



## MSNA 2021 Election Results

Thank you to all the MSNA members who took the time to vote for the future officers of our association. We have some great leadership talent that will be stepping up to lead the association in the years ahead! Thank you all the 2021 ballot candidates. Each one of you demonstrated professionalism and courage by making this important commitment to serve school nutrition programs.

Congratulations to Michele Hawkinson, Tracy ISD as incoming 2021-2022 Vice President, Jennifer Walters, MBS, RD, SNS, Winona ISD as the incoming Nutrition Chair and to Glen Ritter, Inver Grove Heights/So. St. Paul ISD as a 2022-2024 Leadership Development Committee Member.



*Vice President*  
*Michele Hawkinson*  
*Tracy ISD*



*Nutrition Chair*  
*Jennifer Walters, MBS, RD, SNS*  
*Winona ISD*



*Leadership Development Committee*  
*Glen Ritter*  
*Inver Grove Heights/So. St. Paul ISD*

On May 19th, the MSNA Executive Board appointed Kim Hinrichs, Buffalo/Montrose/Hanover ISD to the Education Chair position for a one year term and Kathy Faust, Cross Lake Community Schools to a one year term on the Leadership Development Committee.



*Education Chair*  
*Kim Hinrichs*  
*Buffalo/Montrose/Hanover ISD*



*Leadership Development Committee*  
*Kathy Faust*  
*CrossLake Community Schools*

The incoming board will serve under the leadership of incoming President, Carrie Frank, Dover/Eyota ISD. They will be installed at the 64th Annual State Conference in August!

The full 2021-2022 Board will consist of: President, Carrie Frank, President Elect, Cheryl Pick, Vice President, Michele Hawkinson, Secretary/Treasurer, Vickie J. Speltz, Nutrition Chair, Jennifer Walters, Member Services Chair, Lori Landowski, Education Chair, Kim Hinrichs, PPL Chair, Brenton Lexvold, and Industry Chair, Steve Martel. Congratulations to our newly elected and our board appointed leaders!

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# President's Message



*Jo Lange, SNS  
MSNA President*

Dear MSNA Members,

It is already time to finish out another year, and what a year it has been! Even though it was certainly one of the most challenging years of our school nutrition careers, we all came through with flying colors and a greater determination to feed the students of Minnesota than ever. We all rose to the occasion and went above and beyond to serve our students through every imaginable situation that could possibly be thrown at us. You all have my heartfelt admiration for all of the strength, courage, determination and adaptability you put forth; you have shown just how important and vital school nutrition programs are to the education and well-being of kids of all ages in our great state. Well done!

MSNA's 2020-2021 year was just as challenging for the Executive Board, and they also rose to the occasion and accomplished many things as a team. I have addressed a lot of these things in previous Thymes articles, but I will recap them again for all.

MSNA partnered with CalSNA early in the year to provide a virtual Annual Conference in lieu of our own Annual Conference that was to be held in St. Cloud last August but had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. The CalSNA conference offered MSNA members the opportunity to attend education sessions that helped members get CEU's for professional development. The annual SNIP conference actually had to be postponed twice, in May 2020 and October 2020, and will now be held at Breezy Point Resort this coming October. With the COVID-19 gathering restrictions in place, we were also not able to hold the Nutrition Conference. The Nutrition Chair and Education Chair coordinated together, along with the Secretary Treasurer, to organize and offer the Nutrition Series of 1-hour virtual trainings to our members during February, March and early April. These sessions also enabled members to obtain CEU's for their professional development renewals.

The Executive Board and Executive Committee met virtually during the year for all scheduled meetings, which saved time and MSNA money during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many things were accomplished during these meetings, including bylaw amendments which will be voted on at the House of Delegates meeting at Annual Conference. You can see the amendments in this edition of the Thymes. Policy and Procedures were also updated to reflect a more defined and enhanced Leadership Development Committee which will provide a more robust effort by the committee to recruit members to volunteer for committees and/or board positions. This is necessary in order for MSNA's leadership to continue to be a high caliber, highly productive and proactive board. Also during this challenging year, the Secretary Treasurer, Executive Committee and Executive Board were diligent in minding the association finances and budget. I am happy to report that MSNA's finances are stable, and as of this writing, all of our long term reserves have not been touched. It was necessary to transfer some funds from savings to checking to keep things going, but at this time, savings still has a balance and the funds in savings have not been depleted. Kudos for being conservative and budget conscious!

