

TASN ews

Summer 2023, Vol. 19, No. 4

A Publication of the Texas Association for School Nutrition





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Veronica Villarreal
East Central ISD

Area 12 Representative

Tina Brooks
Stratford ISD

Increase Your District's ADP ASAP

Sneak a peek at a couple of our free recipes to increase your district's ADP:

- Curry Chicken Salad
- PB&J Overnight Oats



Scan for more recipes

IMPORTANT DATES

2023-2024 TASN Membership Drive	September 1, 2023 - May 15, 2024	
Second TASN Board of Directors/Committee Meetings	October 4–5, 2023	Corpus Christi, Texas
TASNews Magazine Fall Issue Deadline	October 15, 2023	
2024 TASN Partnership Collaboration Summit (PCS)	January 29–31, 2024	Horseshoe Bay, Texas
Third TASN Board of Directors/Committee Meetings	February 22–23, 2024	Corpus Christi, Texas
SNA Legislative Action Conference (LAC)	March 3–5, 2024	Washington, D.C.
2024 TASN Annual Conference	June 30 – July 3, 2024	San Antonio, Texas
2024 SNA Annual National Conference (ANC)	July 14-16, 2024	Boston, Massachusetts



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Food and Nutrition, Texas Department of Agriculture

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5910 Courtyard Drive Suite 230, Austin, TX 78731
(800) 444-5189

Shelley Livaudais
Editor / Designer

Karen Andrasi, CMP
Executive Director

Samara Traylor
Ad Sales
samarat@tasn.net

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SUMMER 2023



Greetings TASN Members!

We just finished our 69th Annual Conference in Houston and on all accounts, it was a great success. I sincerely hope we “Created Magic” for you in one way or another. Our Conference Planning Committee worked hard to make it a memorable conference and spent many hours finding great speakers, refining schedules, and working out details. Jon Colby’s keynote had us laughing, smiling, and moving around, all while delivering a message about failing forward. Our incredible Industry Committee exceeded expectations with our Cirque Du Soleil evening filled with illusions I still don’t understand. Thank you to the 1200+ members who joined us, as well as our amazing industry partners who support this organization year after year. If you were unable to attend this year, please make plans to meet us in San Antonio next year.

As I assume the role of TASN President for the 2023-2024 year I am grateful for your trust in leading this organization. We are already working hard analyzing survey results, kicking off new initiatives, and planning events to help TASN grow. I sure hope to see every one of you at a TASN event over the next year.

I hope you get some much needed and well deserved rest this summer and return recharged and ready to tackle the many challenges we face in child nutrition. Your TASN executive committee advocated for our programs at the SNA Annual Conference earlier this month, and will do so at the Legislative Action Conference next March. Protecting our programs so that we can fulfill our mission of feeding kids is an essential responsibility for us. Taking care of kids is an honorable endeavor and you should be extremely proud of the work you do each day. You do in fact “Create Magic” for the students you serve each day!

If you are interested in starting a local chapter or reviving an existing one please reach out to our headquarters team and they will be happy to help. We are always looking for great people to help move this organization forward. If you have a passion for TASN members I encourage you to raise your hand and answer the call.

Please let me know how I can help. I am here for you.

Doug Massey
Klein ISD
TASN 2023-24 President
dmassey@kleinisd.net



HEADQUARTERS HIGHLIGHTS

by Karen J. Andrasi,
TASN Executive Director

Thank you, thank you, and thank you for your support with the TASN Annual Conference. It was great seeing many of you and catching up. For those that had to cancel, you and your families are in our thoughts. For those of you that did not register, we missed you. The TASN conference is a great place to network and keep updated with the latest information and innovations. This year's conference was great. There were 276 booths with over 800 vendors and 1,222 attendees from throughout the state.

I know it seems early, but we are hard at work planning the 2024 Annual Conference to be held in San Antonio. This will be TASN's 70th Annual Conference! We do hope to see you there.

We held the board election in March and welcomed the new and returning board members with board training in conjunction with the conference. The training was an introduction to each person's responsibilities as a board member as well as the responsibilities of the whole board.

We are currently working with the Omni Bayfront Hotel in Corpus Christi for the October 4-5, 2023, Board/Committee Meeting and the February 22-23, 2024, Board/Committee Meeting. If you are in the area, we would love to have you join us. There are various committee meetings that you are welcome to sit in on. TASN values your input.

The 2024 Partnership Collaboration Summit (PCS) will be held at Horseshoe Bay Resort January 29-31, 2024. Keep an eye out for more information about registration and sponsorship.

