

Fueling Students – Inspiring Staff – Building Community Trust!

ILSNA Winter Conference
February 3, 2026

Jodi Risse

MS, RD, LDN

- Consultant
- Former Food & Nutrition Services Director with nearly 40 years of School Nutrition experience
- Active member of many associations including the School Nutrition Association and the Maryland School Nutrition Association
- Team Driven Success for a staff over 500



Why We're Here Today!

- Communication affects **teamwork, trust, and customer service**
- Our words and actions impact: all stakeholders both internal and external including students, staff and the communities we serve
- Today's Keynote blends real-life experience with practical tools and proven communication strategies.

Today's Menu

- Introduction
- Brand Identity
- Staff Engagement
- Student Involvement
- Community Collaboration
- Fueling Students
- Key Insights

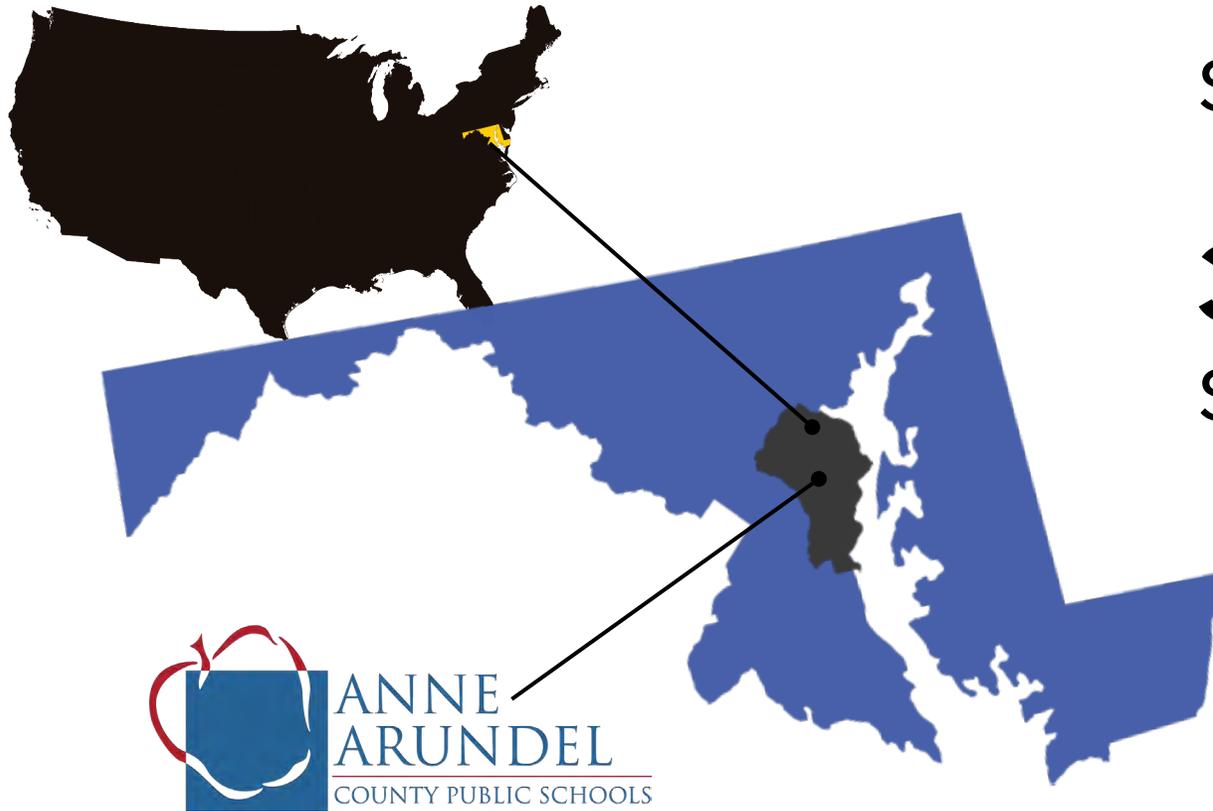


Why Do I Care About Communication?

