



CONFERENCE AGENDA

Nourishing Roots & Growing Futures





Mission

Advancing the quality of child nutrition programs through education, advocacy, and engagement.

Vision

Feeding Alaskan children's body, mind, and spirit by promoting high quality nutrition programs and wellness education.

Values

Child nutrition advocacy and leadership

Honor Alaska's unique and rich cultural diversity

Inclusive of the whole child

Lead with integrity, respect, and transparency

Dedicated to lifelong health and wellness



AKSNA 2025-2026 Board Members

President – Tanya Dube, SNS, Anchorage School District

President Elect - Vacant

Secretary - Sandie Ponte, Cordova School District

Treasurer – Theresa Wilson, Lake and Peninsula School District

Public Policy & Legislation Committee, Susan Pougher, Lower Yukon School District

Nutrition Standards & Education Committee, Diane Russo, MatSu Borough School District

Communication & Mush on News Editor, Vacant

Past Presidents

Susan Lampert (2020-2023) Child Nutrition Programs, Alaska DEED

Carlee Johnson (2015-2017) Petersburg School District

**ALASKA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION
58th Annual Conference**

**Post-conference Sessions
Monday, January 26, 2026**

Pre-registration Required

8:30-5:30

Financial Management for Directors –

Beth Mincemoyer Egan, ICN

This session provides training and management for finances and other resources as the foundation for nutrition integrity and quality meals in school nutrition programs.

- Importance of Financial Management
- Reporting Revenue and Expenditures
- Setting a Meal Standard for Financial
- Controlling Food and Labor Cost
- Financial Planning and Budget Development
- Tools to Analyze Financial Status

ALASKA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

58th Annual Conference

Agenda At-A-Glance

Tuesday, January 27, 2026		Wednesday, January 28, 2026		Thursday, January 29, 2026	
8:00	Registration Opens	8:00	Registration Opens	11:00	Vendor Show Opens at Dena'ina Civic Center
8:30	Opening Remarks and Introductions	8:30	Opening Remarks and Introductions	2:00	Vendor Show Closes
8:45	Keynote Speaker -Joe Pettit – Seeds to Success	8:50	Keynote Speaker -Joe Pettit – Team United		
9:45	Primero Edge Food Distribution Demonstration	9:50	Chair Yoga		
10:30	Break	10:10	Alaska Food Policy Council – Rachel Lord		
10:40	Child Nutrition Program Updates	10:40	Honoring Indigenous Foods		
11:00	Building Flavors - Chef Lukas Doherty	11:40	Problem Solving Round Table Activity		
12:00	Lunch Buffet Provided by AKSNA - Networking	12:00	Lunch Buffet Provided by AKSNA - Annual Business Meeting		
1:00	Breakout Sessions	1:00	Breakout Sessions		
3:10	Break	3:00	Break		
3:30	Breakout Sessions	3:25	Breakout Sessions		
4:30	Closing and Dismissal	4:30	Closing and Dismissal		
		5:00	AKSNA After Dark at Downtown Marriott Sponsored by CORE Foodservice		

Day One

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

8:00	Registration opens	
8:30	Opening Remarks – Welcome to the 58 th AKSNA Conference	
8:45	Keynote Speaker: Joe Pettit – Seeds to Success	
9:45	Efficiently Served- Leveraging Software for Food Distribution	Sue Lampert, DEED USDA Foods Program Coordinator
<i>10:30</i>	<i>Break</i>	
10:40	Alaska Child Nutrition Program Updates	Adrianne Schwatz, DEED Child Nutrition Program Director
11:00	Flavor Building with Certified Chef de Cuisine	Chef Lukas Doherty, University of Alaska
12:00	<i>AKSNA Business Meeting, Election, & Lunch</i>	
1:00- 5:00	Institute of Child Nutrition Training Session in Kahtnu Room Forecasting The Procurement of Foods (4 Hour Session)	Beth Mincemoyer Egan, ICN
	<i>Breakout Sessions in Tubughnenq Room</i>	
1:00	Breakout Session – Growing Together; Project SCALES Grant Findings	Carlee Johnson McIntosh & Alex Helms
1:40	Breakout Session – Problem Solving Together	Roundtable
2:20	Breakout Session – The 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans	Diane Russo, Child Food Nutrition Director, MatSu Borough School District
<i>3:10</i>	<i>Break</i>	
3:30	Breakout Session – Speed Recipe Sharing	Panel Discussion
3:30	Breakout Session - TEAM Nutrition Mentorship	Waverli Stow, DEED Farm to School Program Coordinator
4:30	<i>Closing</i>	