The Call for Nominations information and form are included in this issue of the TASNews (*see page 12*). Please take a moment to review the board openings and the commitment requirements. The deadline to turn in your nomination is September 15, 2023. You all have done a remarkable job in making a difference in your schools and communities. Please join us to make a difference in TASN! If you are interested in a position and would like to learn more, please contact me at karena@tasn.net. The nomination information will also be on the TASN website.

Thank you to all of the great TASN members!

Greetings from TASN President-Elect Lacy Willey



Abracadabra! Alakazam!

I wish someone would cast a spell to whisk me back to the magic of the TASN 2023 Annual Conference! Networking, learning,

and bonding with like-minded professionals throughout the state is an experience I cherish each year. I find that the conference is the perfect close-out to the school year and kick-off to developing goals for the new one. Jon Colby, our keynote speaker, provided an energetic and engaging approach to staying positive and using the phrase “YES, and” to help create an extraordinary experience for our students, staff, and community. You can follow him on all social media outlets: @JonColbySpeaks.

I thank each one of you for supporting our TASN Board of Directors and providing feedback, keeping our association one of the best in the nation. Being installed as President-Elect was a highlight of mine during the conference. I will be working to move the association forward and bring magic to your membership. The call for nominations starts now (*see page 12*) and I encourage you to seek out a leadership role in your association. It is rewarding work and a surefire way to make great connections in our school food service industry.

If you missed out on Creating Magic at the 2023 Annual Conference, you must plan now to attend the 2024 conference in the vibrant city of San Antonio, TX. Brush off your bell bottoms, tie-dye shirts, and platform shoes to celebrate TASN’s 70th Anniversary! It is going to be a groovy time June 30 - July 3, 2024.

Remember it is up to each one of us to make magic happen!

Catch you on the flip-side,
Lacy



SECRETARY/TREASURER CORNER

by Christie Lammers, Texarkana ISD

TASN Secretary/Treasurer

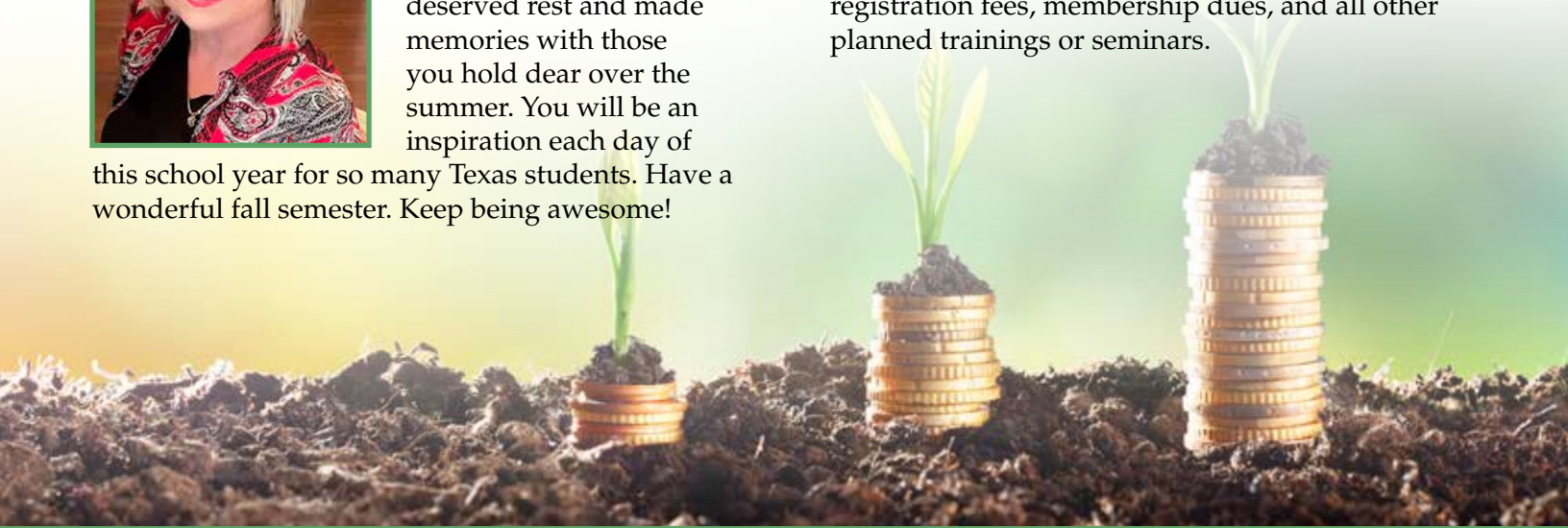


Welcome back to school! Greetings from the northeast corner of the state! I hope that you enjoyed some well-deserved rest and made memories with those you hold dear over the summer. You will be an inspiration each day of

this school year for so many Texas students. Have a wonderful fall semester. Keep being awesome!

