

Texas Association for School Nutrition

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Procedure Manual

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Resource: School Nutrition Association Keys to Excellence

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FOREWORD

Organizations are faced with changing environments and require information about functioning and ways to improve. There is a need for assessment in critical areas of concern; achieving long range goals, public image, implementing government regulations, financial and budget control and general scrutiny of programs. There is an increased need for accountability, and evaluation is the means to achieve it. The use of effective standards is the building block for evaluation, and measuring accountability may best be achieved through peer review.

The Texas Association for School Nutrition takes cognizance of the needs of the membership and realizes that the accountability concerns nation-wide may also apply to this association. Therefore, the Texas Association for School Nutrition under the leadership of Melbagene Ryan developed the first “STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE” to include standards, criteria, PROCEDURE MANUAL and an evaluation procedure. This document was intended for use by local school districts on a voluntary basis for self improvement, and the evaluation is intended to determine excellent school nutrition programs and accredit those who have one. The ultimate goal will be better school nutrition for school children.

Throughout the state there are some excellent school nutrition programs but there has been no yardstick to measure them. Most school nutrition employees give unselfishly to the health and well being of the children in Texas and to the development of our young people-the leaders of tomorrow. The dedicated efforts of the membership in the past have been a catalyst to those who followed. Times have and will continue to change, and new challenges present themselves. School nutrition employees want to do a good job if they know what to do and excellence is a top priority and will be an on-going goal. It is for this reason the project director Melbagene Ryan accepted the challenge of original “STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE” program-a legacy to school nutrition employees.

Since the original program, many changes have necessitated the update of the criteria for evaluating child nutrition programs. The School Nutrition Association (SNA) created a Task Force that included Texas representation. The SNA Keys Classic and online Self-Assessment tool reflect the current needs of the country and Texas. This document will be the tool used to help guide school districts in improving their child nutrition programs and facilitate the recognition of excellent programs in the state of Texas. This will also bring recognition of Child Nutrition Programs at the national level. The original document of the TASN Standards of Excellence will be archived at the TASN office.

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COMMITTEE CHAIR, SNS
TASN STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
June 2006

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INTRODUCTION

The Texas Association for School Nutrition promotes high standards in Child Nutrition Programs and challenges the membership to meet on-going goals. The need to identify and recognize excellent school nutrition programs was presented to the TASN Board of Directors at a board meeting in November of 1985. At the following board meeting in February, 1986 the development of a “STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE” was approved. A project director was appointed and an advisory committee was established to:

DETERMINE THE FEATURES OF AN EXCELLENT SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM, DEVELOP MEASURABLE STANDARDS, PROVIDE A SELF STUDY GUIDE FOR VOLUNTARY EVALUATION AND RECOGNIZE PROGRAMS THAT MEETS THE ESTABLISHED STANDARDS.

The Standards of Excellence Program consists of a three part guide to be used for self development or for recognition and accreditation of school nutrition programs of excellence. Although each section may be used independently, the intent of the guide is identification of TASN Programs of Excellence through completion of all phases of the program.

- SECTION I:** Consists of the School Nutrition Association Key Areas measurable criteria to identify a good school nutrition program.
- SECTION II:** Provides procedure manual.
- SECTION III:** Establishes procedures for an on-site Peer Review Team evaluation to determine the extent the Keys have been met, to designate programs of excellence, and to provide for recognition of TASN Programs of Excellence and School Nutrition Association Keys to Excellence.

School nutrition programs designated TASN Programs of Excellence will project a positive image throughout the school district and community. These programs will serve as an example and provide a catalyst for action by other school districts.

The Texas Association for School Nutrition will continue to encourage excellence through the identification and use of current research to meet changing school nutrition needs.

SECTION I

SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION KEYS CLASSIC

keys to excellence

Keys Classic

-  **Administration**
-  **Communications and Marketing**
-  **Nutrition and Nutrition Education**
-  **Operations**
-  **Glossary**





ADMINISTRATION



KEY AREA

School Food and Nutrition Program Organization

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

A1 *The school food and nutrition program's goals and sound business practices provide the basis for planning.*

BEST PRACTICE

A1.1 **The school food and nutrition program has written short and long-term goals that are communicated and evaluated annually.**

INDICATORS

- A1.1.1 School food and nutrition program goals are consistent with the goals of the school district and the mission/vision of the school food and nutrition program.
- A1.1.2 School food and nutrition personnel communicate short- and long-range goals, along with progress, to administrators at least annually.
- A1.1.3 Progress in achieving short- and long-range goals is evaluated at least annually.

BEST PRACTICE

A1.2 **Written policies and procedures cover key areas, are implemented, kept up to date, and communicated to the school community.**

INDICATORS

- A1.2.1 Written policies and procedures encompass key areas of operations, such as: nutrition, nutrition education, food safety and security, financial management, production and service, receiving and storage, and procurement.
- A1.2.2 Written policies and procedures are reviewed annually and revised as needed.
- A1.2.3 Current policies and procedures are communicated, and available to the school community.
- A1.2.4 Current operational policies and procedures are put into practice.

KEY AREA

Financial Management

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

A2 *The school food and nutrition program uses sound financial and accounting practices.*

BEST PRACTICE

A2.1 The school food and nutrition budget includes input from school food and nutrition management staff.

INDICATORS

A2.1.1 School food and nutrition management staff is involved in the budget preparation and review process.

A2.1.2 A copy of the budget is on file.

A2.1.3 Income and expenditure projections are evaluated regularly and the budget is amended as needed.

BEST PRACTICE

A2.2 Financial and management practices are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

INDICATORS

A2.2.1 Meals per labor hour or other established indicators of productivity are analyzed monthly and benchmarked internally and externally.

A2.2.2 Meal and à la carte prices are determined based on established criteria that recover costs and promote affordable, healthy choices.

A2.2.3 Financial records are submitted regularly to district administration and are cross-referenced against program records.

A2.2.4 A profit and loss statement categorizes income and expense data by district and school sites and compares expenditures to revenue.

A2.2.5 Percent participation is analyzed monthly and benchmarked internally and externally.

BEST PRACTICE

A2.3 Internal controls assure financial accountability.

INDICATORS

A2.3.1 Written policies and procedures for handling cash and credit are well-defined and properly implemented.

A2.3.2 Individuals other than those authorized to handle cash monitor accounting and control procedures.

A2.3.3 Cash handling procedures are limited to authorized personnel and are monitored by independent review.

KEY AREA

Human Resources

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

A3 *School food and nutrition personnel are qualified to implement the goals of the school food and nutrition program.*

BEST PRACTICE

A3.1 **Procedures ensure that qualified staff are recruited and hired following local, state, and federal requirements.**

INDICATORS

- A3.1.1 Written policies and procedures for recruiting and hiring qualified personnel are implemented.
- A3.1.2 The recruiting and hiring procedure is reviewed and revised periodically.
- A3.1.3 The procedures support the recruitment and hiring of personnel who reflect the cultural diversity of the school district.

BEST PRACTICE

A3.2 **Staffing is planned and allocated according to operational needs.**

INDICATORS

- A3.2.1 Staffing procedures are based on factors such as delivery system, participation, school facilities, program trends, preparation method, and employee capabilities.
- A3.2.2 Labor hours are reviewed and adjusted periodically.

BEST PRACTICE

A3.3 **The school food and nutrition program offers employees wage, salary, and fringe benefits that are competitive and equitable.**

INDICATORS

- A3.3.1 Wage and salary scales are compared to area rates.
- A3.3.2 Wage and salary scales are reviewed at least annually and this information is made available to all personnel.
- A3.3.3 Salary increases are consistent with job responsibilities.
- A3.3.4 Compensation incentives are provided to employees with SNA certification and credentialing.
- A3.3.5 Wage and salary scales are equitably applied across positions.

BEST PRACTICE

A3.4 **Training and employee orientation are available to school food and nutrition personnel, and the training responds to the district's goals and workers' needs.**

INDICATORS

- A3.4.1 Training and staff development opportunities are provided based on personnel needs assessment survey, regulations, program and nutrition trends, and local issues.