- My Family
 - both home and at work
- My Experience
 - leadership, teamwork, conflict, challenges
- What I learned the “hard way”
- **Tell your story!**

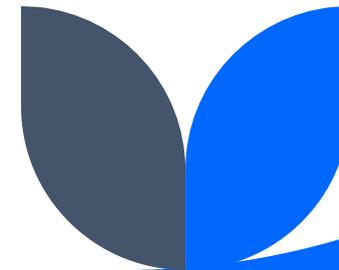


Former Food & Nutrition Service Director Who and Where?



4th Largest School System in Maryland

37th Largest School System in the Country



Anne Arundel County Public Schools Child Nutrition Programs SY 2023–2024

Participation

Breakfast – 2,923,185

Lunch – 6,390,849

After School Meals – 112,870

After School Snacks – 13,921

Free & Reduced-Price Eligibility

41.78%





Where My Story Begins

Westland Beef Recall Circa 2008

My First Story!

- Significant Event
- Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Plant - California
- Recall 143 million pounds of beef
- 10 counties received product in Maryland



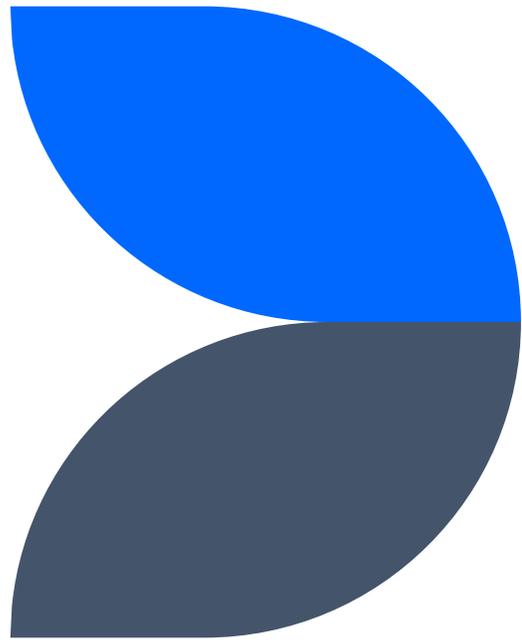
THE BIG STORY

Jodi Risse, MS, RD, LDN

A.A. CO. SCHOOLS FOOD SERVICE

LIVE. LOCAL. LATEBREAKING.

Create your Brand



What is your Brand?

- Provide students with a consistent experience at all grade levels
- Develop a brand or retail look for all schools
- Enhance menu options on the serving line and salad bar
- Communicate School Nutrition Experience to all key stakeholders

Review Current Operations At the Beginning....

The Galley
August - September 2007
Monday, August 27

<p>Monday, August 27</p> <p>Entrée 1 Turkey Sub</p> <p>Entrée 2 Tantalizing Taco w/Hard or Soft Shell/Roll</p> <p>Entrée 3 Fun Fish Nuggets & Roll</p> <p>Milk Milk</p> <p>Assorted Ovens Potatoes Milk Milk</p> <p>Assorted Veggies Fruit</p>	<p>Tuesday, August 28</p> <p>Entrée 1 Pasta</p> <p>Entrée 2 Savory Spaghetti w/Hot Meat Sauce/Roll</p> <p>Entrée 3 Creamy Chicken on Roll</p> <p>Milk Milk</p> <p>Assorted Ovens Potatoes Assorted Veggies Tasty Tossed Salad/Dressing Daily Villy Fruit</p>	<p>Wednesday, August 29</p> <p>Entrée 1 Shrimp & Pasta</p> <p>Entrée 2 Oven Broasted Chicken</p> <p>Entrée 3 Cherry Chicken</p> <p>Milk Milk</p> <p>Southern Chicken Milk Milk</p> <p>Assorted Veggies Fruit</p>
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Thursday, August 30

Entrée 1
Turkey Sub

Entrée 2
Tantalizing Taco w/Hard or Soft Shell/Roll

Entrée 3
Fun Fish Nuggets & Roll

Milk
Milk

Assorted Ovens Potatoes
Milk
Milk

Assorted Veggies
Fruit

Friday, August 31

Entrée 1
Pasta

Entrée 2
Savory Spaghetti w/Hot Meat Sauce/Roll

Entrée 3
Creamy Chicken on Roll

Milk
Milk

Assorted Ovens Potatoes
Assorted Veggies
Tasty Tossed Salad/Dressing
Daily Villy Fruit

Labor Day
Schools Closed

Available Daily
Instead of one of the featured lunch selections, try the Galley's Chef or Garden Salad served with a Roll and Chilled Fruit!