Before I conclude this article, I want to offer my congratulations to our newest members of the Executive Board and the Leadership Development Committee. Newly elected to the Executive Board are Vice President Michele Hawkinson, Nutrition Chair Jennifer Walters, and Leadership Development Committee member Glen Ritter.

Lori Landowski was reappointed by the Board for a second two-year term as Member Services Chair. With Michele Hawkinson being installed as Vice President in August and Jennifer Walters being installed as Nutrition Chair, the Executive Board appointed Kim Hinrichs as Education Chair and Kathy Faust as Leadership Development Committee member to fill the one year vacancies created by the election results. I know that all of these volunteers will be stellar in their new positions.

In closing, I want to let you know that I have truly enjoyed my years of service on the Executive Board, and I have gotten to know so many of you. Thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve you, I have enjoyed every minute of it. You are all amazing and I appreciate your dedication to MSNA and your school districts. Continue to be inspired by those around you and reach for the stars. You are capable of anything you set your mind to.

Your work is deeply appreciated.  
Continue to Be Inspired and Shoot for the Stars.

Jo Lange, SNS  
MNSNA President

# President Elect



*Carrie Frank*  
*President Elect*

Hello MSNA Members!

I want to applaud all of you for everything you have done this past year. You have had to pivot, turn, slide, twist and work extremely hard in extreme circumstances to make sure all your students were fed, whether it was during supply shortages, staff shortages and financial issues, you did it! Bravo to you all and I hope you can catch your breath over the summer!

We are so excited to be able to meet in person this year at the 64th Annual State Conference. Our AC committee is working extremely hard to make it one of the best conferences to date! I encourage you all to attend!

One of the duties I have as President Elect is to chair the House of Delegates (HOD). This year we will be holding the House of Delegates on Sunday, August 1 at 4:00pm at the River's Edge Convention Center. Per our bylaws this meeting is scheduled every other year or if a change in the association bylaws are proposed. We have worked on our draft amendments with our Parliamentarian to make sure the language was correct. Then we had to send the proposed amendments to SNA. As a state affiliate with the national association, one of the requirements we must adhere to, is to have SNA review and approve any amendments to our current bylaws so there is conformity with the SNA bylaws! After review and few adjustments, SNA has approved our amendments to go to the HOD and have our delegates meet to discuss and approve the proposed amendments!

Have you ever wondered how the House of Delegates works or who are the delegates that vote? Our bylaws have the full outline of what the composition of the house of delegates is made up of and note that the house of delegates have the authority to approve amendments to the MSNA bylaws and articles of incorporation. The voting delegates are made up of the members of the executive board, five immediate past state presidents and two delegates from each chapter, which may include the chapter president, the chapter president elect or their alternates. Our executive director is a non-voting member.

We want all our chapters and officers to understand that they are an integral part of our association, and we need the officers or their alternates to be present at the HOD. Adoption of proposed resolutions shall require a majority vote and to achieve this we need our chapter officers in attendance. All MSNA members are welcome to observe during the HOD. Current & incoming chapter officers and past immediate state presidents will be notified with information on the upcoming HOD.

We will be bringing forth a total of three (3) [proposed amendments](#) to the HOD.

1. Proposal 21-01- House of Delegates and Amendments to the MSNA Bylaws  
Article V, Section 22.
2. Proposal 21-02-Board of Directors  
Article VII, Section 1
3. Proposal 21-03- Committee Terms  
Article VII, Section 5

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the annual conference!

Stay Safe and Healthy!

Carrie Frank  
MNSA President Elect

I also want to congratulate Jill Lahti, Wazyata Schools for winning our +1 Membership Challenge that was held from October thru December 2020. Jill will receive a conference registration for the 64th Annual Conference in St. Cloud! Congratulations Jill!!!

# Secretary/Treasurer



*Vickie Speltz*  
Secretary/Treasurer

*Hello MSNA Members!*

What a year this has been! We all have worked tirelessly to feed the students and community and I want you to know how much I appreciate you all. I must give shout out to my staff for their hard work and showing up each day!! You are all amazing!

