

The logo for the Urban School Food Alliance is centered in a blue rounded rectangle. It features the words "URBAN SCHOOL" in a white, spaced-out, sans-serif font at the top. Below this is a stylized white icon of a fork and a spoon. To the right of the icon is the word "FOOD" in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. At the bottom of the rectangle, the word "ALLIANCE" is written in the same spaced-out, sans-serif font as "URBAN SCHOOL".

URBAN SCHOOL  
**FOOD**  
ALLIANCE

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024

[www.UrbanSchoolFoodAlliance.org](http://www.UrbanSchoolFoodAlliance.org)



**Leveraging our collective voice to  
impact our students, our schools,  
our communities, our industry -  
and beyond.**



*In 2024, with the community of  
the Urban School Food Alliance,  
we opened many opportunities to  
impact the lives of people beyond  
the 4.2 million children served meals  
in our schools every day.*

- Dr. Katie Wilson, SNS, Executive Director

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION**



[www.UrbanSchoolFoodAlliance.org](http://www.UrbanSchoolFoodAlliance.org)

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# WHAT IS THE ALLIANCE?



URBAN SCHOOL  
 **FOOD**  
ALLIANCE

## Letter from our **LEADERSHIP**



**DR. KATIE  
WILSON**

**Executive Director**

The end of my letter in the 2023 Annual Report left readers with the message that we must act boldly if we want to make transformational change in school meals and throughout 2024 we have used the Power of the Alliance to act boldly and make those changes. I have been in thousands of conversations and focus groups over the years but 2024 was the year of action – **bold action**. No conversation, meeting, or focus group

was for the purpose of just another conversation. We wanted to make sure there was an action item that came out of every conversation. We tend to speak with like minded people but what can we **DO** to make a difference?

With the community of the Urban School Food Alliance, we have opened many opportunities to impact the lives of people beyond the 4.2 million children

served meals in our schools every day. Together, we have found the courage to challenge the poultry supply chain for healthier chicken products produced by smaller, regional suppliers; engage in sustainable practices that guide us in reducing our use of plastics and reducing food waste in significant quantities throughout our food service facilities and rethinking the process and role of food procurement in institutional settings.

Most procurement rules, including federal, state and local are not written for procuring food, and certainly not high quality, local food in an efficient and effective manner. We have long had the mindset in school food procurement that we have to buy food at the lowest price possible. This low-price perspective has been the sticking point in making real change. The sheer volume of food procured in school food service settings makes us the largest restaurant chain in the county and gives us the ability to create the market we desire rather than being subject to the market we have been given. The Alliance districts alone procure almost 1 billion dollars worth of goods annually – that can allow us the ability to be innovative and create change and, in many cases, the leadership of the Alliance districts trickles down to all school food operations across the United States.

Improving the processes for school food procurement also comes with responsibility. As school food service operators, we must ask the questions: *Would people want to do business with us? Are we good customers exhibiting good business practices?* These are critical to the change we are looking

for. If we put out a solicitation, sign documents that we are agreeing to purchase goods and services and then go back on our agreement – we are not good customers. If we ask vendors to deliver goods and then do not pay them for 30-60 days – we are not good customers. Our responsibility in this business agreement is to understand the other side of the business and take care of the relationships that are made, not just demand the cheapest prices. **If we can come together with all stakeholders in school food procurement and better understand the whole picture we can become much better customers, receive top quality services, and bring in fresh, high-quality foods, at a reasonable price, to our students nationwide.**

In 2024, the Alliance put in a lot of hard work to look at procurement systems and see what needs to be done to improve the overall. We have made progress with nationwide trainings, research surveys to find out what is occurring nationwide, and engaging with all stakeholders in the system. **Sustainable and transformational change takes time, but we are willing to lead the work that it takes to get to the goal.** One thing is for sure: there is a better, more efficient way to procure fresh, wholesome food for our students.

If you would like to help us with these initiatives, please go to our website and donate at [urbanschoolfoodalliance.org](https://urbanschoolfoodalliance.org) ***We need your support to keep this momentum going because 2025 – Here We Come – Leading the way to leverage our collective voice to transform school meals.***

*Dr. Katie Wilson, SNS*



# About USFA



**Sustainable and transformational change takes time, but we are willing to lead the work that it takes to get to the goal.**

The **Urban School Food Alliance** (USFA) is a data-driven nonprofit founded in 2012 by school nutrition professionals in large districts with a mission to change the landscape of child nutrition. For more than a decade, its members have worked to improve food quality, access, and sustainability in the United States.

In recent years their accomplishments include leading plastic free lunch days - supporting our sustainability initiatives, remaining on the front-lines and continuing to serve meals during local and national emergencies - as featured in our award-winning effort, [Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation](#), and supporting monumental change in procurement standards and methods across the industry.

USFA leverages this expertise and experience to share evidence-informed practices, make high-quality ingredients available and affordable, and advocate for policies that support programs and students.

## MISSION

Leveraging our collective voice to transform school meals

## VISION

To be the leading change agent for advancing high-quality school meals that foster student achievement.

## BY THE NUMBERS

18

**MEMBER**

DISTRICTS

4.2

**MILLION STUDENTS**

ENROLLED

6251

**SCHOOL**

SITES

697

**MILLION MEALS**

SERVED ANNUALLY

\$932

**MILLION SPENT**

ON FOOD AND FOOD SUPPLIES

How it's  
**DONE**

The Urban School Food Alliance operates under the leadership of an executive director and board of directors and is supported by a dedicated team of employees.

