



In partnership with



Fall 2024 Healthy Meals Summit

Breakout Session Agenda and Descriptions



Join the Adventure: Celebrating the Champions of School Nutrition!

Table of Contents

Map of the Octavius Floor, Caesar’s Palace2

Tuesday 10:45 am – 11:45 am Sessions3

Tuesday 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Sessions7

Tuesday 2:15 pm – 3:15 pm Sessions11

Wednesday 9:45 am – 10:45 am Sessions15

Wednesday 11:00 am – 12:00 pm Sessions19

Map of the Octavius Floor, Caesar's Palace

PROMENADE SOUTH



- Concurrent sessions will be held in rooms 1-8 and 15-22.
- The following rooms will be combined:
 - Octavius 2 & 3
 - Octavius 7 & 8
 - Octavius 15 & 16
 - Octavius 17 & 18
 - Octavius 21 & 22

Tuesday 10:45 am – 11:45 am Sessions

Revolutionize Child Nutrition Programs with Effective Facility Design and Equipment Strategies

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 1

Organization(s): The Institute of Child Nutrition

Presenter(s): Patrick Garmong

Summary: In this dynamic 60-minute session, participants will explore how strategic facility design and thoughtful equipment choices can transform school nutrition programs. Drawing from the latest research and case studies, this session will provide practical insights into creating efficient, safe, and engaging foodservice environments. Attendees will learn about the impact of regulations, current trends, and innovative solutions on facility design and equipment procurement. Engaging roundtable discussions and interactive group activities will facilitate knowledge sharing and practical application, making this session a must-attend for school nutrition professionals looking to enhance their programs' efficiency and appeal.

Themes: Operational Success

Defining Deliciousness with the CIA: The Physiology of Taste

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 2-3

Organization(s): The Culinary Institute of America (CIA)

Presenter(s): David Kamen, MBA, CEC, CHE, PCIII, Abby Fammartino, MBA, MSFS

Summary: Attendees will be engaged in an interactive discussion with CIA Consulting and Healthy Kids Collaborative leaders to explore and better develop a common-tasting language within their operations. The discussion will include examples of how to develop deliciousness by adding different flavorful, textural, and visual ingredients to dishes to appeal to students and improve the quality of school meals. Examples of the basic tastes (sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and umami) will be provided.

Themes: Cooking Skills

Breaking through with Local: Working with Local Aggregators and Using Value Chain Coordination to Procure Fresh, Healthy Food for your SFA's Menus

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 4

Organization(s): Shared Plate Strategies, Kitchen Sync Strategies

Presenter(s): Elliott Smith, Ben Thomas

Summary: This interactive panel will provide insight for how SFAs can work with "intermediaries" and aggregators like food hubs, food hub networks, and regional distributors to procure fresh, local foods for their menus. We'll share about how our companies work with supply-side partners (producers, aggregators, and distributors) and SFAs to create values-based procurement programs that help SFAs use value chain coordination to drive new menus. We will explore key topics like understanding the nuances in the farm-to-school market channel, using VCC strategies to improve the connections needed for local procurement, and how SFAs can approach producers to do robust values-based procurement.

Themes: Local Foods, Operational Success, Promoting Partnerships

Green Plates: Effective Strategies for Introducing Plant-Based Meals in Schools

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 5

Organization(s): Balanced

Presenter(s): Michelle Saletan

Summary: This presentation will provide a comprehensive guide on successfully introducing and expanding plant-based meal options in school cafeterias. Participants will learn practical steps for implementing these changes based on insights and results from an 8-school pilot program. The session will identify opportunities for integrating or expanding plant-based options within existing meal programs, ensuring a seamless transition and increased variety. Additionally, the presentation will emphasize the importance of gaining staff buy-in and offer strategies for addressing resistance to plant-based meal initiatives. Attendees will be equipped with actionable strategies to promote healthier, more sustainable eating habits among students.

Themes: Menu & Recipe Planning

Scratch Cooking in Schools with Chef Ann Foundation

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 7-8

Organization(s): Chef Ann Foundation

Presenter(s): Rachel Reed-Sanow

Summary: The Scratch Cooking in Schools session will explore the benefits of scratch cooking in school kitchens, including improved nutrition, student engagement, and cost-effectiveness. Participants will learn practical strategies for implementing scratch cooking, including sourcing fresh, local ingredients, training staff, and overcoming challenges like budget constraints. The session will feature a live cooking demonstration, showing districts how to successfully make the transition from a traditional heat-and-serve product to a scratch-made dish by taking recipes through the scratch-cooking continuum. Attendees will leave with actionable steps to bring healthier, scratch-made meals to their schools.

