

TASN^{ews}

Summer 2025, Vol. 21, No. 4

A Publication of the Texas Association for School Nutrition





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**Area 7 Representative
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Contact TASN HQ if
interested in this role



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**Area 9 Representative
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interested in this role



Area 10 Representative
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TASN^{ews}

Summer 2025

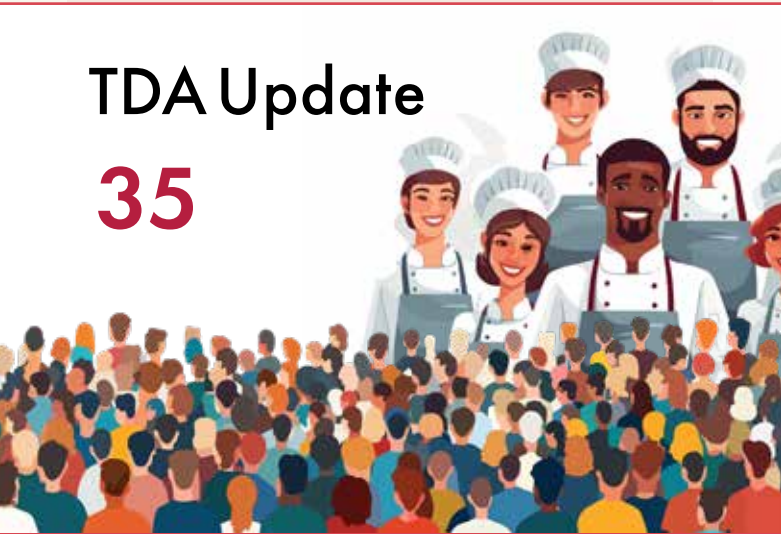
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Food and Nutrition, Texas Department of Agriculture

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SUMMER 2025

by Susan D'Amico
TASN President
Aldine ISD



Hi TASN members,

I'm so honored to write my first article as your TASN President. It's a privilege to connect with all of you dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to nourish the students of Texas. I hope you are enjoying a

well-deserved break from the regular school year and taking this valuable time to recharge and rejuvenate.

As we look ahead, I'm thrilled to share some exciting developments within TASN. First and foremost, it's important for you to become familiar with our online member website, which was put in place in July 2024. This powerful platform is designed to streamline your engagement with TASN. It allows for real-time payments and updates to your profile, ensuring your information is always current. This will significantly speed up all of our communication and save us valuable time and money previously spent on mail outs. Looking ahead, we're excited about a future feature that will allow you to join groups within the system. This will enable you to connect and communicate directly with other members in your same position. Talk about networking and collaborative power!

We are also embarking on our new, three-year Strategic Plan. This roadmap will guide our efforts and ensure we are focused on what matters most to our members and the school nutrition landscape.

The plan features four main goal areas for TASN:

1. Being a respected voice in School Nutrition: We will continue to advocate for policies and practices that support healthy students and strong school nutrition programs.

2. Building inspired communities: Fostering connections and a sense of purpose among our members.
3. Developing organizational excellence in leadership and structure: We are committed to ensuring TASN operates efficiently and effectively to serve you.
4. Providing a journey of professional development and growth: Your continued learning and advancement are key priorities.

We will also be continuing some of the fun and impactful initiatives started in the last year. The photo contest for our conference was a resounding success and will be making a comeback this year – get your cameras ready! Furthermore, the Texas Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Day contest, a productive partnership with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), was met with incredible enthusiasm. We received many inspired entries, and we know that Texas students will continue



to expand their knowledge of Texas agriculture as a result of this wonderful collaboration. We also received great feedback on the contests held throughout the year via social media. Please be sure to follow TASN on as many platforms as possible to stay informed and engaged! The links are found at the end of this article.

Our commitment to robust education programs continues to flourish. The Corpus Christi conference was a testament to this, featuring more bilingual classes than we have ever offered before. We also increased the number of specialized classes for managers and specialists, catering to the diverse needs of our membership. In addition, we are thrilled to have just launched the [Rising Stars](#) program, specifically designed for new administrative professionals joining the field of school nutrition. This program will provide valuable support and guidance as they begin their careers.

We have a lot to look forward to in the coming year. I am confident that TASN will continue to meet your professional needs for support, community,

and education. We will continue striving to do so, and I am excited to lead our association during this promising time.

Thank you for your dedication and passion for school nutrition. I look forward to connecting with many of you in the months ahead.

Sincerely,
Susan



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IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

TASN HQ Closed for Labor Day	September 1, 2025	
TASN Second Board & Committee Meetings	October 9-10, 2025	Gaylord Texan Resort Grapevine
TASN Administrative Academy Part One	October 9-10, 2025	Gaylord Texan Resort Grapevine
2025 National School Lunch Week	October 13-17, 2025	
TASN 2026 Partnership Collaboration Summit (PCS)	January 2026	Details coming soon!
TASN Third Board & Committee Meetings	February 2026	Galveston
TASN Administrative Academy Part Two	February 2026	Galveston
SNA Legislative Action Conference (LAC)	March 8-10, 2026	Washington, D.C.
TASN 2026 Annual Conference	June 28–30, 2026	Gaylord Texan Resort Grapevine
SNA Annual Nutrition Conference (ANC)	July 12-14, 2026	Charlotte, NC



HEADQUARTERS HIGHLIGHTS

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



Hello members!