- A3.4.2 School food and nutrition personnel are included in training opportunities offered to other school district personnel as needed.
- A3.4.3 Nutrition update training is provided regularly for teaching staff and school food and nutrition personnel.
- A3.4.4 Opportunities to attend educational programs and professional meetings are available to all personnel.
- A3.4.5 Education materials, trade publications, and professional journals are available to school food and nutrition personnel.
- A3.4.6 Written policies and procedures for employee orientation are implemented.

BEST PRACTICE

A3.5 Internal communications among school food and nutrition personnel are open and ongoing.

INDICATORS

- A3.5.1 Meetings and/or other open channels of communication are established regularly with personnel to discuss issues and encourage suggestions.
- A3.5.2 A variety of communication vehicles is used to communicate to and among school food and nutrition personnel (such as bulletin boards, email, newsletters, handbooks, etc.).

BEST PRACTICE

A3.6 Performance standards and a formal evaluation system are clear and followed.

INDICATORS

- A3.6.1 Written policies and procedures encompassing key areas such as evaluation, grievance, and discipline, are implemented, communicated, reviewed regularly, and revised as needed.
- A3.6.2 Written job descriptions, which include education and experience requirements, are available to all personnel.
- A3.6.3 Individual employee records are maintained to provide information for use in evaluation, promotion, counseling, and termination and are kept confidential.
- A3.6.4 All personnel are evaluated in writing at least annually.
- A3.6.5 Personnel who conduct evaluations are trained in the evaluation process.
- A3.6.6 Personnel are recognized for outstanding performance.
- A3.6.7 A written disciplinary procedure is implemented.
- A3.6.8 The completion of state and/or School Nutrition Association certification and/or credentialing is identified as a positive factor in promotion.
- A3.7 School food and nutrition personnel are encouraged to join and participate in professional associations.

INDICATORS

- A3.7.1 Personnel are encouraged to become active members of local, state, and national school food and nutrition associations.
- A3.7.2 Personnel are encouraged to assume leadership roles in professional associations.

KEY AREA

District Organization

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

A4 *The school food and nutrition program works in concert with the school community to maintain a healthy school environment.*

BEST PRACTICE

A4.1 **The school food and nutrition program meets Child Nutrition Program regulations.**

INDICATORS

- A4.1.1 All federal, state and local financial audit requirements have been met and all significant findings have been corrected.
- A4.1.2 The most current Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) indicates compliance with federal regulations and all problem areas have been addressed.
- A4.1.3 The most current School Meals Initiative (SMI) review indicates compliance with federal regulations and all problem areas have been addressed.

BEST PRACTICE

A4.2 **The school district’s strategic plan or mission statement reflects that the school food and nutrition program plays an integral role in the learning readiness of children.**

INDICATORS

- A4.2.1 The school district’s mission statement includes reference to the health and learning readiness of children.
- A4.2.2 The school food and nutrition program has a written strategic plan consistent with the school district’s mission statement and strategic plan.

BEST PRACTICE

A4.3 **The local board of education has adopted a written policy that commits to student health, including nutrition and physical activity.**

INDICATORS

- A4.3.1 The policy reflects the content of the SNA Nutrition Integrity definition.
- A4.3.2 The policy promotes the school food and nutrition program as the sole provider of foods and beverages prepared, served, and sold during mealtimes at the school location.
- A4.3.3 The policy addresses food safety in the total school environment

- A4.3.4 The school community is informed of this policy.
- A4.3.5 The policy is implemented and promotes consistent, accurate nutrition messages throughout the school district.
- A4.3.6 The policy is reviewed regularly for effectiveness and revised as needed.

BEST PRACTICE

A4.4 **School food and nutrition personnel are accepted as partners in the education of children.**

INDICATORS

- A4.4.1 School food and nutrition personnel are represented on comprehensive school health and/or other health or nutrition related committees/activities.
- A4.4.2 The organization chart for the district and/or school includes school food and nutrition personnel.
- A4.4.3 School food and nutrition program services are marketed at district events.
- A4.4.4 School food and nutrition personnel are included in district and/or school staff meetings.
- A4.4.5 Site administrators (school principals) take an active role in promoting school meals.
- A4.4.6 School food and nutrition personnel are recognized as a nutrition resource by the school staff.
- A4.4.7 School food and nutrition personnel are included in district in-service and other training programs.
- A4.4.8 The school is a designated USDA Team Nutrition School and the school food and nutrition personnel participate in Team Nutrition activities.
- A4.4.9 Written policies and procedures to meet students' special nutritional needs are implemented.

BEST PRACTICE

A4.5 **The school food and nutrition program provides consistent and reliable nutrition information to all grades.**

INDICATORS

- A4.5.1 Age-appropriate, accurate, and reliable nutrition education materials are readily accessible.
- A4.5.2 Teachers are provided training and encouraged to integrate nutrition into school curricula.
- A4.5.3 Resource lists of nutrition education materials are available, including: web sites, newsletters, videos, teaching kits, etc.

BEST PRACTICE

A4.6 School food and nutrition personnel work with policymakers to establish nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold on campus.

INDICATORS

A4.6.1 Access to foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value are

restricted.

A4.6.2 Sites outside the school cafeteria, such as vending machines, school stores, concession stands, fundraising efforts, and school-sponsored events, are encouraged to offer appealing, healthy food choices.

A4.6.3 Nutrition information is available for all food and beverage products sold throughout the school.

BEST PRACTICE

A4.7 Facility design, meal schedules, and operational procedures are planned to meet the food, nutrition, health, and social needs of students.

INDICATORS

A4.7.1 Students have a minimum of 10 minutes to eat breakfast after receiving their food.

A4.7.2 Students have a minimum of 20 minutes to eat lunch after receiving their food.

A4.7.3 School schedules allow all students access to school meals.

A4.7.4 Non-traditional service methods (such as meals in the classroom or kiosks) are considered and used as appropriate.

A4.7.5 School food and nutrition personnel meet annually with administrators to review meal schedules.

A4.7.6 School food and nutrition personnel are actively involved on planning teams for new buildings and renovations.

A4.7.7 Serving and dining areas meet state, local, and OSHA regulations.

A4.7.8 Tables and seating arrangements encourage conversation among students.

A4.7.9 Hand washing/sanitizing areas are in close proximity to the serving and dining area.

BEST PRACTICE

A4.8 Administrators work with the school food and nutrition program to create a positive dining environment that includes adults as role models.

INDICATORS

A4.8.1 School food and nutrition personnel encourage school community involvement as appropriate.

A4.8.2 Conversation at normal voice level is encouraged.

A4.8.3 The school food and nutrition program provides training opportunities for adults involved in the supervision of students in the dining area.

BEST PRACTICE

A4.9 The school food and nutrition programs uses information technology to enhance its services.

INDICATORS

- A4.9.1 School food and nutrition personnel are involved with information technology planning.
- A4.9.2 Information technology personnel provide assistance in the evaluation and procurement of software and hardware for the school food and nutrition program.
- A4.9.3 Information technology personnel provide training and technical support for the school food and nutrition program's software and hardware.
- A4.9.4 The school food and nutrition program has a designated liaison to the information technology department.

BEST PRACTICE

A4.10 **The school food and nutrition program's district office and school sites coordinate efforts.**

INDICATORS

- A4.10.1 Tools and procedures assure timely communication and guidance from the district office to the school site.
- A4.10.2 Tools and procedures assure data retrieval from the school site to the district food and nutrition office.
- A4.10.3 Management reports are developed, benchmarked, and analyzed to improve operations.



COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING



KEY AREA

Marketing

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

B1 *A comprehensive marketing plan promotes a positive image of the school food and nutrition program.*

BEST PRACTICE

B1.1 **School food and nutrition management staff works with the school community to increase participation.**

INDICATORS

- B1.1.1 Barriers to participation in the school food and nutrition program are identified.
- B1.1.2 A marketing plan for the school food and nutrition program, which includes strategies to reduce barriers to participation, is developed, implemented, and updated annually.
- B1.1.3 Program information is translated to meet the diversity of the community.

