

EDITOR'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

For many, May is the month that marks the beginning of the end. By that, I mean the countdown to the end of the school year is likely the driver for many of your daily tasks. Whether you are busy with end of semester activities related to finishing research projects or completing course work or revising menus in an effort to reduce inventory carry over during the summer, there is a *LOT* going on.

The summer season is a time for re-grouping and getting organized for the next academic year. Part of that preparation should involve some professional development “me” time. Whether you are a researcher or a practitioner, take advantage of opportunities to expand your knowledge about school nutrition.

Find out from state agencies or the state School Nutrition Association about any trainings or conferences planned for the summer. Many states offer day-long workshops that not only meet professional standard requirements, but provide the chance to meet with like-minded folks who *know* what you experience every day!

Attending the Annual National Conference for School Nutrition Association is another great way to network with others, and gain some new knowledge which will help you do your job better. I have attended ANC for all but one of the past 15 years and find it is the conference that is most useful and relevant to my interests. *ALL* stakeholders with an interest in child nutrition attend including vendors, USDA, state agency and researchers. There are sessions for everyone – whether you are directly involved in meal preparation and service, have responsibility for administering a program, or are interested in researching ways to improve child nutrition. Those who research and teach at the university level will find the College Section meeting a wonderful opportunity to learn about initiatives to broaden students’ awareness of school nutrition and network with other academicians. The School Nutrition Showcase has posters in categories of Research and Best Practice. Everyone should take the time to review these and if possible, visit with the authors. Learn from what others have accomplished. Face it, our world is unique, and having opportunities to visit with others who “get it” and understand school nutrition can be an affirming experience.

If you aren’t able to attend the School Nutrition Annual Conference, take advantage of our Journal. Set a goal of using published research to support any new policies you are proposing for the next school year. Data-driven decision making should be the foundation for changes or implementation of any new policies. For instance, if you are considering recess before lunch scheduling in a school, review the several articles on this topic that have been published in our Journal the past few years. Don’t be intimidated with the statistical analysis. In fact, we have pulled together a [guide on how to read a research article](#) with the goal you will find it useful. All of the research articles in this Journal include a section on how the research findings can be useful and relevant for those involved with child nutrition programs. We insist the “so what” question is addressed for our readership.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue of the Journal has six Research articles, one Current issue article, one Commentary, and a summary of USDA research. The six **Research in Action** articles cover a wide range of topics including elementary principals' views of recess before lunch, confidence of school nutrition staff with farm to school programs, reported food traceability practices, and effectiveness of food education programs in improving children's consumption of fruits and vegetables.

The **Current Issue** paper reviews the history of school lunch in one of the largest school districts in the country, New York City, leading to the recent announcement of free lunches for all students. The **Commentary** piece provides an overview about salad bars in schools, and summarizes the research related to students' selection and consumption of fruits and vegetables. **USDA Food and Nutrition Research Summary** provides an overview of projects from the last year as well as a description of ongoing work.

And, don't forget, our November issue will be all about Special Diets!

Read On!

Cathy