Here are the financial updates from TASN:

The TASN board adopted the 2023-2024 budget this summer. Total revenue is estimated at \$1,329,150.00 from all sources, including the annual conference, registration fees, membership dues, and all other planned trainings or seminars.



Stay Connected!

Click below to stay connected with TASN on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter. We post event info, opportunities for member engagement, pictures, & more - don't miss an update!





THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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Choice Partners Cooperative

Chrane Foodservice Solution

Gordon Food Service

Land O'Lakes

LMS Associates

Los Cabos Mexican Foods

Smart Sense by Digi

BRONZE

Cool Tropics

E-Source Miller

Wawona

2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

It was such a pleasure to see everyone in Houston this June for the 2023 TASN Annual Conference. Our members and industry partners were given the opportunity to reconnect, attend learning sessions, build new connections, and simply enjoy seeing each other in person!

It was wonderful to see our members receive awards and recognition that they have worked so hard for.

Check out some of the 2023 highlights in the next few pages.

We look forward to seeing you all next year in San Antonio!



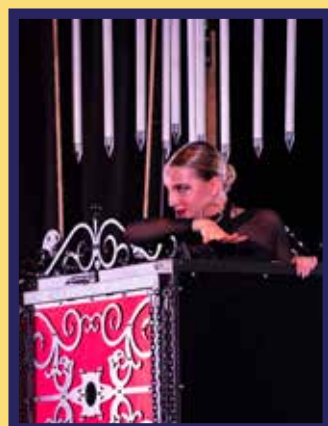
2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



**SEE YOU NEXT JUNE
IN SAN ANTONIO!**



Greetings from Area 5 Representative Suellen Atteberry, Red Oak ISD



Area Five visits TASN!

Garland ISD in Area 5 attended the 2023 TASN 'Creating Magic' Annual Conference. Jennifer Miller, Director of Garland ISD SNS, was installed as the TASN Public Policy & Legislative Chair, and I, Suellen Atteberry, Supervisor Special Projects, was installed as the Area 5 Representative.

As a team we learned a lot! We are bringing our newly gained knowledge back to our district to share with our fellow co-workers. We have learned how to market our program, lead and retain our fabulous employees, give next level service and

advocate for our students! We were also able to spend some time with our team at the Texas-shaped lazy river.

Our group was mesmerized by the performers at the Industry Event on Monday evening. The exhibitors didn't let us down with wonderful presentations of what they have to offer. I even managed to pick up a Magic 8 Ball from one of the exhibitors - now to make the magic happen with that nifty little black ball!

I look forward to meeting and working with the people in Area 5 – let's create a little magic!

Here are just a few of the pictures of Garland ISD!





TASN 2024-2025 ELECTION

**YOUR ORGANIZATION + YOUR LEADERSHIP
=
EVERYONE'S SUCCESS!**

NOTE: THIS WILL BE CONSIDERED AN EVEN YEAR ELECTION

TASN LEADERSHIP IS VITAL TO THE SUCCESS, PROGRESS, AND ADVANCEMENT OF YOUR ASSOCIATION.

The TASN Nominating Committee needs the membership to help in identifying potential Committee Chairs, Area Representatives, and candidates for elected office.

THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS WILL BE ON THE BALLOT FOR THE 2024-2025 TASN ELECTION:

Vice President

Membership Chair

Education Chair

Chair of Area Representatives

Area 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 Representatives

Please check the TASN website starting in early August for information pertaining to the upcoming election. Review the positions and decide whether you are interested in volunteering to serve in any of the positions listed, or if you can recommend a member whom you consider to be professionally qualified for the leadership position. We also welcome anyone who is interested in serving on any of the TASN committees.

The nomination period will be from mid-July to September 15, 2023. The ballot should consist of two nominees for each position, and we are looking for representation throughout the great state of Texas.

