

School Nutrition Programs Advisory Council

MEET THE MEMBERS

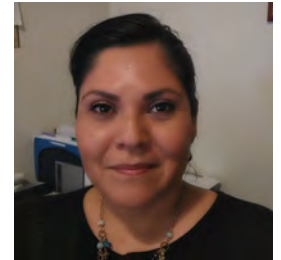
Program Year 2021



Meet the SY20-21 SNPAC

The Arizona School Nutrition Programs Advisory Council (SNPAC) is comprised of dedicated school nutrition professionals who will advise ADE on issues that impact growth, compliance, and nutrition integrity in Arizona school nutrition programs. The SNPAC consists of 13 individuals representing 38 LEAs and 178 sites in Arizona. The council members were carefully selected to create a diverse and representative sample of LEAs in Arizona.

This overview of the council members includes their membership type (**member** or **chair**) and a snapshot of the LEA type they represent. The chairpersons represent the SNPAC and school nutrition professionals in Arizona to champion what is needed at the state and/or federal level to see an increase in participation, ensure compliance, and inspire nutrition integrity in Arizona. Learn more about the SNPAC members in their bios on the following pages.



Anabel Robles
Member
Small LEA, catered



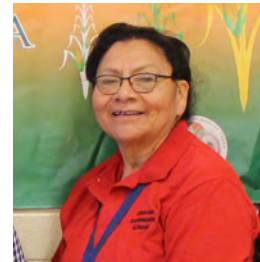
Barb Simington
Member
Small LEA, FSMC



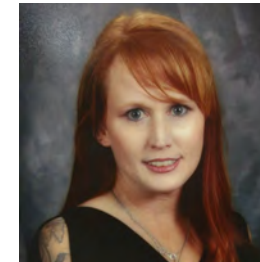
Barbara Shields
Member
Small, rural LEA



Dustin Walker
Spokesperson
Medium LEA, low F/R



Gloria Perkins
Member
Small BIA school



Heather Williams
Training and Professional
Development Chair
Charter schools, catered



Jennifer Gordon
School Nutrition
Association Chair
Medium, urban LEA



Kela Powers
Member
Small charter, high F/R



Lindsay Aguilar
Policy Chair
Large urban LEA



Michael Gaul
Member
Small, rural charter



Patti Bibrey
Food Systems Chair
Large LEA, low F/R



Rob Bowser
Member
Small RCCI/private school



Robin Rinehart
Member
Small, rural, high F/R



ANABEL ROBLES

Portable Practical Educational
Preparation, Inc.

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public charter schools
- Urban & rural
- Enrollment: <2,500
- Food service type: Catered meals
- Free/reduced %: >75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (520) 741-4374

Email: arobles@ppep.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

7 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

Learning the program and the impact that has on our students. Even if they don't seem to appreciate the efforts, they know that they will have food for the day. And now during COVID, some students even have the meals delivered to their homes.

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

Every year, we face the challenge of finding suitable caterers. I have found that when they are trained on the guidelines, they can offer better service and better meals. Thanks to the culinary training we received through the upLIFT webinar contest, I can see improvement in our meals already; the inspiration and the confidence that the caterers have now and how they are applying what they learned. That shows me that by having them more involved, we can improve the program. I would like to keep working on that goal.

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 have our own kitchens to cook and prep our meals (golden dream). But in the immediate time, delivering food for a weeks' worth of meals and using more local produce.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

I wanted to learn more about how other directors manage their program and benefit from their experience. And now, one year later, I can see the difference and what can be accomplished when you have guidance, resources and ideas. I would like to see not only my goals but others' goals become a reality in their food service program.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

I'm good at pulling data, organizing and developing charts and PowerPoints. I'm good at assisting others.



BARB SIMINGTON

Blue Ridge Unified School
District

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public school district
- Rural
- Enrollment: <2,500
- Food service type: FSMC
- Free/reduced %: 51-75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (928) 368-6126, ext. 1106
Email: bsimington@brusd.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

5 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

Ensuring our kiddos receive meals that are nutritious and interacting with families.