Themes: Scratch Cooking

Nutrition on the Move

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 15-16

Organization(s): Active Schools, Action for Healthy Kids

Presenter(s): Nick Kline

Summary: Join this action-packed session to explore innovative ways of using physical activity to reinforce nutrition concepts. Creating a positive and interactive learning environment can make nutrition education fun for teachers and students. Come ready to move with activities that promote healthy eating habits and maximize student engagement.

Themes: Engagement Strategies

Local Lunches: Fresh, Culturally Relevant School Meals through Local Procurement – Hour 1 of 2

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 17-18

Note: This session is 2-hours

Organization(s): National Farm to School Network, USDA Healthy Meals Incentive: Project SCALES, USDA Division of Community Food Systems

Presenter(s): Sunny Baker, Ally Mracheck, Nicole Zammit

Summary: This session will explore the transformative potential of local procurement in school food programs, emphasizing how they can enhance meal quality, support local economies, and promote sustainability. Participants will dive into the practicalities of sourcing locally and best practices for overcoming challenges. The session will highlight case studies and offer actionable strategies for building strong partnerships between schools, farmers, and communities. Additionally, the discussion will touch on creating culturally relevant meals that resonate with diverse student populations. By the end of the session, participants will be equipped to implement and scale local procurement initiatives, creating fresher and culturally meaningful meals.

Themes: HMI SFST, Local Foods, Farm-to-School, Operational Success, Promoting Partnerships

A Decade of Local Food Lessons

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 19

Organization(s): Boulder Valley School District

Presenter(s): Carolyn Villa, Deb Trevor

Summary: With 15 years of local purchasing success, Boulder Valley School District has become a leader in local food for school meals. Our extensive experience sourcing fresh, seasonal ingredients and building strong relationships with local producers uniquely qualifies us to share what truly works. This presentation covers the practical lessons, challenges, and strategies we've mastered, showing how we've made local procurement a cornerstone of our program. We'll share how it starts with local carrots, but can evolve into custom-made bread from local bakeries, locally raised beef, milk, spices, and more—taking your district's food program to the next level.

Themes: Local Foods

Leveraging Relationships to Advance Values-Based Procurement

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 20

Organization(s): Chef Ann Foundation, Montague Area Public Schools, Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, FARM Accelerator, Michigan State University, Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities

Presenter(s): Lea Howe, Jen Schaap, Dan Gorman, Clarence Rudat, Elissa Penczar

Summary: This panel will highlight how resilient school food supply chains and successful values-based procurement initiatives are powered by relationships. Panelists will address the concept of Value Chain Coordination and provide tangible examples of this work in action in Muskegon County, MI and other areas. They will share their insights and expertise to help school food authorities (SFAs) and local food system stakeholders build sustainable initiatives by centering community and relationship building.

Themes: HMI SFST, Local Foods, Operational Success, Promoting Partnerships

Food Justice: Let's Celebrate the Movement, and the People

Tuesday, 10:45 - 11:45 am, Octavius 21-22

Organization(s): Curtis Aikens

Presenter(s): Curtis Aikens

Summary: Together, we'll explore ways to incorporate food justice into your system and discuss the challenges to do that successfully. Let's find the solutions!

Themes: Federal Policy & Advocacy

Tuesday 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Sessions

Trailblazing Tidbits for Healthy School Meals

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 1

Organization(s): RBB Edgewood Schools

Presenter(s): Vickie Coffey, Angela Caldwell, Jordan Vandeventer

Summary: As the final rule quickly approaches, we need to implement it sooner rather than later. Regularly introducing students to newly reduced sugar and reduced sodium items is key for student acceptance as the more they eat it, the sooner the tastebuds will adapt. A recent poll indicated that over eighty percent of School Nutrition Directors indicated student acceptance is their number one concern with the final rule. In this session, we will help you establish a plan for implementation, assessment, and success.

Themes: Engagement Strategies

Picture This: Increasing Participation Through Picture Menus

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 2-3

Organization(s): Northshore School District

Presenter(s): Juliana Fisher

Summary: We eat with our eyes, and so do our students! Learn how one district developed a database of meal tray photos allowing daily menus to be worth a thousand words! Find out how communication through photos can help increase accessibility, stakeholder engagement, and stakeholder engagement in school meals.