As the time approaches for school to return I would like to take this opportunity to say “THANK YOU” for all you do each day of the year as you serve students. Child nutrition is a passion for me, and what a blessing

after 30 years to be able to fill in as the Interim Director at TASN. This organization continues to strive for excellence by being a support system for your district and you. Training and knowledge gained at conferences, classes and academies benefit you professionally and personally...no one can take knowledge and experience from you. Remember, the impact you make each day on lives with your smile, warm words and acknowledgement may be the only one that child or even your co-worker may hear daily. Kindness is free and friendships are a blessing.

TASN is excited to move forward as your friend to make your experiences in classes easier by going paperless. Beginning this fall, all membership and certification will be online. This process will expedite your certification and membership. Once certification is launched through our Memberclicks platform, **no paper certificates will need to be mailed!** You will maintain a file for these documents should we need to verify your certifications, but this means no more trips to the post office. The new website has many features that will be up and coming. Stay tuned for more information.

What a great conference in Corpus Christi this summer! I want to thank the headquarters staff for an amazing job of planning and bringing the board’s ideas together. Thank you to those that attended, and for those that were unable to attend, see you next year in Grapevine!

Enjoy each day! Thank you for all you do!

Debbie Needham
TASN Interim Executive Director

IS YOUR TASN.NET ACCOUNT ACTIVE AND UP TO DATE?

Summer is the perfect time to log in and update your profile with your latest contact info and preferences. Taking a few minutes now ensures a smoother experience when it’s time to register for events this fall. Don’t wait until things get busy—get a head start and make sure you’re ready when school kicks off!

LOG IN



The Year That Built Us

A Message from Past President
Lacy Willey



As I sit down to write this, I find myself thinking less about titles or milestones and more about the people, the laughter, the long days, the quiet wins, and the way our association continues to grow stronger, together. This year was many things: fast, full, sometimes

frustrating, but above all, it was meaningful.

Not because meaning magically appeared, but because we showed up.

Our final year of the 3-year strategic plan was a testament to what commitment looks like in motion. We grew our certified members by 34% over the course of the plan. Our Managers and Administrative Academies filled up with eager professionals looking to do more. Our total membership increased to 5,787 strong, and we now have 20 active chapters across Texas, buzzing with energy.

Sure, we faced challenges. But we didn't stop. We adapted. We tightened our focus. And we kept serving.

This is the kind of work that doesn't always get a standing ovation, but it makes a difference.

To the board, the committees, HQ staff, and every single member who provided service with a smile, made a delicious meal, led a cafeteria, coached a new manager, or gave one more hour when you barely had any left: I see you and I thank you.

As I pass the gavel to the next incredible leader, I do so with full confidence in the direction we're headed. Our strength has never been in one person. It's in the many hands

and hearts that move this association forward.

So, here's my parting encouragement: Don't wait for meaning to strike you. Build it! Build it by showing up, by serving, and making something better than you found it.

We need your voice, your energy, your time—on a committee, in a chapter, as a mentor, or just helping someone new feel like they belong. You don't have to be perfect or have it all figured out. You just have to care. And lucky for us, this profession is full of people who do.

Thank you for the honor of serving. Let's keep going. Together.

With gratitude and big ol' banana-sized hugs,

Lacy Willey
TASN Past President
Cleveland ISD



IGNITE THE LIGHT



As I continue to ride the wave of high tides and good vibes that radiated throughout this year's Annual Conference in Corpus Christi, I can't help but feel energized and inspired. The passion, connection, and purpose shared among our members

reminded me just how powerful our TASN community is—and it's with that same spirit that I step into my next task on the TASN board: planning next year's annual conference!

While conference planning is listed as one of the responsibilities of the President-Elect, this is far from a one-person job. That's why I'm thrilled and honored to introduce the incredible team of leaders who will be serving on the 2026 TASN Conference Planning Committee:

Susan D'Amico | Aldine ISD
Kasandra Davis | Brenham ISD
Jessica Howell | YES Prep Public Schools
Mike Likovich | Buena Vista Foods
Ramona Love | East Central ISD
Rosa Mendiola | Klein ISD
Jennifer Miller | Garland ISD
Brandice Uzoigwe | E-Source Miller

Each of these individuals brings a unique strength to the table and has already shown their dedication to our mission through their work and involvement in TASN. I'm grateful they've answered the call to serve in this capacity, because creating a conference of this magnitude takes both heart and hustle. Next year's theme, *Ignite the Light*, celebrates the spark each of us carries and how, together, we can fuel a brighter future for the students we serve. From breakout sessions to special events, this theme will guide every detail of the 2026 conference experience.

Our first conference planning meeting kicked off in July. We'll meet monthly to brainstorm, build, and dream up an experience that will continue the legacy of excellence our members expect, at what is always our most highly attended event of the year.

Let the planning begin! See you in Grapevine in June 2026!

John Ceballos
TASN President-Elect
Klein ISD

LOOKING AHEAD: A MESSAGE FROM YOUR NEW VICE PRESIDENT



Our Shared Mission

I am truly honored to serve as your TASN Vice President. It's a privilege to work alongside an incredible team of professionals who are passionate about nourishing students

and strengthening TASN as the leading voice for school nutrition in Texas.