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

Bringing back the Summer Food Service Program to my district. I put together a kick off that included guest speaker Danny Diaz from the movie McFarland USA. Kids were able to hear how all things are possible regardless of race, color, background etc. and it begins with healthy actions little by little that grow into something great.

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?

Back Pack Snack Pantry, available for children to visit during the day for take home meals, evenings and weekends. Make it a fun place to be...cool place...music playing...where it doesn't matter who you are, only that you were able to come by and enjoy the visit.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

Shared ideas with others in the same field can only make us all greater and able to provide greater services to our children and families.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

The ability to listen, to share and to grow. I want the best for my district and for yours. I have been in a school or district level environment for a combined total of 22 years...its in my blood.



BARBARA SHIELDS

Grand Canyon Unified School District

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public school district
- Rural
- Enrollment: <2,500
- Food service type: Self-operated
- Free/reduced %: 51-75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (928) 638-2461, ext. 309

Email:

bshields@grandcanyonschool.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

5 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

The kids, and seeing their faces light up when you've made something they are really excited to have.

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

Expanding menu options to minimize repetition in the menu. Dedicated to fresh veggies being available every day.

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?

Time, space, and personnel to do more scratch cooking.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

I really like to hear what other schools are doing. I know it is important to share thoughts and ideas to help up all grow and continue to develop our mission to the students.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

I like to think outside of the box when possible. I'm not afraid to ask questions or speak up when I feel something needs to be said.



DUSTIN WALKER

Queen Creek Unified School
District

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public school district
- Urban
- Enrollment: 2,500-9,999
- Food service type: Self-operated
- Free/reduced %: <25%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (480) 987-5983

Email: dwalker2@qcusd.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

8 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

My team, the atmosphere, the delicious food, creative outlet, and of course, the students.

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

Working on my bar-b-q trailer and can't wait to offer another serving experience to the kiddos.

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?

If I didn't have to worry about time/money, I would like to add a full functioning coffee shop/bakery out of the high schools.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

I have respect for those who work in school nutrition/ADE and wanted to be part of that team.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

Forward thinking, rational, realistic, and focused on enhancing my program so I feel like I could help others around me.

Dustin is the SNPAC Spokesperson. Look out for his monthly segment in the School Nutrition Programs Newsletter, *From Dustin's Desk*, where he will share what the SNPAC has been working on and words of encouragement and inspiration for Arizona school nutrition operators.



GLORIA PERKINS

Cibecue Community School

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school
- Rural
- Enrollment: <2,500
- Food service type: Self-operated
- Free/reduced %: >75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (928) 332-2444

Email:

Gloria.Perkins@Dishchiibikoh.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

30+ years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

Cooking and finding new ideas for students.

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

Using local farms and their fresh produce.

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?

Top notch products and not worrying if available.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

My concerns of School Food Service and how it affects programs.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

Having a open mind, seeking new ideas for new products. Having a say or understanding the different programs to enrich the choices being made.



HEATHER WILLIAMS

The Leona Group;
American Charter Schools
Foundation & Kaizen
Education Foundation

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public charter schools
- Urban & rural
- Enrollment: <2,500
- Food service type: Catered meals
- Free/reduced %: 51-75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (480) 540-6826

Email:

Heather.Williams@leonagroup.com

How long have you been working in school food service?

6 years in school foodservice with an additional 20 years in long-term care foodservice.

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

I enjoy working with students and families that may not otherwise have the ability to have healthy meals, and providing health and wellness opportunities to hopefully provide healthy lifestyles to our students and families.

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

I am most proud of finding ways for our 27 schools to continue to provide meals during this pandemic.

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 run a program that provides more scratch cooking and less processed foods. I would love to see greenhouses that could support a large portion of our program that includes students learning how to grow and produce.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

I joined because I believe we are all better when we are able to share and help each other. We should always be working toward the best programs we can provide to our students. not just at the school or district level but the state and national levels as well. We can only do that together.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

Experience in foodservice from the back of the house to the front of the house. I think I am able to problem-solve while wanting to operate the best program we can as a team.