Themes: Operational Success, Engagement Strategies

Farm to Cafeteria: Integrating Local Agriculture and Nutrition Education in School Meal Programs

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 4

Organization(s): Rialto Unified School District

Presenter(s): Fausat Rahman-Davies, Kristina Kraushaar, Juanita Chan-Roden, Staci Okuno

Summary: This session will explore how to integrate local agriculture and nutrition education into school nutrition programs. Participants will learn the benefits of using locally grown produce, including improved meal quality and support for the local economy. The session will cover practical strategies for incorporating nutrition education into school meals, helping students develop healthy eating habits. Attendees will also discover the advantages of using school gardens to source produce, enhancing both education and nutrition. Additionally, the session will highlight best practices and offer insights into building partnerships with local farmers and community organizations to support farm-to-school initiatives.

Themes: Local Foods, Farm-to-School, Nutrition Education

Innovative Employee Experiences for Training and Boosting Morale

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 5

Organization(s): Austin Independent School District Food Service Department

Presenter(s): Diane Grodek, Lindsey Bradley

Summary: In this session, you will leave with tangible, inexpensive, fun ways to boost morale with your kitchen teams while building camaraderie and improving employee retention rates. You will also learn thoughtful new approaches to training groups of all sizes on the basics needed to work in a kitchen, and also how to approach sharing your broader messaging and district goals with your employees in a way that is hands on and effective.

Themes: Operational Success

Stirring up Success: Empowering Students with Scratch-Made Meals and Hands-On Learning

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 7-8

Organization(s): Washougal School District

Presenter(s): Johnattan Curiel, Sheri Cranford, Margaret Rice

Summary: Want to learn about how to transition to a self-operated, scratch-made school nutrition program? Would you like to learn how to build in student engagement experiences in the process? Then come to our session where participants will gain insights into the steps and strategies involved in making that kind of shift, including the benefits such as improved meal quality, cost-effectiveness, and enhanced student satisfaction. In our session, participants will also learn how to effectively engage students in the school nutrition program through practical experiences. Join us and leave inspired!

Themes: Scratch Cooking, Engagement Strategies

BPSEats: Delicious (Health-Forward) Meals That Our Students Enjoy

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 15-16

Organization(s): Boston Public Schools

Presenter(s): Anneliese Tanner, Kelly Thompson

Summary: The Boston Public Schools team will share about their clean label menus that met the final rule before it was final, and how a focus on cooking in-house and culturally relevant meals create a dignifying meal experience that leads to great meal participation.

Themes: HMI SFST, Operational Success

Local Lunches: Fresh, Culturally Relevant School Meals through Local Procurement – Hour 2 of 2

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 17-18

Note: This is a continuation of the 2-hour session

Organization(s): National Farm to School Network, USDA Healthy Meals Incentive: Project SCALES, USDA Division of Community Food Systems

Presenter(s): Sunny Baker, Ally Mracheck, Nicole Zammit

Summary: This session will explore the transformative potential of local procurement in school food programs, emphasizing how they can enhance meal quality, support local economies, and promote sustainability. Participants will dive into the practicalities of sourcing locally and best practices for overcoming challenges. The session will highlight case studies and offer actionable strategies for building strong partnerships between schools, farmers, and communities. Additionally, the discussion will touch on creating culturally relevant meals that resonate with diverse student populations. By the end of the session, participants will be equipped to implement and scale local procurement initiatives, creating fresher and culturally meaningful meals.

Themes: HMI SFST, Local Foods, Farm-to-School, Operational Success, Promoting Partnerships

Buy Local, Cook Fresh: Implementing a Cost-Neutral Scratch-Cooking Program

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 19

Organization(s): Beyond Green Partners, Sustainable Food Institute of America

Presenter(s): Greg Christian, Nichole Truby

Summary: Beyond Green Partners collaborates with institutions across the country to implement scratch-cooking programs that utilize fresh, local ingredients and serve culturally relevant, diverse foods that the customers want to eat and staff want to make. During this session, we will present our methodologies for remaining cost-neutral, ensuring stakeholder buy-in, and empowering Food Service Staff while transforming operations. Through overproduction tracking, kitchen efficiencies, and staff satisfaction, institutions can serve fresher food within budget. We will highlight the steps of engaging stakeholder voices in the menu development process through taste tests and surveys, as well as ongoing analysis through plate waste tracking.

