

Editor's Note

Please note that this study was published before the implementation of Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which went into effect during the 2012-13 school year, and its provision for Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Food in Schools, implemented during the 2014-15 school year. As such, certain research may not be relevant today.

Both ASFSA and the school nutrition profession are growing and improving! In the last issue, I introduced the 2003-04 ASFSA Plan of Action theme: **SMART**, or School Meals: Achieving Results Together. We truly are achieving results for children—in the United States and around the world—and the impact can be seen through two important professional initiatives: the ongoing program reauthorization process and the creation of the Latin American School Feeding Network.

First, reauthorization has been an important focus of child nutrition professionals for the past couple of years. For this reauthorization, the emphasis has been on eliminating the reduced-price meal category in an effort to provide children with greater access to school nutrition programs; the initiative appears to be gaining support. Second, ASFSA was called by the government of Chile and the World Food Programme to help establish America Latina Red de Alimentacion Escolar (Latin American School Feeding Network), or LA-RAE, for short. The purpose of this international network is to link together those involved with school feeding programs so that they can learn from each other. With this initiative, ASFSA is continuing its outreach efforts to support international child nutrition programs in an effort to improve the health and lives of children.

Research generates support for these child nutrition programs, and I would like to challenge each of you to embrace research as a means of driving the profession forward. The *Journal of Child Nutrition & Management* provides a network to link researchers, practitioners, and government officials so that they can learn from each other and improve the school nutrition profession.

I am very pleased to announce that Iowa State University has established a new doctoral program featuring an alternative schedule. The program focuses on child nutrition professionals. In June 2004, our first group of 18 students will embark on the PhD journey, which will include opportunities for conducting important research. I will keep you posted as the program progresses.

In this issue of the *Journal*, policies and practices that impact nutrition and healthy eating habits are the focus of three articles. Barratt et al. survey North Carolina school foodservice directors to determine whether districts have coordinated nutrition policies, how these policies can be improved, and what barriers exist for developing and implementing these policies. Marie et al. tackle the use of vending machines in Louisiana schools. The authors found that urban schools offered more vending than rural schools, and that the most popular vended items were those of low nutrient density. McCullum et al. evaluated the implementation of the CATCH Eat Smart program in Texas elementary schools and found that a majority of school foodservice directors indicated that the program was beneficial and helped them meet federal nutrient standards.

Additionally, in this issue of the *Journal*, financial performance is addressed in a benchmarking study conducted by Hwang and Sneed. This national study provides benchmarking data related to revenue and expenses. Conklin, Bordi, and Schaper present a practical solution article on the use of “grab ‘n’ go” breakfast as a way to increase participation. Another practical solution,

provided by Smith et al., describes a process for developing culturally diverse menu offerings in a child care center.

Finally, in the FNS Research Corner, Endahl and Strasberg summarize current research being conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Several projects relate to program management, particularly, verification. The authors also report on the evaluation of the School Breakfast Program pilot study, as well as on a study on measuring competitive foods in schools.

I think you will find this issue very interesting and useful. Remember, I am always looking for reviewers and article submissions!

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Editor