



## February 2021

### MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Alec Pienta, MS, RD

*Why hit the breaks or ease up on the gas when times are tough? Alec Pienta hits full throttle this year in his new role, as he takes advantage of professional development opportunities.*



If you think starting a new job is difficult, try starting it during a global pandemic! Alec Pienta, MS, RD, is the Special Projects Coordinator for Cobb County School District in Marietta, Georgia. The district has 112 schools and over 112,000 students. Alec joined the district in March, just weeks before the COVID-19 outbreak shut down schools. His passion for the program has motivated him to take on all of the challenges of 2020. But, he doesn't stop there. What is most impressive is that Alec has put his career and motivation into high gear by committing to professional development and earning additional certificates. Alec reminds us that it's never too soon and it's never too late to learn. Join us for some inspiration and motivation to keep learning- no matter where you are in your career or what is happening in life!

[Read more here](#)

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### Legislative Update

For this month's full report, [please click here](#).

The Academy has a new [action alert](#) to help you connect with and welcome your elected officials to the 117th Congress. Use this opportunity to highlight the key issues.

[Take action today!](#)

### Announcements



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#### SURVEY: Promoting Diversity through School Meals.

We want to hear from our creative professionals! Share with the DPG your ideas on how to educate students on diversity. Do you have a traditional recipe or a holiday event promoting cultural sensitivity and inclusion? Have your creative ideas featured in the upcoming Spoodle Report and inspire your fellow members. [Share your ideas here](#).

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#### February is Black History Month

February is Black History Month. [Watch the School Nutrition Association's webinar](#), honoring and celebrating the Black

## Big News!

To help our members advocate for child nutrition, we are creating an Advocacy Toolbox to help provide you with ideas, tips & guidance as you advocate for School Meals on a local, state & federal level! All resources will be available on our website in the Resource Library.

## Federal Nutrition Impact Story Collection Open

The Academy wants to hear from you! The Academy is collecting federal nutrition stories to assist in advocacy efforts for FY2022 federal budget requests. Your stories help illustrate to policymakers why they should support nutrition, prevention and research priorities. Please complete the story collection form [at this link](#).

## Want to get more involved in the Academy's policy efforts?

Share your areas of interest, experience and readiness to advocate for issues important to our profession. Please use the links below to take your survey. Academy members, please [take this survey](#). Student Academy members, please [take this survey](#).

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## Wrapping Up

February is Black History Month. It is a special month to celebrate the achievements and contributions made by African Americans, as well as a time to speak up for equality, encourage collaboration between people of all races, and appreciate the power of diversity. Both the SNS DPG and Academy have worked diligently to improve efforts to make all members feel included and valued as nutrition professionals. Our Diversity and Inclusion Committee is seeking members to join this committee for the upcoming year. Please connect with our committee chair, [Anh-Tram Pham](#) to learn more about opportunities in this committee.



As always, thank you for being a member of our DPG. We are grateful for each and every one of you!

Thanks!

*Stefanie Dove, MBA RDN SNS*

Stefanie Dove, MBA RDN SNS  
Chair, SNS DPG

community's achievements.

Listen to the inspiring leadership journey of Black nutrition professionals, including our fellow member, **Shannon Ebron, MS, RDN, LD**.

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## 📅 Save the Date!

Our next webinar, Menu Planning and Scratch Cooking in a Virtual World, is **February 18th at 4:00 pm EDT**. Learn more and register <https://www.eatrightstore.org/dpg-products/sns/menu-planning-and-scratch-cooking-in-a-virtual-world> [here](#).

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## 🏆 Awards and Scholarships Open Now!

**School Nutrition Services Award of Excellence:** The SNS DPG seeks to recognize an RD or NDTR member that has demonstrated exceptional performance in practice relating to school nutrition programs and leadership achievements in nutrition-related organization(s). [Apply here](#) by April 1.

**National Awards from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.** [Learn more](#) and [apply here](#) by March 1.

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## 📌 Key Dates

**Feb 1:** Membership renewal for 2021-2022 opens online  
**Feb 1:** Voting in the Academy National Election begins  
**Feb 15:** Foundation scholarship application opens  
**Feb 18:** Call for FNCE® 2021 Poster Session Abstracts closes  
**March 1:** Last day to apply for the Academy's Diversity and Inclusion Awards and Grants  
**March 1:** Last day to submit nominations for 2021 National Honors and Awards  
**March 10:** Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day

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## SNS Leadership

Stefanie Dove, RDN, SNS  
Chair, 2020-2021  
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