The 2019 National School Lunch Week (NSLW) theme, “School Lunch: What’s On Your Playlist” is tailor-made to help you tell your school lunch story and highlight what makes your cafeteria such a special place for students to visit every day. You can use this theme to spotlight so many different aspects of your school nutrition program. Share all the reasons there are to love the menus, the dining space and the people who prep and serve the meals. Engage your customers to share what they love most about their daily cafeteria experience. Promote the immediate and long-term benefits of healthy food choices. Give a shout-out to details that need greater public awareness, such as the creative solutions you’ve developed to overcome the incredible challenges of this complex business. Put your team members in the spotlight so customers get to know even better the staff that adds a pinch of love to everything they do.

SNA has provided this toolkit to help you reach different audiences, educate them about the importance of a nutritious school lunch, and make it easy for you to promote the nutritious and delicious meals you serve each day. Use this kit to set and reach goals for your #NSLW19 celebrations. #NSLW19 is a great opportunity to put school lunch in the spotlight, reminding students, families, staff—and yourselves—that the heart of every school beats in its cafeteria, and that school nutrition professionals serve love on every tray.
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Music. There is no denying its universal appeal. It builds cultural bridges that cut across language, age and geographical barriers—and even time, connecting us to artists of bygone eras and to personalities heralding an intriguing future.

Music creates communal experiences, just like school lunch. It is intricately woven into significant rituals (such as eating) that define our life experiences, particularly throughout our school years.

That’s why SNA is excited to present this year’s music-based NSLW theme. “School Lunch: What’s on Your Playlist?” is a current concept that students in all grade levels—as well as adult stakeholders—can relate to.

The theme is tailor-made to spotlight the wide variety of flavors, dishes, delivery options and tastes of today’s school lunch. A “playlist” connotes a wide range of tastes and is completely individualized, just as school lunch is increasingly “playing to” the customized, made-to-order tastes of students. Today’s school cafeterias are serving up menu items that kids want to eat, with increased choice and customization.

SNA has provided this toolkit to help you reach different audiences, educate them about the importance of a nutritious school lunch, and make it easy for you to promote the healthy and delicious meals you serve each day. Use this kit to plan your celebration, set goals, increase participation and raise awareness for your program.

Your #NSLW19 soundtrack is sure to be as unique as your school nutrition team. To reach the top of the charts, use SNA’s resources, focus on your hit-makers, groove to your own beats and let your staff be the rock stars we know them to be! #NSLW19 is your opportunity to put school lunch in the national spotlight!
National School Lunch Week (NSLW) was created in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy. It’s a weeklong national observance of events and activities designed to promote the benefits of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The week recognizes the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child’s life, and the impact it has inside and outside of the classroom.

The NSLP was signed into law in 1946 (Richard B. Russell Act) and is the largest of the federal child nutrition programs. Nearly 30 million students are served healthy lunches every school day—that’s 5 billion annually!

School nutrition programs play a critical role in ensuring all students, regardless of income level, receive nutritious lunches which follow strict federal nutrition standards. School lunches include servings of fruits and vegetables, whole-grains, lean protein and low-fat dairy.

“School Lunch: What’s on Your Playlist?” Campaign Goals:

• Promote healthy menus and increase school lunch participation;
• Raise awareness with parents, administrators, and media about the importance of school meals and the role played by school nutrition professionals;
• Expand the market—online and off—with campaign-themed social media tools and marketing/PR materials.

Did you know?

95% of U.S. elementary and secondary school students are enrolled in schools that participate in the NSLP.
So, how do you strike the right chord and turn your School Lunch Playlist ideas into increased participation come October? Scroll through these top 10 idea hit singles to discover which ones have the right rhythm for you and your team and begin compiling your own NSLW idea playlist to boost engagement.

1. Ask students to **select their top menu items** in advance of NSLW and use these to comprise an official school lunch playlist.
2. Create a school lunch playlist as the week goes along, asking students to **record their daily favorites**, with the top item “going platinum.”
3. Get **creative with menu names**. Think Chart-Topper Cheeseburgers, Pitch-Perfect Pizza, Rockin’ Rice Bowls and Buffalo Beats Chicken. (See *Menu Music* on page 9 for more.)
4. Consider **partnering with the music department** to sponsor a “School Lunch Rap” or original song contest, lunchtime jam session (great for any age), karaoke or your own cafeteria version of “America’s Got Talent.”
5. Invite **local music celebrities** (or talented cafeteria staff, school teachers and administrators) to be guest servers and give an impromptu performance.
6. Invite a student instrumental or choral ensemble, music class or even the **school marching band** to perform during lunch.
7. In a spinoff on the traditional Spirit Week, pick a day for students and staff to **dress up as their favorite music artist**.
8. Go retro and turn the tables on lunch with a **student guest DJ**.
More Engagement Ideas

The range of possibilities for contest prizes and giveaways to students who eat lunch every day of NSLW is at least eight octaves! Here are two more ideas to generate excitement for the big event.