Like many of you, my journey in school nutrition began with a simple goal: to make a difference in the lives of students. Over the years, I've witnessed firsthand how a nutritious meal can change the course of a student's day—and sometimes their life. This work is more than managing programs or meeting guidelines. It's about people. It's about ensuring that every child has access to the meals that fuel learning, growth, and success.

"School nutrition is more than a program—it's a community that fuels student success."

My Vision as Vice President

As I step into this role, I am deeply committed to building on the strong foundation laid by the incredible leaders who came before me. My focus this year is to:

- Support meaningful professional development that empowers each member, no matter their role.
- Foster stronger connections across districts to share ideas, successes, and solutions.
- Elevate the voices of school nutrition professionals—ensuring our work is valued and understood at both the state and national levels.

by Jennifer Miller
TASN Vice President
Garland ISD

- Advocate fiercely for the policies, funding, and resources that allow us to serve students with excellence.

At the same time, I want to celebrate the resilience, creativity, and dedication that shine in Texas school nutrition programs every day.

High Tides and Good Vibes

It was such a pleasure to connect with many of you at the recent TASN Annual Conference in Corpus Christi. I was inspired by your energy, your commitment, and the way you embraced the conference theme of *High Tides and Good Vibes*. This spirit of positivity and determination is exactly what makes our association strong and our work impactful.

Let's Move Forward—Together

I look forward to continuing these connections—whether at future TASN events, trainings, or through visits to your programs. I am here to listen, to learn, and to represent your interests. My goal is to help ensure that the work of our association reflects the realities, goals, and aspirations of every member.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. I am inspired by what lies ahead and fully committed to making this term one of progress, collaboration, and shared success. If you ever have ideas, questions, or just want to share the great things happening in your program, please don't hesitate to reach out. Together, we can continue moving school nutrition in Texas forward.



Greetings from Area 3 Representative

**Teresa Evans
Crosby ISD**



AREA 3 INCLUDES SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THESE COUNTIES:

Austin	Milam
Brazos	Montgomery
Burleson	Polk
Chambers	Robertson
Grimes	San Jacinto
Hardin	Trinity
Harris	Tyle
Houston	Walker
Leon	Waller
Liberty	Washington
Madison	

I am incredibly honored and excited to

introduce myself as your newly installed TASN Area 3 Representative! Stepping into this role is both humbling and energizing, especially after attending this year's TASN Annual Conference in Corpus Christi. The conference theme, *High Tides and Good Vibes*, is a perfect motto for the wave of inspiration and unity we all experienced.

The conference opened with a bang during the First General Session. Jeff Joiner brought energy, laughter, and motivation that really set the mood for the days ahead. His message reminded us just how important our roles are—not just in feeding kids, but leading with passion and purpose. It was a great start to an amazing event. The sessions had something for everyone, covering everything from communicating with confidence to stirring up success. I think everyone left with new ideas and tools to bring back and use with their teams. It was a



perfect mix of learning, connecting, and celebrating what we do in child nutrition.

One highlight for me was accepting the TASN Award for Increased Participation for Crosby ISD. While my awesome team couldn't attend, this award truly reflects how dedicated and hard-working they are. I'm honored to lead such a talented team that pours their hearts into serving our students and community.

What made the conference even more special was the chance to meet so many of you from Area 3. Your stories, positive vibes, and commitment

inspired me. I'm excited to serve you and be your voice at the table. If we didn't get a chance to meet in Corpus, I'd love to connect! Feel free to reach out. I'd be happy to come to your chapter events and support you however I can.

Here's to a new school year full of fresh ideas, renewed purpose, and good vibes all around. We're in this together, and I can't wait to see what we achieve!

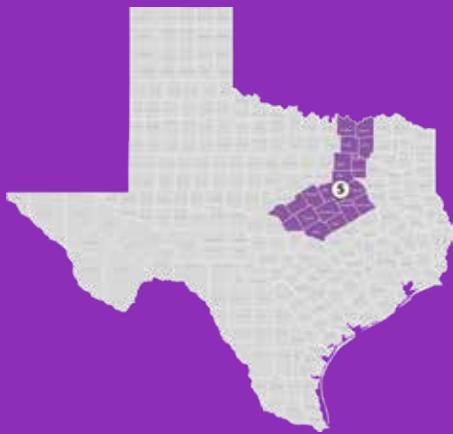
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Greetings from Area 5 Representative Suellen Atteberry Garland ISD



AREA 5 INCLUDES SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THESE COUNTIES:

Bell	Hamilton
Bosque	Hill
Collin	Hunt
Coryell	Kaufman
Dallas	Lampasas
Ellis	Limestone
Falls	McLennan
Fannin	Mills
Freestone	Navarro
Grayson	Rockwall

Hello! It's July in Texas and that means summer. Heat, humidity and hopefully you are able to find some fabulous air conditioning! If not, try hitting your local grocery store and head to the freezer section.

Our Annual Conference is over. I so enjoyed meeting so many of you and received some wonderful responses with regard to restarting a chapter and creating new ones. I will be touching base with the contacts I have, along with your Area Representatives, and we can get the ball rolling.