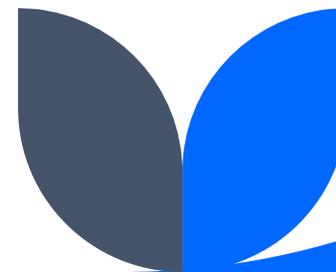
Breakfast Menu
Orange Juice, Milk, an extra Captain's Choice of one of the following:
Biscuit or Croissant with Jelly, Fruit or Cream with Jelly, Fruit with Jelly, Cheesecake, K'n, Waffles, Muffins, Creampan Roll, Graham Crackers, Max Loni!

Breakfast Served Daily for \$1.99
Lunch Served Daily for \$1.75



Review Current Operations Expand Opportunities....

- Perception is Reality
- Have confidence in your team
- Believe in your products
- Take advantage of negative stories
- **Tell your story!**



Marketing Matters!



Ms. Shawna Stepp
Food & Nutrition Services Manager
Hilltop Elementary School

Serving Anne Arundel County Public Schools Since **2016**
Food Safety Certified by the National Restaurant Association
Creating Healthy Students, Healthy Schools while
Cultivating Communities of Wellness

How May I Help You?



Summer Food Service Program Continue Expansion....

- Develop Menu
- Convenience for Staff
- Communicate to Community
- Brand Identity
- Consistency in Messaging



Summer Meals Menu
July 17 – July 27, 2023
Monday's through Thursday's

What Whole Grains are you eating this summer?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
July 17 Breakfast: Honey Cheerios Cereal Fruit Juice Milk Lunch: Macaroni Cheese Sticks w/Marshmallows Sauce Green Beans, Grape Tomatoes Frozen Apple Cup Milk USDA Handout - Whole Grains Make a Difference	July 18 Breakfast: Sweet Potatoes Fruit Juice Milk Lunch: Ribs w/Barbecue Sauce & Garlic Bread Sticks California Blend, Carrot Sticks Peach Cup Milk	July 19 Breakfast: Ultimate Breakfast Bowl Fruit Juice Milk Lunch: Korean BBQ Meatballs w/Bean & Tofu Tropical Fruit Slush, Broccoli Florets Fruit Juice Milk	July 20 Breakfast: Smoothie w/Milk Fruit Juice Milk Lunch: Pizza Corn, Celery Sticks Appleauce Milk
July 24 Breakfast: Cinnamon Chex Cereal Fruit Juice Milk Lunch: Teriyaki Chicken w/Rice & Scopes Berry Berry Blue Slush, Carrot Sticks Peas Milk USDA Handout - Encouraging Vegetables	July 25 Breakfast: Breakfast Bread Fruit Juice Milk Lunch: Macaroni & Cheese w/Fritos California Blend, Grape Tomatoes Appleauce Milk	July 26 Breakfast: Cinnamon Cramb/Loaf Fruit Juice Milk Lunch: Tacos w/Beans Corn, Celery Sticks Strawberry Cup Milk	July 27 Breakfast: Smoothie w/Milk Fruit Juice Milk Lunch: Pizza Green Beans, Broccoli Florets Mixed Fruit Cup Milk

Menu Subject to Change

Visit teamnutrition.usda.gov for free nutrition information and resources!

For a complete list of meal sites visit www.aps.org/meals.asp
Anne Arundel County Public Schools
This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

SUMMER MEALS
MONDAY, JUNE 20-THURSDAY,
(MONDAY - THURSDAY, NO MEALS MONDAY)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools
children, **ages 2-18** at the following locations:

There are no income or registration requirements.
JUST COME AND ENJOY A MEAL!

STEP 1:
Annapolis Gardens
10:45 - 11:00am
213 Croft Drive, Annapolis, MD 21401

STEP 2:
Bywater Community
11:15 - 11:30am
1901 Copeland Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

STEP 3:
Annapolis Walk
11:45am - 12:00pm
629 Annapolis Walk Drive, Annapolis, MD 21401

STEP 4:
Woodside Gardens
12:15 - 12:30pm
Newtown Drive, Annapolis, MD 21401

1:15 - 1:30pm
Bouwood Rd @ Bouwood Ct,
Annapolis, MD 21403

STEP 5:
Bay Ridge Community
1:45 - 2:00pm
Ben's Drive @ Victor Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21403

LET'S KEEP CHILDREN EATING HEALTHY!