Themes: HMI SFST, Local Foods, Engagement Strategies

Incorporating Cultural Meals in Schools Meals for the Healthy Win

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 20

Organization(s): Applewhite Nutrition

Presenter(s): Bettina J. Applewhite, MS, RDN, LDN, SNS

Summary: As the country is becoming more culturally diverse, the child population is even more diverse than the adults. Diverse cultures introduce more diverse palates. In this session, participants will understand the need for culturally inclusive meals and how to integrate these foods and dishes in an appropriate and economical manner. Starting something new can be overwhelming; however, small, intentional steps can make a big positive impact on student nutrition and participation. This session will review some of the toolkits and tips to integrate cultural foods in school menus.

Themes: Culturally Inclusive Foods

Scratch Cooking - Doing More and More Everyday!

Tuesday, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Octavius 21-22

Organization(s): CheffyK and CA, LLC, Chef Laura K12 Culinary and Consulting

Presenter(s): Chef Laura Bullene Jacobo, SNS, Chef Kent Getzin

Summary: Wondering how to do more scratch cooking? This session is for you! Let us show you how to demystify the path to doing more and more scratch cooking everyday! We will explore choosing the right small wares and equipment, implementing the whiteboard method, menu planning for production efficiency and incorporating more local ingredients. Using master recipes to simplify production, cooking today for tomorrow and more.

Themes: Scratch Cooking

Tuesday 2:15 pm – 3:15 pm Sessions

Impactful Scratch Cooking - For Students and Staff

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 1

Organization(s): School District of New Richmond

Presenter(s): Bobbie Guyette, Megan Walters

Summary: This session will explore the benefits of implementing scratch cooking programs in educational settings. Participants will learn how preparing meals from scratch can improve student nutrition, foster healthier eating habits, and enhance overall well-being. The session will cover practical strategies for integrating scratch cooking into school menus, including tips for training staff and involving students. Attendees will also hear success stories and see examples of recipes and menu planning techniques. By the end of the session, participants will be equipped with actionable tools and inspiration to start or enhance scratch cooking initiatives in their own schools.

Themes: Scratch Cooking

Chasing Rainbows and More: Nutrition Education in School Cafeterias

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 2-3

Organization(s): Brooklyn Center Community Schools

Presenter(s): Michelle Auld

Summary: Nutrition education is an important responsibility for schools to include in their services. BCCS has implemented innovative approaches to increase nutrition education lessons in various spaces and have used creative opportunities for stakeholders to share diverse approaches to nutrition across cultures.

We will show how BCCS has continued to improve the implementation of nutrition education, sharing practical strategies, successes, and growth opportunities to implement nutrition education in schools that foster more inclusive food environments. The final mini-action plan will show how to increase nutrition education and potentially qualify for the "Innovation in Nutrition Education" Recognition Award.

Themes: Nutrition Education

Resilience on the Menu: Applying Principles of Trauma-Informed Care to Nutrition Programming

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 4

Organization(s): Action for Healthy Kids

Presenter(s): Anais Murphy

Summary: This session is designed to provide a foundational understanding of the connection between trauma and toxic stress and nutrition and food-related behavior, with an emphasis on exploring how nutrition programs are protective factors for student mental health and overall wellbeing. This session is appropriate for those professionals providing meals directly to students and for those in supervisory positions, as we will explore how to apply best practices in trauma-informed nutrition directly to interactions with students and to programming.

Themes: Operational Success

Enhancing Your Nutrition Department Through Strategic Planning

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 5

Organization(s): Urbandale Community School District

Presenter(s): Jessy Sadler

Summary: In this presentation, attendees will gain insights on what was done to enhance our nutrition departments through a structured approach. You will learn how tools and resources such as a SWOT analysis and SMART Goals were used to identify key strengths, weaknesses and opportunities which served as a foundation for future planning. By the end of the presentation, attendees will leave with practical examples and strategies to help them assess their current operations and implement meaningful improvements to continue to drive positive change of their programs.

Themes: Operational Success

Start Strong: Reduce Sugar and Add Protein to Boost Students Academic Performance

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 7-8

Organization(s): Minneapolis Public Schools Culinary Wellness Services

Presenter(s): Amanda Ewest

Summary: Starting the day with too much sugar can lead to "brain fog," which can make it difficult for students to focus and learn. With new added sugar expectations beginning July 1, 2025 regarding added sugar in breakfast cereal, yogurt, and flavored milk in school meals, this session will offer examples of how Minneapolis Public Schools incorporated more protein into breakfast with the help of Speed Scratch recipes.