As for conference – I will admit that I did have the opportunity to play just a bit. As you can see below, my 5½ week old grandson, Matthew, was in top notch shape at the beach. Thanks to all of the exhibitors that allowed me to use these items.





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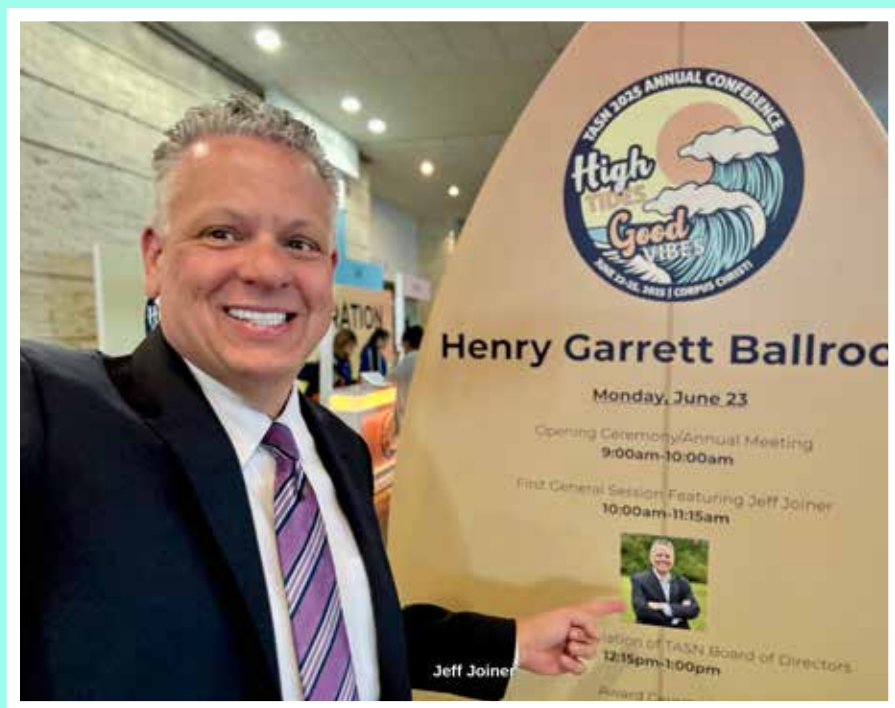


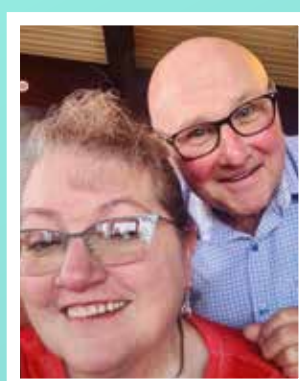
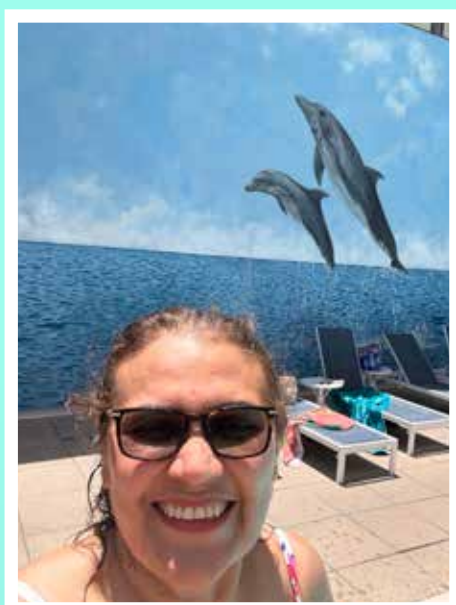
The TASN 2025 Annual Conference in Corpus Christi offered High Tides and Good Vibes as we celebrated another year of learning, connecting, and growing.

We were lucky to have Jeff Joiner 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 2025-2026 TASN Board of Directors and committee members, and attendees were treated to the '80s vibes of The Spazmatics during our annual Industry Evening Event! We can't wait to do it all again next summer in Grapevine. Thanks to all who attended, spoke at, exhibited, and sponsored the TASN 2025 Annual Conference!

Check out the pictures of the event in the next few pages, and click [here](#) for even more!











COUNTER DECORATING CONTEST

Back by popular demand:
the Counter Decorating Contest at
the TASN Annual Conference!

Teams of conference attendees
signed up for time slots to put
together the best counter display
they could in just 15 minutes. All
supplies and decor were included.
Teams brought their creativity and
enthusiasm, and nothing else - no
outside supplies allowed!

This year we had 11 teams
competing in the contest. Check out
the participants and winners!



Texarkana ISD

**Elementary Category
Winner**



Gunter ISD

**Secondary Category
Winner**



Tomball ISD

Overall Winner



Aldine ISD



Frankston ISD



Alvin ISD



Gregory Portland ISD



Azle ISD



Klein ISD



Copperas Cove ISD



Pasadena ISD

REGISTRATION OPENS
THIS FALL

SAVE THE DATE

TASN 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

June 28-30, 2026

Gaylord Texan Resort • Grapevine

Join us in Grapevine next June where we'll *Ignite The Light* together at the Annual Conference – an unforgettable gathering of inspiration, innovation, and connection.