BEST PRACTICE

B1.2 **Reimbursable meals are promoted as the meal of choice.**

INDICATORS

- B1.2.1 The nutritional and economic advantages of school meals are promoted to the school community through a variety of channels.
- B1.2.2 Reimbursable meals are more economically priced than à la carte selections.
- B1.2.3 Food is merchandized and served efficiently to encourage the selection of reimbursable meals.

BEST PRACTICE

B1.3 **School food and nutrition management staff acts as advocates inside and outside the school.**

INDICATORS

- B1.3.1 School food and nutrition management staff promotes program goals and activities within the school community.
- B1.3.2 School food and nutrition personnel participate in communications and marketing training.
- B1.3.3 The district public information officer or other official spokesperson consults with school food and nutrition management staff to develop press releases and written communications about the school foodservice program.

- B1.3.4 School food and nutrition personnel work with advisory groups that may include administrators, teachers, staff, students, and community members.
- B1.3.5 At least one member of the school food and nutrition program participates in spokesperson training.
- B1.3.6 School food and nutrition personnel plan and promote activities for state and/or National School Lunch Week, School Breakfast Week, Child Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week, and other recognized appropriate celebrations.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

B2 *The school food and nutrition program is a resource for meeting the community’s food and nutrition needs.*

BEST PRACTICE

B2.1 **School food and nutrition management staff develops opportunities to extended programs to meet school and community needs.**

INDICATORS

- B2.1.1 School food and nutrition management staff evaluates the needs for providing additional nutrition services such as breakfast programs, after school snack program, summer foodservice, elderly foodservice, contract services, catering services, and/or nutrition education and consulting.
- B2.1.2 School food and nutrition management staff develops plans for additional services and seek approval from appropriate authorities.
- B2.1.3 School food and nutrition management staff evaluates and modifies the additional services.

KEY AREA

Communications

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

B3 *School food and nutrition personnel work with the school community and allied organizations to promote nutritious food and nutrition education.*

BEST PRACTICE

B3.1 **School food and nutrition program management staff works with groups allied with schools, higher education institutions and the community to promote good nutrition.**

INDICATORS

- B3.1.1 School food and nutrition program management staff provides information about the programs to groups allied with schools, higher education institutions, and local community organizations, such as, parent teacher organizations, dietetic internship programs, local dietetic associations, and cooperative extension service.

- B3.1.2 School food and nutrition program management staff requests information from groups allied with schools, higher education institutions, and local community organizations concerning their mission, goals, and resources to encourage cooperative activities.
- B3.1.3 School food and nutrition program management staff participates in activities of groups allied with schools, higher education institutions, and local community organizations.

BEST PRACTICE

B3.2 School food and nutrition program management staff works to develop partnerships with industry and commercial and non-profit food service operations to support and promote the program.

INDICATORS

- B3.2.1 School food and nutrition program management staff engages in an ongoing dialogue with industry and commercial and non-profit food service operations to share information about the program.
- B3.2.2 School food and nutrition program management staff provides input to the foodservice industry on the development of products and services.
- B3.2.3 School food and nutrition program management staff invites industry representatives to visit schools, in accordance with district and/or school policy, to observe the program in operation.
- B3.2.4 School food and nutrition management staff keeps abreast of trends in commercial foodservice restaurants and nonprofit foodservice operations.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

B4 *School food and nutrition personnel assist in developing policies to support nutrition integrity.*

BEST PRACTICE

B4.1 School food and nutrition program management staff advocates for public policy that is beneficial to the health and education of children.

INDICATORS

- B4.1.1 School food and nutrition program management staff is trained on how to review legislative proposals and assess their effects on the school foodservice program.
- B4.1.2 School food and nutrition program management staff communicates with legislative personnel and government agencies.
- B4.1.3 School food and nutrition program management staff provides written information on program goals and objectives to legislative personnel and government agencies.
- B4.1.4 Elected officials are invited to visit the school and participate in activities to observe the contribution of school food and nutrition programs to the health and education of children.



NUTRITION AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

section

KEY AREA

Nutrition

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

C1 *School meals/snacks and à la carte foods contribute to healthy eating habits.*

BEST PRACTICE

C1.1 **School meals and snacks meet the nutritional needs of all students.**

INDICATORS

- C1.1.1 School meal menus are analyzed for nutrient composition with up-to-date nutrition information, and menus are revised and adjusted accordingly to meet nutrient standards.
- C1.1.2 Planned menus are followed and menu substitutions are appropriate.
- C1.1.3 Students are provided a choice of low fat and/or skim, flavored or unflavored milk.
- C1.1.4 Snacks are planned to offer healthy food choices, especially fruits, vegetables (fresh when available) and grains.
- C1.1.5 Low fat or skim milk is included several times per week as a snack component.
- C1.1.6 The ingredients in all prepared and purchased food and beverage items are known.
- C1.1.7 A registered dietitian or other qualified health and nutrition professional are consulted as needed to modify special diets.

BEST PRACTICE

C1.2 **The school food and nutrition program identifies and addresses competitive food activities.**

INDICATORS

- C1.2.1 School food and nutrition personnel communicate state and federal competitive food rules to school administrators.
- C1.2.2 The school food and nutrition program develops partnerships with fund-raising and/or student groups to reduce or eliminate competition.
- C1.2.3 School food and nutrition personnel report to the district foodservice office the sale of competitive foods from sources other than the school food and nutrition program.
- C1.2.4 School food and nutrition personnel promote classroom parties and events by designing menus that meet nutritional goals and are fun and unique.

BEST PRACTICE

C1.3 Standards have been established that provide an appealing and healthy variety of foods and beverages in the school food and nutrition program, à la carte, and vending machine sales.

INDICATORS

C1.3.1 The school food and nutrition program has developed nutrition standards for à la carte and vended food items.

C1.3.2 Healthy food item options outnumber less healthy food options.

KEY AREA

Nutrition Education

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

C2 *School food and nutrition personnel are actively involved in nutrition education at the school level.*

BEST PRACTICE

C2.1 School food and nutrition personnel provide opportunities to reinforce classroom nutrition education.

INDICATORS

C2.2.1 The school food and nutrition program recommends and promotes current, science-based nutrition and nutrition education materials.

C2.1.2 Nutrition education materials such as posters, table tents, and bulletin boards are used in the cafeteria and on campus.

C2.1.3 Meals and other foods and beverages served in the school cafeteria reinforce the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and other accurate nutrition messages.

C2.1.4 The school food and nutrition program serves as a resource for nutrition activities through kitchen tours, food demonstrations, tasting parties, and/or participating in classroom nutrition education activities.

C2.1.5 Messages about the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the *Food Guide Pyramid* are communicated to parents through various avenues such as presentations at parent meetings, on the school Web site and/or cable TV, and communications printed on take home menus or other school media (newsletters, etc).

C2.1.6 School food service employees participate in wellness activities.



KEY AREA

Menu Planning

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

D1 *Menus are planned to ensure a balance between optimal nutrition and student acceptance.*

BEST PRACTICE

D1.1 **Planned menus and standardized recipes direct school food and nutrition operations.**

INDICATORS

- D1.1.1 Menus are planned at least one month in advance.
- D1.1.2 Commodity foods are incorporated into menus when feasible.
- D1.1.3 Standardized recipes with critical control points are used.

BEST PRACTICE

D1.2 **Student preferences are considered when planning menus.**

INDICATORS

- D1.2.1 School food and nutrition personnel are trained to observe student choices and ask for comments on product acceptability.
- D1.2.2 School food and nutrition personnel are trained to monitor plate waste.
- D1.2.3 Students are included in panels and/or committees used to select products and/or plan menus.
- D1.2.4 Menu choices take into account lifestyle (such as vegetarian), ethnic, and religious preferences of students.
- D1.2.5 The offer vs. serve option is available for students at all grade levels.