Now that we are into setting up the annual conference, know that we are also being as careful with our spending as we can. We are working hard to make sure we are keeping our conference budget as tight as we can while still offering all the fun things we can! As treasurer, I keep working on different type of financial scenarios so we can be able to sustain the costs-cover all costs- no matter what type of conference we might have.

We are still monitoring what is happening with the CDC guidelines, state guidelines and the River's Edge safety protocol is. We are implementing safety procedures to make sure we all are as safe as we can be when we all meet up in August! This will help determine how MSNA will come to a decision.

At the annual conference, I will be presenting the financial year in review and also working with President Jo Lange

on the business meeting for the review of the association for the past two years. Note that we have been very fiscally responsible and that in turn has helped us weather this past year and half!

We have successfully concluded the online Certified Food Protection Manager Series held in May and June. These sessions replaced the session we normally would have had at the conference. Thank you to Melissa Anderson RD, SNS and Annette Hendrickx Derouin, RD, SNS for teaching this 4 hour renewal course. We had statewide attendees that enjoyed interactive and fun lessons online and received their renewal hours without leaving home!

### Financial Report for May 2021

Checking:	\$19,927.77
Savings:	\$6,618.94
Investments:	\$370,359.87
CD Investments:	\$114,366.19
Total:	\$511,272.77

The June financial statements were not ready at the time of writing this article.

Can't wait to see you all at the 64th Annual State Conference!  
Stay safe and healthy!

Vickie

## 2021 Award Winners



### Director of the Year

Stacy Koppen, SNS, MS, RD, LD, Director of Nutrition for Saint Paul Public Schools, has been awarded the SNA state Director of the Year and the Midwest Regional Director of

the Year!! This award recognizes the extraordinary contributions of school nutrition directors who manage effective school nutrition programs providing healthy, appetizing meals to students. Stacy led efforts to rebound the nutrition program from financial deficit, and they are now able to invest in new equipment. She has used her business savvy and communications skills to work with various groups in the district and close program gaps. She helped create a unique zero hunger and zero waste initiative, which collected extensive data that could also be used to make operational improvements to the nutrition program.

When the pandemic started and schools closed in-person learning, Stacy led her team to work with the transportation department and create a completely new home meal delivery operation for local children. The initiative also ensured full-time employment for nutrition services staff, bus drivers

and teacher assistants. She also secured a grant to pay every employee an extra three dollars an hour for hazard pay. Her district served more than 16,000,000 meals over the pandemic, the most successful direct-to-door delivery program in the state.



### Manager of the Year

Wendy Andrews, kitchen manager at Valley View Middle School, Bloomington Public Schools, has been awarded the state SNA Manager of the Year. Valley View is

one of three middle schools in Bloomington Public Schools. Considered the highest honor a school nutrition manager can earn; the award recognizes a cafeteria manager who has demonstrated dedication and ingenuity to improve his or her school meal program.

During the pandemic, Wendy has been the constantly smiling masked face with a sign reading "Free Meals" for students. She has continued to motivate staff over the past year by being creative about how the school provides nutritious meals for students and the community. She truly

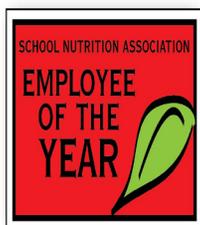
# Award Winners

believes in neighbors helping neighbors, encouraging others to pick up meals for those that couldn't drive or get to the school for their meals.

With the safety and cleanliness of her kitchen prioritized, Wendy has become known for her training efforts with staff and students. Every lunch she mingles with students, reminding them to wash their hands, "take what they touch" and maintain their social distance. Treating her staff like family and creating a positive work environment, Andrews enjoys eating breakfast and lunch with employees and volunteers.

Wendy offers opportunities for her staff to continue their career training and education, sharing the benefits of being an SNA member. She encourages them to network with fellow nutrition service professionals. She is known to not ever ask anyone to do something she herself would not do and is always ready to lend a helping hand where she can.

## Employee of the Year



Debra Root, Nutrition Service Assistant at Falcon Heights Elementary School, Roseville Area Public Schools has been awarded the state SNA Employee of the Year and the SNA Midwest Regional Employee of the Year!! Falcon Heights is one of eight

elementary schools in Roseville Area Public School District. The award recognizes the valuable contribution of school nutrition employees who exhibit a remarkable commitment to the school meal program and the students they serve.