## USFA STAFF

**Dr. Katie Wilson, SNS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Jill Kidd, MS, RD, SNS**  
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND  
BUSINESS INNOVATION INITIATIVES

**Lev Tmanov**  
IT MANAGER

**Jeremy West, MS, SNS**  
CHIEF OF FINANCE  
& OPERATIONS

**Abigail Okiji**  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

**Dottie Arnold, MS, FCSA**  
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT  
ADMINISTRATOR

# Working Together:

**WA SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
SEATTLE, WA  
Member since January 2021

**IL CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
CHICAGO, IL  
Founding member 2012

**OR PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
PORTLAND, OR  
Member since January 2021

**CA LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
LOS ANGELES, CA  
Founding member 2012

**SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
SAN DIEGO, CA  
Member since September 2021

**TX AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
AUSTIN, TX  
Member since January 2021

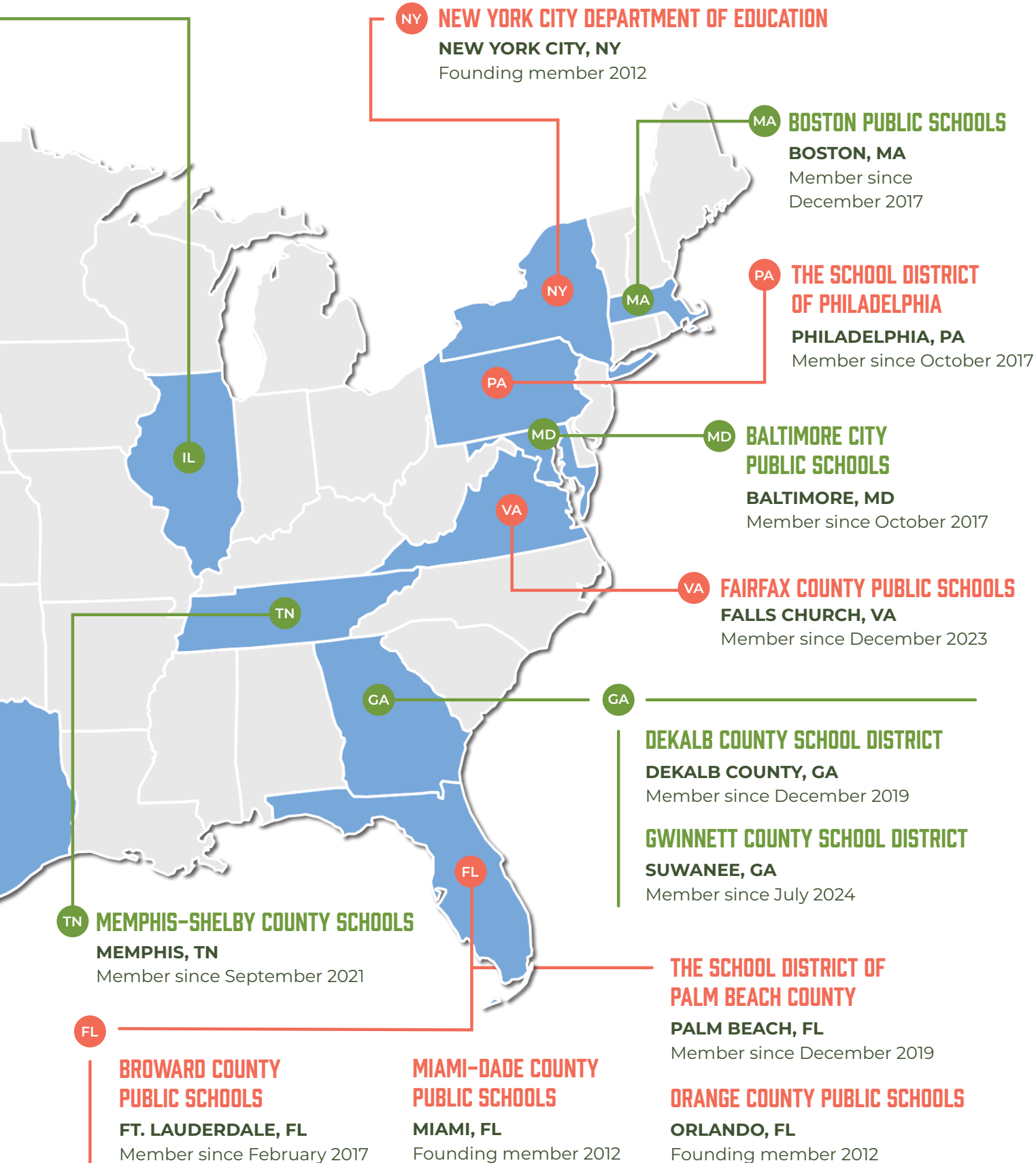
**DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
DALLAS, TX  
Founding member 2012

**NORTH EAST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
SAN ANTONIO, TX  
Member since December 2023

**URBAN SCHOOL FOOD ALLIANCE**  
PROUD MEMBER

**CLICK HERE**  
to learn more about our member districts

# OUR DISTRICTS





Our board of directors is composed of school nutrition administrators in our member districts and interested professionals from outside organizations nationwide. Their leadership provides direction and oversight to Urban School Food Alliance programming and priorities, and their diverse locations and lived experience ensure that our work is guided by all members and relevant to districts of different sizes and settings.

● **MICHAEL ROSENBERGER**

**Dallas Independent  
School District**  
Chairperson

● **STEPHEN O'BRIEN**

**New York City  
Department of Education**  
Vice Chairperson

● **FLORENCE SIMPSON**

**Los Angeles Unified  
School District**  
Secretary

● **AMY VIRUS**

**The School District  
of Philadelphia**  
Treasurer

● **EUGENE BRADFORD**

**Memphis-Shelby County  
Public Schools**  
Board Director

● **JASON MOJICA**

**Chicago Public Schools**  
Board Director

● **AARON SMITH**

**Seattle Public Schools**  
Board Director

## DIRECTORS AT LARGE

● **DR. KEITH THOMAS AYOUB, RD**

**Albert Einstein College  
of Medicine**  
Director At Large

● **TROELS ADRIAN**

**Greater Sacramento  
Economic Council**  
Director At Large

● **DR. PAOLA PAEZ, RD**

**Center for Food Safety in  
Child Nutrition Programs**  
Director At Large



# New in 2024

As the Urban School Food Alliance continues to grow its membership, we are also working to grow our organizational capacity to support members, expand partnerships, and transform the school food system. In 2024, USFA welcomed one new staff member to the Washington, DC office and two new member districts.