Heather is the SNPAC Training and Professional Development Chair. She will advise ADE on training needs for the field and assist with content development.



JENNIFER GORDON

Laveen Elementary District

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public school district
- Urban
- Enrollment: 2,500-9,999
- Food service type: Self-operated
- Free/reduced %: 51-75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (602) 237-9100, ext. 3044

Email: jgordon@laveeneld.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

12 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

Knowing that what we do every day matters in the lives of so many school-aged children. Growing up in a food insecure household, I am passionate about providing nutritious meals and nutrition education to students and reducing the stigma associated with school meals.

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

I am proud to have expanded programs in my school district that provide increased access to nutritious meals such as our (traditional) Summer Food Service Program and the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program.

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?

We just started a partnership with the Life Time Foundation, prior to the school closures last March. We are partnering with a chef to bring more scratch and quick-scratch meals with less harmful ingredients into our school meals.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

Having experience at the state agency and in the field, I bring a unique perspective to the SNPAC. I can be a sounding board to those at the state agency who have limited perspective on how federal and state guidance can be communicated to the field in a practical matter.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

My experience, coupled with my involvement in the School Nutrition Association of Arizona. I feel that I am a good communicator, can look outside the box and come up with creative solutions, am a strategic thinker and get along well with others.

Jennifer is the SNPAC School Nutrition Association (SNA) Chair. She will provide federal and state advocacy updates from SNA so the council is aware and can consider the potential impact on operations in Arizona.



KELA POWERS

Vista College Preparatory, Inc.

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public charter schools
- Urban
- Enrollment: <2,500
- Food service type: Catered meals
- Free/reduced %: >75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (303) 947-2007

Email:

kpowers@vistacollegeprep.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

8 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

I enjoy interacting with our students and families through healthy food choices and activities.

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

I championed switching our campuses to Breakfast in the Classroom. This ensured more students were able to eat breakfast at school even if arriving after the bell.

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 healthier and a broader variety of choices for meals. A school garden would be really great too!

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

It is important to ensure that we continue to center nutritional choices and decisions in the best interest of our school communities. I'm eager to be an active voice on this council to bridge on the ground efforts and policy work.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

I'm eager to make innovative change. I have a great connection to our school community and can actively engage our families quickly and easily.



LINDSAY AGUILAR

Tucson Unified School District

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public school district
- Urban
- Enrollment: >10,000
- Food service type: Self-operated
- Free/reduced %: 51-75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (520) 225-4728

Email: lindsay.aguilar@tusd1.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

Over 15 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

The lifelong impact on nutrition and wellness that our work and services has on children and families. I also enjoy working with school food service staff whom I feel are the most dedicated and passionate group of professionals.

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

During the school closure and summer I partnered with our county supervisors office, local food bank, National Guard and our district Family Resource Centers to coordinate distribution of produce boxes and milk from local dairy farms at our meal bus stops. It was so rewarding to see this collaboration all come together to provide additional food support to our community during the pandemic.

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?

Making nutrition education required for pre-k through 12th grade since nutrition is an essential life skill just like math, English, science, etc. Another top priority would be incorporating nutrition and our school nutrition program as a comprehensive approach to health in all schools.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

I joined to represent school nutrition operators and be a voice for the successes and challenges we face each day implementing child nutrition programs. It is important to me to have this opportunity to collaborate with ADE and other school nutrition professionals to enhance and best support all of our work with our shared common goal.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

Operational experience in a large school district, program and fiscal management, program compliance, and skills in collaboration, leadership, and development.

Lindsay is the SNPAC Policy Chair. She will assess the need for State policies that impact growth, compliance, and nutrition integrity in Arizona.



