



Director Spotlight!

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



Jenny Bracamonte

Director of Food and Nutrition, Chandler Unified School District

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

Current City of Residence: Gilbert, Arizona

Favorite Childhood School Meal: Turkey, Gravy and Dinner Rolls

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

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

I spent most of my career in Business Dining with Aramark managing food service operations and catering in Fortune 500 companies. In the 17-18 school year, Aramark was awarded the contract for Chandler Unified School district which opened up a new opportunity for me. I was excited about the chance to utilize my food service skills in a different way and provide our students a restaurant style experience during their school day. I think my outside expertise allowed me to approach school food a little differently, trying to take the best ideas of the retail world and tailor them to fit within the regulations of the NSLP.

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

This school year has been incredibly challenging for our department and I am very proud of our team's response to all the changes they've had to endure. I'm most proud of our COVID-19 response – we didn't hesitate to utilize every program and waiver that was available to us. Our participation is up 20% from prior years, we've served millions of meals to our community, and we've kept our department financially sound along the way. #mealhustle

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'd like to see the current universal free program stay in place as well as some of the waivers we've been able to utilize. If we are allowed to serve multi-day meal packs vs each individual meal period I think we'll really be solving food insecurity in our community like we never have before.

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

The ability to build a diverse team, an agile mindset, and communication and collaboration.

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

You've got this, don't doubt yourself or your experience.