Themes: Menu & Recipe Planning

Lights, Camera, Action – How to Quickly Share Your Story on Social Media

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 15-16

Organization(s): Franklin Special School District

Presenter(s): Robbin Cross, Marne' Price, Lacey Haynes

Summary: A small district has the same list of "to do" as a large district but less staff. Learn these "tricks" for posting quickly and effectively on social media. These tricks have played an energizing role with our key audiences that include developing a clear and engaging message while making it fun for the viewer. Participants will view several short videos produced by the Food and Culinary staff. Participants will have the opportunity to create their own 30 second commercial and will leave the session inspired and equipped with all the tools needed to use these techniques to highlight their programs.

Themes: Operational Success, Engagement Strategies

A Taste of Change (Building Communities One Meal at a Time)

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 17-18

Organization(s): UAMS Institute for Community Health Innovation

Presenter(s): Alexa Cueto, Jenn Clampitt MS, RD, LD, CDCES

Summary: Student participation is at the forefront of school nutrition program goals. We aim to help increase student participation even as nutrition teams work to reduce sodium, saturated fat, and sugar in their meals. We will share student and parent engagement, and communication activities. Learn to gain and retain customers by creating influencers for your program. See examples of how you can incorporate these activities successfully with materials that can be adapted to engage parents and families of different cultures and backgrounds.

Themes: Engagement Strategies

How to Grow a Farm to School Nutrition Education Program

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 19

Organization(s): Carrollton Exempted Village School District

Presenter(s): Barbara Burns RDN, LD, Kay Russell, Outdoor Educator

Summary: This presentation outlines our successes with expanding our nutrition education/farm to school efforts and bumps along the way. It will highlight how we have impacted our students by collaborating with teachers and curriculum needs to provide meaningful, enriching experiences to help students understand where their food comes from and how it grows.

We coordinated with our nutrition department to engage students with taste panels, menu planning, and hands-on experience with gardening. Thanks to the HMI grant, we implemented a new hydroponic system for large scaled production of lettuce for the cafeteria each month for our student meals and taste panels.

Themes: Farm-to-School, Nutrition Education

Exclude the Food, Not The Child

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 20

Organization(s): Petersburg Borough School District

Presenter(s): Carlee Johnson McIntosh

Summary: Allergies are among the most common medical conditions affecting children in the US. It's important for student nutrition staff to identify allergies and learn how to feed these students without putting them at risk. Incorporating scratch cooking into the SFA helps create easy to adjust recipes to create an inclusive environment for these students.

Themes: HMI SFST, Menu & Recipe Planning, Scratch Cooking

Growing Together: Bridging School Garden Programming and Cafeteria Services for Impactful Nutrition Education

Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 pm, Octavius 21-22

Organization(s): SustainEd Farms, Denver Public Schools Food & Nutrition Services

Presenter(s): Dr. Matt Suprunowicz, Maya McDowell, Lindsey Long

Summary: While it might seem that a school garden and a food and nutrition program were matches made in heaven, collaboration in the context of competing priorities is always a challenge. Recently, DPS FNS and SustainEd Farms have found ways to bridge programming in service of nutrition education, scratch cooking, and local produce. In this session, SustainEd Farms and DPS FNS will co-present describing their process for how they built a new collaborative program that supported both of their organizations' goals. They will walk through their best practices for collaborative school garden-to-cafeteria initiatives and support session participants in identifying collaborative opportunities.

Themes: Nutrition Education, Engagement Strategies, Promoting Partnerships

Wednesday 9:45 am – 10:45 am Sessions

Edible Learning: Promoting Better Nutrition in Schools

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 1

Organization(s): Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District, Country House Kitchen

Presenter(s): Kristi Grasty, Colleen Malone

Summary: This session focuses on case studies including three public school districts in California that have made significant strides with offering scratch-prepared meals and/or have implemented successful, hands-on nutrition education programs. This session integrates selected clips from a 2023 documentary film entitled "Edible Learning" which was created by the presenter and has been shown on public television stations in over 14 states. The co-presenters have worked as collaborative partners in the transformational process of shifting a public school district's food service program to a scratch cooking model.

