



- INSIDE THIS ISSUE -

President's Message	1
Award Nominations	2
MT Farm to School Summit	3
Harvest of the Month	4
USDA Comments	5
#NSBW	6
Executive Board	7

THANKS FOR READING!

Newsletter Date: Winter 2018

## President's Message

Happy New Year Montana School Nutrition Professionals!

I am very excited to ring in this New Year with all of our Montana members! We have a lot to look forward to in 2018, your MTSNA Board along with OPI have already started conference planning and we promise to have a wonderful selection of sessions and networking in Great Falls June 26, 27 and 28. Save the dates!

If anyone has a special conference request for classes, speakers, venues, or anything at all please let me or one of your board members know. We are here to serve!

I hope you are all staying warm and safe during our Montana winter. Best wishes for 2018!

Salley Young, President

## Making a Difference

MTSNA members make a difference every day in the lives of our students, schools, and communities. We are proud to represent the diverse school cultures in Montana, from small rural schools to multi-school districts. Never underestimate the impact you have on the student body, with your smile, interest in their academics, activities, sports, and how they are feeling. We've all seen a student who needs a little extra, time, attention, or a listening ear. The value we have is being in a place where those students can have an extra minute of our time, where we can connect with them, offer to fill a need, or just communicate with a teacher or counselor about what we are seeing. I love to hear how your MTSNA members make a difference. Food is only the beginning of what we do. Thanks to all your hard work, our students are nutritionally fueled, and cared for completely.

Louise Chandler, Vice President

## MTSNA Scholarships

### MTNSA Member Scholarship

Don't forget to apply for the MTSNA member scholarship! MTSNA offers **TWO** \$500 scholarships to members each year. If you have to pay to come to our fun and educational summer conference out of pocket or want to offset costs for your district, apply to by completing the application form found [here](#). This is a great way to meet peers from around the state and get new ideas for your program. The deadline to apply is May 1; winners will be announced May 15.

Send completed applications to Tammy Wham, Scholarship Chair at [twham@ennisschools.org](mailto:twham@ennisschools.org)

### Post-Secondary Education Scholarship

MTSNA offers **THREE** \$500 scholarships for anyone furthering their education in the field of nutrition. If you have a student or know of a former student that is going into the field of nutrition in any capacity, please encourage them to apply for this scholarship. The application form can be found [here](#) and must be completed by May 1; winners will be announced May 15.

Send completed applications to Tammy Wham, Scholarship Chair at [twham@ennisschools.org](mailto:twham@ennisschools.org)



## Celebrate National School Breakfast Week: March 5-9, 2018

Mark your calendars for National School Breakfast Week 2018! March 5-9 consider doing something fun to bring attention to your school breakfast program! Surveys show, when you make breakfast an event – **more students participate**. #NSBW2018 is a great excuse to feature all the fun things you do at school in regards to making the most important meal of the day something to celebrate.

Visit the [School Nutrition Association webpage](#) for free tools, ideas, handouts, graphics, and more!



### Awards for All

Welcome 2018! It's hard to believe we are into 2018 already. It seems like we just started the new school year and here it is almost half over. While we still have on our winter coats, boots and gloves I want to remind everyone of the great awards we offer every year at our annual summer conference. It is easy to put off documenting all the great things people do in our cafeterias across the state but MTSNA has a lot of outstanding members who should be recognized for the work they do every single day.

At my first SNA conference I heard the President address all of us as the staff of the largest restaurant in the world. In order to be a part of this organization that makes sure we are up to date with training and all of our facilities are up to code, taking advantage of the countless resources available to us takes great leadership and dedication.

Our awards recognize all levels of operation of our school nutrition programs across the state. I invite all of you to go to our MTSNA website [www.mtsna.org](http://www.mtsna.org) or click on the hyperlinks below to nominate the deserving person or people you know to be recognized for all they do.

