

NEWSLETTER

Nutrition Services



**NUTRITION
SERVICES**



APRIL 2026 / Vol. 006

Happy Spring, everyone! Like the flora of the Earth, our department is indeed blooming. As you read through the latest edition of our newsletter, you will see our work in full glow. Personal professional growth and organizational enhancements are collectively producing the results that matter most, and we are overcoming major challenges to achieve this. Despite significant budget constraints, we are making progress toward our goals. I hope you all experience fulfillment in this difficult yet rewarding work.

Like a flower, we overcome winter to enjoy the promise of spring. But spring is also a bridge between winter and summer. Before you know it, we will be pivoting to our summer meal operations. And then, it'll all start over again. It's as if everything changes, and yet nothing does. Like the tide, it moves in and out but never stays and never vanishes. If we can learn anything from spring, it is to embrace the ebb, learn to love the flow, and never be afraid of change.

**“Una flor florece por su propia alegría.”
—Oscar Wilde**

¡Feliz primavera a todos! Como la flora de la Tierra, nuestro departamento está realmente floreciendo. Mientras lees la última edición de nuestro boletín, verás nuestro trabajo en pleno brillo. El crecimiento profesional y personal, y las mejoras organizativas, están produciendo colectivamente los resultados que más importan, y estamos superando grandes desafíos para lograrlos. A pesar de las importantes limitaciones presupuestarias, estamos avanzando hacia nuestros objetivos.

Espero que todos ustedes encuentren satisfacción en este trabajo, difícil pero gratificante.

Como una flor, superamos el invierno para disfrutar de la promesa de la primavera. Pero la primavera también es un puente entre el invierno y el verano. Antes de que te des cuenta, estaremos cambiando a nuestras operaciones de verano. Y entonces, todo volverá a comenzar. Es como si todo cambiara y, sin embargo, nada cambia. Como la marea, entra y sale pero nunca se queda ni desaparece. Si algo podemos aprender de la primavera, es abrazar el reflujo, aprender a amar el flujo y nunca tener miedo al cambio.



By: Josh Goddard

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From Then to Now: Bringing Scratch Cooking Back to Our Schools



I started working for Nutrition Services in 2008, when we still prepared some meals from scratch. Over time, that approach was phased out and replaced with prepackaged items. Now, we have returned to scratch cooking, and our department has been working hard to improve what we serve by offering more delicious, freshly prepared food.

Special thanks go to Chef Jonathan and Jacob for developing new recipes, and to Navil for creating an entirely new menu. This year, we began scratch cooking at our site, and while it has been a challenge, it has also been very rewarding. Transitioning from prepackaged meals to scratch cooking has not been easy for me or my coworkers. It requires more labor, and there has been some resistance along the way.

However, once we prepare and serve the new menu items, and the team sees the final product, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. It is amazing to see how happy the students are when they try something new and truly enjoy it. While it is more work, seeing the excitement on their faces makes it all worthwhile.

I would also like to thank Josefina for her support throughout this transition.

By: Mara Juarez

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March Menu Rollouts

SAUSD's March menu rollout marks an exciting step forward as we introduce new scratch-made, house-prepared meals at Segerstrom and Santa Ana High Schools. This launch highlights fresh flavors and student-centered menu items that reflect our continued commitment to scratch cooking. According to our Coordinator of Culinary Research and Development, Chef Jacob Rojas, "New offerings include house-made carnitas, overnight-braised birria, and our legendary cinnamon rolls — all inspired by student feedback and thoughtfully crafted to meet school nutrition standards." This initiative reinforces SAUSD's commitment to enhancing meal quality, increasing participation, and creating enjoyable dining experiences for our students



 Santa Ana HS Team



 Segerstrom HS Team

**NUTRITION
SERVICES**



By: Josh Goddard

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Food Connects us



March is National Nutrition Month, created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, which encourages everyone to develop healthier eating habits and make informed food choices. Every day at all SAUSD schools, students are offered fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and proteins to meet their nutritional needs and to create a pleasant eating experience. SAUSD actively participates in the health of its students and staff through participation in the National School Lunch Program and Child and Adult Food Care Program.

SAUSD recognizes the dedicated school nutrition professionals who prepare, deliver, and serve millions of nutritious meals every year. Check out the resolution passed unanimously by our Board of Trustees.

[Click here to access Resolution](#)

By: Josh Goddard

Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day 2026



March 11, 2026, is Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day! Here in SAUSD, we are proud to celebrate our three incredible RDNs, Emily, Navil, and Jen, who work every day to make Santa Ana school meals healthier and more nourishing for our students. Let us celebrate these superstars—and Registered Dietitian Nutritionists everywhere—for the vital role they play in supporting healthier communities!