Day Two

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

8:30	Welcome and Updates	
8:50	Team United: Our Differences Give Us Power and Our Power is in Our Differences <i>Keynote Speaker Joe Pettit</i>	
9:50	Chair Yoga	Lori March
10:10	<i>Break</i>	
10:20	Mapping the Gaps: What We're Learning from Alaska's Food Value Chain Coordination Work	Rachel Lord, Alaska Food Policy Council
10:50	Rooted in Tradition: Bringing Indigenous Foods to School Meals	Amy Foote, Director of Indigenous Cuisine
12:00	<i>Forks & Focus: A Business Lunch Buffett</i>	
1:00 – 5:00	Institute of Child Nutrition Training Session in Kahtnu Room Food Allergies for School Nutrition (4 Hour Session)	Beth Mincemoyer Egan, ICN
	<i>Breakout Sessions in Tubughnenq Room</i>	
1:00	Breakout Session - Honoring Culture Through Food	Melissa Chlupach MS, RD, LD University of Alaska
2:00	Breakout Session- Go for The Gold	Pam Fobes, International Food Solutions
3:00	<i>Break</i>	
3:15	Breakout Session - From Cafeteria to Café: Transforming School Lunch Spaces with Grant Support	Diane Russo, MatSu Borough School District
3:45	Breakout Session – New Alaska Child Nutrition Staff and Leadership	Adrienne Schwartz, Child Nutrition Program Director
4:30	Closing	
5:00 – 8:00 AKSNA After Dark		

Thursday, January 29, 2026

11:00 -2:00	Vendor Show at the Dena'ina downtown Anchorage

ALASKA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

58th Annual Conference

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

8:00	Registration Opens
8:30	Opening Remarks and Introductions
8:45	<p><u>Seeds to Success: Producing Better Results in Life and at Work</u> <i>Keynote Speaker, Joe Pettit</i></p> <p>In this thought-provoking session, Joe Pettit explains how intentional choices or "planting seeds" can increase personal and organizational effectiveness. As a former school nutrition manager and supervisor, Joe shares personal and professional obstacles and accomplishments faced during his time as a school nutrition leader and helps audiences walk away stronger by emphasizing the importance of “remembering your purpose, recognizing your impact, and rewriting your future”.</p>
9:45	<p><u>Efficiency Served: Leveraging Software for Food Distribution</u> <i>Sue Lampert, Child Nutrition Programs, USDA Foods</i></p> <p>Alaska’s Food Distribution Programs will implement the use of Primero Edge software to administer the NSLP Commodity Program. Join us to learn valuable information about how this transition will affect your Child Nutrition Program, including updates to ordering, inventory management, and required processes</p>
10:30	<i>Break</i>
10:45	<p><u>Alaska Child Nutrition Program Updates</u> <i>Adrienne Schwartz, Child Nutrition Programs Director</i></p> <p>This session will also provide an update on state and national level regulations and policy impacting school programs in Alaska.</p>