BEST PRACTICE

D1.3 **Recipes are selected or modified to achieve appropriate levels of fat, sodium, sugar, and fiber while considering palatability.**

INDICATORS

- D1.3.1 Standardized recipes are analyzed for nutrient content.
- D1.3.2 Modified recipes are tested and evaluated by school food and nutrition personnel and students.
- D1.3.3 Information about the nutrient content of meals and food is communicated to the school community.

KEY AREA

Procurement

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

D2 *Ethical purchasing practices ensure the use of high quality and safe ingredients and products.*

BEST PRACTICE

D2.1 **Purchasing practices for foods and beverages include written specifications that reflect quality, safety, nutritional value, customer acceptance, and cost.**

INDICATORS

D2.1.1 Specifications and conditions are developed and used for all purchasing.

D2.1.2 Vendors are evaluated and selected based on use of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) and/or Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and compliance with bid specifications.

D2.1.3 Specifications and conditions are reviewed and updated at least annually.

BEST PRACTICE

D2.2 **Purchasing practices for equipment, supplies, and services include a written description that reflects quality, safety, costs, and needs of the program.**

INDICATORS

D2.2.1 Specifications and conditions are developed and used for all purchasing.

D2.2.2 Vendors are evaluated and selected based on ability to comply with bid specifications and with industry standards, such as National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) approval.

D2.2.3 Specifications and conditions are reviewed and updated at least annually.

BEST PRACTICE

D2.3 **Purchasing decisions are made after an objective evaluation of quality, safety, conditions, service, and cost.**

INDICATORS

D2.3.1 Specifications and conditions are written to encourage maximum competition among qualified vendors.

D2.3.2 Vendors are given equal opportunity to provide service.

D2.3.3 The bid analysis process considers all factors – specifications, service, conditions, and cost – and is verified by more than one person.

KEY AREA

Receiving and Storage

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

D3 *Appropriate receiving and storage practices are followed to ensure quality, quantity, and safety of all food and non-food products.*

BEST PRACTICE

D3.1 **Policies and practices ensure that products are checked for safety and specifications when received.**

INDICATORS

D3.1.1 Written policies and procedures ensure that products received meet specifications, cost, quantities, and delivery instructions.

D3.1.2 Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as needed.

D3.1.3 Temperatures of potentially hazardous foods (PHFs) are taken and recorded upon receipt.

BEST PRACTICE

D3.2 **A system is in place that assures an accurate inventory is tracked and maintained.**

INDICATORS

D3.2.1 Written policies and procedures for storage and inventory control are written and implemented.

D3.2.2 Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as needed.

D3.2.3 Food in storage is accurately labeled and dated.

D3.2.4 First-in, first-out (FIFO) inventory rotation is used.

D3.2.5 A physical inventory of all food and supplies is taken at least monthly.

KEY AREA

Production and Service

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

D4 *Management procedures assure the production and service of high quality and safe foods to all students.*

BEST PRACTICE

D4.1 **Daily operations for food production and service are planned in advance.**

INDICATORS

D4.1.1 Work flow and the flow of food (steps from procurement through service) are used in production planning.

D4.1.2 Work schedules, including cleaning schedules, are developed, posted, and implemented.

- D4.1.3 Work schedules are reviewed and revised periodically.
- D4.1.4 A long-range facility and equipment plan, which includes records of equipment repair, is developed and implemented.

BEST PRACTICE

D4.2 Standardized procedures for food preparation and handling are implemented and monitored and school food and nutrition personnel are trained in food production, service, and safety.

INDICATORS

- D4.2.1 School food and nutrition personnel are regularly trained in food production, service, and safety.
- D4.2.2 A master file (hard copy or electronic) of standardized recipes is maintained and used.
- D4.2.3 Batch cooking is used whenever possible.
- D4.2.4 End-point cooking temperatures are taken and recorded.
- D4.2.5 Food temperatures are taken and recorded at time of service and periodically during service.
- D4.2.6 Food production records are maintained daily.
- D4.2.7 Appropriate portion control procedures are in place.
- D4.2.8 An on-going training program for food production and service personnel is implemented, documented, and revised as needed.
- D4.2.9 A procedure for the proper handling of leftovers is implemented and monitored.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

D5 *A student-centered environment, conducive to healthy eating habits and social interaction is provided.*

BEST PRACTICE

D5.1 The dining and serving areas are clean and attractive.

INDICATORS

- D5.1.1 Policies and procedures are followed to ensure clean and sanitary dining and serving areas.
- D5.1.2 Serving and dining area decorations are neat, attractive, and changed regularly.
- D5.1.3 Students are involved in the selection of decorations, colors, music, etc. for the dining area.

BEST PRACTICE

D5.2 Food set up and service options are provided that encourage healthy choices and minimize the time students wait to be service.

INDICATORS

- D5.2.1 Concepts such as self service, food courts, kiosks, food bars, and

scramble system serving stations are used where appropriate.

D5.2.2 Individual portions, point of sale marketing, self-serve, and student education activities are planned to reduce the time it takes to serve students.

BEST PRACTICE

D5.3 **School food and nutrition personnel make an effort to show concern and interest in students.**

INDICATORS

D5.3.1 Customer service training is provided at least annually.

D5.3.2 School food and nutrition program develops and implements a plan for student recognition, such as student of the month, special achievements, birthdays, and/or addressing students by name.

D5.3.3 School food and nutrition program personnel work with the school community to address individual student needs.

KEY AREA

Safety and Security

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

D6 *An environment for safe and secure food and worker safety is maintained.*

BEST PRACTICE

D6.1 **School food and nutrition program staff follows food safety and health regulations.**

INDICATORS

D6.1.1 A copy of the state and local regulations is on file in the district office.

D6.1.2 A written Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan is implemented with appropriate documentation procedures.

D6.1.3 Inspection reports, along with corrective actions, are available for review.

D6.1.4 School food and nutrition program staff attends training to update knowledge of safe food handling practices.

D6.1.5 The onsite manager is certified in food safety through a recognized training program.

D6.1.6 School food and nutrition program staff is encouraged to participate in food safety certification programs.

D6.1.7 School food and nutrition program staff works with school/district teams that address food safety and security.

D6.1.8 A food borne illness outbreak crisis management plan is developed, maintained, reviewed, and updated regularly.

D6.1.9 A food recall plan is developed, maintained, reviewed, and updated regularly.

D6.1.10 A food security plan is developed, maintained, reviewed, and updated regularly.

BEST PRACTICE

D6.2 Procedures are in place and accessible to school food and nutrition program personnel to ensure a safe working environment.

INDICATORS

- D6.1.1 Instructions for equipment operation and cleaning are accessible to school food and nutrition program personnel.
- D6.2.2 A procedure for reporting, investigating, and correcting the causes of accidents is developed, implemented, and updated regularly.
- D6.2.3 School food and nutrition program personnel are trained in kitchen and equipment safety.
- D6.2.4 School food and nutrition program personnel participate in school fire, emergency, and disaster plans.
- D6.2.5 School food and nutrition program personnel are trained in the basic principles of first aid and how to prevent the transfer of body fluid pathogens.
- D6.2.6 A first aid kit is readily accessible to all school food and nutrition program personnel.
- D6.2.7 Material safety data sheets (MSDS) are readily accessible and employees are trained to use them.

KEY AREA

Environmental Resources

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

D7 *A commitment to responsible waste management and water and energy conservation practices exists in the school food and nutrition program.*

BEST PRACTICE

D7.1 School food and nutrition program personnel work to improve waste management and water and energy conservations practices.

INDICATORS

- D7.1.1 School food and nutrition program personnel work cooperatively with the school community and industry to improve systems of waste management.
- D7.1.2 School food and nutrition program personnel work cooperatively with the school community and industry to engage in water and energy conservation.



À la Carte Foods

Foods sold separately from reimbursable meals served in Federal child nutrition programs.



