

2018 School Nutrition Champion Nominees



SCHOOL NUTRITION CHAMPION AWARD

- **Rebecca Braasch, SN Worker II at Bloomington Jr. High School:** *"Becky's main objective is to feed students well balanced appealing meals. She takes pride in her position. She constantly interacts with students to get their feedback on products that we serve. ... She is committed, enthusiastic, and constantly going above and beyond."*
- **Rhonda Buford, Food Service Manager, District 148 in Riverdale:** *"Ms. Buford ensures that the children and staff are given not only the required daily supplements but includes lots of love in each food service. Ms. Buford, as she walks around the center and hallways, notices what children may have additional nutritional needs and supports the families in securing SNAP and other food supports."*
- **Sabine Coulter, Lunch Program Supervisor at Cambridge Lakes Charter School in Community Unit School District 300:** *"Sabine fully steps into the role, continues her necessary certifications, keeps the Admin Team informed of current rules and regulations, and most importantly builds incredible rapport with the students."*
- **Joyce Feldt, Head Cook at Red Bud Elementary School in Red Bud Community Unit School District 132:** *"Joyce has been an absolute asset to our elementary school. She enjoys cooking and does it well. She is very particular in knowing the rules and enforcing them with her staff and the students. She works very hard to make her meals enjoyable, but stay within her budget. ... She is truly a treasure."*
- **Susan Giet, Food Service Secretary at J. Sterling Morton High School District 201:** *"Susan doesn't interact with students on a daily basis, however she is the one behind the scenes making sure lunch codes are correct for students who eat on a daily basis.... These processes are important and are sometimes overlooked, when appreciation is due."*
- **Kris Hinderks, Kitchen Coordinator, Corpus Christi Catholic School:** *"Kris makes a point of welcoming each student as they come through the lunch line, she helps coordinate our lunchroom volunteers, and strives to truly develop a personal relationship with our students. The kids all know Miss Kris, and they appreciate that she knows them!"*
- **Coletta Hines-Newell, Director of Food Services, Arlington Heights District 25:** *"Coletta reaches out to parents, students and staff to provide input in the food service program. The extent to which she reaches out is evidence of her commitment to the success of the program. ... I have been approached by many colleagues who have heard how excellent our program is. This is all due to Coletta's leadership."*
- **Carolyn Jent, Director of Food Services for Ridgeview Community Unit School District 19:** *"Because of her concern for her kitchen staff, her quick smile, and her positive attitude, she has built a team that works like a fine oiled machine. We have seen the number of students eating breakfast and lunch skyrocket since Carolyn has become our food service director."*
- **Melanie Johnson, Food Service Director at Crestwood School in Paris Community Unit School District 4:** *"Melanie ensures students are greeted with a smiling face each day. She takes the time to get to know the students and has conversations to improve the student staff relationship. Melanie is an extremely hard worker and her dedication to her job shows in her ability to successfully manage multiple tasks at a time."*
- **Kathleen Langley, Head Cook, Greenfield Community Unit School District 10:** *"Kathleen led the charge for our school to apply for the Fuel Up to Play 60 grant, so she could purchase a new glass front refrigerator in order to showcase and offer special fruit drinks, milk products like cheese, and healthy choices for students. The cafeteria is now a friendly and welcoming environment for all students, parents, and staff members."*

- **Stacy Lenihan, Director of Food Service, Township High School District 211:** *“Stacy (and her entire foods staff in all five high schools) are remarkable in the quality and nutritious value of foods they offer. ... She takes on interns and encourages new recipes and ideas that not only fulfill state requirements but also awakens the palates of all!”*
- **Gaylene Logue, Head Cook at Eureka High School, Community Unit School District 140:** *“What truly sets Gaylene apart from others is her willingness to create dishes that these students don't normally see in a school lunch program or maybe at home. She will start with the school commodities and then figure out how to create something using a variety of other items that she has purchased.”*
- **Dawnal Mahan, Cafeteria Manager, Chatham Elementary School, Ball Chatham CUSD 5:** *“Since the 2013-14 school year Dawnal has seen a steady increase in her participation without any increase in her enrollment. She is on pace this year to serve an estimated 5,000 more meals this year than 2013-14, and approximately 1,700 more meals than last year.”*
- **Chad Martel, Director of Food Service for Ball Chatham Community Unit School District 5:** *“Mr. Martel’s blend of leadership, nutrition education, and gentle demeanor have all been instrumental in improving the work environment and creating nutritional meals that appeal to the current student’s tastes.”*
- **Nancy McCord, Cafeteria Manager, Glenwood Intermediate School, Ball Chatham CUSD 5:** *“Evidence of how well Nancy and her team work together is how they have handled the increase in participation this school year. Her cafeteria is on pace to serve close to 3500 more meals this year than last year. Nancy and her staff have been working together to find foods the students want and will eat which is key to the increase this year, and the past few years.”*
- **Vicki McConnell, Foods Service Director for Ottawa Elementary School District 141:** *Vicki McConnell “has a positive working relationship with staff, students, school board members, parents, community members, and the superintendent. She is highly respected and regarded as one of our most dedicated and hardworking individuals.”*
- **Melissa Murdock, District Head Cook in Community Unit School District 3 in Palestine:** *“The following are some examples of how she has went above and beyond: providing fruit infused water to junior high students, roasting vegetables vs. serving raw (this was really a hit!), selecting a student taste testing panel to help create new menu items based on student preference, and celebrating National School Lunch Week and National School Breakfast Week with fun events for students.”*
- **Deb Peters, Cafeteria Supervisor for Earlville Community Unit School District 9:** *“In addition to being extremely reliable, dependable, and flexible, Deb exhibits a passion for children. Mrs. Peters has transformed our cafeteria into a place where children feel safe, comfortable, and loved.”*
- **Nubia Sanchez, Compliance Manager for ACERO Charter Schools Inc.:** *“Because of her experience both at the school and network level, Nubia Sanchez is able to deliver a food service program that not only meets state requirements, but also accommodates school and community needs. ... She is committed, enthusiastic, and constantly going above and beyond.”*
- **Marcus Shelton, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, Berkeley School District 87:** *“He has brought wellness and nutrition to our schools in such a way the students and staff don't even realize how much better and healthier their choices are now because he has made them so appealing!”*
- **Sandy Voss, Director of Food and Nutrition Services for Marquardt School District 15:** *“Sandy Voss goes above and beyond her role as Director of Food and Nutrition, and she does so in some unique ways. For example, she started a Young Chefs Club to teach middle school students cooking skills in order to plan and prepare healthy meals.”* **ISBE’s 2018 School Nutrition Champion**
- **Lisa Wetzel, Head Cook at Dunlap Grade School in Dunlap Community Unit School District 323:** *“Lisa is one of those head cooks you wish you had 50 more just like her. ... She is always ready to try new recipes and even conquered cooking whole grain pasta after many tries.”*