For 27 years, Debbie has been taking care of students' needs, particularly those with special dietary needs or those students who are just having a bad day. Her smiling face, before mask wearing days, was a comforting welcome to students as they entered the cafeteria each day. She has been instrumental in creating attractive, pre-plated meals for staff while also increasing grab-n-go meals at the school. Debbie has become a historian of sorts, capturing school programs, conferences and now during the pandemic with her camera. Her pictures have been used on the district's Facebook and Instagram pages to help advertise available food boxes and highlight the staff's hard work.

A leader among her Nutrition Service Assistants, Debbit encourages staff to grow professionally, helping to train new staff and take continued training courses. She is flexible and willing to lend a helping hand, stepping in where needed and floating to different schools to help ensure proper staffing coverage. Supervisors describe her as reliable, steadfast and caring. Debbie serves as the district's unofficial SNA liaison, helping staff register for the SNA certificate process and get educated on what holding a certificate can do in addition to providing the most up-to-date information to help staff reach their full potential.

## MSNA Innovation Award

Ricardo Abbott of Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS), has been awarded the MSNA Innovation Award. The award recognizes Ricardo's ability to remain calm and unruffled in an emergency, acting immediately to employ the new concept of bundled meal boxes to ensure Saint Paul remain fed through the pandemic.

After a Sunday evening brainstorm session with his school nutrition team, Ricardo prepared the weekly meal box concept to introduce to district leaders on Monday. He was one of the first nutrition professionals in the state to consider a weekly, bundled meal concept to minimize virus exposure for both staff and families. He also worked with the district transportation director to gain support from bus drivers in delivering the meals. As early as March 18, 2020, SPPS was operating the nutrition program via 275 school buses along bus route pick-ups and offering daily school curbside grab-and-go pick-ups. Ricardo led a team of 50 employees serving 16 million meals to the children of Saint Paul.

## MSNA "E" Team Award

The leadership team at Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) Nutrition Center has been awarded the 2021 MSNA "E" Team Award, which showcases excellence in foodservice teamwork, creativity and customer service.

This year has tested many to work in new ways, with different colleagues and find solutions to wide range of daily challenges. The "E" Team Award honors staff members Genny Turner, Bono Gbolo, Tracy Alexander and Cole Welhaven for going the "Extra Mile" to serve the students and staff in their school. According to their manager, it seemed more like went a "thousand extra miles" this year. Like many school food service departments, this year has been a challenging one at SPPS. Overnight, they were tasked with creating school meal boxes filled with a week's worth of food for all children in Saint Paul, not only SPPS students. From March 2020 to February 15, 2021, more than 16,000,000 meals were provided to children.

Even during a pandemic, the team was committed to providing all children qualify foods that were fresh, exciting and culturally relevant – improving menus and procuring new foods. Members of this team connected with representatives from immigrant communities, visiting ethnic grocery stores and incorporating foods that were culturally significant for local families. Together, they packaged and distributed over 30,000 meal boxes per week, filling 60,000 pallets and deliver to the homes of 14,000 children while still managing five daily pick-up curbside locations.

In August, all the award winners will be honored during the Awards Ceremony at the 64th Minnesota School Nutrition Association's Annual State Conference at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud, MN.



*Steve Martel  
Industry Chair*

Wow! Again Wow! So much has happened since my last update! We are finally moving out of the pandemic and back to the new normal!

At the time of writing this article, it is technically still spring, we are in a heat wave that is breaking records. Hopefully as you finished the last weeks of school, the AC was working, and you kept cool!

It has been quite a year! I am looking forward to a nice summer and am hopeful we will return to a near normal school year in the fall.

I am truly amazed at how many meals School Foodservice operations have served during the last year! In my conversations with FS directors, I have heard about some truly astonishing numbers! I am proud to be part of the MSNA, and I am honored and humbled to work with such an outstanding group of people. You are my hero's and your work during the pandemic is greatly appreciated and will not be forgotten.

The Industry Advisory Board (IAB) is continuing with the planning for 2021, with the elimination of the Covid 19 restrictions, we are focusing our time and efforts on the Annual Conference Vendor Show. We are extremely excited to be hosting one of the first in-person events and will be working to ensure it will be a safe and impactful event. While there will be some changes, we expect it will be very similar to previous years. Watch for additional details to come in the next month. Conference registration and vendor show registration are open so make sure you register so we can continue with the planning.