2026

TASN 2026-2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Great leadership is the heartbeat of TASN, and your input is key to keeping it strong. The Nominating Committee is calling on members to help identify passionate, capable individuals to serve on the TASN Board of Directors.

Take a moment to explore the leadership opportunities below. Whether you're ready to raise your hand or want to recommend a fellow member who would shine in a leadership role, we'd love to hear from you. We also welcome anyone eager to get involved by serving on a committee. **Your voice and energy make a difference in our growing association!**

The following positions will be on the ballot for the 2026-2027 TASN election:

Vice President (one-year term)
Membership Chair (two-year term)
Education Chair (two-year term)
Area 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 Representatives (two-year term)

The nomination period is from mid-July to November 10, 2025. The ballot should consist of two nominees for each position, and we are looking for representation from throughout the great state of Texas.

For additional information, please contact TASN headquarters and we will be happy to answer your questions: (512) 371-0087.

Vice President One-Year Term

Description: The TASN Vice President assists the President and President-Elect and presides in their absence. The Vice President also plans the 2027 Partnership Collaboration Summit (PCS). This position is the first step toward becoming the TASN President and offers the opportunity to observe and learn the ways of the association.

Qualifications:

- 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.

continued on next page

Education Chair

Two-Year Term

Description: The Education Chair is the liaison for the TASN Certification and Training Department. It is their responsibility to assist with educational classes during the conference, and they are also responsible for planning and executing the Managers and Administrative Academies.

Qualifications:

- Have held membership in TASN for at least one year.
- Have attended at least one TASN Annual Conference.
- Be a voting member of TASN and SNA.

Membership Chair

Two-Year Term

Description: The Membership Chair is responsible for the membership committee. It is their responsibility to create tools to promote a positive image of TASN and help continue to grow our membership.

Qualifications:

- Have held membership in TASN for at least one year.
- Have attended at least one TASN Annual Conference.
- Be a voting member of TASN and SNA.

Area Representatives

Two-Year Term

Description: Area Representatives work regionally to share resources and amplify our members' needs. They work hard to stay in touch with our members and help in the creation of local chapters and most importantly focus on building relationships with our members to ensure every voice is heard.

Qualifications:

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

Full details about the nomination process and requirements, along with the nomination form, can be found on the TASN website.

[LEARN MORE](#)

NOMINATION DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 10, 2025

District News

Area 2

Beeville ISD

by Amanda Daniels

Beeville ISD Child Nutrition Department proudly recognizes eight of its exceptional child nutrition managers who attended the Texas Association for School Nutrition (TASN) 2025 Annual Conference. These dedicated professionals participated in the TASN Managers Academy and earned their Level 4 Certificate for Manager, the highest level of recognition offered through the program.

Honorees include:

Ernest Gomez, AC Jones High School
Stephanie Fierova, AC Jones High School
Sandra Salinas, Moreno Jr. High
Jesse Gonzales, RA Hall Elementary
Michelle Marin, RA Hall Elementary
Maria Campos, FMC
Victoria Cisneros, HMD
Desiree Rodriguez, Coordinator

The Managers Academy is a professional development program designed by TASN to equip school nutrition leaders with the tools and training needed to excel in their roles. Through coursework,

workshops, and leadership sessions, participants gain skills in operations management, staff supervision, compliance, budgeting, and more.

Beeville ISD Child Nutrition is proud to celebrate the hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence shown by these leaders. Their continued professional growth directly enhances the quality of the district's child nutrition program and supports student success across all campuses.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Lezlie Davis
Tomball ISD



Check out this [great feature](#) on Creekside Forest Elementary cafeteria manager Lezlie Davis!

Lezlie joined Tomball ISD in 2021 and has served as the cafeteria manager at CFES for the last three years. She brings over 20 years of experience in restaurant management to her role.

"Lezlie makes such a big difference at CFES," said Treva Madore, CFES Principal. "She brings warmth, laughter, and heart to everything she does. Whether she's welcoming students with a cheerful smile in the lunch line or checking in to make sure no one goes without, she makes every child feel seen and cared for."

Recently, CFES held an auction for their spring fundraiser with families bidding to have their child become a staff member for a day. In an overwhelming response with several high bids, one lucky student earned the the opportunity to be Lezlie Davis for a day.

Read the full story [here](#)!

Rachelle Kan
George Gervin Academy



MEMBER ON THE MOVE!

Meet [Rachelle Kan](#), Director of Child Nutrition and Food Services at George Gervin Academy!

In addition to starting her new role with George Gervin Academy, Rachelle recently continued her education with Parkland College online, to pursue CDM, CFPP credentials, and Associate in Science degree.

She was also chosen to receive the TASN College Scholarship Award at this year's TASN Annual Conference, and was also awarded the CTSFSDA College Scholarship Award from the Smithville ISD Child Nutrition Education Committee as well.

Rachelle also graduated from the Julie Alexander Leadership Program this April, 2025, attaining her Level 4 certification, and also holds TASN Level 4 certification. Way to go, Rachelle!



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Melissa Moore, FCSI, CEO

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Lance Brooks, President

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Southlake, TX 76092
972.245.5300**



TASN AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS 2024-2025

We were proud to honor all of our award and scholarship recipients
at the TASN 2025 Annual Conference!

BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION AWARD

Jeffrey Atkinson, Gregory-Portland ISD
Teresa Evans, Crosby ISD

LUNCH PARTICIPATION AWARD

Carlette Drabek, Navarro ISD

MEMBERSHIP AWARD

Mary Boyd, Corpus Christi ISD
Susie Little, Cleveland ISD
Debbie Taylor, Trinidad ISD

CERTIFICATION AWARD

Suellen Atteberry, Garland ISD
Courtney Boullion, Hardin-Jefferson ISD

LOCAL PLAN OF ACTION AWARD

Maria Sanchez Garcia, Aldine ISD

AREA REPRESENTATIVE AWARD

Tina Brooks, Stratford ISD

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Adrian Hansell, Klein ISD

SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR AWARD

Debbie Jackson, Montgomery ISD

DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Jessiica Howell, YES PREP Public Schools

TEXAS FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AWARD

First Place: Brenham ISD

Second Place: Magnolia ISD

Honorable Mention: Lumberton ISD

PARTNERSHIP IN NUTRITION AWARD

Justin Jasmin, Garland ISD

Teresita Montoya, Aldine ISD

Jody Nieto, Copperas Cove ISD

MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Connie Ingram, Willis ISD

NUTRITION EDUCATION AWARD

Melissa Bryan, Copperas Cove ISD

Jessiica Howell, YES PREP Public Schools

Melissa Moreno, Copperas Cove ISD

Ashley Robbins, East Central ISD

Veronica Villarreal, East Central ISD

ADMINISTRATIVE ACADEMY SCHOLARSHIP

Crystal Strader, New Caney ISD

GED SCHOLARSHIP

Michele Albiero, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Maria Bautista, Aldine ISD

ESL SCHOLARSHIP

Gloria Akatugba, Aldine ISD

Artemiza Azua Cabello, Birdville ISD

Marlen Miranda, Aldine ISD

GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP

Joy Hayes, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Stephanie Trevino, Sweeny ISD

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

Sandra Botello, Sweeny ISD

Dolly Carmona, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Adrian Hansell, Klein ISD

Angelica Jimenez, Angleton ISD

Rachelle Kan, North East ISD

Sonia Ledezma, Galena Park ISD

Ramona Love, East Central ISD

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2024-2025 MANAGERS ACADEMY GRADUATES

Hayde Almanza, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Alma Artica, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Margarita Ayala, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Mallory Barnes, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Analisa Barrientes, Beeville ISD

Aprele Bethem, Franklin ISD

Maria Campos, Beeville ISD

Ryan Carr, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Victoria Cisneros, Beeville ISD

Tosha Davis, Franklin ISD

Maggie Elizondo, Gregory-Portland ISD

Susan Felice, Gregory-Portland ISD

Stephanie Fierova, Beeville ISD

Linzee Fowler, Woodville ISD

Susan Fuentez, Gregory-Portland ISD

Earnest Gomez, Beeville ISD

Jesse Gonzales, Beeville ISD

Phyllis Hawkins, Franklin ISD

Sheila Henson, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Shannon Hurst, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Caroline Kimzey, Humble ISD

Gina Lopez, Gregory-Portland ISD

Martha Lopez, Gregory-Portland ISD

Michelle Mari,n Beeville ISD

Teresa Marines, Corpus Christi ISD

Harley Maxwell, Woodville ISD

Laura Meeks, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD

Rhiannon Mejia, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Nadia Moody, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD

Erica Norman, College Station ISD

Kelly Olivas-Rubin, Beeville ISD

Heather Oliver, Woodville ISD

Rachel Perez, Gregory-Portland ISD

Sarai Quirarte, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Martha Ramos, College Station ISD

Stephanie Ramos, Corpus Christi ISD

Samantha Reeves, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Norma Riojas, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Irene Rios, Gregory-Portland ISD

Chelsea Rivera, Corpus Christi ISD

Desiree Rodriguez, Beeville ISD

Sandra Salinas, Beeville ISD

Ashley Salone, Gregory-Portland ISD

Lana Sedgwick, Gregory-Portland ISD

Lisa Strine, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Pamela Swindell, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Vecy Urquilla, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

Frances Witherspoon, Franklin ISD

2024-2025 ADMINISTRATIVE ACADEMY GRADUATES

Carrie Allen, Aldine ISD
Lindsey Anderle, Whitesboro ISD
Lori Bauer, Willis ISD
Malenia Bell, Woodville ISD
Lorenza Cervantes, San Marcos CISD
Fernando Ciprian, Tomball ISD
Thomas Edwards, Southside ISD
Tracie Garduno, Spring ISD
Tennia Gilbert, Uplift Education
Robin Gonzales, Northside ISD
Brandon Guzman, Klein ISD
Laura Hernandez, Donna ISD
Courtney Huckels, Spring ISD
Sheila Johnston, Whitesboro ISD
Sharon Jones, Willis ISD
Kathryn Laurance, Houston ISD
Madrea Loy, Woodville ISD
Priscilla Magallanes, Southside ISD
Hosana Medbery, Texas City ISD
Mario Monjaras, Beeville ISD
Edna Palacios, El Paso ISD
Beatriz Ramirez, Klein ISD
Virna Rey, El Paso ISD
Brooke Roberson, Klein ISD
Benjamin Rojo Settle, San Angelo ISD
Claudia Sanchez, Pearland ISD
Amy Santagate, Copperas Cove ISD
Shelby Shelley, Klein ISD
Katrina Shriver, Pearland ISD
Angela Tibbs, Klein ISD
Ashlyn Ziaja, Klein ISD

TASN 2025-2026 ADMINISTRATIVE ACADEMY

The TASN Administrative Academy is an in-depth training facilitated by the TASN Education Committee. It is designed to provide practical business skills for school food service administration. Invaluable resources will be provided to child nutrition directors, assistant directors, supervisors, and managers.