Batch Cooking

Cooking in small quantities (e.g., an amount that can be served in 15 minutes) on a continuous basis during serving periods to maintain fresh, safe, and nutritious products.

Benchmark

The collection, analysis, and monitoring of program data that are used for program review and planning.

Best Practices

Actions within the school environment, including the food and nutrition program, that measure key achievements found in Keys to Excellence.

Budget

A financial planning and management tool that projects revenues and expenses for a specific time period and/or activity.



Catering Services

Food and beverage services provided by the school food and nutrition department for special functions not directly associated with Federal food programs.

Certification Program (SNA)

An SNA professional development program with established standards for academic education, specialized training, and work experience as conditions of being awarded certification. Certification is renewable every three years upon successful completion of continuing education hours.

Certification in Food Safety

Provided by a local health agency or national professional organization that verifies that the holder has successfully completed a course in food safety/sanitation.

Child Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week

One designated week a year for directors, managers, parents, teachers, and school administrators to acknowledge that child nutrition employees work hard year round.

Competitive Foods

Any foods and beverages sold in competition with the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program to students in food service areas during meal periods.

Contract Services

Services provided through contractual agreements with independent suppliers and consultants.

Corrective Action

Action taken by the school or school district to correct a deficiency in the administration, management, or operation of the school food and nutrition program.

Credentialing Program (SNA)

An SNA professional development program that awards the School Food and Nutrition Specialist (SNS) credential to individuals who meet professional requirements including successfully passing a standardized examination designed to assess professional competence against established criteria for school food and nutrition programs. The SNS credential is renewable every three years upon successful completion of continuing education hours.

Control Point

A practice, preparation step, or procedure where a preventive or control measure can be applied that would prevent, eliminate, or reduce the risk of a hazard.



Dietary Guidelines for Americans

A publication issued jointly every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which contains nutritional and dietary information and guidelines for the general public and is based on scientific and medical

knowledge current at the time of publication. The guidelines place emphasis on choosing a variety of foods each day that limit fat, sugar, and salt, and increase complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber; and on increasing exercise.



FIFO

First in, first out method of inventory rotation, which means that the oldest products held in inventory are the first to be used.

Foodborne Illness

A disease carried or transmitted to people by foods or beverages (commonly referred to as food poisoning).

Food Recall

An order issued by USDA, food manufacturers, or other suppliers to stop usage of a food believed to be unsafe for consumption, which also includes instructions for handling the food in question.

Food Safety

Food and beverage handling procedures, such as HACCP, that prevent, control, and minimize food safety hazards and food borne illness.

Food Security

Assurance that foods and beverages are safe from chemical, biological, and other sources of contamination that pose hazards to the health and well being of consumers.

Food Specifications and Conditions

A written description of a desired item that provides procurement information, such as USDA grade standard (if appropriate), container size, number of containers (units) per case, number of cases ordered, and net drained weights (if appropriate). Conditions include delivery location, procedures, and schedules, and procedures for overages, shortages, outages, refunds, and returns.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value

A food that provides less than 5% of the Reference Daily Intakes for each of 8 specified nutrients per 100 calories or serving.



Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs)

Regulations that describe the methods, equipment, facilities, and controls required for producing processed foods, human and veterinary products, and medical devices.

Goals

A broad statement of results sought; what will happen as a result of what is done over the course of 3–5 years.



Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP)

A food safety system designed to keep food safe throughout the production and service in an establishment. HACCP is based on the idea that if hazards are identified at specific points in the flow of a food, the hazards will be prevented, eliminated or reduced to safe levels.



Information Technology (IT)

Computer systems and other technology that enhance operational efficiency by accessing, processing, and transmitting information.

Inspection Report

Written report prepared by local health departments or other authorized persons that identifies the food safety status of foodservice facilities and provides recommendations and timelines for remedial actions, if needed.



Job Description

A detailed list of the work requirements and responsibilities to perform a certain job.



Marketing Plan

A predetermined plan to increase participation in a Child Nutrition Program.

Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH)

A common measure of productivity in school foodservice; calculated by dividing the number of meals and meal equivalents produced and served in a day by the number of labor hours used.

Mission Statement

A succinct statement as to the purpose of the organization; its reason for existence (usually 20 words or less).

Modified Recipes

Recipes that have been altered to accommodate a change in one or more nutrients or ingredients.



National Sanitation Foundation (NSF)

A widely respected and globally recognized provider of safety standards for food products, manufacturing procedures, and food preparation and serving equipment. The NSF seal represents compliance with established health and safety standards.

National School Breakfast Week

By Presidential proclamation, a week of observance in March of each year that commemorates the contribution of the School Breakfast Program to the health and education of children.

National School Lunch Week

By Presidential proclamation, a week of observance in October of each year that commemorates the contribution of the National School Lunch Program to the health and education of children.

Nutrition Education

A comprehensive nutrition information program that coordinates classroom instruction with the school food and nutrition program and school community, with emphasis on making healthful food choices.

Nutrition Integrity Statement (SNA)

A level of performance that assures all foods and beverages available in schools are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and, when combined with nutrition education, physical activity, and a healthy school environment, contributes to enhanced learning and the development of lifelong, healthy eating habits.



Percent Participation

The calculation of the number of students who might take part in a child nutrition program (breakfast, lunch, snack, summer feeding) divided by the number of students who do participate.

Physical Inventory

An actual count of goods in stock. This count should be taken at least once a month.

Point of Sale

The location in a foodservice operation where sales transactions take place.

Portion Control

A specific quantity of food to be served as indicated on a standardized recipe.

Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF)

Foods that deteriorate rapidly in quality if not subjected to sufficient heat or cold to prevent the rapid reproduction of pathogens that might cause foodborne illness.

Production Record

A form used to provide essential information recorded at the school kitchen that lists food items, recipe numbers, amounts prepared, portion sizes, and leftovers for the reimbursable meals served. It is used for determining if the appropriate level of nutrients and calories were offered for a reimbursable meal.

Profit and Loss Statement

A statement that shows the financial results at the end of an accounting period—usually the end of the month. The statement includes: the cost of goods and services used, income or revenue generated, and profit (gain) or deficit (loss).



Registered Dietitian (RD)

A food and nutrition professional who meets the educational and practical experience established by the American Dietetic Association (ADA), has passed an ADA registration exam, and successfully maintains continuing education requirements.

Reimbursable Meal

Student meal that meets Federal food and nutrition requirements and is paid for, partially or totally, by USDA.



School Community

Includes principals, teachers, administrators, school support staff, parents, school foodservice personnel, and students who make up and support the educational process in the schools.

School Food and Nutrition Program

The operations within a school or school district, authorized by the local governing board, that provides students with food and nutrition services and nutrition education.

School Food and Nutrition Personnel

The employees of the school foodservice and nutrition department who work in the schools and central office to provide healthy meals to students, provide nutrition education support to students and faculty, and promote the school food and nutrition program.

School Nutrition Association (SNA)

Founded in 1946, the 55,000 members of SNA represent the full spectrum of school foodservice and child nutrition personnel including: directors of school foodservice programs in school districts, state agency program directors, managers of individual kitchens, foodservice employees responsible for food preparation and service, child and adult care food program employees, and industry representatives.

Standardized Recipe

A written formula that has been tested and produces a consistent quality and yield of a food or beverage. It provides a list of ingredients, the required quantity of each ingredient, and specific instructions for preparation and service, including portion size, yield, and nutrient composition.

Strategic Planning

A roadmap to work toward a vision and goals.



Team Nutrition

A nationwide school-based program designed to help implement USDA's School Meals Initiative (SMI) for Healthy Children by providing technical assistance and training to enable school foodservice personnel to prepare and serve meals that meet the SMI requirements and by providing nutrition education materials for encouraging children to choose these healthier meals.



United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

The Federal department responsible for administration of the nation's child nutrition and commodity distribution programs.



Vended Foods

Foods sold from vending machines.

Vision

A statement that defines what an organization seeks to become. It provides personnel with a destination by which they can measure progress and feel a sense of accomplishment as they work toward reaching that vision.

