

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024

4 Features

## Lunch lady appreciation

Students say they are enjoying the new options available in the cafeteria

By Autumn Gullett

School lunch is a staple in the high school movies you grew up watching - just like breakfast for lunch on Fridays is for NAHS students. "Mysterious meat" has been joked about for decades on hit television series like *That '70s Show*.

Lunch time is considered a high point in the school day for many students. Students spend their time talking with their friends while eating what the lunch ladies are serving that day.

In past years, the lunches being offered were not always the best, according to a video on the New Albany Floyd County Consolidated School Corporations Facebook account.

"Our food service teams are chopping, dicing, slicing, boiling, tossing, cooking, and a lot more than they have since I began working here two years ago," Director of Food services Leslie Beach said. "Change can be tough and they have very high expectations of themselves and want to present the students with the best product they can. We work very closely with each other to review and revise based on the feedback they receive from students. Our teams put hours of planning, ordering, and preparation into all of the dishes they serve. They are truly dedicated to providing for the students and relish the moments they see kids excited about what they are eating.

This year students have seen a

change in the food choices - fresher produce and local meat from closeby farms.

"At this time, we have added more scratch-made items such as burritos, quesadillas, enchiladas, Asian noodles, edamame salad, cajun chicken pasta, homemade lasagna, and many more," Beach said. "Additionally, we have build-your-own salad bars and more vegetarian options. Our relationship with local farmers has also been a wonderful partnership we have been wanting to solidify for a long time. We now supply local grass-fed beef, local pork sausage, and plan to add more products from our neighboring farms as the year progresses."

Students are becoming more excited to see what is for lunch and talking about how much more enjoyable food is, glad to be having multiple options everyday and always finding something that fits their preferences or food needs.

The school lunches now have greatly made me want to eat more because of the variety of options they now offer," senior Madison Mullis said. "I look forward to lunch now because the options are things that I genuinely would want to eat and I don't feel as gross while eating them"

More options have created a greater quantity of students eating school lunch. Last year the options were more directed towards students who do not have dairy issues, or students who are vegan or vegetarian.

**"I definitely look forward to lunch more because of the expanded options, I especially love having the new hummus box."**  
Maddie Mullis, 12



*A cafeteria employee cleans up after lunch and starts the prep work for the next day's breakfast. This year, the Food Services staff say they are focusing on serving locally-sourced food.*

"Last year, there were far less options for me to eat at lunch as a vegetarian, meaning that typically led to me not eating as much food at lunch. On days where there weren't many vegetarian options, having more vegetarian options are definitely more convenient for me," senior Gretchen Sprecher said.

Feeding thousands of kids and being able to serve a broader range of food needs for different types of eating habits/needs has helped students start talking and sharing their thoughts on how well the lunch ladies are taking care of them.

Trying new foods is not something high school students are known for. By the time students get to lunch after the first week or so they have already created a pattern of knowing what they like and what they would be okay with eating.

"Last year, I used to go to lunch every day and just pay for a bag of chips because there wasn't anything that

looked good to eat on most days," junior Zoey Elsea said.

This year Elsea says she has more options.

"I definitely look forward to lunch more because of the expanded options, I especially love having the new hummus box and the new offers within the refreshed salad bar like the chickpea salad," Mullis said.

Along with the appeal of lunches coming back, the benefits from a balanced meal is entering the discussion as well. Unlike last year there is a full salad bar with a variety of vegetables like carrots, broccoli, and tomatoes.

"I feel like there are a lot more benefits of school lunch this year than last year, last year I could only get nachos, Bosco sticks, and other greasy foods but this year I can get healthier options that make me feel better about what I am eating," Mullis said.

# THANK YOU PARTNERS!



Dole  
Foster Farms  
Hadley Farms

Harvest Hill Beverage  
Heartland Food Products Group  
High Liner Foods



Got some food for thought to dish out in our upcoming newsletter? Share your scoop at [admin@indianasna.org](mailto:admin@indianasna.org)!

## ISNA Certificate Classes

Don't forget to register for the ISNA Certificate Classes! From leadership to financial and menu planning there is something for everyone to learn! Check out the below dates and classes:

September 25: Product and Inventory Management and

Menu Planning Regulations and Concepts  
J&J Snack Foods  
JTM Food Group  
Kellogg's  
Kenat & Associates LLC

[Register Here!](#)

## Changing lives one Character Count at a time!

In Warrick County School Corporation, Loge Elementary School prides itself on teaching its kids these 6 main characteristics! Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. They hold fun-filled assemblies for each character trait, and last Friday's was Respect! The fantastic cafeteria crew at Loge was selected to teach the kids about this important life characteristic.

They put on an amazing skit about how to be respectful in the cafeteria! These ladies are so involved with their school and love all the kids they serve. They have all the sparkle and more! Thank you ladies for the amazing role you play in these kids' lives!



Save The Date!!