## NEW STAFF **Abigail Okiji** | Administrative Assistant



Abigail is a dynamic professional with years of experience as an executive/administrative assistant, demonstrating exceptional organizational and managerial skills. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Marketing with a concentration in product and brand management from Virginia Commonwealth University. Outside of work, Abigail enjoys indulging her creativity, whether it's through crafting, cooking, or finding new DIY projects. She also cherishes spending time with family and friends, always ready to lend a helping hand wherever she can.

## NEW MEMBERS



Joined January 2024  
Falls Church, VA  
**182,000 Students**  
**198 campuses**



**CLICK HERE**  
to read the full story

FCPS is the largest school system in Virginia and the 12th largest district in the United States, serving approximately 188,000 students on 198 campuses.



**GWINNETT COUNTY**  
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Joined July 2024 | Suwanee, GA  
**182,000 Students** | **135 campuses**



GCPS is the largest school district in Georgia. GCPS School Nutrition serves 30 million meals each year across all programs, with an annual procurement budget of nearly \$80 million.



**CLICK HERE**  
to read the full story



## TOGETHER WE SUPPORT SCHOOL MEALS

School meals play a critical role in a child's ability to succeed in the classroom and in the future. The Urban School Food Alliance uses the collective strength of its member districts to ensure that the quality and accessibility of school meals continues to trend upwards.

USFA works to showcase the incredible work happening in its member districts, so districts everywhere can learn from one another and drive innovation nationwide.

# WE ARE THE ALLIANCE

The Urban School Food Alliance and its members work diligently throughout the year to make a positive impact in school food service. These efforts, while often unnoticed, impact communities, students and their families, and the urban cities they are a part of. Progress takes action, and action takes hard work - something that our members are not afraid of.

*This is USFA in action.*

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# SUPPORT: MEETINGS & TRAININGS

# USFA HOSTS

An investment in your board is an investment in your organization! In January the Urban School Food Alliance held its first annual board training event in Chicago. During the week, board members gained new tools and skills to support the continued growth and sustainability of our work. Watch the recap below to hear from USFA leaders about the impact of this development on their ability to best serve the organization and mission.

## USFA HOSTS: First Annual Board Training

<https://youtu.be/1eXS5m0Og88?si=xsHujln47dX8eGNO>

**“Board training is an important part of leadership and gives the board the confidence to help lead the mission and vision of the organization.”**

- Dr. Katie Wilson -

# USFA HOSTS: Two Member Meetings

## WINTER MEMBER MEETING

<https://youtu.be/TSPSEgjldFQ?si=bXWVQMMIXdCrHhDz>

The School District of Palm Beach County hosted our winter member meeting in February of 2024. Our members, staff, leadership, and partners experienced the difference Palm Beach is making by growing school gardens and elevating the student dining experience. These meetings are critical in bringing decision makers together to share and create new school food ideas.



## FALL MEMBER MEETING

In September of 2024 the Urban School Food Alliance hosted the fall membership meeting in Chicago, IL. Child nutrition legislative updates and food waste solutions were all part of the agenda.

During the meeting we also celebrated the remarkable work of individuals and organizations committed to advancing nutrition and sustainability in school food. Rich Petrone, Regional Sales Manager for Huhtamaki, accepted a recognition award for their historic work with USFA to create and bring to market a compostable, round 5-compartment tray.

We also recognized Michael Rosenberger (Dallas ISD) and Stephen O'Brien (New York City Public Schools) for their contributions as members and officers on the board of directors. Both retired from their districts in the fall of 2024. In addition, leadership presented two Innovation Awards - one for a USFA member and one to an industry member.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE EVENT GALLERY](#)

# USFA HOSTS: Second Annual Culinary Training

<https://youtu.be/2SWURBLBcFw?si=tNrmoMLRsSVgJhex>



Culinary Institute  
of America



CLICK HERE TO VIEW  
THE EVENT GALLERY

In April, the Urban School Food Alliance convened a group of school food leaders at The Culinary Institute of America's Texas Campus in San Antonio. During the week-long event, Alliance members participated in sessions led by top culinary trainers, centered on plant-based culinary recipes and skills.

In addition to the sessions led by a chef and registered dietitian, the week was rich with best practice sharing and innovation among district staff. The group represented a diverse mix of school nutrition roles and responsibilities, including district chefs, dietitians, kitchen managers, and training staff. By leveraging their unique perspectives and expertise, attendees co-created solutions that not only produced healthy, delicious food for students, but also resulted in production and procurement strategies that center around sustainability, equity, efficiency, and waste reduction.

At the end of the week attendees are equipped with the tools needed to return to their districts to train professional adult peers in their districts. We look forward to the continued growth of this program in the coming years.



VIEW THE IMPACT REPORT  
FROM THIS TRAINING

# SUPPORT: MEETINGS & TRAININGS

# USFA COLLABORATES

Part of the cooperative agreement between USDA and the Urban School Food Alliance is hosting Team Up Procurement Trainings throughout the country for districts all sizes. Hear from attendees of recent trainings in these takeaway videos.