SECTION II

PROCEDURES

I. The Texas Association for School Nutrition Standards of Excellence Procedures

A. Introduction

The Texas Association for School Nutrition procedure manual relates the School Nutrition Association (SNA) Keys Classic Best Practice Standards and criteria to the individual school nutrition operation. The Keys process encompasses all aspects of school nutrition and presents a comprehensive description of the operation, its surroundings and future development.

B. Purpose

The TASN Standards of Excellence procedure manual provides the steps required to achieve the Standards of Excellence recognition. The manual presents information about the program to the Past President's Advisory Board (PPAB) and Peer Review Team members for use in evaluation.

Successful completion of SNA's Key to Excellence (Keys) on-line evaluation and achievement of the "District of Excellence" status is a requirement for participation in the TASN Standards of Excellence award.

C. Time

The completion of the Keys should be carefully planned. Six months to a year is a reasonable estimate of time to allow for completion. The time required by each school food and nutrition department will vary depending on the school district size, available staff time, and the priority placed on the goal.

D. Planning and Preparation

In most instances the School Nutrition director takes a leadership role in guiding the staff toward achieving excellence in School Nutrition services. The director will familiarize the department staff in the Keys. The organizational structure of the plan may depend on the size of the school district and its philosophy and objectives. For optimal benefit, all department members should be involved in the full process.

If the local school district should have a need for assistance in explaining, planning or implementation throughout the study at various stages, the Texas Association for School Nutrition maintains a list of approved consultants who the local district could contact and arrange for services. The consultant services are voluntary with the school district being evaluated responsible for any expenses incurred.

SECTION III

EVALUATION

II. The Texas Association for School Nutrition Standards of Excellence Evaluation

A. Introduction

Evaluation compares performance to established measures of quality. It is an objective process which provides an opportunity to enhance communication and understanding among participants. The results of evaluation identify strengths and weaknesses, provide a focus for improvement and offer a method for informing school district administration and the public that operations are managed effectively.

B. Purpose

The goal of the Texas Association for School Nutrition Standards of Excellence review is to identify outstanding school nutrition programs in Texas. These programs will receive recognition as Texas Association for School Nutrition Programs of Excellence.

C. General Information

Participation in the TASN Standards of Excellence program is voluntary and non-punitive. The intent of the program is to improve school nutrition programs and encourage professional growth.

The evaluation process includes an on site review which consists of interviews, observations, presentation of findings and recommendations performed by school nutrition professionals possessing extensive experience and comprehensive school nutrition knowledge and skills.

D. The PPAB

The PPAB is the current TASN Past presidents' advisory board with the immediate past president acting as the chairman. This group guides the evaluation process, reviews evaluation data and determines TASN Programs of Excellence. It has final decision making authority in designating the programs of excellence. The original document of the TASN Standards of Excellence will be archived at the TASN office.

E. The Peer Review Evaluators

The Peer Review Evaluators are outstanding SNA/TASN members who agree to share their experience and expertise to improve school nutrition services.

SNA/TASN members who wish to serve as peer review evaluators must submit an application to the TASN Standards of Excellence staff liaison and copied to the Past Presidents Advisory Board (PPAB) Chair.

Applicants are selected on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Peer review evaluators must have a minimum of three years tenure as active member of SNA/TASN.
2. Peer review evaluators must have a minimum of five years experience at an administrative level of a TASN program which is a participant in the USDA School Nutrition Programs.
3. A new peer reviewer must be recommended by an experienced reviewer and have approval of the PPAB.
4. One of the peer reviewers can be a retired member who meets all the other qualifications.
5. The school nutrition program which the peer reviewer represents must be a program in good standing with the USDA and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

F. Training/Orientation

Prior to a peer review, the team leader will provide a team orientation concerning proper protocol, procedures, and provide information and instructions for the review.

G. Peer Review Team

There will be no less than two members on each peer review team and as many as necessary to conduct a thorough review. The peer review team will observe school nutrition performance in a minimum of ten percent of schools, in order to attain comprehensive knowledge of the school nutrition department. The four Keys will be divided among the reviewers. This division of responsibility allows evaluators to perform an in-depth analysis of areas in which they possess superior knowledge and experience.

Because of the time constraints and workload requirements of evaluation, the school district should not schedule peer review team participation in events of a social nature. This will allow the evaluators to devote their full attention to the evaluation process. It is expected that the review team will eat some of their meals in school nutrition facilities as a part of the evaluation. It is the responsibility of the peer review team members to arrange for all other meals during the site visit. School districts are urged to submit requests for review by February 1, so that a review will not have to be done in May which is typically a very busy time for administrators to leave their districts. In addition, should a return trip be required there might not be adequate time to revisit before conference delaying a decision until the following school year.

H. Rating

School nutrition performance is compared to SNA's Keys criteria. The TASN peer review team's role is to verify the district's Keys assessment.

J. Expenses

The cost of TASN Standards of Excellence review is the responsibility of the local school district. A daily rate, at fair market value, will be charged for each team member. The school district must reimburse the peer review team members for food, lodging, travel, and incidental expenses incurred by the site visit. Travel, lodging, and meal expenses will follow the state approved reimbursement rate.

K. TASN Headquarters Office

The PPAB chair provides TASN Headquarters with a copy of all correspondence pertinent to the TASN Standards of Excellence program so that TASN Headquarters can maintain a complete information file on the Standards of Excellence Program.

The TASN Headquarters Office serves as a central information source for all participants in the Standards of Excellence Program. Requests for information and materials may be directed to:

TASN Headquarters Office
3520 Executive Center Dr, Suite 165
Austin, Texas 78731
(800) 444-5189

L. Recognition

Designation as a Texas Association for School Nutrition Program of Excellence is an outstanding achievement and cause for considerable pride by the school nutrition department, the district they represent and TASN. This accomplishment will be recognized by TASN in the following manner:

1. A TASN representative will present a Certificate of Excellence.
2. All school nutrition departments achieving the status of Program of Excellence will be recognized at the annual TASN Conference.
3. The TASN professional journal will publish an article which highlights school nutrition departments selected as TASN Programs of Excellence and submitted to other professional associations
4. Press release will be provided and status promoted on the TASN website.

M. Procedures

Specific instructions guide the applicant in initiating, organizing, implementing and completing a TASN evaluation. These instructions are presented below in a step-by-step fashion.

Step 1 The School district completes and achieves the School Nutrition Association's (SNA) Keys of Excellence assessment.

Step 2 The Superintendent requests TASN peer review.

The authorized school district administrator makes a formal request (see Exhibit XX) by February 1, for an on-site evaluation of the school nutrition department to the TASN Headquarters following the achievement of the SNA's District of Excellence in Child Nutrition status. Applications should be submitted to the TASN Headquarters Office, 3520 Executive Center Dr., Suite 165 Austin, Texas 78731 (800) 444-5189

The attachments to the formal letter of request must include:

- a. notification letter from the Child Nutrition Foundation
- b. a copy of the Keys to Excellence assessment
- c. validation documents submitted for Keys to Excellence
- d. most recent CRE and SMI exit reports
- e. name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number of superintendent's designee and the school nutrition director

Step 3 The TASN Headquarters Office acknowledges application and requests materials prior to the review.