By: Josh Goddard

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Congratulations!
ON YOUR PROMOTION

Congrats

Lina Hernandez Promotion to Franklin



Lina has been promoted to Site Lead at Franklin in recognition of her strong leadership, reliability, and consistent commitment to supporting both students and staff. She has demonstrated exceptional ownership of daily operations, a positive attitude, and the ability to maintain smooth, compliant workflows. Lina's promotion reflects her readiness to take on greater responsibility and continue elevating the quality of service at Franklin.

By: Jesse Cervantes, Field Supervisor

Elena Solorio Caliz Promotion to Carr



Big shout out to Elena—congratulations on your promotion at Carr! Your positive attitude, great customer service, and the way you connect so naturally with both students and staff make you an incredible fit. You bring great energy to your site, and it shows. Wishing you continued success in your new role!

By: Edward Garcia, Field Supervisor

Wendy Flores Promotion to Ed. B. Cole



And a special shout out to Wendy on your recent promotion to Rover and for leading at Ed. B. Cole! Your strong work ethic, supportive approach, and commitment to excellent customer service truly stand out. You've stepped into this role with confidence, and it's great to see. Wishing you much success—congratulations!

By: Edward Garcia, Field Supervisor

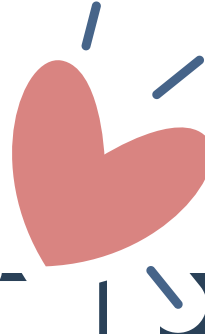


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Thank
You



Un reconocimiento especial a todos nuestros increíbles sustitutos de Servicios de Nutrición!

Un reconocimiento especial a todos nuestros increíbles sustitutos de Servicios de Nutrición por el trabajo excepcional que realizan a diario. Su flexibilidad y disposición para colaborar donde sea necesario marcan la diferencia y contribuyen al buen funcionamiento del servicio. Agradecemos su rápida adaptación a nuevos entornos, equipos y desafíos sin dudarlos. Su dedicación y compromiso para ir más allá de sus obligaciones no pasan desapercibidos. Gracias a su esfuerzo, los estudiantes siguen recibiendo la atención y el servicio que merecen. Gracias por ser una parte tan esencial y valiosa de nuestro equipo.

Shout out to all of our amazing Nutrition Services Assistant substitutes!

Shout out to all of our amazing Nutrition Services assistant substitutes for the incredible work you do every single day. Your flexibility and willingness to step in wherever you're needed truly make a difference in keeping things running smoothly. We appreciate how you adapt quickly to new environments, teams, and challenges without hesitation. Your dedication to going above and beyond the call of duty does not go unnoticed. Because of your efforts, students continue to receive the care and service they deserve. Thank you for being such an essential and valued part of our team.

By: Arnold Carrillo



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Goodbye
TENSION
(hello)
PENSION

Congratulations

Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to our incredible SAUSD Nutrition Services team members who are retiring.

Your years of dedication, hard work, and commitment to serving our students and community have made a lasting impact. Through every early morning and every meal prepared, you helped not only our students but also their ability to learn, grow, and succeed.

Your service, professionalism, and passion strengthened our program and inspired those around you. The difference you made will be felt for years to come.

You will always remain an important part of the SAUSD Nutrition Services family. We are deeply grateful for your contributions and the legacy you have left behind.

Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement. We wish you happiness, good health, and many joyful moments in this exciting new chapter.

By: Josefina Mejia



Carmen Rodriguez,
Satellite Lead @
Franklin 32 yrs.



Maria Arreola,
NSA @ Central Kitchen
25 yrs.



Ana Rosas
NSA @ Jackson
25 yrs.



Celia Lopez,
NSA @ Valley
23 yrs

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Celebrating Our 2025-26 Employee of the Year

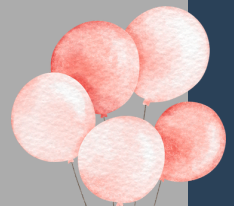
Yay!



Great Job!

Denisse Ramirez is an exceptional Nutrition Services Lead at Santiago TK-8 School who consistently demonstrates excellence, dedication, and a student-first mindset in her work. She approaches each day with a strong work ethic, efficiency, and a positive attitude, ensuring that every TK-8 student receives nutritious, well-prepared meals while accommodating individual needs with care and attention. Denisse is a trusted and welcoming presence on campus, actively participating in school events, supporting family engagement efforts, and building strong relationships with students, staff, and families. As a leader, she models responsibility, compassion, and professionalism, mentors new staff, streamlines service routines, and readily supports her team whenever needed. Her kindness, reliability, and pride in her work uplift the entire school community, making her a shining example of service, leadership, and commitment and a truly deserving Classified School Employee of the Year.