We are so excited for the SNIP conference, which will be

finally happening at the end of October at Breezy Point! Mark your calendars for October 27-29th! Registration and the hotel block will open in early August so watch for that on the website and in your email in box!

We want to thank all our Industry members who have renewed their membership for 2021! We deeply appreciate your support and partnership! Your support of MSNA allows us to continue to support school foodservice in Minnesota. It is not too late to renew your membership and take advantage of the benefits membership brings! The Industry Advisory Board and Executive Board continue to ensure that membership creates value for all Industry members and will be adding additional opportunities for members in 2021 and beyond.

We would like to announce that Jeremy Kurth, GVM Food Marketing, has been appointed as a new member of the Industry Advisory Board! We are looking forward to all the great experience he will bring to the board. Welcome Jeremy!!

Like all of you, I am excited for summer and the warmer weather it brings. I hope you all have a chance to relax and recharge! I look forward to seeing all of you in person at Annual Conference! I am proud to lead the Industry Advisory Board and be a partner to School Foodservice.

Please stay safe and be well.

Steve



*Breezy Point Resort  
Breezy Point MN*



Have you seen the new Job Posting Board on the MSNA website? If you are an employer and need to post a job, all you need to do is go to the website, click on the red tab on the home page "Member Job Posting Board". It will take you to a survey monkey page to post your open position.

[MSNA Job Posting Board](#)

This is a space for MSNA members to post their available jobs at their respective district/companies. All \*information for job postings must be filled out completely. Jobs will be posted within 48 hours and the job postings stay up for a period of two weeks once placed on website.

# 2021 Elite Industry Members



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To find out more on how to become an MSNA Industry Member visit our [Industry page](#) on the MSNA website or contact the [MSNA office](#)!

# Conference Corner



Plan to join us!

Registration is now open for [MSNA's 64th Annual State Conference](#), August 1-4, 2021, at the St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center. This year, registration

is online only. To [get started](#), watch the tutorial on how to login in and how to register. We have extended the Early Bird Registration until July 15th! There are options for [districts to register](#) their staff...check out the website for all the details!

Now that we made it through the past year it is time for some great education sessions, fun and networking! Our MSNA Conference Committee has worked extremely hard getting things in place for the conference, ensuring this conference will be one of our best! **Thank You** to the committee for their hard work and a thank you to all of our school and industry members for their patience as we navigated through this ever-evolving new normal.

We are looking forward to the 64th Annual State Conference as the "School Event of the Year" with our exciting opening keynote speaker, Holly Hoffman! Holly was the last remaining member of the Espada Tribe and the last woman standing on Season 21 of CBS' hit reality show "Survivor Nicaragua". Holly acknowledges that life is made up of challenges, and we are oftentimes faced with situations that seem insurmountable. Within each of us is an ability to focus our thoughts, emotions, and energy to succeed—if only we have the knowledge, tools, and discipline to do so.



*Holly Hoffman*

energy to succeed—if only we have the knowledge, tools, and discipline to do so.



*Chef Sean Sherman*

Chef Sean Sherman is a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, born and raised in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Cooking in kitchens across the United States and Mexico for over 30 years, Chef Sean is renowned nationally and internationally in the culinary movement of Indigenous foods. His focus is the revitalization and evolution of Indigenous foods

systems throughout North America. His extensive studies on the foundations of Indigenous food systems have led to his deep understanding of what is needed to showcase Native American cuisine in today's world.



*Chris Heeter*

Chris Heeter, The Wild Institute, is out to create a Wild revolution in the workplace. A wilderness guide since 1984 and professional speaker since 2001, Chris has led and worked with a diverse array of teams, both canine and human! She brings decades of leadership experience indoors, working with teams and leaders, helping us

recognize that leadership and teamwork doesn't have to be so complicated. With remarkable parallels to the work world, Chris will share hilarious stories from her sled dog team with their quirky personalities and from guiding whitewater trips, where successfully navigating obstacles (mostly) is part of the journey. Chris will challenge and inspire us toward Wild leadership, compassionate presence, and daring authenticity!