Within two weeks of the evaluation request, the TASN Headquarters Office sends the applicant:

- a. a letter of acknowledgement requesting:
 - .completed GENERAL INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE (Exhibit XX)
 - .completed PERSONNEL INFORMATION form (Exhibit XX)
- b. an estimate of the anticipated budget for the peer review project

Step 4 The TASN Headquarters Office arranges plans with chair of past presidents advisory board

Upon receipt of the applicant's material requested in Step 3 above, the Chair of the Past President's Advisory Board:

- a. selects the peer review team members and two alternates (with approval of the district's school nutrition director)

- b. designates the peer review team leader
 - c. designates the dates of the on-site visit
- Step 5 The TASN Headquarters Office sends applicant pertinent details.
- a. site visit dates
 - b. name, address, e-mail address, telephone number of peer review team leader and members
- Step 6 The TASN Headquarters Office notifies the peer review team leader and members of the final arrangements.
- a. team members
 - b. team leader
 - c. site visit dates
- Step 7 The Peer review team receives confirmation of assignment from headquarters office.
- Step 8 The school nutrition director receive details and initiates plans for the on-site visit. (example: suggest schools for review suggest the review teams schedule while in the district, schedule interviews, etc.)
- Step 9 The TASN Headquarters Office sends materials to Past President’s Advisory Board and peer review team (see Steps 2 and Step 3 for lists).
- Step 10 The Peer review team receives materials from the headquarters office.
- a. team leader takes a leadership role in the evaluation and directs the team with guidelines from headquarters office
 - b. team reviews information
- Step 11 The Peer review team leader contacts the school nutrition director.
- The peer review team leader makes contact by phone or letter with the authorized school district contact person for the on-site visit for:
- a. hotel accommodations
 - b. travel arrangements
 - c. arrangements for interviews
 - d. exit meetings with school district administration
 - e. visits to individual school nutrition facilities
- Step 12 The Peer review team leader contacts peer review team members. The peer

review team leader makes contact with members of the peer review team:

- a. give guidance or assistance in reviewing self study materials
- b. give instruction on travel, lodging, schedules for on-site visit and other pertinent information

Step 13 The Peer review team makes on-site visit.

- a. The School nutrition director and the peer review team meet the morning of the first day of the site visit to confirm plans and review evaluation procedures.
- b. The team and director attend the entrance meeting with school district administration.
- c. Evaluation procedures are performed the remainder of the first day and are completed by noon of the last day of the site visit.
- d. The peer review team coordinates evaluation information and prepares a summary of evaluation results and gives a signed copy of report to team leader.
- e. The team meets with the superintendent or designee, school nutrition director, child nutrition staff, and interested individuals invited by the superintendent to present the summary evaluation.
- f. The site visit concludes with the exit meeting with school district administration.
- g. The peer review team leader submits expenses.

Step 14 The Past Presidents Advisory Board serves as the decision-making body.

Step 15 The peer review team leader sends final report to headquarters office.

- a. within two weeks of the on-site visit the peer review team leader prepares and submits final report to the headquarters office
- b. the peer review team evaluation report (Exhibit XX) will include
 - peer review team members
 - a list of interviews with names of those visited, location and time of visit
 - commendations and recommendations for improvement
 - review teams recommendations to the PPAB

Step 16 The Headquarters office receives report and sends copies to the PPAB.

Step 17 The PPAB makes the award decision.

PPAB makes a group decision on the outcome of the review through appropriate communication channels.

Step 18 The chairman of the PPAB signs the award letter of the committee decision and sends to the headquarters office and copies the TASN President.

- Step 19 The TASN Headquarters Office:
- a. sends a letter from the PPAB to the school nutrition director and a copy to the superintendent of the school district reviewed.
 - b. provide a press release for the district's use
- Step 20 The school nutrition director receives the report and arranges for announcement and ceremonies at the local level (upon request, a TASN representative may formally present at a school board meeting or designated school function, at the district's expense).
- Step 21 The school nutrition programs being awarded "Programs of Excellence" within the current year will be recognized:
- a. in the TASN professional journal
 - b. at the TASN annual conference
 - c. on the TASN website

N. Revisions to the Standards of Excellence Program

The materials and instructions in this guide have been approved by the TASN Board of Directors. To maintain conformance to the guidelines and evaluate all school nutrition programs in a like manner as much as possible, changes are not to be made in any part to meet any particular situation. Suggestions for improving the guide should be given to the TASN Headquarters Office. These comments will be taken into account as the guide is periodically updated and revisions presented to the TASN Board of Directors for approval.

- O. A school nutrition program completing the TASN Program of Excellence review and receiving full approval is accredited for a period of ten years. After five years, Program of Excellence districts will be required to submit a letter to the PPAB documenting that their SNA Key status has not changed.

If at any time during the accreditation period significant changes occur within the school nutrition department, the school nutrition director should notify the PPAB. The conditions that require notification of the PPAB are:

1. the school nutrition department is cited for noncompliance with USDA and/or TDA critical regulations
2. any information brought to the association that the quality of program has diminished
3. SNA's Key status changes

A school nutrition department must correct any violations or deficiencies within one year to retain award status. In the event of a change in management, an interim report must be submitted to the PPAB after one year operation under the new director or management.

APPENDIX
STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
DEFINITIONS

ACCREDITATION: Texas Association for School Nutrition designation and recognition of a school nutrition department as a TASN Program of Excellence.

APPLICANT: The individual, group or organizational entity requesting a TASN Program of Excellence evaluation.

CRITERIA: Specific, objective measures of attainment which aid in judging the degree the Standards of Excellence is met.

EVALUATION: The process by which quality is judged by comparison to established standards. The purpose of the TASN evaluation is to identify outstanding school nutrition programs in Texas.

PAST PRESIDENTS ADVISORY BOARD: A five member group composed of the current TASN immediate past president and four past presidents elected at the first board of directors meeting each year. This group comprises the PPAB and is authorized by TASN to administer the TASN Standards of Excellence Program and to select outstanding school nutrition operations for certification as a TASN Program of Excellence.

HUMAN RESOURCES: The time, energy, talents, abilities and knowledge provided by people.

PEER REVIEW: The process by which school nutrition practitioners critically appraise school nutrition program performance against the TASN Standards of Excellence.

PEER REVIEW EVALUATORS: Peer Review evaluators are outstanding TASN members with comprehensive school nutrition knowledge and experience designated by TASN to collect and evaluate information on school nutrition programs participating in the TASN Standards of Excellence evaluation process.

RATIONALE: The statement of reasons supporting each Standard of Excellence.

SELF STUDY: The process of examination, analysis and evaluation of operations and services by individual school nutrition to determine strengths and weakness. A completed self study is a requirement for participation in the TASN Standards of Excellence evaluation.

SITE VISIT: A site visit is a two to three day observation and inspection of an individual school nutrition program by a peer review team for the purpose of participation in the TASN Standards of Excellence program.

SAMPLE LETTER OF REQUESTING TASN SITE-REVIEW

(District’s Letterhead)

(Date)

Executive Director
The Texas Association for School Nutrition
3520 Executive Center Dr., Suite 165
Austin, Texas 78731

Dear Madam/Sir:

The _____ Independent School District has received the School Nutrition Associations “Keys of Excellence” and is requesting a site visit by the Past President’s Advisory Board of Texas Association for School Nutrition. We are submitting a request for an evaluation of our program by February 1. Three dates preferable to us are:

_____ (2 consecutive days)

_____ (2 consecutive days)

_____ (2 consecutive days)

School district enrollment _____ Number of schools _____

We look forward to receiving the pertinent data about the acceptable date, peer review team members, and evaluation costs within the time frame designated in your guide.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools or authorized designate
Telephone:

Director
Telephone:

General Information Questionnaire

Date _____

School District _____

Address _____ Telephone Number _____

Superintendent of Schools _____

Address _____ Telephone Number _____

School Nutrition Director _____

Address _____ Telephone Number _____

City _____ Population _____

District Enrollment _____

Number of Secondary Schools _____ Enrollment _____ ADA _____

Number of Middle Schools _____ Enrollment _____ ADA _____

Number of Elementary Schools _____ Enrollment _____ ADA _____

Average Daily Participation in School Nutrition _____

Number of School Nutrition Employees _____

Services Offered By the School Nutrition Department

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Summer School _____

Catering _____

Other _____

Type Production and Delivery System _____

Number Meals Served Daily _____

Number Reduced Price Meals Served Daily _____

Other (Specify) _____

Centralized Warehouse

Yes _____ No _____

Personnel Information

Complete One Personnel Information Sheet for Each District School Nutrition Administrative Employee.