<https://youtube.com/shorts/W34t8SwzHZc?si=bCT3A9G-K4o0hYHVI>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/BXgQ5VUWwQ?si=2k-90SaW-JHtjV7I->

<https://youtube.com/shorts/m62YKwaC0eo?si=ooXEUB6h-f8b7C1Hz>



UTAH



BOSTON [ANC]



MINNESOTA



ST. LOUIS [ACDA]



LOUISIANA

# SUPPORT: MEETINGS & TRAININGS

# USFA ATTENDS

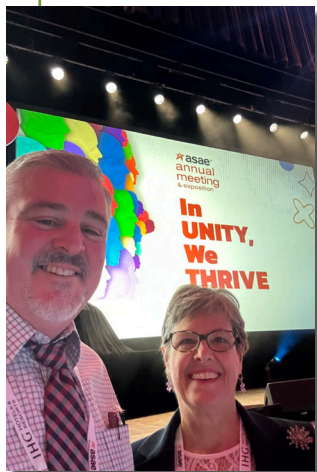
## SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION: ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE



**While at ANC:** After multiple speaking sessions during pre-con, and housing a tour of Boston Public Schools, the USFA team enjoyed meeting and speaking with attendees in the partner pavilion

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE EVENT GALLERY](#)

## ASAE CONFERENCE



**AUGUST 2024:** Urban School Food Alliance's Dr. Katie Wilson and Jeremy West, MS attended the ASAE (The Center for Association Leadership) Annual Meeting in Cleveland, OH to connect and learn from our association peers.

## SERVING UP SCIENCE

**MAY 2024:** School nutrition personnel from members **Seattle Public Schools** and **Dallas ISD** attended the latest Serving Up Science: The Path to Safe Food in Schools at Kansas State University, led by Urban School Food Alliance Director at Large, Dr. Paola Paez. Staff from 32 districts, 17 state agencies, and UDSA participated in the session.

**JUNE 2024:** Staff from USFA member districts, **San Diego Unified School District, School District of Philadelphia, Dallas ISD, and North East Independent School District**, attended the June Serving up Science session also held at Kansas State University for Urban School Food Alliance members.

The program provides an opportunity for districts to learn from one another on all aspects of Food Safety and engage with experts through lectures, hands-on activities, and facility tours.



## SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT LIVE WEBINAR

### Live Webinar

"Schools are now the single healthiest place Americans are eating."

**DR. DARIUSH MOZAFFARIAN**  
Director of the Food is Medicine Institute at Tufts University

Monday, March 25th  
10 AM Pacific

[Reserve Your Space Today](#)

Join SDUSD and Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, Director of the Food is Medicine Institute at Tufts University, and a lead author of a ground-breaking study on the eating habits of more than 60,000 Americans. Learn why the study concluded that "schools are now the single healthiest place Americans are eating."

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE WEBINAR RECORDING](#)



## USDA PATRICK LEAHY FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM GRANTEE CONFERENCE



Executive Director Dr. Katie Wilson and Cooperative Agreement Administrator Dottie Arnold, MS attended the conference and presented on value-based procurement and are enjoying speaking with attendees about their farm to school work!

*i love school lunch so much.*

## MEMBER MEETINGS: AUSTIN ISD



Each month USFA hosts member meetings to discuss news, legislative updates, and share Best Practices among districts.

We are highlighting Austin ISD's "I love school lunch so much" campaign. This incredibly successful initiative encourages teachers and administrators to participate in school lunch with fun rewards!

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)

# BUILD: PROCUREMENT & PROGRESS

# USFA LEADS



CLEAN LABEL CHICKEN FOR SCHOOLS

**A Pilot Project in K12  
Transformational Procurement**

Ready Set Launch Video

**955,550** Pounds of NAE Chicken Delivered  
to Schools Across the USA!



**This Project  
Spanned 41 Months  
and Four Phases:**



**RESEARCH &  
DISCOVERY**



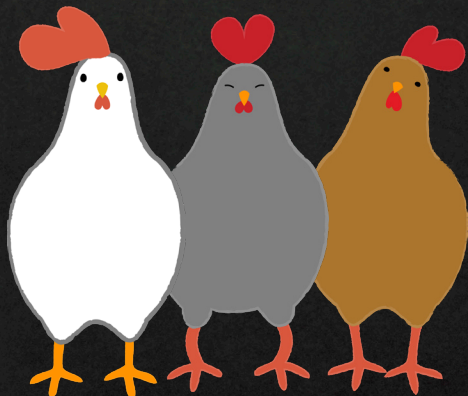
**READY, SET,  
LAUNCH**



**RESULTS &  
SUCCESSES**



**LOOKING  
AHEAD**



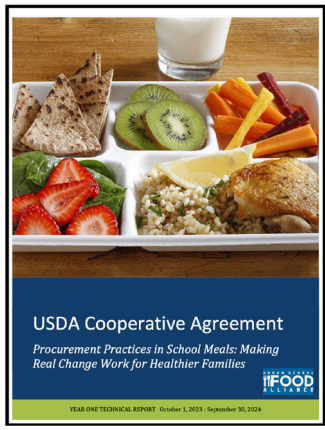
## HUNGRY FOR MORE?

Access the full digital recap of the Boost the Roost Pilot project complete with videos, articles, and resources by clicking the image above.



BOOST THE ROOST

## USFA LEADS: USDA COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT



### YEAR ONE TECHNICAL REPORT: Procurement Practices In School Meals: Making Real Change Work For Healthier Meals

This project seeks to improve procurement practices for districts of all sizes in urban and rural areas. As the first year of the Cooperative Agreement came to completion in 2024, all objectives were in progress. The deliverables highlighted in the report will demonstrate the complexity of this project, along with its many achievements during this first year.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW ONLINE](#)

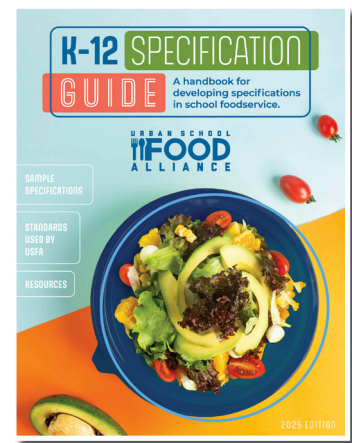
## USFA LEADS: K-12 SPECIFICATION GUIDE

**“Specifications are essential to fair, open, and competitive procurement.”**

The K-12 Specification Guide (previously Food Specification Catalog) was updated in December of 2024 for a brand new 2025 Edition Release.