We have some great workshops planned, click here to see the line up. (note: that this is subject to change). We will be implementing social distancing and safety protocol for all sessions. . At this time, we will not be requiring you to wear a mask but if you'd like to, please do what you need to do to feel safe. We will be monitoring all CDC guidelines right up until the conference begins.

Registration is open for the Vendor Show. The exhibit hall (Vendor Show) will be open on Tuesday, August 3 - and our vendors are excited to showcase their fantastic products! We have directors only time on the exhibit floor and two groups -one group on the show floor or in with Chef Sean Sherman.

We will be having the Education Scholarship Fundraiser! We encourage all chapters to donate and bring a basket/box/bag of goodies that will be up for all to purchase a ticket to win it! Tickets will be cash/check only-no credit cards. We are planning on also having some MSNA logo sweatshirts for sale during the conference. More details to come on this!

Evening meal vouchers for attendees to choose from local restaurants on Monday and Tuesday night. Plan on attending some off [campus activities](#) that involve planting and fun!

Service Project this year is for Red Lake Rosie's Rescue on the Red Lake and White Earth Reservations of northern Minnesota. Red Lake Rosie's provides a shelter for homeless, unwanted and injured animals and has a food shelf to provide basic food for those animals who have no other source of food. [Click here](#) for a full list of items you can donate and bring to the registration desk at conference!



## SNA CNR Task Force Issues Recommendations

SNA's Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) Task Force has finalized [recommendations](#) for the Association to share with Congress as they work to reauthorize the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). In March, SNA convened a diverse group of school nutrition operators, State agency and industry members to examine every aspect of HHFKA, gather input, discuss concerns and identify potential solutions to ensure the continued success of school meal programs. The final Board-approved [recommendations](#) cover a broad range of topics, ranging from expanding access to school meals through universal meals and increasing reimbursement rates, to addressing meal pattern challenges and reducing the complexity of reporting requirements.

## House Education and Labor Subcommittee Holds Hearing on CNR Priorities

The U.S. House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services held the [hearing](#), "Ending Child Hunger: Priorities for Child Nutrition Reauthorization." During this hearing, Committee Chair Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) stated, "we have the opportunity to rethink our child nutrition programs to provide every child with the healthy food they need to succeed in school and throughout life" and "to make these flexibilities permanent to ensure kids have access to healthy and nutritious meals year-round." Watch the [full Subcommittee hearing](#).

Check out the new infographic, "[Key Findings on The Benefits of 7 Healthy School Meals for All](#)," from Healthy Eating Research.

The American Heart Association is supporting federal legislation, the Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill, that would implement a universal school meal program as well as reinforce school nutrition standards. The move comes as data shows that child obesity rates rose last spring during pandemic-related closures and shutdowns. [Full story here](#).

## SNA Comments on COVID-19 School Meal Operations Study

SNA submitted comments in response to the USDA FNS Federal Register Comment Request, "School Meal Operations Study: Evaluation of the COVID-19 Child Nutrition Waivers and Child Nutrition Programs". In the comment letter, SNA encouraged USDA to recognize and adjust for abrupt changes in traditional school meal operations due to the pandemic crisis. Without national coordination, each local educational agency has implemented best practices and actions to address their needs and address safety and social distancing protocols. SNA recommends that FNS convene a Commission to evaluate the processes and methods used during this emergency health crisis and develop a national playbook on operating school meal service programs in various emergencies.

[Read the Full Comment Letter](#).

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# National Nibbles



## Embrace the Future at #ANC21

Mark your calendars to join SNA's virtual [Annual National Conference](#) (ANC), July 12-15, 2021! Check out the full [Virtual #ANC21 Education Program](#), now downloadable on the ANC website! The full range of conference topics includes Menu Planning, Nutrition, Leadership/Management, Diversity, and Marketing. Going virtual allows SNA to extend exhibit booth hours—which will open on Monday, July 12—as well as the pre-conference workshops.