The academy offers a two-part series of comprehensive courses in school food service management. Courses will cover eight key areas pertinent to operating a sound, successful school food service program. A highly qualified team of instructors will guide participants through each course and share insights reached through years of hands-on experience.

DATES

Administrative Academy Part I:

October 9-10, 2025, in conjunction with the [Second Board of Directors and committee meetings](#), at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Conference Center in Grapevine.

Administrative Academy Part II:

The second part of this year's Administrative Academy will take place in February. The location is being finalized.

Details about registration for the Administrative Academy will be available soon on [TASN.net](#).

REQUIREMENTS

An Administrative Academy attendee must:

- be an active TASN member
- submit a letter of recommendation or sponsor letter from their Superintendent/Director
- have **ONE** of the following:
 - 3 years of school food service experience
 - an unofficial transcript of an associate degree plus two years of school food service experience
 - Bachelor's Degree in a related field

TASN 2025-2026 MANAGERS ACADEMY

The TASN Managers Academy is designed to improve the competencies, knowledge and skills of cafeteria managers. Topics include customer service, leadership, creating an effective team, menu planning, human resources, cashier training, and financial management. The four sessions of this training series provide the highest level of management training available.

Successful completion of the Managers Academy program allows participants to apply for TASN Level 4 certification.

TASN recently wrapped up two summer Manager Academies. The next opportunity will be in San Antonio this fall. **Check the [TASN website](#) for details and keep an eye out for email updates.**

REQUIREMENTS

It is preferred that the member has a food handler's certificate prior to attending the academy.

To attend Managers Academy, a member must:

- be an active member
- submit a letter of recommendation from the district supervisor or director



2024-2025 Managers Academy participants

For more information about the Administrative and Managers Academies, contact TASN HQ at 512-371-0087 ext.207 or email Ericv@tasn.net.

LEGISLATIVE WINS FOR TEXAS SCHOOL NUTRITION:

Funding Gains for Free Meals and Summer EBT

The 89th Texas legislative session

brought several developments that will directly and indirectly impact school nutrition operations, meal access, and food safety standards across the state. Below are the most notable updates affecting our programs and the families we serve, both now and in the coming years.

Ending Reduced-Price Lunch: More Meals, No Cost

In a continuation of progress made last session, the Texas Legislature not only preserved funding to eliminate the reduced-price category for School Breakfast but expanded this initiative to include School Lunch. With an additional \$13.2 million in appropriations, thousands more Texas children will now receive both breakfast and lunch completely free of charge.

This change removes financial barriers for working families who might not qualify for free meals but still struggle with daily meal costs. It increases access to healthy meals and reduces stigma for students. This investment underscores the state's growing commitment to ensuring every child starts their day nourished and ready to learn.

SB 314: Prohibited Additives in School Meals

Senate Bill 314 introduces new food safety restrictions for school meals. Effective school year 2026–2027, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools participating in federal child nutrition programs (National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, or state-funded meal programs under Section 33.901) will be prohibited from serving foods containing

By Jennifer Miller
Garland ISD



specific chemical additives as part of any free or reduced-price meal.

The bill bans the following substances:

1. Brominated vegetable oil (BVO)
2. Potassium bromate
3. Propylparaben
4. Azodicarbonamide
5. Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA)
6. Red 3
7. Red 40
8. Yellow 5
9. Yellow 6
10. Blue 1
11. Blue 2
12. Green 3
13. Citrus Red 3
14. Orange B
15. Ammonia caramel (Class III – INS No. 150c)
16. Sulfite ammonia caramel (Class IV – INS No. 150d)
17. Titanium dioxide
18. Any additive substantially similar to those listed above

This legislation will require coordination between school districts, food manufacturers, and vendors to ensure all products served meet the new standards by the implementation deadline.

Summer EBT Funding for 2027

The Legislature also approved \$60 million for the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to implement the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program, beginning Summer 2027. The program is expected to bring approximately \$450 million per summer in federal food assistance to support children who rely on school meals during the academic year.

It is important to note that the appropriation includes a contingency clause: if Congress enacts legislation that shifts additional Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) costs—either through increased benefit obligations or administrative costs—to the states, the funding will be voided. This clause is tied to provisions in the House-passed federal budget reconciliation proposal. Discussions are ongoing with state lawmakers to potentially revise this language.