Date _____

Name _____ **Title** _____

Major Responsibilities _____

Immediate Supervisor _____

Date Appointed To Present Position _____

Other Positions Held _____ **Location** _____ **Date** _____

Education Completed and Name of Institution _____

Date _____ **Major** _____

High School _____

College _____

Advanced Degree _____

Honors, Distinctions

Professional/ Community Organization Membership

SAMPLE LETTER OF FIVE-YEAR NOTICE

(TASN's Letterhead)

(Date)

(Superintendent of Schools)
(Address)

Dear (Mr. /Ms. Superintendent):

The Texas Association for School Nutrition "Standards of Excellence" was awarded to your school district in recognition of your school nutrition program on _____. In order to maintain this accreditation the recipient is allowed to renew the award at the end of five years.

A letter from you stating the intent of the district to pursue the renewal should be sent to the Chairman of the TASN Past President's Advisory Board, at the above address, by February 1, _____. The process will involve a self study and submission of a notebook documenting significant changes during the past five years. Following these steps, an evaluation report prepared by the TASN Past President's Advisory Board will be made determining the continuation of the accreditation status. If approved, recognition will be given at the annual TASN State Conference to be held in (city), in June of _____.

Upon receipt of the letter indicating your intention the process can begin. We look forward to working with you and your school nutrition director in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to call should there be questions in regard to this matter.

Sincerely,

(Chair)
Chair of Past Presidents Advisory Board

Enclosure

cc :(School Nutrition Director)

SAMPLE LETTER OF KEYS SUBMITTAL FOR SUPERINTENDENTS

(DISTRICT LETTERHEAD)

(DATE)

Child Nutrition Foundation
Attn: Districts of Excellence in Child Nutrition
700 S. Washington Street Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Committee,

The (department name, school district) Independent School District is a program that is worthy of designation as a School Nutrition Association (SNA) District of Excellence. Going through the process of self-assessment criteria from SNA Keys to Excellence Program (Keys) assisted the Department in identifying goals to improve our District program.

(Include other information about the program)

The (department name) is an efficient program worthy of recognition and designation as a District of Excellence in Child Nutrition. Your review of the department's self-assessment, documentation and consideration for this award is appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

(Name)
Superintendent of Schools

cc :(School Nutrition Director)

SAMPLE LETTER OF KEYS SUBMITTAL TO SNA

(DISTRICT LETTERHEAD)

(DATE)

Child Nutrition Foundation
Attn: Districts of Excellence in Child Nutrition
700 S. Washington Street Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22324

Subject: District of Excellence in Child Nutrition Award

Dear Paul Alberghine,

Enclosed are validation documents that are required for reviewing (District Name) Independent School District as a District of Excellence in Child Nutrition. We have included:

- Letter of Recommendation from Business Official
- Summary letter to the Superintendent from our most recent School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI) state review
- Validation of HACCP Program
- Summary letter to superintendent regarding our most recent Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) state review will be available in May.

I understand only three of the four items noted are required for consideration as a District of Excellence; however, I have enclosed all four. The (district name and department) has worked hard and looks forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Respectfully,

(Name)
(School Nutrition Director)

cc: (others)

Enclosure

SAMPLE LETTER OF APPROVAL FOR RENEWAL

(TASN Letterhead)

(month, date, year)

(superintendent)

(address)

Dear (superintendent):

The Past President's Advisory Board has reviewed the submitted update of self study materials of the _____ School District school nutrition department. We are pleased to inform you that the Standards of Excellence accreditation is renewed for an additional five years.

Recognition of the renewal of accreditation will be made at the _____ General Session of the conference in _____ on June _____, 200__. The person designated to receive the seal of approval is requested to arrive fifteen minutes prior to the beginning of the session and sit in the front row of the auditorium.

It has been a pleasure working with you and the people in your district during the renewal process. The outstanding performance of your school nutrition program reflects very positively on your school district, community and over the state as well.

If we may be of further assistance, please call on us.

Sincerely,

(Chair)

Chair of Past Presidents Advisory Board

cc :(School Nutrition Director)

SAMPLE LETTER FOR TEN-YEAR NOTICE

(Chair of the Past President’s Advisory Board)
(Address)

(Superintendent of Schools)
(Address)

Dear (Mr./Ms. Superintendent):

The Texas Association for School Nutrition “Standards of Excellence” was awarded to your school district in recognition of your child nutrition program on _____ *date* _____ and accreditation renewal on _____ *date* _____. In order to maintain your status the recipient district is allowed to renew the award at the end of ten years.

A letter from you stating the intent of the district to pursue the renewal should be sent to the Chair of the TASN Past President’s Advisory Board, at the above address, by February 1, _____. The process will involve an on-site observation by a peer review team. Following these steps, an evaluation report prepared by the peer review team will be reviewed by the TASN Past President’s Advisory Board to determine the accreditation status. If approved, your district will be recognized during general session at the annual TASN State Conference. The conference will be held in (_____), on June _____, 200__.

Upon receipt of the letter indicating your intention, materials and details will be provided to the school nutrition director and the process can begin. We look forward to working with both you and your director in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to call should there be questions in regard to this matter.

Sincerely,

(Chair)
Chair of Past Presidents Advisory Board

cc :(School Nutrition Director)

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: (Director's Name, phone number and e-mail)

(DISTRICTS NAME)ISD EARNS FOODSERVICE *DISTRICT OF EXCELLENCE IN CHILD NUTRITION* AWARD

School Nutrition Association Recognizes Outstanding Local School Nutrition Program

Dallas, Texas, May 22, 2006 – Dallas Independent School District announced today the *District of Excellence in Child Nutrition* designation by the School Nutrition Association (SNA).

This prestigious award recognizes school districts that score 80 percent or higher on SNA's Keys to Excellence, in covering nutrition and nutrition education, administration, communications and marketing, and operations. In Texas, there are only four other District Child Nutrition Programs that have achieved this designation. The Keys to Excellence provides a standard way for school districts to compare their program to the industry's model of practice while helping meet their goals to serve healthy, delicious food in a cost-effective way. (Quote from Director, Example: "We are proud of meeting the SNA criteria for Excellence in Child Nutrition, but we still have a lot to do" said Dora Rivas, M.S., R.D., Division Manager. Our staff has worked hard to reach this level of performance. In the coming year, we will continue to make more changes to serve the needs of our diverse student population with attractive and healthier meal options while at the same time maintain our costs to them.")

(Quote from Superintendent, Example: "We're honored to receive this School Nutrition Association designation, because it recognizes all the hard work our foodservice operation does to make school meals delicious, attractive, nutritious, and economical," said Michael Hinojosa, General Superintendent.)

Dallas ISD Food and Child Nutrition Services successfully met the challenges of achieving a quality school nutrition program and we congratulate them on their achievement and commitment to excellence in foodservice management," said Ruth Jonen, SNA President.

Foodservice directors utilize the Keys to Excellence standards to promote excellence and challenge other directors to implement new and innovative ideas like placing food kiosks around the lunchroom to make a meal different, fun, sociable, and to make the serving of food more efficient. The program encourages community involvement at special events in the cafeteria. The Keys to Excellence offers guidance on involving the entire school in student nutrition, for example, by using a menu to teach about nutrition.

The new Keys to Excellence was developed and produced by the SNA and the Child Nutrition

Foundation, with support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Adolescent and School Health, and the National Dairy Council. To learn more about this cutting edge tool, go to www.asfsa.org/keys.

SNA is a national, non-profit professional organization representing more than 55,000 members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the country. The Association and its members are dedicated to feeding children safe and nutritious meals. Founded in 1946, SNA is the only association devoted exclusively to protecting and enhancing children’s health and well being through school meals and sound nutrition education.

.....more.....

The Child Nutrition Foundation, established in 1964, is a non-profit corporation that provides high-quality professional development, financial aid and research programs to child nutrition professionals and members of the SNA. The Foundation’s commitment to the child nutrition community is integral to implementing positive changes in school meals and, ultimately, to the health of school children.

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