

# TIPS FOR MEETING With Your District's School Nutrition Professional



Many people are quick to criticize school food, yet very few people understand the difficulties school nutrition directors face in offering nutritious foods within the current budget limitations and new federal nutrition standards. Below are some tips to consider when meeting with your district's school nutrition professional (SNP):

- Contact the SNP in advance to request a meeting. If relevant, let the SNP know that you represent a group of individuals that would like to see an expanded breakfast service and meet to see how you can help.
- In the first meeting, consider starting by asking the SNP what type of breakfast program does he/ she want to see in the district if there were no financial and regulatory issues. You may be surprised at his/her answer; he/she most likely also wants to increase school breakfast participation.
- At the meeting, let your SNP know right away that you understand his/her need to focus on the financial bottom line. Encourage the SNP to share with you the financial and regulatory constraints that the district school nutrition program is under. Be willing to listen and learn. This will help you better understand the school nutrition department as a whole.
- Explain that you want to work in partnership with the SNP to increase school breakfast participation.
- Think of ways you can help your SNP, such as:
  - » Help get more students qualified for free/reduced-price meals by encouraging families (at PTA meetings, orientation or Back to School) to complete their application forms.
  - » Help spread the word to other staff about the benefits of school breakfast and allowing students to eat in the classroom.
  - » Help spread the word to families and the community about the importance of school breakfast and how the school nutrition department is helping them out by providing a nutritious breakfast every day. If your school/district has made improvements, make sure school staff and families know about it!

*Adapted from Start School with Breakfast: A Guide to Increasing School Breakfast Participation. NEA Health Information Network and Share Our Strength*