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

Also, when it is time to vote in the election, please take advantage of that opportunity. We only had 444 of the 4,600 TASN members vote in the 2023-2024 election. **YOUR VOICE COUNTS!**

**NOMINATION DEADLINE:
SEPTEMBER 15, 2023**



NOMINATION FORM

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM TO:

**TASN
5910 COURTYARD DRIVE #230
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78731
FAX: 512-371-0125**

Name of nominee: _____

School district: _____

Position you are being nominated for: _____

Phone # of nominee: _____

Address of nominee: _____

Email of nominee: _____

Person submitting the nomination: _____

ISD of person submitting nomination: _____

Phone # of person submitting nomination: _____

Days out of Your District

Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer

TASN Annual Conference (June or July)	4 days
TASN Board of Directors Meetings (Oct & Feb)	2 x 2 = 4 days
TASN Partnership Collaboration Summit (Jan or Feb)	3 days
TASN Board Training (Apr or May)	2 days
SNA Annual Conference (July)	5 days
SNA Legislative Action Conference (Feb or Mar)	3-4 days

Minimum of: 21 days

SNA Leadership Conference (Vice President Only) (Apr)	3-4 days
---	----------

25-26 days

Committee Chairs & Area Representatives

TASN Annual Conference (June or July)	4 days
TASN Board of Directors Meetings (Oct & Feb)	2 x 2 = 4 days
TASN Board Training (Apr or May)	2 days
TASN Leadership Camp (Sept, Oct, or Nov)	1 day

Minimum of: 11 days

When submitting nomination form, please include: this form, a letter from your immediate supervisor approving that you run for the position, and a photo (to be used as a headshot for the TASNews.)

Chapter News

Area 3

Tomball ISD



Howdy from Tomball Texas, home of the Tomball ISD “Plateful” experience.

What a year it has been! With so many ups and downs, due to more food and supply shortages and staffing issues, the 2022-2023 school year proved to be another challenging experience for so many in our field of work. Through all those hardships our department made it through with teamwork and smiles on our faces.

The Tomball ISD chapter of TASN started out last year with the “Challenge Accepted” Annual Conference in Fort Worth. It was a first-time experience for many of our members, and such a wonderful time to get to know each other better. Also, it was a fun way to meet others from different districts all over Texas and gain knowledge from all the presenters who came.

As our year progressed, we had a couple of successful fundraisers. One included going out into the community and having a huge garage sale. We even had a food truck there! The garage sale was another fun bonding experience for all of us. Instead of having a March meeting we decided to do a group outing. We went to Pottery Land, where we could sit, laugh, eat snacks, and paint something fun.

As we wind down our summer break, we reflect on our time at the 2023 TASN Annual Conference, which was only an hour away from us this year!

We had so many neat experiences and met wonderful people, and are excited to bring back ideas to our kitchens to have a successful 2023-2024 school year!



TASN MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

September 1 - May 31

How it works:

- For every three (3) people you recruit to be members, your name will be entered into a drawing that will take place on TASN Facebook Live.

Prizes:

- \$100.00 cash prize, free membership for the next year, and recognition at the 2024 TASN Annual Conference.

Rules:

- Must be a new member or a person that has had inactive member status with TASN for two (2) or more years.
- Must include email address to be eligible.
- Must use membership drive form, located in this issue and on the TASN website.
- Recruiter must be a Specialist, Manager, or Supervisor.
- Recruit at least three (3) members to be eligible.
- Membership application form must be completed and postmarked by May 31, 2024.



TASN Membership Application Form

Please check one of the following: New Member _____ Member Renewal _____

Personal Information:

Member #: _____

(Please print and complete information on this form. TASN will use this address for all correspondence.) Only completed forms will be processed.

Name

Last: _____ First: _____ M.I.: _____

Street Address: _____ Apt/Ste. #: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

ISD: _____ Area: _____ Chapter: _____ County: _____

Position:	Category:	Individual:
Cooks, bakers, bookkeepers, technicians, assistants, equipment/maintenance specialists	Employee	\$23.00
Managers, head cooks, assistant managers, accounting dept., equipment/maintenance	Manager	\$28.00
Please circle or check one: Working in the foodservice program at the school district level, equipment/maintenance	Director or Supervisor	\$43.00
Working in the state office for child nutrition programs, including nutrition education	TDA, ESC, TDH	\$43.00
Retired school foodservice workers	Retired	\$18.00
Full-time students enrolled in college or university in the foodservice, nutrition, or dietary program	Students	\$13.00
Persons involved in non-foodservice administrative duties of a school district, college/university in Texas, or an allied non-profit organization	Affiliate	\$18.00

If recruiting during TASN's year-long membership drive period, please fill out the following. **September 1st - May 31st**

Membership Drive Requirements:

- Must be a new member or a person with an inactive member status with TASN for two (2) or more years
- Must include email address
- Must use this membership drive form
- Recruiter must be a specialist, manager, or supervisor
- Recruit at least three (3) members for one (1) entry

Prizes: \$100.00 gift card, Free TASN membership for recruiter, and recognition at the TASN Annual Conference.

Recruitment must be postmarked within membership drive dates.