11:00	<p><u>Building Flavors</u> <i>Chef Lukas Doherty, University of Alaska</i> Chef Luke will showcase flavor-building strategies that enhance taste while supporting nutrition goals, all without adding extra sodium, added sugars, or saturated fats.</p>
12:00	<p><u>Alaska School Nutrition Association Annual Business Meeting (Lunch Provided)</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Breakout Sessions</u></p>
1:00	<p><u>Forecasting the Procurement of Foods (4 Hour Session)</u> <i>Beth Mincemoyer Egan, ICN</i> Learn the fundamentals of forecasting for Child Nutrition Programs, focusing on how menus drive purchasing decisions and cost control. Topics include stakeholder roles, inventory and product management, CN labeling,</p>
1:00	<p><u>Growing Together – Project Scales Grant Findings</u> <i>Carlee Johnson McIntosh and Alex Helms</i> Join us for a focused look at what the Project Scales grant uncovered about the needs, challenges, and opportunities within Child Nutrition Programs. This session will break down the data in a clear, practical way, highlighting trends in program operations, staffing, procurement, menu planning, and access that directly impact your daily work. We'll explore what the findings mean for schools and sponsors, how identified gaps can guide future improvements, and which strategies show the most promise for boosting efficiency and meal quality. Attendees will leave with actionable insights, real-world takeaways, and a better understanding of how Project Scales can help shape stronger, more resilient Child Nutrition Programs across Alaska.</p>
1:40	<p><u>Problem Solving Together</u> <i>Conference Attendee Interaction</i> Bring a real challenge from your district and get solutions fast! Work with peers in small groups to brainstorm practical, actionable ideas. Share experiences, swap strategies, and leave with ready-to-use solutions and fresh perspectives.</p>

2:20	<p><u>The 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans</u> <i>Diane Russo. MatSu School District</i></p> <p>The <i>2025–2030</i> Dietary Guidelines for Americans reinforce nutrient quality, whole foods, and reduced processing and added sugars — trends that child nutrition operators will increasingly need to incorporate into menus and procurement as federal policies and meal pattern regulations evolve.</p>
3:10	<i>Break</i>
3:30	<p><u>Speed Recipe Sharing</u> <i>Conference Attendee Interaction</i></p> <p>Inspired by the “speed dating” model, Speed Recipe Sharing is a fast-paced, interactive activity that brings participants together to exchange their favorite quick meals, kitchen tricks, and go-to recipes. Participants rotate from table to table in short, timed intervals, sharing one recipe or food idea before moving on to meet the next person</p>
3:30	<p><u>Team Nutrition Mentorship Grantees Meeting</u> <i>Waverli Stowe, Child Nutrition Programs, Farm to School</i></p> <p>All Team Nutrition Mentorship Grantees are required to attend this mandatory meeting. The session will provide important program updates, review grant requirements and expectations, and outline key timelines and reporting responsibilities. Grantees will also receive guidance on allowable activities, best practices for mentorship implementation, and opportunities for peer collaboration and technical assistance. Attendance is required to ensure consistency, compliance, and successful implementation of Team Nutrition Mentorship activities.</p>
4:30	Closing and Dismissal

ALASKA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

58th Annual Conference

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

8:00	Registration Opens
8:30	Opening Remarks and Introductions
8:50	<p><u>Team United: Our Differences Give Us Power and Our Power is in Our Differences</u></p> <p><i>Joe Pettit</i></p> <p>In this dynamic workshop, Joe will help teams unlock the full potential of their unique strengths and differences. Attendees will gain valuable insights into their behavioral strengths, blind spots, and communication preferences, and learn practical strategies for improving team communication, developing stronger relationships, and creating a healthier workplace culture.</p>
9:50	<p><u>Chair Yoga</u></p> <p><i>Lori Marsh Virtual Class Session</i></p> <p>Experience the benefits of yoga in a safe, gentle, and accessible format. Chair Yoga is designed for participants of all abilities and focuses on improving flexibility, balance, and strength using seated movements and supported standing poses. This session will teach you how to chair yoga incorporates mindful breathing, light stretching, and relaxation techniques to help reduce stress and increase mobility. Perfect for beginners, older adults, or anyone looking for a low-impact wellness option. No floor work required—just comfortable clothing and a willingness to move at your own pace.</p>
10:10	<i>Break</i>