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ANAPS - ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO LEARN

If you have questions regarding the Summer Food Program, please contact Food & Nutrition Services at 410-222-5990.
USDA, MDCE and AACS are equal opportunity providers.

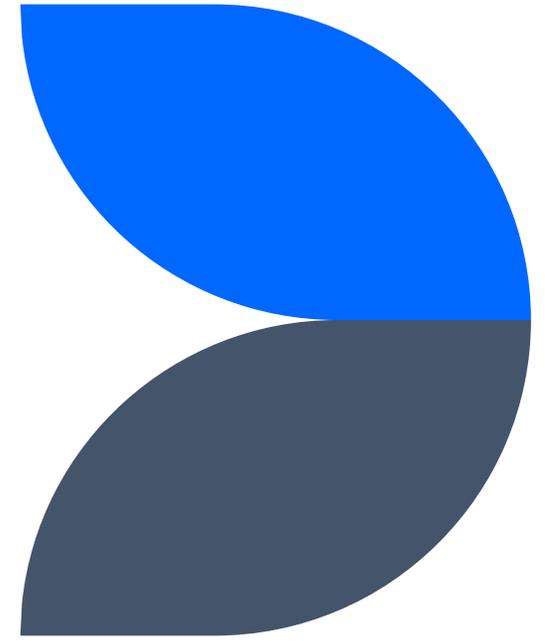


Communicate the School Nutrition Brand

Celebrate Nutrition!



Inspiring Staff



Inspiring Staff

- Make all communication count
 - **Honesty** – Staff respect
 - **Competent** – Capable and effective leader
 - **Inspirational** – Emotional energy focusing with passion and commitment
 - **Forward Thinker** – Clear and concise ideas with a path moving forward

Engage your Team!



“Believe in yourself, for that is
where true success begins”



Lead to Succeed

- **Role Model** – Set an example and demonstrate how shared values increase success
- **Be Inspirational** – Share values keep the team on board and motivated
- **Challenge the Status Quo** – Take advantage of opportunities to lead your team to new heights

Lead to Succeed

- **Empower Team Members** – Foster collaboration and trust from all team members. All staff are key to the success of the organization
- **Lead with your Heart** – Genuinely care about your team and the role they play. Focus on building relationships with all staff



Engage your Team!