**2024 ISNA Annual Conference**  
**November 6-8, 2024**  
**South Bend, Indiana**

# SNF Scholarships

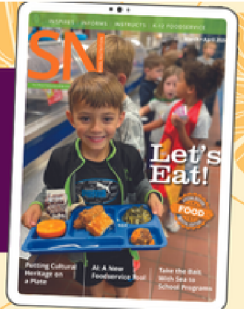


This year, the School Nutrition Foundation (SNF) has 45 conference scholarships to award to lucky members so they can attend SNA's 2024 Annual National Conference (#ANC24) in Boston, Massachusetts! **Check out** the below scholarships!

- SNA Scholarships
- Super Bakery's 22 Seconds Society Scholarship
- The J.T.M. Food Group Jack Maas, Jr., Scholarship
- AccuTemp Scholarship

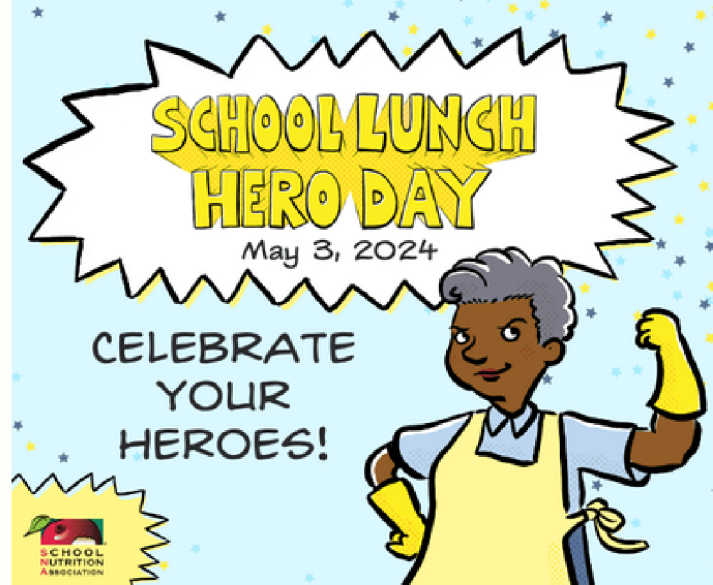


**SN** SCHOOL NUTRITION **MAGAZINE**  
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Registration for SNA's Annual National Conference (#ANC24) is open. Join us from July 14-16 in Boston, Massachusetts, for the school nutrition event of the year. Click here to secure your spot!

Get more Information here!



The first Friday in May is School Lunch Hero Day, dedicated to those men and women who make the cafeterias and the schools a better place to be! Get ready to celebrate your friends and colleagues!



# MEET THE CANDIDATES

Mary Ellen  
Gilliam

MSD Wayne Township

Assistant Director  
of Child Nutrition

How many years have you  
worked in school  
nutrition?

11

How many years have you  
been a member of ISNA?

6

## How can ISNA better meet the needs of its members?

Mary Ellen believes by actively listening to our membership's concerns we can meet more needs. This will involve adapting our programming as necessary to continuously provide effective educational and training opportunities to our membership.

## Why they want to serve

She would like to be considered for an elected leadership position with ISNA because Child Nutrition for me is where passion meets purpose. She is a product of the programs, we as an association advocate for. Mary believes her experience with these programs along with her involvement ISNA, she's able further the mission of the association, as we advocate for quality child nutrition programs.

## Views on obligations

The obligations and duties of an ISNA Officer to our membership is to provide adequate programming, diversified services, and educational development to the members of ISNA. In fulfilling this obligation, we're equipping our members with the tools necessary to advocate and provide exceptional service to our most precious commodity, the children of Indiana, who are our future.

## Involvement

### Professional:

- Regional workshops
- ISNA Annual Conference
- National Leadership Conference
- Legislative Action Conference
- National Annual Conference

### ISNA:

- Nutrition Committee Member
- Region 7 Representative
- Membership Committee Chair

### Volunteer Work:

- kitchen manager at Bibb County schools 2013
- Director of School Nutrition
- School Nutrition Consultant
- Serving on committees of Child Nutrition Associations

# MEET THE CANDIDATES

Sue Aikman

New Prairie United School Corporation

Director, Nutrition Services

How many years have you worked in school nutrition?

3.5

How many years have you been a member of ISNA?

3.5

## How can ISNA better meet the needs of its members?

Sue believes in more networking opportunities, both virtual and in person. As well as more educational opportunities for diverse membership, such as 2 hour workshops or meet and greets with industry members. The Director's series is a great start, but not everyone wants to make that 2-year commitment. She wants to see quick and easy trainings for members.

## Why they want to serve

Serving as the Region 2 Representative, as well as ISNA conference presenter. Sue is excited for the opportunity to continue to create more great connections, just as she did in the past creating a virtual meetup for Region 2 directors!