10:20	<p><u>Mapping the Gaps: What We're Learning from Alaska's Food Value Chain Coordination Work</u></p> <p><i>Rachel Lord, Alaska Food Policy Council</i></p> <p>Join us for an informative session exploring key findings from Alaska's ongoing Food Value Chain Coordination efforts. This presentation will break down how statewide partners identify gaps, strengthening connections, and improving communication throughout Alaska's unique food system. Participants will gain insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by producers, distributors, retailers, and community organizations, and how coordinated strategies can build a more resilient and equitable food network</p>
10:50	<p><u>Rooted in Tradition: Bringing Indigenous Foods to School Meals</u></p> <p><i>Amy Foote, Director of Indigenous Cuisine</i></p> <p>Explore how incorporating Indigenous cuisine can make school nutrition programs more inclusive and meaningful. Learn how Indigenous ingredients foster health, sustainability, and cultural identity. Discuss the challenges and opportunities for integrating Indigenous foods in school meals. Discover strategies to collaborate with Indigenous communities, farmers, and producers to support food sovereignty and student wellness.</p>
12:00	<p><u>Networking Over Lunch: Share, Learn, Connect</u></p> <p><i>Lunch Buffett provided by AKSNA</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Breakout Sessions</u></p>
1:00	<p><u>Food Allergies for School Nutrition (4 Hour Session)</u></p> <p><i>Beth Mincemoyer Egan, ICN</i></p> <p>This updated training contains information about the new 9th major allergen, sesame, and incorporates current guidelines and regulations. School nutrition professionals who take this course will learn about food allergies, food intolerance, reading food labels, avoiding cross contact, accommodating students with food allergies, laws regarding food allergies, and educating the school community about food allergies</p>

1:00	<p><u>Honoring Culture Through Food: Celebrating Identity, Community, and Connection</u></p> <p><i>Melissa Chlupach</i></p> <p>Food is more than nourishment—it’s a story, a memory, and a powerful expression of culture. In this session, we’ll explore how school and community nutrition programs can honor the diverse cultural identities of the students and families they serve. Participants will learn practical strategies for incorporating culturally meaningful foods, building respectful menus, engaging families, and creating inclusive dining experiences. Through shared examples and discussion, we’ll examine how honoring culture through food strengthens community connection, supports belonging, and enriches the meal programs we deliver every day</p>
2:00	<p><u>Go For the Gold</u></p> <p><i>Pam Forbes, International Food Solutions</i></p> <p>Get motivated to “go for the gold” in both life and your child nutrition career. This session will inspire participants to set bold goals, embrace growth, and pursue excellence while making a meaningful impact on the children and communities they serve.</p>
3:00	<p><i>Break</i></p>
3:15	<p><u>From Cafeteria to Café: Transforming School Lunch Spaces with Grant Support</u></p> <p><i>Diane Russon, MatSu Borough School District</i></p> <p>Dive into a compelling case study about how one school district leveraged a grant to rethink and revamp its cafeteria into a more welcoming, efficient, and student-friendly café environment. In this session a food service director will share how they used funding to make meaningful improvements — from layout redesign and furniture upgrades to updated serving lines, ambient lighting, and more appealing food presentations.</p>
3:45	<p><u>New Faces at Alaska Child Nutrition Program</u></p> <p><i>Adrienne Schwartz, Child Nutrition Program Director</i></p> <p>This session will introduce the new Child Nutrition Program staff and provide an overview of their vision for advancing</p>

	<p>Alaska's Child Nutrition Programs. Discussion will focus on future priorities, collaboration, and strategies to enhance access, quality, and sustainability statewide.</p>
4:30	<p>Closing and Dismissal</p>
5:00	<p>AKSNA After Dark at Mariott Downtown Hotel</p>

ALASKA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION
57th Annual Conference

Thursday, January 29, 2026

11:00-2:00

Vendor Show – Egan Center

A chance to check out new products and equipment for your nutrition program.

Sample the USDA Processed Foods products that are being offered for SY26-27

Keynote Speaker, Joe Pettit



Joe Pettit is not just a speaker - he's a catalyst for transformation. With a remarkable leadership career spanning over two decades, Joe has become a distinguished figure in leadership development and emotional intelligence. He's the author of the acclaimed book, "Seeds to Success," which has touched the lives of thousands with its powerful insights.

