen ISD
 Tameco Williams, Spring Branch ISD

SAVE THE DATE



TASN 2025 PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION SUMMIT

JANUARY 27-29, 2025 **ROCKWALL, TEXAS**

The TASN Partnership Collaboration Summit (PCS) is a two-day, collaborative event connecting K-12 child nutrition decision makers with industry partners. This is a unique opportunity for in-depth discussions, training, and future planning. You will experience inspirational keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and activities designed to generate ideas you can implement in your district, and fun networking opportunities.

SPEAKERS & SESSIONS

We are excited to announce two great speakers at this year's PCS: Diane Darling, leadership coach, and Lena Wilson, Assistant Commissioner for Food and Nutrition at TDA.

VENUE

The 2025 PCS will take place at the [Hilton Rockwall Hotel](#).

REGISTRATION & HOTEL

PCS Registration and hotel block reservations will open in September. Check the [TASN website](#) for full details!

Make 2024-2025 an AWARD WINNING YEAR for School Nutrition in Texas



By **Lena Wilson**

Assistant Commissioner for Food and Nutrition
Texas Department of Agriculture



The start of the academic year brings a new beginning for school nutrition professionals. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) has new areas of emphasis, directors have new expectations, and you all join students for their first day of school.

When those students visit your cafeteria after their summer break, you can make a first impression that ensures that children become customers for years to come. You will continue your efforts to show students colorful entrees and entice them with prepped easy-to-grab healthy choices. I know you will provide a welcoming environment while teaching them new things about healthy lifestyles.

The nutrition education you provide has become as important as the school-day sustenance that helps children focus on their classes. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and TDA are creating more recognition for innovative educational efforts in the cafeteria. Earning recognition awards for nutritional and operational excellence raises the profile of your program and shows students they can enjoy award-winning meals in their cafeteria.

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

This year TDA brings back the [USDA Foods](#)

Challenge. Your USDA Foods entitlement is one of the best deals out there and using it all



benefits your bottom line. To encourage you to maximize this opportunity, TDA will recognize schools that use 95% of their USDA Foods entitlement. Visit SquareMeals.org/USDAFoodsChallenge to see the resources and recognition available for USDA Foods Challenge Prime Players.

I am especially enthusiastic about the [Healthy Meals Incentives awards](#) introduced by USDA and Action for Healthy Kids. Nutrition directors earning recognition also earn a trip to Las Vegas. These awards will spotlight innovative practices, student and community engagement activities, and strategies schools have used to provide meals that are consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. You have until June 30, 2025, to apply in one of the eight categories. Don't wait!

Other awards include USDA's [Turnip the Beet](#) award for outstanding summer meals. Last year there were 38 Turnip the Beet winners in Texas, more than any other state! Schools participating



Continued on next page

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in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program can earn [TDA's Pear-fection Award](#) by maximizing the program and ensuring it has a lasting impact for students by introducing them to additional fruits and vegetables.



The [Farm Fresh Challenge](#) takes place during October, which is also Farm to

School Month, and offers child nutrition programs a chance to earn recognition for serving local foods, teaching local agricultural facts, and sharing their efforts on social media. TDA will add a new tier to the Farm Fresh Challenge recognition this year. Cream of the Crop will recognize those who go above and beyond by serving more local foods, creating their own teaching materials, hosting special events on campus, and posting more frequently on social media.



SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE

Introducing children to Texas products is the underlying theme of many recognition efforts. The [Local Food for Schools](#) grant funding reimburses schools for purchases of minimally processed local foods such as milk, beef, and produce. There are 331 schools participating. TDA has reimbursed schools about \$2 million using the grant funds and has \$20 million left to spend before March 2025. USDA and TDA are exploring ways to make it easier for all schools to purchase fresh foods. Schools may give preference or bonus points to local producers when soliciting and awarding contracts for the purchase of unprocessed locally grown or raised agricultural products. Of course, the preference or bonus points must not restrict full and open competition.

Schools using food service management companies (FSMCs) will have opportunities for more training this year to help them manage those contracts. TDA will conduct in-depth training for Education Service Centers (ESCs) in August 2024. These will be in-person sessions at ESCs with large numbers of districts using FSMCs. This will be followed by one-on-one sessions with districts. The schedule of webinars will be posted in August to help districts plan for the new year.

The new school year also brings implementation of a five-year Administrative Review cycle. The five-year review cycle is based on a risk assessment for schools, and it is for contracting entities that self-operate their child nutrition programs. This is exciting as it reduces the administrative burden of reviews. CEs utilizing an FSMC remain on a three-year cycle.

Please take time this year to shore up Paid Lunch Equity policies for non-program meals in schools and courtesy meals for guests. Also, TDA will be taking actions to implement the Program Integrity Final Rule in the new school year.

Other things to anticipate in 2024-25 include an updated food production record. TDA has updated the [Onsite Kitchen Production Record](#). It was done to help better document the amounts planned and served for each food or menu item as well as the number of portions of each food or menu item served. The central kitchen and receiving kitchen forms have not changed from the last version and will be updated later.

I know you look forward to welcoming students soon. Your cafeterias offer many special things for students as they navigate a new school year ... healthy foods, friendly nutrition professionals, and purpose. Thank you for all your hard work and I hope all of you had a great summer break. Try to enjoy all the activities the next few weeks will bring as you prepare your menus, lunch lines, kitchens, and everything else needed to welcome the smiling faces of the children you serve.

August is National Wellness Month

Celebrate National Wellness Month during the entire month of August. It's time to prioritize your self-care, reduce stress, and create healthier habits to feel like your best self!

National Wellness Month was born out of the idea that if we are going to do big things in the world – in between building our careers, raising a family, furthering our education, creating new ideas, and nurturing our bodies – we need to take care of ourselves, too.

This August, take the “I Choose Wellness” pledge and make a promise to yourself to prioritize your self-care. Choose one small daily habit, such as

drinking 64 ounces of water daily or walking 10,000 steps. Taking the 31-day challenge during National Wellness Month will help you discover a new way to can take care of yourself.

Share your self-care tips and transformation on social media using these hashtags:

#NationalWellnessMonth

#wellnessmonth