The K-12 Specification Guide is a resource for school nutrition professionals that includes sample specifications, shares the standards used by USFA, and provides free resources for writing specifications for school districts of all sizes.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW ONLINE](#)



## USFA LEADS: SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES



### FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

The Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) team had always been committed to serving students nutritious meals. But alongside the meals, something else accumulated—plastic. Plastic-wrapped cutlery, plastic utensils, plastic waste. Determined to make a change, FNS made the bold decision to transition from plastic utensils to wooden alternatives.

**Since this implementation in March of 2024, the impact was clear—over 70,000 pounds of plastic saved.** A small change in materials has led to a massive reduction in waste, reinforcing the district's commitment to environmental responsibility. With each meal served, Fairfax County Public Schools continues to set an example, proving that even the smallest changes can lead to a lasting impact—one wooden fork at a time.

# BUILD: PROCUREMENT & PROGRESS USFA PROMOTES

## HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

The Urban School Food Alliance supports serving healthy meals to all students as part of the school day. Good nutrition is just as important to academic success as a bus ride or a physical classroom or a computer! These meals are an investment in the future, giving all children an opportunity to concentrate on their studies instead of hunger. The stigma has long been associated with school meals and once we take that stigma away - we are a step forward in food justice!

### DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS ON FREE SCHOOL MEALS:

#### North East ISD announces free and reduced-price school meal program

By SBCS San Antonio Staff Reports | Nathi Castibon | Mon, August 19th 2024 at 3:45 PM



North East ISD (NEISD) is participating in a free and reduced-price school lunch program for qualifying students. (Graphic image)

TOPICS: NEISD SCHOOL PROGRAM ELEMENTARY FREE STUDENTS MEALS CAMPUS

SAN ANTONIO - North East ISD (NEISD) is participating in a free and reduced-price school lunch program for qualifying students.

This year, forty-eight NEISD campuses are qualified to participate in the



### NORTH EAST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)

### SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

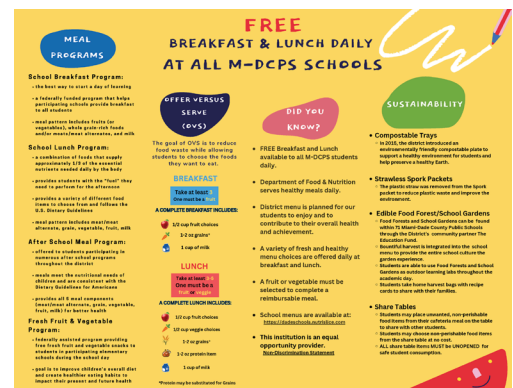
[LEARN MORE ABOUT PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOL FOOD SERVICES IN THEIR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT](#)



### ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



### LOS ANGELES UNIFIED PUBLIC SCHOOLS



### MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# BUILD: PROCUREMENT & PROGRESS

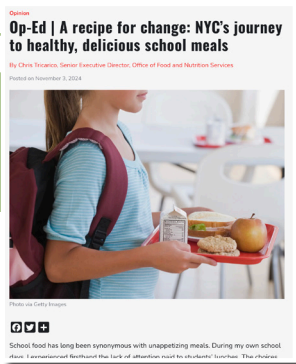
## USFA CHANGES

The Urban School Food Alliance is proud to foster an environment that supports and promotes change that pushes the needle of school nutrition forward. Changes in our districts create a ripple effect that have the potential to impact programs of all sizes.

### NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Over the past six years, USFA member New York City Public Schools has made **tremendous progress in advancing healthy, delicious, and sustainable school food!** Chris Tricarico, the Senior Executive Director at the Office of Food and Nutrition Services, shared his insights on this journey in *amny*, November 2024.

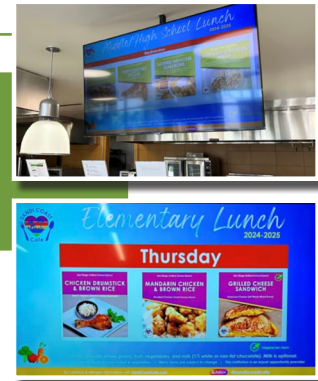
[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)



### SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

In 2024, SDUSD made major tech and infrastructure improvements to modernize operations in their kitchens and cafes. Tech updates included: 200 iPads used as digital recipe books, 25 staff kiosks, 45 Combi Ovens connected to Wi-Fi for easy management, and 15+ digital menu boards.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH SDUSD'S ANNUAL REPORT RECAP](#)



### BALTIMORE CITY SCHOOLS

Baltimore City Schools **expanded its Farm to School (F2S) team capacity** by hiring three FoodCorps service members, allowing the full team to engage more than 9,000 students directly in programs both at and beyond Great Kids Farm – that represents a 56% increase from SY22! Read more about impact in [Farm to School Annual Report SY23-24](#).

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE FNS ANNUAL REPORT](#)



### NORTH EAST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

North East Independent School District in San Antonio, TX hosted its **first annual Summer Feast Resource Fair**. The fair held in June was established so the community could learn about the summer meal program and other community resources in a fun and engaging environment.