Recruiter's Information:

Recruiter's Name: _____ Recruiter Member #: _____

Recruiter's Phone: _____ Recruiter's ISD: _____

Recruiter's Email: _____

Payment Information:

Credit Card type: _____ Check #: _____

Name on Card: _____ Billing Address: _____

Credit Card #: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____ Total Amount: \$ _____

Please return payment and application form to: TASN, 5910 Courtyard Drive, Suite #230, Austin, Texas 78731
or by Fax: (512) 371-0125

Do you make purchasing decisions for your district? Yes No Is your salary paid by a management company? Yes No

Member (ISD, TDA, ESC, TDH) Signature: _____ Date: _____

Certification Update

by Eric Vicharelli, TASN Education & Training Specialist



Hello TASN family!

It was great getting the chance to see everyone at the Annual Conference this year! Thank you for attending and for being a part of TASN. I would like to take this opportunity to share with

you some of the goals the Education & Training department has set for the 2023-2024 school year:

- Develop and distribute competitive and relevant education to members with multiple delivery methods with high quality instruction and technology integration.
- Provide education in both English and Spanish.
- Simply the certification process.
- Promote in-person classes.

What's the plan?

TASN has already been evaluating its current curriculum starting with the Managers Academy and Administrative Academy (previously called Directors Academy). This will lead to developing new materials to best train and educate the upcoming leaders in the field. TASN is also working on creating educational videos to post online for additional continuing education credit hours. The goal is to reach a wider audience by offering English and Spanish versions of classes.

TASN started a new certification program as of July 1, 2022. It has never been easier to find classes and get certified through TASN! For those of you struggling to find classes please visit the Education tab on our [website](#). Our program follows USDA Professional Standard Codes that ensure the hours accepted in our program are the most up-to-date and relevant information available. And although we happily accept approved online courses, TASN will continue promoting in-person classes for those who prefer

them. Let us continue feeding and building a better tomorrow.

Certification Program Reminders

- Certifications will become void if a membership goes inactive past the 30-day grace period.
- Key Area(s) are not the same as TASN Level(s). Each level has its own requirements consisting of each Key Area 1-4.
- The fee for earning a level is \$20 per level; the fee for renewing a level is \$10 annually.

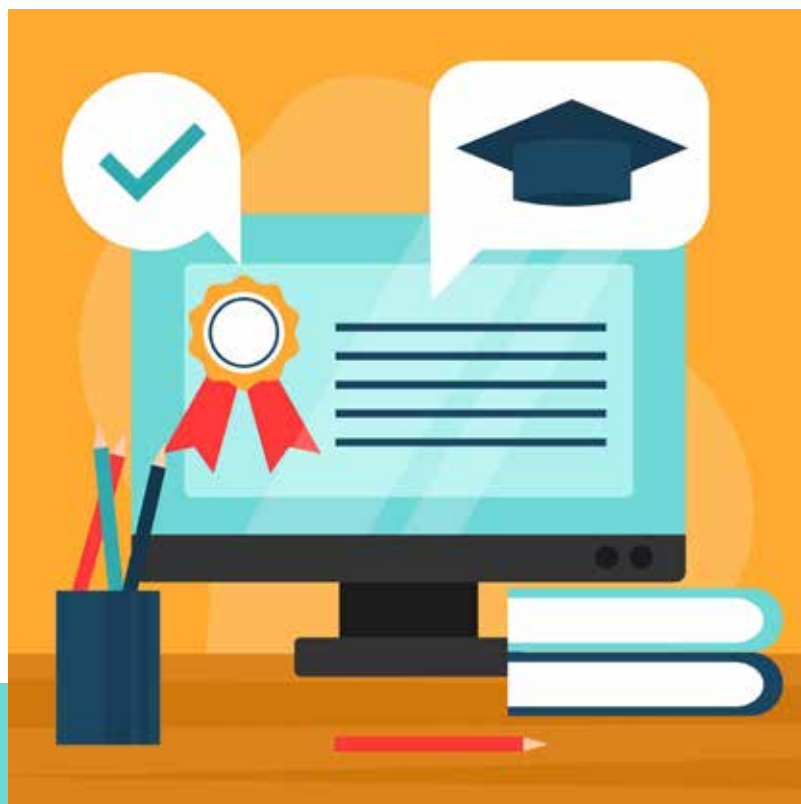
Please see below for education related forms:

Certification Application - click [HERE](#)

Certification Renewal Application - click [HERE](#)

Request for Approval Application - click [HERE](#)

Eric Vicharelli
 TASN Education & Training Specialist
 5910 Courtyard Drive #230
 Austin, Texas 78731
 512.371.0087 ext. 207



2023 AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

We were proud to honor all of our award and scholarship recipients at the 2023 Annual Conference!