Themes: Scratch Cooking, Nutrition Education

The Power of Partnerships

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 2-3

Organization(s): Wellness in the Schools, New York City Public Schools Office of Food and Nutrition Services

Presenter(s): Alexina Cather, Tracy Cashin

Summary: Leadership from Wellness in the Schools and the New York City Department Of Education's Office of Food and Nutrition Services will share details on the power of their new public-private partnership, Chefs in the Schools: how it started, how it grew, and the many wins and challenges along the way. Attendees will learn how partnerships can help reach their district's goals, from increasing scratch-cooking and the number of scratch-cooked recipes available to providing training and education to everyone in the school cafeteria, and how to turn challenges into opportunities and solutions.

Themes: Operational Success, Promoting Partnerships

Leading Through Change

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 4

Organization(s): Chef Ann Foundation

Presenter(s): Lori Nelson, Josh Mathiasmeier

Summary: In the Leading Through Change session, we will explore various leadership styles, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and situational leadership to effectively guide teams. We will discuss strategies for managing and leading through change, focusing on the power of communication. Additionally, we will discuss techniques for navigating difficult conversations with empathy and clarity, as well as the significance of appreciation and recognition in cultivating a motivated and engaged workforce. Participants will receive templates and tools to facilitate productive one-on-one meetings and to outline difficult conversations effectively.

Note: This is a repeat session from the spring summit.

Themes: Operational Success

Defining, Achieving, and Measuring Success in K-12 Nutrition

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 5

Organization(s): Newman-Crows Landing Unified School District

Presenter(s): Caralyn Mendoza, Nanci Miramontes

Summary: How do you know your program is successful? How do you define what your program is? How do you achieve the potential your program has? Together we will walk through how our district defined who we are, what we do and how we measure our success. When we are armed with that information, we can appeal to our stakeholders and communicate the importance of the work we do.

Themes: Operational Success

Developing a Comprehensive K-12 Culinary Training Program

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 7-8

Organization(s): Cherry Creek School District

Presenter(s): Cady Molloy

Summary: This presentation will provide an overview of Cherry Creek School District's path to developing a comprehensive culinary training program. We will discuss the impact the training program has had on the district's menu and staff. Attendees will have an opportunity to brainstorm their district's training needs. The session will close out with space for attendees to ask questions and share training wins from their own district.

Themes: Operational Success

Reimagining School Meal Programs: Nourishing our Students the Traditional Way

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 15-16

Organization(s): Eat Real Certified, Inc

Presenter(s): Natalie Linden, Kristin Zellhart, Lisa Seiber-Gardland, Christina Lawson

Summary: The school food landscape has changed drastically over the last 50 years – from the food we serve, to the people who put on the aprons, to the operations and infrastructure of our kitchens. During this session, we'll examine how data and metrics-guided menu planning can optimize school food operations for the health and well-being of our most important customers, the next generation. We'll hear directly from food service leaders utilizing data analysis to track their progress toward healthy, nutritious, and delicious meals. Let's combine traditional ways of cooking with modern tools to nourish the future of our nation's students.

Themes: Operational Success, Promoting Partnerships

Building a Healthier Future: Basics of School Nutrition Programs for Non-School Nutrition Professionals

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 17-18

Organization(s): United States Department of Agriculture

Presenter(s): Sara Bennett

Summary: This session aims to provide non-school nutrition professionals and partners with an introductory understanding of school nutrition programs. Attendees will gain foundational knowledge of meal pattern requirements, nutritional standards, and guidelines that govern school meals; how the school meal programs contribute to the health and well-being of students; and how food industry partnerships and other collaborative efforts play a role in supporting these efforts. School Food System Transformation Challenge Grantees are encouraged to attend!

Themes: Operational Success

Serving Up Success: Policies and Practices that Increase School Meals Participation

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 19

Organization(s): Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)

Presenter(s): Erin Kennedy Hysom

Summary: School meals are pivotal public health programs that advance nutrition equity, support student health and learning, and provide the foundation for lifelong success. Since the end of the pandemic, schools have embraced ways to continue offering all students school meals at no cost. From innovative service models to CEP and state legislation, schools and partners are working tirelessly to breakthrough barriers and increase children's access to these vital meals. Join FRAC as we review national participation data, discuss best practices for increasing participation, and share lessons learned from the first eight states that passed Healthy School Meals for All legislation.