## Views on obligations

Keep the lines of communication open between the ISNA Board and our membership. I also feel like it is important to provide networking opportunities for local members, a way to talk through some of our day-to-day issues and experiences with others who are "in the same boat". We also need to be very intentional in our work to help educate new and existing members in the nuances of School Food Service.

## Involvement

Professional:

- Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership course
- ISNA Annual Conference
- graduate of the ISNA/IDOE Director's Series

ISNA:

- Region 2 representative
- Breakout Session Presenter at ISNA
- Professional Development Committee Member
- Nomination Reviewer

Volunteer Work:

- SNA Regulatory and Bylaws Committee Member
- Community advocate for the Food Service Program
- Rate and choose speakers for SNA Annual Conference

# MEET THE CANDIDATES

Ivan Balicky

West Lafayette

Assistant FS  
Director

How many years have you  
worked in school  
nutrition?

14

How many years have you  
been a member of ISNA?

5

## How can ISNA better meet the needs of its members?

Ivan believes offering up to date and relevant trainings, conferences and workshops will benefit all members. He also wants to shift focus towards manager level staff.

## Why they want to serve

School lunch is what Ivan does and by now he doesn't know anything different! Ivan feels it's time to give back and help all ISNA members succeed.

## Views on obligations

My duties to members include overseeing faithful decision making, ensuring financial health of organization, and focus on strategic goals, while moving forward towards free meals for all in Indiana.

## Involvement

### Professional:

- IDOE/ISNA certificate program
- ISNA Annual Conference
- LAC and Summit

### ISNA:

- Region 4 Representative
- Regularly attends ISNA Meetings
- Routinely maintain contact with region ISNA members

### Volunteer Work:

- Oversees meal production at his High School
- Helps ensure to reach nutritional as well as reimbursable standards.

# MEET THE CANDIDATES

Dee Orick

New Castle Community  
School Corporation

Director of Child  
Nutrition Services

How many years have you  
worked in school  
nutrition?

25

How many years have you  
been a member of ISNA?

17

## How can ISNA better meet the needs of its members?

This position will allow Dee to continue to drive initiatives that benefit our members and promote the interests of her fellow school nutrition professionals. Dee is confident, that if elected, she can help the board make a positive difference for our members.

## Why they want to serve

By providing professional development opportunities that offer education programs that allow all members from our line employees to our Directors to enhance their skills and knowledge. ISNA can continue to organize networking events where members can connect with peers to share best practices, exchange ideas and experiences. She believes in a strong voice that supports the interests and needs of our members regarding legislation and regulatory issues.

## Views on obligations

Dee believes that they are an advocate for their members, representing their interests, and ideas and promoting key issues affecting school nutrition. They should foster a sense of community among association members by encouraging participation in events, fostering better communication among members, and encouraging networking opportunities. She hopes to contribute to the overall success and sustainability of the association by fulfilling all duties with professionalism and diligence.

## Involvement

### Professional:

- Attends the classes offered by ISNA
- ISNA Annual Conference
- 3x SNA National Conference attendee
- 4x SNA Legislative Conference attendee

### ISNA:

- Active SNA member for 17 years.
- Public Relations Committee
- Professional Development Committee
- Secretary Treasurer from 2015-2017
- Vice President from 2017-2018
- SNA President for the 2019-2020 and Immediate Past President in 2021

### Volunteer Work:

- Worked school nutrition for the past 25 years in the role of Assistant Director and Food Service Director.

# MEET THE CANDIDATES

Aleise Barron

Warrick

Assistant Director

How many years have you worked in school nutrition?

1

How many years have you been a member of ISNA?

1

## How can ISNA better meet the needs of its members?

ISNA is always striving to keep our members well-informed. We are constantly updating ways we can communicate with them, as well as involve them in all things ISNA. If we continue to strive for change, better communication, and integrative ways to involve our members, the positive will continue to come.

## Why they want to serve

Aleise has a passion for school nutrition and wants to continue to grow in her passion, career, and involvement. ISNA allows her to have a bigger voice in this community, and a greater opportunity to make change not only locally, but also with school nutrition issues nationally. Helping people and educating is her love language as many people she knows would agree. This opportunity would allow her reach more people within our state and beyond that.

## Views on obligations

Aleise feels like she will be the bridge for our members and loves being able to help anyone who needs it! She enjoys not only sharing her experiences with others, but also learning from our members, and hearing about their experiences. Throughout her roles in our board and committees, she has had a responsibility to bring any new ideas, comments, and concerns of our members to the table.

## Involvement

### Professional:

- Attended Industry Summits
- ISNA Annual Conference and National Conference
- ISNA School Nutrition certificate course
- Farm to School meetings with Indiana Grown

### ISNA:

- Region 8 Representative
- Public Relations committee
- Professional Development Committee Member
- Nomination Reviewer

### Volunteer Work:

- Dietetic internship working with the EVSC School Nutrition Program
- Farm to School efforts
- Connecting community members, growers and farmers.