AWARDS

GOLD MEMBERSHIP AWARD

CARMEN NAULING, SHELDON ASN
SHELLY COPELAND, SPRING ASN

GOLD CERTIFICATION AWARD

SUSAN NAYERI, SHELDON ASN

PARTNERSHIP IN CHILD NUTRITION AWARD

HILDA CENTENO, YES PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MAYRA CHAVEZ, SPRING ISD
MICHELLE ERICKSON, COPPERAS COVE ISD
ROSA MENDIOLA, KLEIN ISD

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

HEATHER OLIVER, TEXARKANA ISD
ERICA DORSEY, KLEIN ISD

BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION AWARD

JESSICA HOWELL, YES PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LISA MITCHELL, BRAZOSPORT ISD
LACY WILLEY, CLEVELAND ISD

LUNCH PARTICIPATION AWARD

JESSICA HOWELL, YES PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LACY WILLEY, CLEVELAND ISD

SCHOOL NUTRITION MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

CLAUDIA DEL VALLE, KLEIN ISD

SCHOOL NUTRITION SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR AWARD

SOCORRO PADILLA, BIRDVILLE ISD

NUTRITION EDUCATION AWARD

MELISSA BRYAN, COPPERAS COVE ISD

RECOGNITION AWARD

JOHN CEBALLOS, KLEIN ISD
DIANA BROWN, CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD

SCHOLARSHIPS

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

SANDRA BOTELLO, SWEENEY ISD

WANDA CHAVEZ, SHELDON ISD

KATINA FREY, ALDINE ISD

ADRIAN HANSELL, KLEIN ISD

RAHIA MELTON, KLEIN ISD

SAMANTHA MIMS, CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD

ELIZABETH VASQUEZ, GALENA PARK ISD

LEAH WHETSTONE, NORTH EAST ISD

GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP

WIPARAT HAYES, CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD

SHARON PHILLIPS, SPRING BRANCH ISD

MANAGERS ACADEMY SCHOLARSHIP

MARIELA TORRES, GALENA PARK ISD

PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION SUMMIT SCHOLARSHIP

LORRIE HORNADAY, COPPERAS COVE ISD

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR
2023 TASN AWARD & SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

TO LEARN ABOUT APPLYING FOR TASN SCHOLARSHIPS, CLICK [HERE](#)

TO LEARN ABOUT TASN AWARDS & NOMINATIONS, CLICK [HERE](#)

2022-2023 ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERS ACADEMY GRADUATES

Congratulations to these hard-working TASN members for their completion of the 2022–2023 Managers and Administrative Academies

ADMINISTRATIVE ACADEMY GRADUATES

TARA AUSTIN, LA PORTE ISD
SANDRA BOTELLO, SWEENY ISD
CHRISTOPHER CAMPBELL, LUBBOCK - COOPER ISD
VANESSA CARTER-BLACK, TEXARKANA ISD
CANDICE CREIGHTON, LA PORTE ISD
CATHERINE DURHAM, TEXARKANA ISD
AMANDA GARCIA, RED OAK ISD
DAGMARA GUJDA, KATY ISD
TIFFANI HEBERT, SAN ANGELO ISD
RACHEL HIGGS, COLLEGE STATION ISD
PEDRINA HOOD, NORTH EAST ISD
CHANDRA JOHNSON, ALDINE ISD
ASHLEEANN JONES, KLEIN ISD
SARAI JONES, LA PORTE ISD
PAUL LEBLANC, HOUSTON ISD
IRMA MATA, COLLEGE STATION ISD
HEATHER OLIVER, TEXARKANA ISD
DEBRA RICHARD, TEXARKANA ISD
REBECCA ROMO, KLEIN ISD
TAYLOR THOMPSON, NORTH EAST ISD
BRIDGETTE YOUNG, FRANKLIN ISD

MANAGERS ACADEMY GRADUATES

STEPHANIE FRANCO, COLLEGE STATION ISD
KERRY FRAZAR, SEGUIN ISD
FLOR GALLEGOS, SEGUIN ISD
JACOB GALVAN, SEGUIN ISD
LISA GARCIA, COLLEGE STATION ISD
GRACIE GARZA, COLLEGE STATION ISD
MARIA ABREGO, SEGUIN ISD
TAMISHA JENKINS, COLLEGE STATION ISD
MARY LOPEZ, NAVARRO ISD
MARIA PEDRAZA, COLLEGE STATION ISD
DENISE REYNA, SEGUIN ISD
ANDREA RICHARDSON, SEGUIN ISD
LISA TENEYUQUE, SEGUIN ISD
ASHLEY VANN, SEGUIN ISD