### SNA Awards

<a href="#">Director of the Year</a>	March 1
<a href="#">Employee of the Year</a>	March 1
<a href="#">Manager of the Year</a>	March 1

### MTSNA Awards

<a href="#">Silver Spoon Award</a>	May 1
<a href="#">WOW Award</a>	May 1
<a href="#">Professional of the Year</a>	May 1

Please add MTSNA awards to subject line of emails directed to me at [bjones@stlabre.org](mailto:bjones@stlabre.org) Thank you and look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at this year's conference.

Brian Jones, School Nutrition Employee (Awards) Chair



**CULTIVATING  
CONNECTIONS**  
Montana Farm to School  
**SUMMIT 2018**

September 13-14, 2018 | Missoula, Montana  
[www.montana.edu/mffarmtoschool/summit.html](http://www.montana.edu/mffarmtoschool/summit.html)

## Montana Farm to School Summit: Cultivating Connections Seeking Presenters for MT Farm to School Summit

Seeking presenters for the **Montana Farm to School Summit: Cultivating Connections** conference! The statewide conference will be held on September 13-14, 2018 at University of Montana in Missoula.

Proposals are open for workshop (50 minute) and Montana Food Talks (5 minute) sessions. Presentation tracks include Procurement (for foodservice & producers), K-12 Education, Early Care & Education, Skill Building (e.g., social media strategies, fundraising). Proposals must be submitted online by March 31, 2018 at: <http://www.montana.edu/mffarmtoschool/summit.html>.

Learn and share how schools and programs are cultivating connections across Montana through the core elements of farm to school--serving local foods, school gardens, and nutrition, agriculture, and food education. Workshops, field trips, and networking opportunities will provide inspiration, ideas, and resources.

All individuals interested in farm to school programs are encouraged to attend including school and summer food service personnel, afterschool program coordinators, teachers, school administrators, preschool and childcare providers, parents, students, food producers and vendors, farm to school practitioners, and groups that support farm to school efforts.

For more information visit <http://www.montana.edu/mffarmtoschool/summit.html> or contact: Aubree Roth, Montana Farm to School Coordinator at [aubree.roth@montana.edu](mailto:aubree.roth@montana.edu) or (406) 994-5996.

## Join SNA STEPS Challenge

Step into the new year with SNA's Steps challenge! SNA members participate free of charge, just sign up, submit monthly challenge, and be entered to win prizes! Taking steps to good health is important for you, your family, and your school! Sign up by clicking [here!](#)

Louise Chandler, Vice President

## Calling for Articles about YOU!



Would you like to include a unique story about **your** school nutrition program in the next addition of the MTSNA newsletter?? We'd love to feature your work!

Do you do something especially neat or fun at your school? Do parents or grandparents participate in meal service frequently? Do students draw you pictures or write you sweet thank you notes?

What about doing a profile for our newsletter? You could send a picture of yourself along with the answers to the following questions:  
What is your first and last name?  
What school district do you work in?  
How long have you worked in the field of school nutrition?  
What is your favorite part about being in school food service?

Send your submissions to Tara Jones at [tray@mt.gov](mailto:tray@mt.gov) by **February 10, 2018**.

Tara Jones, Newsletter Editor





**Save the Date:  
Montana Harvest of the Month Cook-Off  
March 19-23**

Mark your calendar for the Montana Harvest of the Month Cook-off—a delicious celebration of Montana Harvest of the Month, National Nutrition Month, and National Ag Day!

The purpose of this statewide event is to showcase Montana Harvest of the Month by serving the same meal across the state featuring Montana Harvest of the Month foods. Further, this event provides opportunities to increase outreach to and engagement of students, parents, and community members in school meals programs. Montana Harvest of the Month showcases a different Montana grown or raised food each month in Montana schools and communities to promote healthy eating and vibrant Montana agriculture.

To participate, schools will serve chili and cinnamon rolls using as many Montana grown or raised Harvest of the Month ingredients they can. Schools are encouraged to get students, parents, and/or community members involved in planning and implementing the event. Participating schools can enter to win one of three \$100 prizes by submitting their recipe for either the chili or cinnamon rolls served (must feature at least one Montana grown or raised Harvest of the Month ingredient, number of student and adult meals served, photo of meal, and description of event.