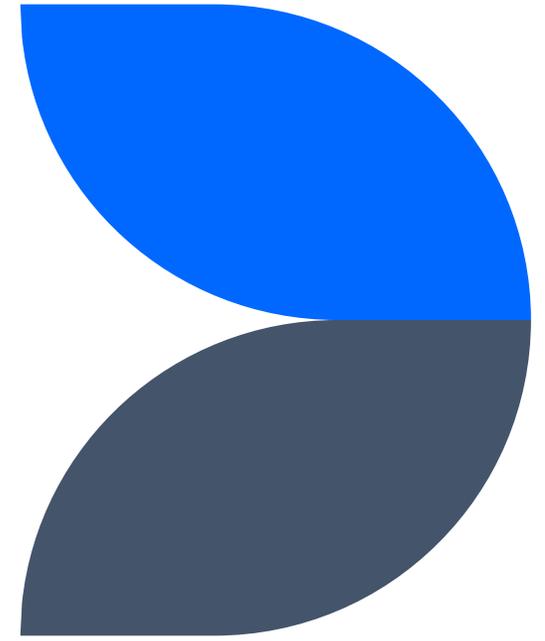




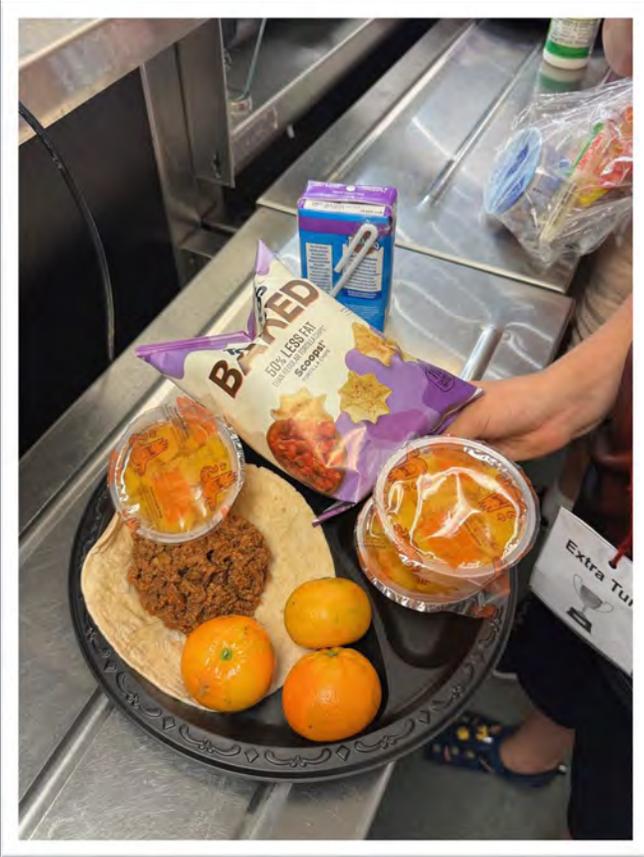
- Monthly Activities
 - Coffee With
 - Monthly Motivations
- Team Building Activities
- Nightly Emails
- Inspirational Messages
- Create a Hashtag
- Share Data
- Take photos and share success stories



Fueling Students



Involve Students! Cultivating Communities of Wellness!



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DIVISION OF FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

A Taste of Excellence

Students Savor Flavors of
Future School Meals

Wednesday, April 23, 2025
10:00am
Crofton High School



Agenda

10:00-11:00 am

Taste Testing

You will be asked to sample from all eight stations and give your honest feedback on the comment card. Please plan on 7-8 minutes per station.

11:00-11:20 am

School Lunch

Enjoy today's lunch selection of
Pizza Stricks with Marinara Sauce
Chicken Entree Salad with Rounds & Salsa
Mini Corn Muffin • Green Beans
Hummus • Broccoli Florets • Pears
Apple Slices • Fresh Fruit
Milk

11:30 am-12:00 pm

Food & Nutrition Services Presentation

12:00-1:00 pm

Develop Marketing Plans for School Meals

You will be broken into six groups and will meet with food manufacturers/brokers to develop marketing plans to entice your fellow students to try our School Meals!



Menu

Station One

Lactose Free Milk

Contains: Milk
Manufacture/Broker: Dairy Pure
Additional Guest: American Dairy Association North East

Station Two

Beef and Sweet Plantain Empanada

Contains: Wheat, Soy
Manufacture/Broker: ES Foods/Affinity Group

Station Three

Cheese and Bean Pupusa

Contains: Milk
Manufacture/Broker: Del Real Foods/Affinity Group

Station Four

Beef Barbacoa w/Tortilla Chips

Contains: None of the top 9 allergens
Manufacture/Broker: Comida Vida/International Foods Solutions,
Tostitos/Peppico

Station Five

Tikka Masala w/Rice & Stacey's Pita Chips

Contains: Soy, Milk, Wheat, Sesame
Manufacture/Broker: Ashar Foods/
International Foods Solutions, Stacy's/Peppico

Station Six

Chicken Enchilada Empanada

Contains: Wheat, Soy, Milk
Manufacture/Broker: Albies/Daves Food

Station Seven

Black Bean Burger on Pretzel Roll

Contains: Soy, Milk, Egg, Wheat
Manufacture/Broker: Morningstar/Kellanova, J & J/Corc

Station Eight

Penne Rosa with Meatballs

Contains: Milk, Egg, Wheat
Manufacture/Broker: JTM/Corc, Red Gold/Affinity Group

Taste of Excellence

Involve Students! Menu Development



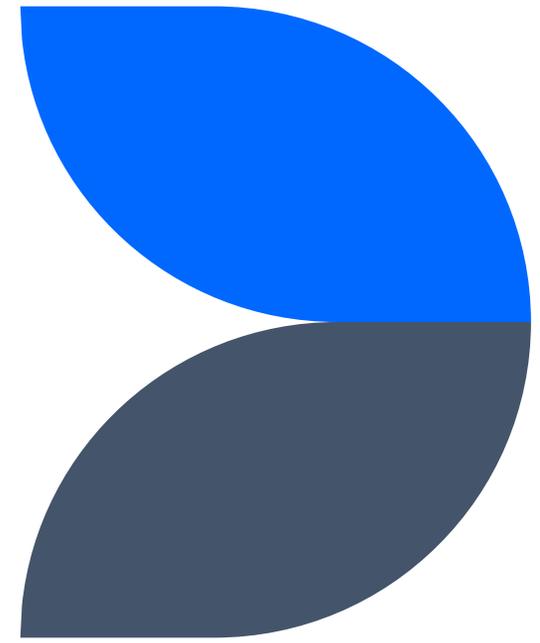


Breakfast Week!