# BUILD: PROCUREMENT & PROGRESS USFA ENGAGES



[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE GALLERY](#)

## SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

"As School Nutrition program operators, we wear many hats and often play a critical role in advocating for our meal programs, always seeking opportunities to give voice to our work. When the Science History Institute contacted us regarding a planned exhibit, 'The History and Science of Food in US Schools,' we were absolutely thrilled to play a role in its development. The museum curator innocently asked about the logistics of how the food makes its way into our schools. I laughed and asked how far in the weeds he wanted me to go because I had just the thing to answer that question, but it happened to be a two-page flow chart mapping out the path and all the parties involved in the process. A few meetings later, this complex answer to an innocent question was made into a beautiful, simplified diagram digitally printed onto one of our school lunch tables to be showcased at the exhibit. The opportunity has allowed us to share what happens behind the scenes. It gives the public a better understanding of how we operate within the federal meal program while shedding light on the fact that there's more to our program than just throwing food on a tray." - Elizabeth Keegan, MS, RD, LDN, SNS

**STUDENT-LED MENUS INCREASE PARTICIPATION:** Engaging students in the school food selection process is critical to ensuring menus are delicious, diverse, and representative of the student population. Our members consider this step of menu planning critical to their success and is a regular event throughout the majority of our districts.

### CPS students issue the grades in cafeteria taste test

Fourth-grader Arianne Curry and several other grade-schoolers gathered Wednesday morning to taste test potential school menu items at Arianne's elementary school in South Chicago.



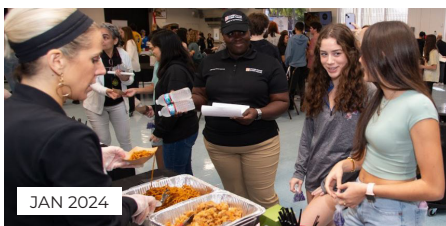
JULY 2024

## CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Students in member Chicago Public Schools tasted new recipes to help decide what ends up on the menu. Students tried jollof rice, a blueberry crisp, fruit parfait, cinnamon peaches, and more, and shared their favorites with Chicago Sun-Times.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)

## ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



JAN 2024

Member OCPS food show: students tasted potential new lunch recipes like arepas, veggie burgers, and lemongrass chicken chow mein and gave feedback.

### Whole grain cinnamon rolls? LAUSD cafeterias are ready for 2024-25 school year

The district will introduce some of the favorites based on the students' feedback.

JULY 2024



[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)

## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Students in member LAUSD returned to new classes and updated school meals menus. Students and Superintendent Alberto Carvalho previewed options, including whole-grain cinnamon rolls and acai bowls, to pick their healthy and delicious favorites.

# INFLUENCE: EVENTS & ADVOCACY

## USFA SPEAKS

Our leadership team is honored to be a voice at events and conferences throughout the year. Speaking engagements ranged from topics of procurement, challenges and successes, to policy and advocacy for the school nutrition industry.

Dairy industry looks to low-income access, new products, sustainability messages

By Jerry Hagopian, The Hagopian Report



From left, Michelle Harris of the International Dairy Foods Association, Will McIntee of the White House, Katie Wilson of the United School Food Alliance, and Alicia Powers of the National Dairy Promotion Board. Photo by Jerry Hagopian, The Hagopian Report

PHOTOGRAPHY - As the dairy industry looks to the future, it seeks growth by increasing access to its products for low-income people, new products and making sure consumers understand that the industry is concerned about carbon emissions and other sustainable practices said at the International Dairy Foods Association's Dairy Forum here last week.



### INTERNATIONAL DAIRY FOODS ASSOCIATION

Dr. Katie Wilson joined Alicia Powers (Auburn University Hunger Solutions Institute) and Will McIntee (The White House) for a deep dive session on how to reinforce the importance of healthy diets in policy development.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)

JAN 2024



### ALASKA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

Dr. Katie Wilson spoke in Anchorage for the Alaska School Nutrition Association's 56th Annual Conference. She delivered the keynote address and encouraged members to take steps to improve their programs, reach out when facing challenges, and celebrate wins in the new era for school meals.

### VIRGINIA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION



Dr. Wilson gave the keynote address at the Virginia State Conference following opening remarks from Congressman Bobby Scott.

### CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA



Dr. Katie Wilson represented USFA on the Consumer Federation of America plenary panel in Washington, DC. to answer the questions: "What makes for an effective school meals program, and what can federal policymakers learn from these success stories?"

# INFLUENCE: EVENTS & ADVOCACY

# USFA CELEBRATES



## USFA WINS ASAE 2024 SUMMIT AWARD

The Alliance was recognized by ASAE Power of Associations and selected to receive the 2024 Summit Award, the highest distinction for associations, in the Power of Community Support and Engagement category.

<https://youtu.be/n6ALpUqpsZU?si=S-Rz9QRb0hm6AADjL>

### HUNGER DOESN'T TAKE A VACATION AWARD SUBMISSION VIDEO

<https://youtu.be/bY0yfbLGXds?si=ywbvKevYZ-9b0H-wX>

### 2024 USFA ASAE SUMMIT AWARD AWARD PRESENTATION VIDEO

### ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE PODCAST](#)

Mallory Reeves, Senior Administrator for Orange County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services, was featured on the NextUp podcast. Mallory shares the innovative practices that are helping Urban School Food Alliance member OCPS Food and Nutrition Services serve more than 250,000 school meals per day.

### NORTH EAST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



[CLICK HERE TO READ LEARN MORE](#)

Member NEISD received the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Turnip The Beet award for summer 2023. This award recognizes sponsors within the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option that go above and beyond program requirements to serve high-quality meals during the summer months, when many children lose access to critical nutrition.

### SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)

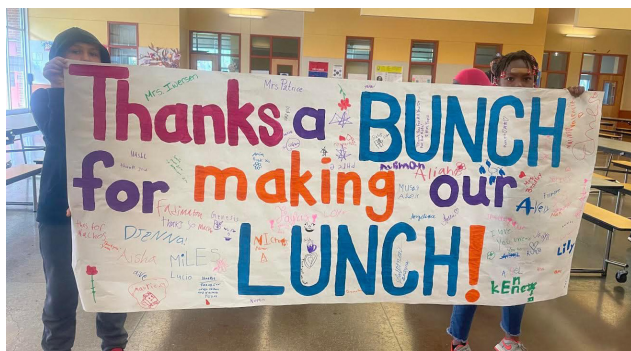
Seattle Public Schools Director of Culinary Services Aaron Smith recieved the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association - IFMA Silver Plate Award for elementary and secondary schools. The Urban School Food Alliance is proud to have Aaron and our board, membership, and industry are stronger with his passion and creativity.