9. **Earbuds** and **iTunes gift cards** can work for smaller budgets, while a **Bluetooth speaker**, grand prize of an electronic **keyboard** or **guitar** would be sure to generate buzz for bigger budgets.

10. Contact local music stores or music departments at local colleges and universities to see if they would be willing to **donate music lessons**, **do a demonstration** or **offer free tickets to a performance**.
MAKE SOME NOISE: Create Social Buzz

Whatever your #lunchplaylist entails, make time to develop a social media plan that will start in the weeks leading up to #NSLW19 and gain momentum throughout your weeklong celebration. Use a variety of platforms to reach different audiences (e.g., Facebook for parents, Instagram for students and Twitter for local media). Consider streaming a Facebook Live video for one of your lunchtime performances or events.

Create a video to promote your celebration using your smartphone, and jazz it up with easy-to-use free tech tools from this great resource: www.yournerdybestfriend.com/.

#NSLW19
#LunchPlaylist  #SchoolLunch
#SchoolLunchRocks  #SchoolLunchHits
HIT MAKERS:
Social Media Dos & Don’ts

**DO:** Use relevant hashtags to track the conversation, and amplify your own posts: #NSLW19, #LunchPlaylist, #SchoolLunch.

**DON’T:** Share poor-quality photos. Learn how to stage a great food photo (i.e., shoot in natural light, remove background objects, crop instead of using the zoom to avoid grainy photos, use colorful trays and plates) and practice.

**DO:** Update your Facebook page with our #NSLW19-branded cover photos, and shareable content available in our members-only PR Resources section under PR campaign on SNA’s website.

**DON’T:** Worry if your school or program isn’t on social media! We love to share member photos on SNA social media channels. Tag SNA on Facebook (@SchoolNutritionAssociation), Twitter (@SchoolLunch) and Instagram (@SchoolNutritionAssoc).

**DO:** Use photos of healthy menu options and caption the photos with a list of what’s depicted, and tag distributors, farmers, producers, etc.

**DON’T:** Post any photos of students without checking your school and/or district’s policy regarding photo media releases.

Check with the principal or communications office for guidance. Make sure your school’s communication office has release templates on file.

**DO:** Think about who uses what platform; students like Twitter for news, but they get more ‘social’ on Instagram and Snapchat, while parents prefer Facebook and Twitter. Tailor your messages—and images—accordingly.

**DON’T:** Forget to use #NSLW19 in three key ways—promote and generate excitement ahead of time, share photos and updates all week long, and follow-up with a post-NSLW update via a blog or newsletter, for example.

**DO:** Use other strategies to increase engagement, along with great photos and infographics. For example, share links to relevant content from the SNA website, a human interest story about your program from the local media or a school lunch video you create!

**DON’T:** Hesitate to go the extra mile to customize #NSLW19 for your school with logos, photos, mascots and more! Personalize the message for students and parents to communicate what makes your school lunch program special!
There are as many ways to **pump up the volume** for your #NSLW19 menus as there are dishes to feature! Check out these tips to get your creative juices flowing:

- As the new school year begins, **conduct a vote** among students for the top hit school menus, meals or ingredients. Tally the votes and feature the winners as your official NSLW menu playlist.
- Create **new music-themed menu items** for NSLW or rename a current hit to reflect the theme (e.g. Techno Tacos, Island Breeze Reggae Rice Bowl, K Pop Pizza, Country Chicken & Waffles).
- Use digital menu boards, online artwork and logos to create **custom signs** and **promotional materials**.
- Use NSLW as a **sampling event** to identify the next new menu item that will be a hit with kids.
- **Partner** with a local farmer or producer to create a new NSLW-themed dish.
- Serve a hit ‘breakfast-for-lunch’ item and **cross-promote** two programs at once!
- If your school has **television monitors**, ask them to display your #NSLW19 menu.
- Promote the week’s menu theme through the **morning announcements**.
- In a twist on the “**manager’s choice**” lunch special, plan a day when the menu features hit recipes or items from the manager’s playlist.
Check out these tips to engage parents in your celebration plans. Encourage them to join the conversation on social media using the campaign hashtag.

- Invite parents to experience school lunch during **National Take Your Parents to Lunch Day** on **Wednesday, October 16, 2019** to see how much school lunch has changed! Offer samples, take parents on a tour of the kitchen and cafeteria and give them a free lunch coupon for an upcoming meal.

- Provide parents with a **family-sized recipe** of a student favorite menu item to make at home.

- **Remind** parents about the **benefits** of school lunch and share the #NSLW19 infographic. Studies show that school lunches are more likely to include fruit, vegetables, and dairy than those who bring lunches from home. Lunches from home are also likely to have snacks high in sugar and/or fat.

- **Encourage** students and parents to review the lunch week menu together to **start a dialogue** about healthy eating.