**Building
Community Trust**





Tasting of the Rainbow

Began in 2007

Expanded in 2010

Evolution in 2015



Tasting of the Rainbow

#relationshipsmatter

- Provide students with samples of new fruits and vegetables
- Develop relationships with local farmers
- Enhance menu options on the serving line and salad bar
- Increase communication using students, farmers and school nutrition team

Fifer Orchards

Local Farmer



Shlagel Farms Local Farmer



Russ Shlagel of Shlagel Farms grows fruits, vegetables, beef and other crops in Charles County. You can visit his farm to pick strawberries in the spring and pumpkins in the fall.

- Taste tomatoes diced, sliced, stewed or pickled.
- Tomatoes are used for sauces, salsas, ketchup, and salads.
- Have you ever tried a purple tomato? Tomatoes come in a variety of colors.
- Did you know a tomato is a fruit? Except the Supreme Court ruled them a vegetable in 1893.
- Many Maryland farmers grow tomatoes and you can find them at farmers markets, grocery stores and farm stands.



www.marylandfarmtoschool.org

MD Dept. of Agriculture, www.mda.maryland.gov



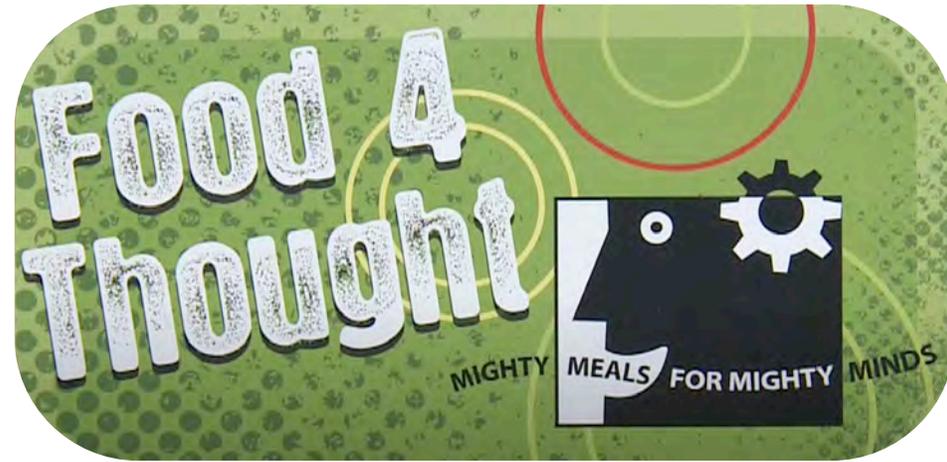
Tasting of the Rainbow





Food 4 Thought



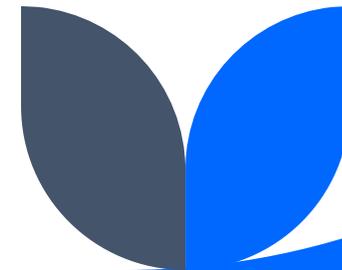


Began in 2007

- 15-minute show

Enhance Programming each year

- Multiple shows a month
- 30-minute show



Food 4 Thought

#expandingpartnerships

- Highlight Child Nutrition Programs
- Provide insight to School Nutrition Operations
- Showcase internal and external partners
- Expand collaboration with outside agencies
- Enhance communications with manufacturers and brokers
- Increase communication to students, staff and community members



**The power of
school meals!**



Healthy School Meals Fueling our Future!





Key Insights

- Continue to tell your story
- Be transparent
- Believe in your team and products
- Evaluate your operations from the loading dock to the serving line
- Collaborate with multiple internal and external partners
- Be persistent in all communications

and...



Have Fun!



**2024 National School Lunch Week AACPS Team:
School Lunch Pirates...Find your Treasure!**





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