More information including ways to "spice" up your event coming soon! Learn more at [www.montana.com/mtharvestofthemonth](http://www.montana.com/mtharvestofthemonth) or by contacting Aubree Roth at [aubree.roth@montana.edu](mailto:aubree.roth@montana.edu) or (406) 994-5996.



If you aren't already a follower of the Montana School Nutrition Association Facebook page, you should be! We currently have 178 followers including my Grandma Bette who doesn't even work in a school kitchen! (Thanks for the support Gma!)

To find us online simply search for Montana School Nutrition Association and you'll find us.

We post uplifting news articles about school meals from around the state, learning opportunities and reminders we

think might come in handy. It's another great place to get looped in to the school nutrition conversations in Montana.

Tara Jones, Newsletter Editor

## MTSNA Legislative Action Report

As your legislative advocate at the state and national level, I am excited to do my best to keep you informed about the ever changing USDA regulations.

Did you know that your membership with SNA helps provides five full time government affairs employees working on Capitol Hill every day? Their work for Child Nutrition Programs is possibly the most important thing SNA does for its members.

Since Congress released a bill in 2016 to establish a school meal block grant pilot, SNA has been leading the charge to Stop the Block as it could drastically reduce funding for School Nutrition. To build on these efforts, SNA assembled a Block Grant Task Force to identify the full impact of block grant funding on school nutrition programs, of which I am honored to be a member.

The Task Force is comprised of 19 members. We met for two days in early December in Alexandria, VA to conduct an exhaustive review of the potential dangers of block grants and best strategies for informing and mobilizing SNA members to defeat any block grant proposal.

As Congress prepares to consider reforms and spending cuts to social programs, school meal block grants could easily be slipped into legislation. SNA urges members to stay informed through SNA's website, and watch for SNA's 2018 Position Paper and upcoming opportunities to speak out in opposition to school meal block grants.

Best wishes in 2018,

Salley Young, Public Policy and Legislative Chair

## SNA Comments on USDA School Meal Rule

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD (November 29, 2017) – The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released an [interim final rule](#) to extend current regulatory flexibility for school meal programs through School Year (SY) 2018-19. The non-profit School Nutrition Association (SNA) commended USDA for the extension and [has called for](#) even greater flexibility under whole grain and sodium mandates to address challenges while maintaining strong standards to benefit students. SNA is assembling a member working group to develop detailed recommendations to improve a final rule.

The interim rule maintains Target I sodium limits for school meals, and USDA “anticipates” extending this deadline through SY 2020-21. States can continue to offer waivers to schools demonstrating hardship in procuring or preparing specific whole grain rich foods that are acceptable to students (eg whole grain tortillas or brown rice). Finally, the rule provides schools the option to offer flavored 1% milk. USDA requests public comment on the interim rule and the sodium reduction timeline to inform the development of a final rule, effective in SY 2019-20.

A recent [SNA survey](#) of school meal programs across the country, detailed below, demonstrated the need for increased flexibility under the rules. [The Government Accountability Office \(GAO\)](#) and USDA have also cited significant challenges under updated standards with student acceptance, food waste, product availability and participation - more than [one million fewer students choose school lunch each day](#) under the updated nutrition standards. To address these challenges, SNA [has advocated](#) to restore the initial requirement that at least half of grains offered with school meals be whole grain rich and to maintain the Target I sodium levels permanently.

“School nutrition professionals have achieved tremendous progress, modifying recipes, hosting student taste tests and employing a wide range of other tactics to meet regulations while also encouraging students to enjoy healthier school meals,” said SNA President Lynn Harvey, Ed.D., RDN, LDN, FAND, SNS. “Despite these efforts, school nutrition professionals continue to report challenges with sodium and whole grain mandates, as well as limited access to whole grain waivers. SNA appreciates USDA’s desire to address challenges and will provide comment on how to improve a final rule to support the preparation of healthy school meals that appeal to students.”