- Break down the **cost savings** of school lunch. Parents may not realize the incredible value school lunch can offer versus ‘brown bagging’ it. Illustrate the savings with a side-by-side comparison of the average school lunch at your school versus the average school lunch brought from home (average school pricing—elementary: $2.48; middle: $2.68; high school: $2.74).*

*School meal prices vary across the country. These are averages of prices paid for meals during SY 2016-17 from data collected in SNA’s 2018 School Nutrition Operations Report.
PHOTO OP: Legislators Playlist

We’ve gathered **10 tips** to help you connect with your elected representatives and invite them to visit your cafeteria. Find more information on legislative outreach here: www.schoolnutrition.org/legislation.

1. **Know Your Legislator:** Find a full list of state and federal representatives on the SNA website, including contact information, in SNA’s Legislative Action Center—all you need is your zip code.

2. **Who to Talk To:** When you call your representative’s office, ask to speak with the aide who handles child nutrition programs. Tell the aide you are extending an invitation to the legislator to visit your school the next time he or she is in their congressional district.

3. **Make Your Case:** Be prepared to offer compelling reasons for your representative to attend—how does it benefit them? It’s always good for them to see a federal program at work, and positive media coverage is always welcome!

4. **Time Constraints:** Be mindful that your representative will likely have a very limited amount of time to spend at your school, so use it wisely. Plan a specific agenda for his or her visit, and don’t forget photo ops. Make sure you extend the invitation well in advance of NSLW if you want them to attend the celebration in October.

5. **Staff Are also Welcome:** Sometimes representatives are unavailable, but they will opt to send an aide in their place. If you get a “no”, ask if the aide in charge of child nutrition programs or the district office director can come instead and report on the visit to their boss later. Be sure to check out SNA’s Cafeteria Visits 101 online toolkit.
6. **Noteworthy & Newsworthy:** A visit from a public figure is something to brag about! Once you’ve confirmed their upcoming visit, coordinate with your school district’s communication office and reach out to local media outlets that may want to cover the event. Be sure to use SNA’s customizable press release on the NSLW website to provide all the details in one document. If an outlet can’t attend, provide your own follow-up with photos and event details for possible coverage at a later date.

7. **Be Organized:** When your guest is on a tight schedule, it’s best to have a detailed agenda, and to run through it in advance. Let the principal or other school administrator know a special guest is coming, and help him or her be prepared to answer questions and provide additional information if asked. It’s also helpful to prepare a takeaway fact sheet about your program with your school’s logo. This is a simple and effective way to share key details.

8. **Make It Special:** Greet your guest with a “student welcoming committee” and conduct a tour. Conclude with school lunch with the students, if there’s time. Be prepared with information about your school, and your school lunch program (see No.7).

9. **Picture Perfect:** Make sure you are aware of your district or school’s policy on photo releases with students before taking photos with your guest. For your media follow-up, ask your representative for a quick quote to include in your press release.

10. **Say Thanks:** Send a thank-you note to the legislator, and follow-up with any additional materials or details discussed during their visit.
Be prepared to reach out to your local media! Reporters and food bloggers alike will want to know about your #NSLW19 plans. Make it easier for them to write a good story by following these tips:

**Research** local reporters, bloggers and news producers to gain an understanding of what topics they cover and how they connect to your school nutrition news. On-target areas might include local/community, education, nutrition, health food, etc.

Print SNA’s **sample press release** on your school/district letterhead; list yourself, or another school representative, as the contact and send to media representatives **at least one week prior** to NSLW.

**Arrange** for a student, a parent and a school nutrition professional from your staff to be available to speak with media. (TIP: When you pitch your story, always include more than one perspective.)

**Create** an **NSLW press kit** for yourself too, so you’re prepared to share photos, background information and statistics about your program (and past NSLW celebrations); offer reporters plenty of details for their stories. If you’re short on time, or not sure where to start, see if your district’s communications office can help.

If your school or district has a communications office, **coordinate your efforts** with departmental staff.
This toolkit is just the beginning! The SNA NSLW website is your one-stop-shop for resources to create a winning playlist for #NSLW19, with lots of tools and templates you can customize and download. Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/nslw to get started!

**Activity Sheets:** Our popular coloring pages and games are fun ways to engage students.

**Artwork & Logos:** Download official #NSLW19 artwork and logos to use online and off.

**Certificates of Recognition:** Customizable NSLW certificates to thank the staff for their hard work and recognize schools with the largest increases in participation.

**Infographic:** The #NSLW19 infographic is a one-page visual communications tool for parents on the importance of a healthy school lunch.

**Merchandise:** Find #NSLW19-branded gear, debuting at #ANC19, online in the Emporium shop this summer at emporium.schoolnutrition.org/.

**Press Release:** Customize our press release—it’s easy! Let your local media know that NSLW is a newsworthy story. Simply add your district’s information and send out to reporters and bloggers.

**Presentations:** Customizable PowerPoint presentations to help you communicate the importance of NSLW to different audiences—administrators, parents and teachers.

**Proclamation:** Download the sample proclamation and fill in your school or district’s information. Request that the mayor or city council proclaim October 14-18, 2019 National School Lunch Week.

**Social Media Tools:** Get tips, best practices and images for use on your school or district’s website and social media channels.