SNAP Restrictions – SB 379 Final Version

A bill that originally aimed to prohibit SNAP (Lone Star Card) purchases of sweetened beverages, chips, cookies, and candy (SB 379) was significantly amended before final passage. The final version of the bill aligns with a directive issued by Governor Abbott, narrowing the list of prohibited items to only sweetened beverages and candy, specifically:

- Prohibited under final version: Sweetened beverages (defined as those containing ≥5g added sugar or artificial sweeteners) and candy packaged for immediate consumption.
- Removed from restriction: Chips and cookies.

This change was intended to simplify implementation and reduce confusion for SNAP participants. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) will now be required to seek a waiver from the USDA to implement these changes, with a tentative goal of going into effect by September 1, 2025.

Looking Ahead

These legislative successes reflect the power of unified advocacy and a growing recognition of the essential role school nutrition plays in supporting student health, academic performance, and equity. As always, your voice matters. Whether you're in a school cafeteria, a district office, or the state capitol, your efforts make a difference.



SCHEDULE A VISIT!

Since Texas lawmakers will soon be in their home districts until January 2027, and federal legislators are generally home during the August recess, the beginning of the school year is a perfect time to invite your representative or senator to visit your district and see your department in action! Seeing firsthand the important work that you do highlights the real-world impact of policy and funding decisions at the ground level, and helps build stronger relationships and support for the issues that matter most.

Click [here](#) to find out who represents you.



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TASN 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW

IGNITE THE LIGHT

June 28-30, 2026
Gaylord Texan Resort • Grapevine

Join us in Grapevine next June where we'll *Ignite The Light* together at the Annual Conference and the nation's second-largest school food show.

2026 BOOTH RATES

10 x 10 BOOTH	MEMBER RATE	NON-MEMBER RATE
IN-LINE BOOTH	\$1,750.00	\$2,200.00
CORNER BOOTH	\$1,850.00	\$2,300.00

BOOTH INCLUDES:

- Five conference badges per 10x10 booth
- Post-conference attendee contact file
- Conference app listing and product description
- Company ID sign
- Two chairs
- Six-foot skirted table
- Eight-foot back drape
- Three-foot side drape
- Wastebasket
- Two Industry Night tickets per 10x10 booth (more available for purchase)

EXHIBIT REGISTRATION FOR TASN MEMBERS
OPENS IN SEPTEMBER!

SUCCESS AND OUTREACH HEIGHTEN AWARENESS OF SCHOOL NUTRITION'S IMPACT

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



Thank you for working to improve school meals, serve local foods, and promote your success on social media. These efforts have raised program visibility among elected officials and in your communities. Your progress improves

people's perception of school nutrition and introduces them to the reality of serving five million meals for Texas children every school day.

Heightened awareness matters as lawmakers consider decisions about nutrition programs that could affect school nutrition for years. Such attention has already resulted in changes. This session, the Texas Legislature provided assistance to streamline programs for you and families by funding the cost differential for reduced-price meals at breakfast and lunch.

Covering the \$.30 copay for breakfast and the \$.40 copay for lunch removes one hurdle faced by program operators and families in Texas. Texas lawmakers also prohibited certain food additives in school meals. Federal policy makers have even

more authority over your programs and could make impactful changes at any time. Getting involved in organizations like the Texas Association for School Nutrition will keep you in the loop and amplify your influence in their decision making.

Increased visibility also invites misinformation.

Encouraging elected officials to visit your schools during meal service will open their eyes to your reality. Remember that you have a powerful voice that can impact lawmakers when they visit your schools to enjoy a school meal and see your work.

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Start by celebrating [National School Lunch Week](#) and [National School Breakfast Week](#) and inviting media, city officials, and state representatives. The same goes for the [Farm Fresh Challenge](#). Student participation will only add to the impact. Before the school year starts, use social media and parent communications to encourage students to apply for the Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA) student engagement initiative [Health Ambassadors for a Ready Texas \(HART\)](#).

A former student in the HART program served as a TDA Food and Nutrition intern this summer. As a HART student he applied for and received a \$2,000 grant to promote school nutrition. His school nutrition team recommended the grant program. He worked with the child nutrition director and his friends to launch an over-the-top National School Breakfast Week celebration with fun games that attracted about a thousand students or half the high school. The funds went for decorations and door prizes that included an Apple watch, AirPods, and more.

The [MyPlate Ambassador program](#) for high school students will be fully implemented this year and provides another opportunity for your students to add to their nutrition expertise and support your programs. Students in the program will promote good nutrition in their community and schools. Participating in healthy eating assessments can earn

them up to \$200. Look for more information on [SquareMeals.org](#) and encourage student leaders to apply.

Ultimately, your success depends on the fundamentals – compliance and reimbursements. As you jump into a new school year you will address policy changes including limits on added sugars. Look for other changes highlighted in [TDA's Administrator's Reference Manual \(ARM\)](#). Our policy team updated it recently. Talk to your representatives at the Education Service Center and attend our next [school call](#) on August 27, 2025.

You have so many opportunities to advance your programs in the 2025-2026 school year. An excellent year starts with everyone's participation – students, staff, parents, and local leaders. Respond to their feedback and rally their support to strengthen school nutrition in your community and across Texas. Thank you again for the great work you do, and I look forward to seeing the results of an exciting new year for school nutrition in the Lone Star State.



TASN HQ wishes everyone a wonderful start to the new school year! We're here to support you in your crucial mission of nourishing the children of Texas.



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