Themes: Federal Policy & Advocacy

Room at the Table: Culturally Diverse and Inclusive Recipe Development for School Nutrition Programs

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 20

Organization(s): The Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition

Presenter(s): Chef Chela Cooper

Summary: Students in today's 21st century schools are the most culturally diverse and culturally aware generation in US history. Do the foods offered on your school menus reflect the cultural diversity of the students you serve? This session aims to address the benefits of culturally inclusive foods in school nutrition programs. Discover the new Culturally Inclusive Recipe Toolkit from the ICN, including resources to support collaboration with students and the school community to develop, evaluate, and implement culturally inclusive recipes in your program. HMI Awardees of Cultural Diversity in School Menus will be invited to share their successes during this session.

Themes: Culturally Inclusive Foods

Integrating Farm to School and Nutrition Education: Engaging Youth for Healthier Futures

Wednesday, 9:45 - 10:45 am, Octavius 21-22

Organization(s): Dairy Council of CA, Lodi Unified School District

Presenter(s): Dr. Betty Crocker, Alyssa McClelland

Summary: Co-presented by Lodi Unified School District and Dairy Council of California, explores integrating farm-to-school initiatives and nutrition education. Emphasizing youth engagement, experiential learning, and dairy's role in nutrition security. Highlighting "Let's Eat Healthy Together - Explore Dairy," a CA Credentialed Teachers and dietitians co-developed five-lesson unit promoting dairy agriculture literacy. Emphasizing nutrient-dense, under consumed foods like dairy, vegetables, fruits, and whole grains for children's health, learning, and social-emotional well-being. Strategies include inclusive F2S programs integrating all food groups, supporting local foods, and farm tours for hands-on learning. Gain actionable insights for implementing agricultural literacy, engaging students, and promoting nutrition security.

Themes: Farm-to-School, Nutrition Education, Engagement Strategies, Promoting Partnerships

Wednesday 11:00 am – 12:00 pm Sessions

Boosting Your Marketing with AI to Create Meal Appeal

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 1

Organization(s): School Food and Wellness Group

Presenter(s): Jerry Cervantes, Clare Keating

Summary: This session will demonstrate the critical importance of having an effective marketing strategy to promote school meal programs and how AI can be a powerful supplemental tool in developing campaigns that boost program participation. By showcasing successful marketing strategies—such as signage, surveys, and taste testing—we will illustrate how AI can provide additional ideas and strategies to enhance these efforts. Attendees will leave with a solid understanding of the role marketing plays in school meal programs and practical knowledge on how to leverage AI to engage students and increase participation in their programs.

Themes: Operational Success

Connecting Communities: Supporting School Meals Through Engagement and Collaboration

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 2-3

Organization(s): REAP Food Group, Monona Grove School District

Presenter(s): Allison Pfaff Harris, Maggie Sanna

Summary: This session will discuss ideas to promote school meal programs and build community engagement through events and partnerships. Participants will learn strategies to gather meaningful feedback from students and parents, aiming to develop meal options that reflect the cultural diversity of their student populations. The session will also explore methods to strengthen school meal programs, emphasizing the benefits of inclusive practices and the importance of initiatives like Healthy School Meals for All (HSM4A). Attendees will leave with practical ideas and actionable steps to enhance their own programs through events and partnerships.

Themes: HMI SFST, Engagement Strategies, Promoting Partnerships

Engaging Students in Taste Testing

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 4

Organization(s): DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Presenter(s): Melissa Gurevitch

Summary: During this session, participants will learn about and discuss the benefits and barriers of taste tests for both students and SFA's. Additionally, participants will be able to see several examples of how taste tests can be conducted in the cafeteria or the classroom. Participants will identify how taste testing can be helpful in both promoting school meals as well as highlighting locally grown items on their menu. Participants will then get the opportunity to work individually or in groups to develop their own taste test plan.

Themes: Engagement Strategies

From Scratch to School: Freshly Made Meals for Healthier Futures

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 5

Organization(s): Seattle Public Schools

Presenter(s): Eva Yablonsky Smith, Aaron Smith

Summary: The From Scratch to School: Freshly Made Meals for Healthier Futures session will focus on incorporating freshly made meals into school cafeterias. Participants will learn about the benefits of scratch cooking, recipe development, staff training strategies for integrating these practices into school food operations. The session covers practical recipes, and sourcing quality ingredients within budget constraints. Participants will leave the session with actionable steps to bring freshly made meals to their schools, fostering a healthier, more vibrant learning environment for students, and offering a diverse array of culturally relevant cuisine through immersive culinary experiences.