Just like the traditional ANC, directors will have exclusive access to meet with exhibitors before the show begins and the chance to win an SNA 2022 conference package. You'll be able to take part in live chats with [keynote speakers](#), join [membership section meetings](#) to connect with your peers, and join in on popular culinary demonstrations. More than [100 exhibitors](#) have signed on so far, and they will be offering giveaways and live demonstrations in their booths. Attending SNA's Annual National Conference will never be more easy or convenient. With no travel expenses, this is the perfect opportunity to take advantage of special savings and have your whole team attend. [Register now!](#)

## TAKE ACTION: Support the Universal School Meals Program Act of 2021!

Senators Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Representatives Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Gwyn Moore (D-WI) introduced [S. 1530](#), the Universal School Meals Program Act of 2021. SNA has endorsed this bill and is urging all members to [send a letter](#) to Congress in support of healthy school meals for all students! This act would offer free breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a snack to all school children regardless of income, eliminate school meal debt, and strengthen local economies by incentivizing local food procurement. Ensure your Members of Congress hear from you in support of the Universal School Meals Program Act—our students depend on YOU to speak up!

## SNA Joins Allied Groups on Letter to Secretary Vilsack on Expanding Direct Certification

On May 10, SNA, along with 10 other organizations, including the School Superintendents Association and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, signed on to an allied letter by the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack. This letter encourages USDA to extend and expand the Demonstration Projects to Evaluate Direct Certification with Medicaid, as proposed in the American Families Plan. Evaluating Direct Certification using Medicaid helps to enroll children for free or reduced-price school meals automatically. [Read the full letter.](#)

## New USDA Data Shows Impact of First Full Year of Pandemic on School Nutrition

[New data](#) from the USDA compares the number of meals served and reimbursements in the year preceding the pandemic (March 2019-February 2020) to the first full year of the pandemic (March 2020-February 2021).

So, how did school nutrition programs fare in the first full year of the pandemic?

A [SNA analysis](#) of the newly released USDA data shows that in the first full year of the pandemic, schools nationwide served nearly 30% fewer meals to students and incurred significant losses in federal revenue in the first twelve months of the pandemic. That's 2.2 billion fewer meals compared to the year preceding the pandemic, equating to a \$2.3 billion loss in federal revenue for school meal programs. For details and to view the full report [click here.](#)

## Read School Nutrition's June/July 2021 Issue

My, my, how time flies! The School Nutrition Association is celebrating 75 years of serving America's children, and you can read all about it in this month's issue of School Nutrition magazine. Plus, now that we're emerging from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, you can take a moment to re-evaluate other important programming—including nutrition education! From lessons for students, to key concepts for staff, the June/July 2021 issue of School Nutrition has all sorts of ideas and inspiration. [Read it today.](#)

## Learn More About LEAD to Succeed!

The School Nutrition Foundation has been working with Georgetown University to create content you can use to build your communication and leadership skills! The first (of many more to come) module, "LEARN to Master Difficult Conversations," is available at no cost OnDemand NOW! Learn more about the training here: [www.schoolnutrition.org/LEAD](http://www.schoolnutrition.org/LEAD)



## Calendar of Events

**July 12-15, 2021**

[ANC \(Virtual\)](#)

**August 1-4, 2021**

[Annual State Conference](#)

St. Cloud MN

**August 3, 2021**

[Vendor Exhibit Show](#)

St. Cloud, MN

**October 11-15, 2021**

National School Lunch Week

**October 27-29 2021**

SNIP Conference-Breezy

Point

## Industry Partners

You can find their information on the Industry Directory on the [MSNA website](#).

### New Industry Members

Arlington Valley Farms

Baker Boy

Basic American Foods

Best Maid Cookie Co.

Catallia Mexican Foods

Cloverdale Foods

ES Foods

Hubert Company

Shearer's Snacks



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Are you thinking of taking the SNS exam?

MSNA will be hosting the SNA Credentialing Exam August 1, 2021 in St. Cloud at the River's Edge Convention Center. Registration is open for signing up for the exam. The SNA registration deadline is July 11, 2021.

If you are interested in taking the exam, visit the SNA website for more details on registration and exam prep. The SNS Exam Central has all the details on what you need to do for the exam and studying. [Click here](#) for all the details.

**\*\*YOU MUST REGISTER THROUGH SNA!!** Once you are registered, you will receive all the information and directions on what you need for the exam directly from SNA!

**PLEASE NOTE:** Use of the SNS Credentialing Exam Handbook, SNS Study Guide and related book, will not guarantee passing the SNS Credentialing Exam. The sample questions included in the SNS Handbook and Study Guide are for practice. The sample questions are NOT part of the SNS exam.

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