MICHAEL GAUL

Mohave Accelerated Learning
Center

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public charter schools
- Rural
- Enrollment: <2,500
- Food service type: Self-operated
- Free/reduced %: 51-75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (928) 704-9345

Email: mgaul@mohavelearning.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

13 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

Working with students, teachers and co-workers.

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

I helped many organizations feed children during the pandemic.

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?

More fresh fruit—I'm having trouble getting everything I want. I would like to do more baking.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

I wanted to meet other directors and learn from them.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

My perspective and experience of working in the food service industry as well as working in school food service.



PATTI BILBREY

Scottsdale Unified School
District

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public school district
- Urban
- Enrollment: >10,000
- Food service type: Self-operated
- Free/reduced %: 25-50%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (602) 370-2664

Email: pbilbrey@susd.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

20 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

The diversity of what we do, from nutrition, business, and customer service angles, which harmoniously work together support our kids in the best way possible!

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

In our Scottsdale Nutrition Initiative, we worked with a parent group to revamp our menus to eliminate potentially harmful ingredients. Through the process, we were able to educate our parents on the guiding principles and regulations we must follow and change the misleading perception they had of school food programs, ultimately converting them to our promoters and cheerleaders!

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?

Oh how I could give you so many answers... But if I had to pick one priority, it would be the ability to add a robust nutrition education segment to guide and teach students how to make healthy choices.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

When there is honest and transparent conversation around opportunities, successes and challenges, there becomes a better understanding from all sides on where we can work together to become more successful. I was excited to join to not only share my voice, but to hear the voices of others and work together as a collaborative and dynamic group.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

I am a critical thinker and look to find solutions that meet all our needs. I bring a unique depth of knowledge I've learned from colleagues all over the nation. I enjoy advocating for our program needs and promoting our program to our communities.

Patti is the SNPAC Food Systems Chair. She will represent the SNPAC to advise ADE on procurement and USDA Foods.



ROB BOWSER

Canyon State Academy

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI), private school
- Urban
- Enrollment: <2,500
- Food service type: Self-operated
- Free/reduced %: >75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (480) 987-2045

Email: Robert.Bowser@rop.com

How long have you been working in school food service?

13 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

Being an RCCI watching these students eat food that they normally would not have.

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

Implementing "choose two" menus for breakfast and lunch.

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?

Portions and variety.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

Learning from other school districts and talking with people from ADE about what we can do as a team to feed the kids.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

Being a chef, I have a different perspective with food.



ROBIN RINEHART

Antelope Union High School
District

LEA CHARACTERISTICS

- Public school district
- Rural
- Enrollment: <2,500
- Food service type: Self-operated
- Free/reduced %: >75%

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (928) 785-3344, ext. 4409
Email: rorinehart@antelopeunion.org

How long have you been working in school food service?

35 years

What do you enjoy most about working in school food service?

The people in our community! I have been fortunate to work with some really special people. Due to the support of my administration, food service staff, teachers, support staff, and students, we have seen a lot of change in our community. The implementation of our Summer Feeding Program is a great example of what can be done if we all work together. I could not have made that program happen by myself. At first I was not sure it would happen, but the community jumped right in and supported us.

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

When I first started at Antelope High School, the only meal served was lunch. My goal was to introduce the School Breakfast Program. Luckily for me, the students were on board and helped me convince the principal to give it a try. The program has grown to 90% of enrolled students in the last couple of years prior to COVID-19.

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?

Moving toward more scratch cooking, having students help preparing and menu planning, and students being able to serve themselves like at some commercial cafeteria style restaurants. Having the necessary equipment would enable our students to have access to less processed foods.

Please explain why you joined the SNPAC. Why is it important to you?

I have the opportunity to work with people from different areas to gain a better understanding of the regulations and policies of the nutrition program. I feel that knowledge conquers fear, and when we are comfortable, we are able to ask questions and be open to positive changes that benefit all our programs.

What do you think are the best skills that you bring to the SNPAC?

The willingness to learn, listen, comprise and work with others to bring about change.