TASN ACADEMIES HELP TAKE YOUR CAREER TO THE NEXT LEVEL

TO LEARN ABOUT THE TASN MANAGERS ACADEMY, CLICK [HERE](#)

TO LEARN ABOUT THE TASN ADMINISTRATIVE ACADEMY, CLICK [HERE](#)

HONORING THE HUNGER HEROES FEEDING KIDS THIS SUMMER

Most kids will not see a cafeteria for the next few months, but our school nutrition staff remain hard at work feeding kids throughout the summer. During this time, when classes let out and vital meal programs like school breakfast and lunch disappear, families already struggling with food insecurity must now shoulder the additional grocery costs to fill these gaps. Summer meal sites help bridge this gap for Texas families, and No Kid Hungry would like to honor and celebrate the extraordinary individuals who make them possible.

In 2022, No Kid Hungry Texas awarded \$1.1 million in grants to school districts and community nonprofit partners, helping provide over 90.8 million meals to children and families. Each year, we work closely with our partners who do the critical work of sourcing, preparing, serving, and even delivering these meals straight to children who need them. This work requires heart, ingenuity, and dedication, and we are continuously inspired by all who make it possible to operate these sites that serve a crucial need in our Texas communities.

A survey conducted earlier this year found 2 in 5 parents of school-aged children in Texas



reported experiencing at least one symptom of food insecurity in the past year. Even Texas school teachers surveyed witnessed these struggles, sharing: “I have seen many children who lack food. They come to school with nothing in their lunchbox or just bread,” and “I spent a lot of money buying lunch for students. So did other teachers.”

“Our vision is for children to embrace the joys of summer without the burden of hunger, allowing them to grow, play, and thrive,” said Stacie Sanchez Hare, director of No Kid Hungry Texas. “We would not be able to do it without our on-the-ground partners who operate these meal sites across the state.”

These hunger heroes are not just passionate about their mission; they are also innovators. When faced with logistical challenges, they find creative solutions to ensure that children have access to meals. Some operate air-conditioned buses that meet children at splash pads where they gather and in the neighborhoods where they live, while others provide a week’s worth of food at a time for families to take home. Those who operate

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meals programs in rural school districts – which often experience higher levels of food insecurity must contend with transportation challenges for these families in remote and hard-to-reach communities. Their adaptability and resourcefulness are key to ensuring every child gets nutritious summer meals, regardless of location or circumstance.

Beyond their invaluable service, these hunger heroes foster a sense of community. Each day, they arrive at summer meal sites with a genuine desire to nourish young minds and bodies, providing nutritious meals that fuel the potential of every child. Working rain or shine, often long days in the Texas heat, their commitment is unwavering. Greeting all with friendly smiles and caring interactions, these heroes create an environment where children feel valued and embraced. These summer meal sites directly strengthen our communities and offer a sense of stability and support to parents.

What's more, their impact extends far beyond the summer months. By nourishing children during this critical period, nutrition staff lay the



foundation for a successful return to the classroom come fall. Proper nutrition enhances children's overall well-being, supports their cognitive development, and equips them with the energy and focus they need to succeed academically and beyond.

This year, let us celebrate and honor these hunger heroes for their tireless work throughout the summer months to ensure our children stay nourished, even when school is no longer in session.

Their dedication, compassion, and innovative approaches make a profound difference in the lives of so many Texas children, helping our communities thrive.

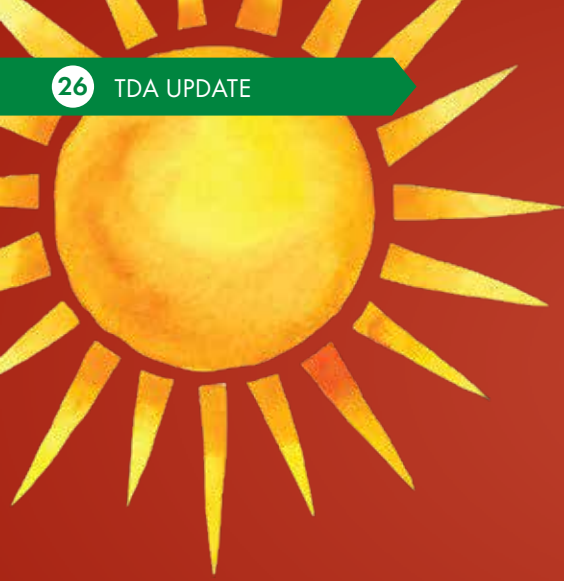




THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 SNA LAC Texas Delegates Dinner Sponsors



We look forward to seeing all Texas Delegates in
Washington, D.C. next year, March 3-5, 2024.