SNA’s [2017 School Nutrition Trends Report](#) examined the positive efforts of schools to meet nutrition mandates while demonstrating the need for increased flexibility under the nutrition standards:

### About School Nutrition Association:

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) is a national, non-profit professional organization representing 57,000 school nutrition professionals across the country. Founded in 1946, SNA and its members are dedicated to making healthy school meals and nutrition education available to all students. For more information on school meals, visit [www.SchoolNutrition.org/SchoolMeals](http://www.SchoolNutrition.org/SchoolMeals).

### WHOLE GRAINS:

- School nutrition professionals are working to increase student acceptance of whole grain foods required in school meals. Among responding districts:
- **White wheat flour** is utilized by 80% to give whole grain foods a lighter appearance
- 70% have conducted **student taste tests** to promote whole grain options and gather student feedback
- 39% helped students adjust by **gradually increasing the amount of whole wheat flour** in recipes
- Despite these proactive steps, 65% of responding districts report **challenges** with the current mandate that all grains offered with school meals be whole grain rich; 22% of responding districts note a “significant challenge”
- Among districts reporting difficulties, 96% cite challenges with **student acceptance** and more than half (54%) note the **higher cost of whole grains**.
- When asked to identify which whole grain food is most troublesome, **pasta or noodles** was the top concern, named by nearly half of these districts.
- Nearly one-third of respondents have obtained a **whole grain waiver**. An additional 19% indicate they would like to acquire a waiver, but nearly 50% of these respondents feel there are **barriers to applying for or receiving a waiver**.

### SODIUM:

- Schools reported employing a wide range of tactics to meet sodium limits for school meals. Notably:
- 73% of responding districts have **reformulated recipes**
- **Increased scratch preparation** of foods was cited by 61%
- 57% have **limited the service of condiments**
- One-third have **reduced portion sizes**
- Despite these efforts, schools nationwide express concerns about sodium limits:
- 92% of responding school districts are concerned about the **availability of foods that will meet future sodium limits and are well accepted by students**; 58% of respondents report they are “very concerned.”
- 88% face challenges with **student acceptance or familiarity of reduced sodium foods**.
- A large majority of respondents also cite challenges with **naturally occurring sodium** in foods such as milk, low-fat cheese and meat; **product or ingredient availability**; and sodium levels in **condiments**.



March 5-9, 2018 #NSBW18 #schoolbreakfast

If you want to expand your school breakfast program or don't have one but would like to get one started, reach out to Tara Jones, School Breakfast Program Manager with OPI School Nutrition Programs at [tray@mt.gov](mailto:tray@mt.gov)  
Tara Jones, Newsletter Editor



Chili with local beef, whole grain cinnamon rolls with Montana flour, spinach and carrot salad with local apple slices served as part of the Harvest of the Month Program at Monforton School.

## Scholarships Open for 9th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference

The National Farm to School Network is now accepting applications for scholarships to the 9th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference, which will take place in Cincinnati, Ohio, April 25-27, 2018. This event is the top national training and networking event for farm to cafeteria professionals working to improve community health, build economic opportunities for farmers and producers, and ensure long-term sustainability for local food efforts nationwide. To ensure the conference reflects the full diversity of the movement, scholarships are prioritized for farmers and farm support organizations, farm to college / hospital practitioners, early care and education providers, **food service professionals**, persons of color, and youth (through age 22). Learn more and submit your application at [farmtocafeteriaconference.org](http://farmtocafeteriaconference.org). The deadline to apply is Feb. 12 at 8pm ET.

PS. This is an incredible conference and I hope to see in Cincinnati in April!

Aubree Roth, Farm to School Coordinator

## MTSNA Board Meeting: January 19-20, 2018



If you are interested in participating in the next MTSNA board meeting, please know any member is welcome to attend or join by conference call January 19-20 at the Best Western Heritage Inn in Great Falls, MT. We appreciate hearing feedback from our members and this is a great opportunity to voice your thoughts and opinions.

The focus of our winter meeting is the summer conference. Please tell us how we can make the conference more educational, more fun, or more organized to meet your needs. We want to know what's important to you and encourage you to use your voice.

Contact Salley Young at [syoung@3rivers.net](mailto:syoung@3rivers.net) for more information.

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