# INFLUENCE: EVENTS & ADVOCACY

## USFA SUPPORTS



### SCHOOL LUNCH HEROES



### PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Rosa Parks Elementary students created a beautiful banner thanking the food service team!



School meals are a critical part of our school and food systems, ensuring that every child has access to the nutrition they need to be ready for learning and life. Thank you to all the dedicated school nutrition professionals in our member districts and schools nationwide for their commitment to serving students and creating a healthy, happy environment every day.

## NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH



USFA celebrated National Nutrition Month with **Los Angeles Unified School District** at their Farm2School event! The initiative provides fresh food to LA students within 24-48 hours of harvesting. Cafe LA is dedicated to building equity in child nutrition, increasing student achievement, supporting small and BIPOC farmers, and improving the quality of life for all. Great testament to the power and purpose of local procurement!

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)



## NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH

Behind the Scenes of Food & Nutrition:  
**#FarmtoSchool Friday!**



Missed the [Great Kids Farm](#) livestream this week? Catch up with Farmer L and the goats at <http://Bit.ly/GKFTOUR24>

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Food & Nutrition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7X4fRKQf2M>

### BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Baltimore City Public Schools hosted a live-streamed, interactive tour of the district's Great Kids Farm for a behind-the-scenes look at our food system. More than 900 students from schools around the world (including 200+ from City Schools!) tuned in. Experience the farm for yourself!

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE GREAT KIDS FARMS ANNUAL REPORT](#)

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE 2024 FOOD SERVICE UPDATE](#)

## NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK



BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



NEW YORK CITY DOE



AUSTIN ISD

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE GALLERY](#)



INFLUENCE: EVENTS & ADVOCACY

**USFA SUSTAINS**

**PLASTIC FREE LUNCH DAY**

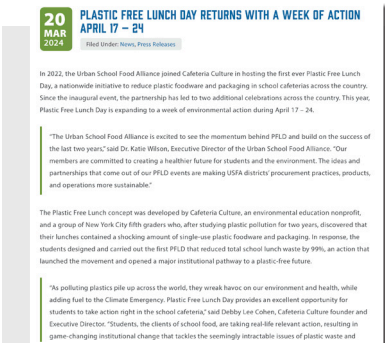
Here are a few of the ways that our members celebrated and are working towards a more sustainable school food system. Schools implementing the following strategies keep the momentum of Plastic Free Lunch Day going throughout the country:

Rather than individually wrapping or packaging items, servings are placed directly on students' plates

Serving vegetables that students can eat with their hands, like cherry tomatoes or carrot sticks

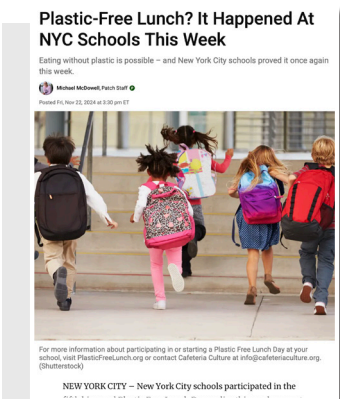
Cutlery kits or utensil packets are kept out of sight at the POS and only offered them to students who ask for them

Planning ahead:  
Plastic Free  
Lunch Days are  
incorporated into  
school nutrition  
promotion cycles



[CLICK HERE TO READ THE BLOG](#)

APRIL 2024



## NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Member NYC Department of Education celebrated Plastic Free Lunch Day alongside Urban School Food Alliance districts and many more nationwide! The latest event built on a movement that started in New York City and has led to 750 NYC schools hosting PFLD every three weeks during the school year, as well as reduced waste and cost savings.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)

NOV 2024

## ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Member district, OCPS and their students are leading the way to create a more sustainable food system. By making incremental changes to reduce waste, we can have a tremendous impact on the environment.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)



Students at Sand Lake Elementary dump their food into compost bins as part of an Orange County Public Schools food recovery program. (Spectrum News/Celeste Springer)

FOOD WASTE

Orange County schools compost more than 151,000 pounds in food recovery pilot program

### How 21 Orange County schools are diverting food waste from the landfill to compost



Compost (WFTV.com News Staff)

January 29, 2024 at 10:56 p.m. UTC

By George Waldenberger



### EARTH DAY 2024

OCPS celebrated Earth Day 2024 with a look at the district's ongoing pilot program to reduce food waste. As of the beginning of this school year, 21 schools participating in the program have composted more than 151,000 pounds of food! The compost is collected, and in return, schools with community gardens can use it to grow new fruits, vegetables and flowers.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)



## SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

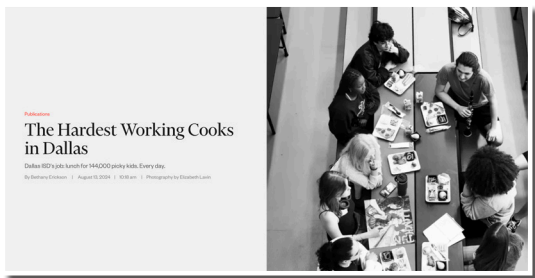
Member SDUSD has been making efforts to feed students, not landfills, since 2016, through the Love Food Not Waste program. Food and Nutrition Services is partnered with two high school sophomores, Henry Jiang and Kai Trees, to launch a compostable cutlery pilot. The pilot will test biodegradable spork alternatives, including birch, bamboo, and pressed bamboo, for student acceptability and future expansion.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)

# INFLUENCE: EVENTS & ADVOCACY

# MEDIA APPEARANCES

## DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



*D Magazine, August, 2024: The Hardest Working Cooks in Dallas*

D Magazine shared the stories and faces of school nutrition professionals in Dallas ISD.