Themes: Scratch Cooking

An Exploration of Flavors with CICN

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 7-8

Organization(s): The Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN), The Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN)

Presenter(s): Patrick Garmong

Summary: "An Exploration of Flavors with CICN" will uncover the science and art behind creating delicious and nutritious meals for children. From understanding the basic building blocks of flavor profiles to mastering the use of herbs, spices, and acids, this session will equip you with the knowledge and skills to transform school meals into culinary delights. Join us for hands-on activities, including a jelly bean aroma experiment and a taste balancing challenge, to experience firsthand how to make flavors pop and entice young eaters. Don't miss this opportunity to elevate your school nutrition program with innovative flavor techniques.

Themes: Operational Success

School Gardens as Nutrition Education: SGSO Network and Case Studies of Effective District-Led School Garden Programs

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 15-16

Organization(s): School Garden Support Organization Network

Presenter(s): Daniel Barrera Ortega

Summary: This session will provide an overview of the School Garden Support Organization Network (SGSO Network), covering our resources, platforms to connect, in person and virtual professional development opportunities. We'll then dive deeper into case studies of successful district-led school garden programs, providing specific examples. Finally, we'll create time for attendees to network and connect with one another.

Themes: Nutrition Education, Promoting Partnerships

Cultural Connections: Co-Creating School Meals That Reflect Our Communities

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 17-18

Organization(s): Nourish Partners

Presenter(s): Angela Gomez, Janel Wojcik

Summary: Dive deep into strategies for promoting culturally inclusive menus that resonate with your students and community. We'll highlight effective practices and introduce reflective questions to help you evaluate your current approach. You can share your experiences and learn from others as we complete the Cultural Connection Checklist. This session will empower you to incorporate student and community engagement through taste-testing events and feedback activities, ultimately creating menu options that reflect the diversity of your students. You'll walk away with an action plan and practical tools to enhance your menu promotion practices and foster meaningful collaboration with education and community partners.

Themes: Culturally Inclusive Foods, Engagement Strategies

Voices on the Menu: Engaging Students through Taste Tests and Nutrition Education

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 19

Organization(s): Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Presenter(s): Madeline Moritsch, Josephine Thomason

Summary: Engaging students in nutrition education ensures students are active participants in creating healthy habits that last a lifetime. Join Healthier Generation for a dynamic professional learning opportunity where participants will explore the intersection of student voice and nutrition education. In this session, we will examine how current nutrition education efforts can incorporate student perspectives, leveraging the student voice spectrum to enhance taste test events. Participants will also create action steps to foster meaningful dialogue and empower student agency in food education. Don't miss this chance to learn how to amplify student voices and transform your nutrition education initiatives!

Themes: Nutrition Education, Engagement Strategies

Now We're Cooking! Integrating Local, Fresh Prep, Taste Tests and Scratch Cooking in Schools

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 20

Organization(s): Chef Ann Foundation, Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development, Council Bluffs Community School District, Urbandale Community School District

Presenter(s): Josh Mathiasmeier, Sophie Churchill, Lisa Stewart, Jessy Sadler

Summary: This panel is geared towards small and rural SFAs. It will highlight efforts to increase scratch cooking in order to integrate local food into Iowa schools. Panelists will share resources, strategies, best practices AND INSPIRATION for getting started on their scratch cooking journey and how they plan to leverage rural school districts' collective buying power to incorporate more local foods into their meal programs.

Themes: HMI SFST, Scratch Cooking, Local Foods, Promoting Partnerships

No Time to Eat: Advocating for Sufficient Time to Eat Policies

Wednesday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Octavius 21-22

Organization(s): Center for Science in the Public Interest

Presenter(s): Erin Ogden, MS, RD, LD, Catherine Cochran, MA

Summary: To ensure sufficient time to eat, experts recommend students have 20+ minutes of seated lunch time. However, this isn't the case for most students, thus limiting consumption and enjoyment of school meals. School nutrition directors are uniquely positioned to advocate for sufficient time to eat policies and champion increased child wellbeing. This session discusses the positive impacts of sufficient time to eat policies, the role food and nutrition teams can play in supporting these initiatives, and introduces advocacy activities. Participants will understand the impact of these policies on school food programs and identify allies and resources to support this initiative.

Themes: Federal Policy & Advocacy