

Professional Standards for School Food Service Professionals

Food Service Leaders Voice Their Support



“The School Nutrition Association (SNA) is committed to elevating the quality and efficacy of school meal programs by advancing professional development opportunities for school nutrition professionals, including SNA’s educational conferences, webinars and Certification and Credentialing programs. Ensuring school nutrition personnel are highly trained is especially critical as schools strive to meet new nutrition standards for school meals and snacks.

Continuous professional development initiatives and professional standards will help ensure students continue to receive healthy, safe meals that enhance the public’s confidence in school nutrition professionals and their programs.”

Patti Montague
Chief Executive Officer
School Nutrition Association

“Training for school nutrition personnel is an important aspect of a school’s ability to prepare and serve healthy foods. According to our research, 64 percent of districts report needing staff training to better serve nutritious meals. Professional standards that include food service education can lead to more efficient operations, and ultimately more appealing, cost-effective meals that meet kids’ needs.”

Jessica Donze Black, Director, Kids’ Safe and Healthful Foods Project, PEW Charitable Trusts

“In today’s business landscape, training is not just a matter of survival; it is what separates high performance organizations from those being fitted for a burial suit. Various studies demonstrate that companies that invest in learning outperform the market by more than 45 percent. The Food Services Division must invest in its human capital just as it invests in facilities and equipment in order to be able to maximize the cognitive, physical, and behavioral resources critical to the success of the organization.”

Dennis Barrett, Executive Director, NYC School Food, New York City Department of Education

“The complexities of the school nutrition programs and the varied schools served by the programs require a qualified professional to oversee them. The USDA professional standards will provide the opportunity to address the needs of school nutrition professionals for on-going education.”

Kathleen Millett, State Child Nutrition Director, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

“The release of the professional standards is a positive step for continued growth for child nutrition personnel, both new hires and seasoned professionals. The education and training requirements ensure successful continuation of program administration and oversight. This is a win-win situation for students, School Food Authorities, and child nutrition professionals.”

Janelle Peterson, Food Service Supervisor, Rapid City, S.D., Area Schools

“The California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division fully supports the USDA Proposed Rule for Professional Development Standards. To help ensure a healthy nutrition environment for our school aged children, it is important for food service personnel to have strong skills and knowledge relating to nutrition and food service administration. California has partnered with a variety of school nutrition stakeholders in our state to develop a five-year professional development training plan that supports the implementation of the USDA Professional Development Standards.”

Kim Frinzell, Nutrition Education Administrator, California Department of Education

“Continued professional development is an essential investment in our frontline staff for the employee’s confidence in job performance as well as an enhancement for the image of the school meals program. “

Marla Caplon, Division of Food and Nutrition Services Director, Montgomery County Public Schools

“The school food service director and senior management are professional positions, usually managing the largest food service operation in any community. Their responsibility is to provide high quality nutrition to support the education of children and comply within a range of complex nutrition, employment, local, state, and federal funding regulations. Key positions in school food service require a high degree of nutrition knowledge and its impact on children and their education.

Lora Gilbert, Senior Director, Food and Nutrition Services, Orange County (Fla.) Public Schools

“I am excited about Professional Standard and their potential for improving Child Nutrition Programs. Child Nutrition Programs are complex and require personnel with a solid background in areas such as nutrition, food safety, consumer behavior, and program management. The implementation of professional standards really emphasizes the importance of hiring employees with appropriate backgrounds and providing continuing education to keep abreast of new information.

Jeannie Sneed, Head of the Kansas State University Department of Hospitality Management and Dietetics

“Investing in training and professional development for Child Nutrition directors, managers and ALL employees is the key to successful child nutrition program administration at the local level and most importantly results in safe, healthy and appealing meals for children.”

Cheryl Johnson, Director, Child Nutrition & Wellness, Kansas State Department of Education

“The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act provides guidance and recognition of food service worker careers by improving training and career mobility opportunities. Eighty-four percent of food service workers live in the school communities where they work. We applaud the Department of Agriculture for recognizing the important role of school staff and their commitment to students and the communities in which they live. Providing training to school staff transforms communities.”

Roxanne M. Dove, Education Support Professional Quality Director, National Education Association

“To be respected you must be knowledgeable and invested in training and quality standards. The more I learn and apply my knowledge the better I feel about myself. I have more confidence in myself and in my job; therefore I have become a more effective leader. I am currently the supervisor of operations in my district. I have also grown my skills by going to college with the support of my local, state, and national organization. I am the girl who never finished high school, had absolutely no confidence in myself, went back and got my GED, and currently attend college with the goal of being able to become SNS Certified.”

Margo Frazier, Supervisor of Child Nutrition Operations, Sheldon Independent School District, Houston, Texas

“Professional development training is an essential component to enhancing school nutrition program quality, efficiency, and integrity as well as career advancement for program personnel. I have spoken to countless school nutrition employees across the country that have attributed program improvements and personal promotions to the professional development training they have received.”

Katie Wilson, Executive Director, National Food Service Management Institute