End of Summer Heats Up

HOT TOPICS

for School Nutrition

By Lena Wilson

Assistant Commissioner for Food and Nutrition
Texas Department of Agriculture



The start of every school year brings hot topics for school nutrition professionals to consider. In 2023-2024, the list includes new nutrition standards, reimbursement rates, and the end of pandemic-era waivers.

Many of you are working to decrease excess fund balances and effectively use Supply Chain Assistance funding just as more will come this school year. In Texas, we will all transition to Web-based Supply Chain Management for USDA Foods. Of course, there is more than I can cover in this article.

A great win in the last legislative session was the passage of a bill to cover reduced-price breakfasts. The 88th Texas Legislature's General Appropriations Act includes \$3.3 million per year in the next two school years to provide free breakfast in lieu of reduced-price breakfast to qualified students. TDA is working on details of how this funding will roll out to schools.

The [Local Food for Schools \(LFS\)](#) \$22 million

grant opportunity will allow districts to purchase more directly from farmers than ever before. LFS will increase the amount of Texas products in school meals and strengthen the food supply system. TDA will continue to support producer awareness of school procurement processes and popular items. TDA aims to grow the [Farm Fresh Network](#) and connect agriculture producers and school food service to create relevant connections that support industry and nutrition. Also, the new round of [Supply Chain Assistance funding](#) will continue to strengthen district budgets as they purchase unprocessed or minimally processed foods.

This year, TDA will focus efforts on a return to the basics. TDA will conduct all administrative reviews without engaging contracted vendor services. This ensures a more consistent application of regulatory guidance across the state. The regional [Education Service Centers](#) (ESCs) will help you prepare for administrative reviews so you can work toward getting "No Findings" recognition at MegaCon 2024.

TDA will target additional efforts on sustained training and technical assistance for every aspect of program operations. Webinars on

an array of topics will resume immediately following the monthly calls to ensure that guidance is readily available to support operations. ESCs will also use standardized training tools to make sure that all districts get the same information. I am excited about the significant advances in training that will help all contracting entities (CEs).

I am also excited about all the opportunities for CEs to earn recognition. Schools participating in activities that increase student engagement or maximize resources deserve statewide accolades. The [USDA Foods Challenge](#) will be in its second year, and we have a plan for recognizing participation in [National School Lunch Week](#) activities. This kind of involvement is fun for students and staff.

Farm Fresh is still an integral part of providing healthy meals and a great way to stand out in the community. This year, TDA will have an enhanced award recognition for the state's Farm Fresh champions. Are you stepping up to the Farm Fresh Challenge? Visit [SquareMeals.org/FarmFresh Challenge](#) and pledge participation now!

On the national front, we continue to monitor activities in Washington, D.C., and the impact those decisions may have on school nutrition in Texas. The [Healthy Meals Help Kids Learn Act](#) and the [Universal School Meals Program Act](#) have been introduced in Congress. Others may also be introduced. Rest assured that TDA will continue to track anything that will affect the nutrition programs in Texas.

Like always, the new school year will bring change, challenges, and successes. I hope we will continue to forge a supportive and close-knit community working to maintain Texas' national recognition for its administration of federal nutrition programs.



Click above to visit these three great resources for encouraging student engagement and earning statewide recognition!



AUGUST IS NATIONAL SANDWICH MONTH

DID YOU KNOW?

- Although the fourth Earl of Sandwich, otherwise known as John Montagu, first popularized the meal in the 1700s and gave it its modern name, the sandwich has been around in some form for centuries. There are examples of sandwiches throughout history, and it's believed that the oldest sandwich, now known as the Hillel sandwich, was eaten during Passover as far back as the first century BC.
- Sandwiches became commonplace in the United States after the invention of sliced bread in the 1920s.
- Americans eat Americans eat close to 200 sandwiches per year on average!
- Astronaut John Young once smuggled a corned beef sandwich on board a Gemini flight.

Sandwiches are now popular all over the world. In Cuba, restaurants serve ham and cheese on Cuban bread. In the Middle East, it's falafel or shawarma in a pita pocket. In France, a Croque Monsieur or Croque Madame can be found in most cafes. Italian sandwiches are called panini. In New York, you'll find pastrami on rye and the Reuben. Philadelphia is all about the cheesesteak. The possibilities are endless.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

ARE HOT DOGS SANDWICHES?

WHAT ABOUT WRAPS OR TACOS?

A QUESADILLA?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?