“We’re coming to work every day,” she says. “I see the faces of the kids, and we talk to them, and they come talk to me sometimes. I really enjoy that.” But the work isn’t always easy. “It takes energy and strength to get everything prepared. And you have to set up, clean up, and get ready for the next bunch.”

- Lessie Dixon, Alex W. Spence Talented/Gifted Academy. Credit: Bethany Erickson, D Magazine



[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)

## CLEAN-LABEL, NO ANTIBIOTIC EVER CHICKEN PILOT MEDIA

## The Guardian

**She wanted to make a chicken sandwich with fewer chemicals for schoolkids. How hard could it be?**

*The Guardian, February, 2024: She wanted to make a chicken sandwich with fewer chemicals for schoolkids. How hard could it be?*

Between tight budgets and the stranglehold of big corporations on the school food supply, the system seems stacked against healthy options  
By Jessica Terrell

After more than three decades of working to feed students under increasingly difficult circumstances, Katie Wilson was fed up. The leader of the Urban School Food Alliance, a non-profit that supports nutrition programs at the country's largest school districts, wanted to do something to disrupt a school food status quo she says is "so broken it's unbelievable".

Wilson's biggest beef is with the convoluted and overly restrictive way schools are forced to purchase food, something she thought the alliance could start to change. In 2021, she decided to try something deceptively simple: creating a recipe for a chicken patty.

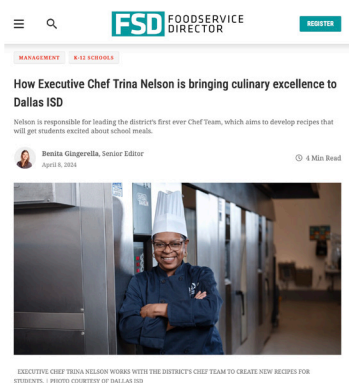
Since the alliance's member districts cover enormous school systems in cities including Boston, New York City and Miami, expanding the limited number of producers they can buy from would be monumental. In any given year, the 19 school districts in the alliance serve about \$40m worth of chicken to students, giving it the purchasing power to make a statement.

But even Wilson, a school nutrition veteran who has worked as deputy undersecretary at the US Department of Agriculture and served as president of the School Nutrition Association, had no idea just how difficult making a chicken patty from scratch would be.

Her quest for a tasty, healthier chicken sandwich for US schoolchildren took

Up against rising costs, supply chain issues, and regulatory restrictions, USFA set out to create a healthy, accessible product. Dr. Katie Wilson spoke with The Guardian to share the full story and our vision for the future of school food procurement.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)



## FSD FOODSERVICE DIRECTOR

*Food Service Director, April, 2024: How Executive Chef Trina Nelson is bringing culinary excellence to Dallas ISD*

“Where do I sign up?” Her first job with the

district was a dual central kitchen manager and executive chef role where she managed production at the district’s 153,575 square-foot centralized kitchen.” - Chef Trina Nelson

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ARTICLE](#)



## USFA SELECTED FOR NEWMAN'S OWN FOUNDATION GRANT

The Urban School Food Alliance values this new partnership with Newman's Own Foundation and is very grateful for their support. With this funding, we plan on introducing new relationships between local producers and school nutrition procurement personnel across the country, enabling even more fresh, local food to be served in schools.



CLICK HERE  
TO WATCH THE  
COVERAGE ON  
4 WASHINGTON



**Interested in featuring the Urban School Food Alliance, or one of our member districts, in your news outlet?**

**Contact us at:**  
**[press@UrbanSchoolFoodAlliance.org](mailto:press@UrbanSchoolFoodAlliance.org)**



Read more stories like these online at The USFA Resource Center - your source for best practices, bid standards, district meetings, professional development and so much more.



# USFA FINANCIAL RECAP



## YOU FUEL OUR CONTINUED WORK

The work that we do is not possible without the support and expertise of organizations that share our mission. This year has brought continued challenges to school nutrition, as programs navigated regulatory changes, supply chain disruptions, and funding strains. Through the continued generosity of our funding partners, the Urban School Food Alliance has been on the front lines of these national issues.

## GIVING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

The Urban School Food Alliance is grateful to the following organizations for their generous contributions that help us drive transformative change in school cafeterias across the country:



LIFE TIME FOUNDATION



BUILDERS INITIATIVE

Joyce and Irving Goldman  
Family Foundation



Another thank you to the many individuals who have offered us support in important ways, including through direct donations. We appreciate you for championing school nutrition programs in your communities and across the country. Looking for new opportunities to give back this year?

We invite you to explore the convenient, tax-deductible options and select a method of giving that best fits your needs. Any amount will help the Urban School Food Alliance create research and resources that transform food systems and change the lives of families nationwide!

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2023	2024*
Bank Assets	\$1,017,263	\$1,435,855
Accounts Receivable	\$68,800	\$96,745
Other Current Assets	\$129,016	\$128,268
Total Assets	\$1,215,079	\$1,660,868
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Interest	\$36,734	\$8,892
Deferred Revenue	\$171,000	\$171,000
Total Liabilities	\$207,734	\$179,892
EQUITY		
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$905,790	\$1,054,421
Restricted Revenue	\$101,555	\$301,555
Total Equity	\$1,007,345	\$1,355,796
Total Equity and Liabilities	\$1,215,079	\$1,535,868

\*unaudited



## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

-  [info@urbanschoolfoodalliance.org](mailto:info@urbanschoolfoodalliance.org)
-  Urban School Food Alliance
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