SAUSD Honors January 2026 Employee of the Month



Blanca Mendez is being recognized as our January 2026 Classified Employee of the Month for her outstanding dedication, leadership, and commitment to students. As a nutrition services assistant, Blanca does more than prepare meals — she helps create a positive, welcoming experience for every student she serves. Known for her scratch cooking skills, she ensures each meal is made with care and quality. Blanca is often trusted to serve as a substitute lead at other sites, reflecting her professionalism and reliability. Even when teams are short-staffed, she remains positive, flexible, and ready to help wherever needed. Her warm interactions with students, including those with special needs, and strong collaboration with staff make a meaningful impact each day. Through compassion, teamwork, and consistency, Blanca leads by example and truly represents the spirit of service that makes SAUSD strong.

By: Josefina Mejia

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NOT ALL HEROES WEAR CAPES

**SOME WEAR
APRONS!**



On May 1, we celebrate our incredible Nutrition Services team, the heroes behind every school meal. Your dedication, care, and hard work ensure students are nourished, supported, and ready to learn each day.

Thank you for the difference you make every single day. We see you, we appreciate you, and we celebrate you!

Grab-and-Go Success at Lowell!

Our Grab-and-Go cart at Lowell has been a great success! By making meals quick, convenient, and accessible, we're helping more students fuel their day and stay focused on learning. This success is a direct result of the creativity, teamwork, and dedication of our Nutrition Services staff. Thank you for continuing to find innovative ways to serve our students and make a positive impact every day!



By: Josefina Mejia

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Why is it important to wear slip resistant shoes at work?

The fundamental reason to wear slip-resistant shoes at work is to drastically reduce your risk of injury from slips, trips, and falls. These incidents are among the most frequent and causes of workplace accidents, and proper footwear provides essential traction on hazardous surfaces like wet, oily, or uneven floors, serving as your first line of defense.

IDENTIFYING HIGH-RISK ENVIRONMENTS

Food Service/ Commercial Kitchens Healthcare Facilities Manufacturing Plants Construction Sites

Workers with Consistently Wet, Greasy, or Slippery Surfaces.

ESPECIALLY CRITICAL for older workers & roles on feet all day.

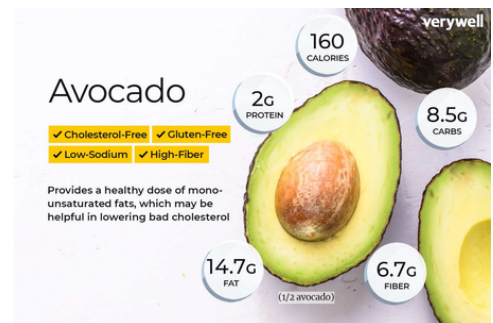
The graphic features four icons representing different work environments: a chef for food service, a hospital for healthcare, gears for manufacturing, and a construction worker for construction sites. Below the icons is a text box highlighting that these environments are especially critical for older workers.

I wanted to take a moment to emphasize the importance of all Nutrition Services staff wearing slip resistant shoes while on duty.

This is a critical safety requirement, especially when working in environments where floors may be wet or slippery. Proper footwear helps prevent accidents and injuries, ensuring the safety of our team and maintaining smooth daily operations.

By: Martha Vazquez

Quick Bites: Avocado Facts



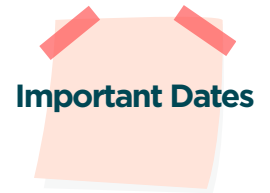
Most of us love avocados, which is great because they are rich in nutrients. They are packed with heart-healthy monounsaturated fats that help support good cholesterol levels. They're also rich in fiber, potassium, and vitamins like folate and vitamin K, which makes them the perfect addition to meals for energy and fullness.

I personally love their versatility. They can be sliced onto toast, blended into a smoothie, or made into guacamole. Either way, they offer a simple, delicious way to boost overall nutrition in everyday eating. The best part is...they taste delicious too! What's your favorite way to enjoy them?

By: Emily Machuca

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April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			 1	 2	 3	4
 5	 6	 7	 8	 9	 10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	 22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Spring Break: April 6th - 10th

Spring Break is coming up! Enjoy the long break! Take this time to relax, recharge, and spend quality moments with family and friends. Stay safe, and we look forward to seeing everyone back refreshed and ready to go!

- April Fool's Day: Wednesday, April 1
- Autism Awareness Day: Thursday, April 2
- Good Friday: Friday, April 3
- Easter Sunday: Sunday, April 5
- World Health Day: Tuesday, April 7
- Administrative Professionals Day: Wednesday, April 22
- Earth Day: Wednesday, April 22

Let's continue creating a supportive and welcoming environment for all!

Summer Training Announcement

All Nutrition Services Staff:

Summer Training will be held in person as follows:

Location: Valley High School – Student Eating Area

Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2026

Time: 2:30–3:30 PM

Important Note:

This training is for employees with a summer assignment only.

We look forward to seeing you there!

By: Josefina Mejia, Operations Manager