



Director Spotlight!

Showcasing the passion, talents, and hard work of Arizona school nutrition professionals.



Cory Alexander

Director of Child Nutrition, Osborn School District

Hometown: Flint, Michigan

Current City of Residence: Glendale, Arizona

Favorite Childhood School Meal: Spaghetti with Garlic Bread

When I was a kid, I wanted to grow up to be a: Firefighter

What prompted you to start working the field of school nutrition?

Many reasons, but my initial decision to leave healthcare and seek other options was centered around my desire to work in a preventative capacity rather than working with populations that had become sick from poor nutrition or with preventable situations. After finding the field of school nutrition, I realized that it fit everything I was looking for in making that change.

Tell us about a specific project or initiative you have championed that you are proud of.

I am proud of our clean label initiative, which continues to be ongoing. In this work it has pushed us to increase our scratch cooking, look closer at our menu in terms of sustainability in an environmental sense, and seek foods that are grown and sourced locally. In seeking a cleaner label we have also identified the need to hold ourselves to a higher standard of quality and freshness as we provide a better quality product that might not taste like what the students are used to. Beginning our clean label initiative prompted us to focus on other important aspects of nutrition such as nutrition education, how our menu impacts our environment and our responsibility to support our local economy.

Assuming time and money were not barriers, what would be your top priority as far as changes you would like to see in your school nutrition program?

I would like to have more flexibility to work more with our local farmers and producers to plan and procure crops through local farms.

What are the top three skills a school food service director should have?

Financial management, leadership skills, strong problem solving skills, and a sense of humor!

What advice would you give to a younger version of yourself just starting your role as Director?

I would tell my younger self to find a mentor, speak up more often, connect as often and as openly as possible with your community stakeholders and learn the functions of other departments and positions within the school district, as they are all interconnected.