Joe's journey to becoming a sought-after keynote speaker and the founder of New Leaf Leadership was paved with purpose. With more than 20 years of hands-on leadership experience, including over seven years as a school nutrition administrator, he understands leadership in its raw, practical form. At the helm of a team of 100, Joe crafted a leadership development program from the ground up. His innovative approach led to remarkable results, including increased revenue, reduced turnover, and the nurturing of a robust leadership pipeline.

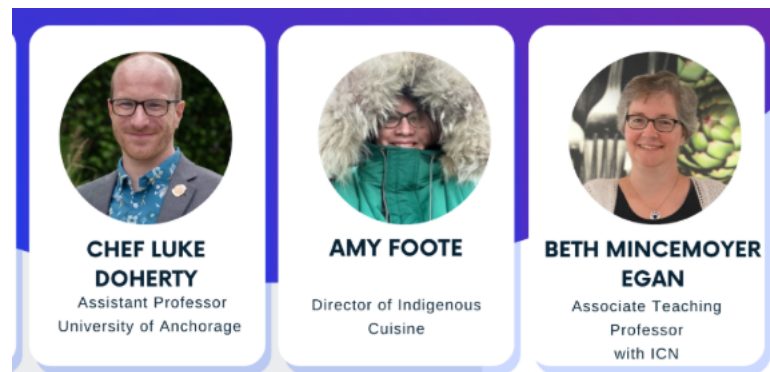
What sets Joe apart is his commitment to real-world application over mere theory. His sessions are not passive lectures; they're dynamic and activity-based experiences that resonate with his audience. Joe's audiences walk away with tangible takeaways that can be immediately implemented in their professional and personal lives.

One testament to the power of Joe's work is a director who credited his emotional intelligence program with nearly eliminating employee referrals. Team members armed with Joe's tools effectively managed conflicts and

found solutions, resulting in increased productivity and a harmonious workplace.

Joe Pettit's mission is clear: to empower leaders with the skills, knowledge, and emotional intelligence needed to thrive in today's complex world. With a track record of impacting over 10,000 leaders in the past four years, Joe is a driving force for positive change. To learn more about Joe and his work, visit him at www.joepettitinspires.com or www.newleafleadership.com.

Joe's non-profit, New Leaf Farm, is a leadership retreat and community hub that teaches and equips people to reach their full potential in life and at work. Here leaders can connect with their team, learn, write, and grow. They find themselves re-energized as they experience the first-hand therapeutic benefits of gardening.



Chef Lukas Doherty

Assistant Professor, University of Alaska Anchorage

Chef Lukas joined the program in 2023 at the University of Alaska in Anchorage and currently teaches courses in nutrition, sanitation, and baking. He began his culinary education in local programs in Anchorage and earned an AOS in Culinary Arts (2005) from Le Cordon Bleu's Western Culinary Institute.

He brings more than 20 years of professional culinary experience from the restaurant industry, including time spent teaching Culinary Arts for the Anchorage School District at King Tech High School.

Outside of work, Chef Lukas enjoys cooking a variety of delicious dishes and traveling, France being one of his favorite destinations

Chef Amy Foote

Director of Indigenous Cuisine | Executive Chef, CDM | Nana Management Services Eagle River, Alaska

Chef Amy Foote is a visionary culinary leader dedicated to revitalizing indigenous food systems and fostering sustainability, food sovereignty, and food security in Alaska. As the Director of Indigenous Cuisine and Executive Chef at Nana Management Services, she works to blend traditional indigenous knowledge with modern agricultural practices, creating a holistic approach to food that nourishes both people and the land.

With a deep respect for indigenous cultural practices and a commitment to community engagement, Chef Amy advocates for a food system rooted in reciprocity and mutual respect. Her work focuses on cultivating indigenous plants, proteins, and seafood, and developing agricultural diversity through reindeer farms, seaweed farms, and other locally cultivated ingredients. By bridging the gap between ancestral wisdom and contemporary technology, she is helping to reclaim and revitalize indigenous culinary arts, empowering local communities with the tools they need to thrive sustainably.

Chef Amy believes that the act of harvesting food from the land is as nourishing to the soul as it is to the body. Her passion lies in building connections that support the long-term health and vitality of her community, ensuring that the traditions of the past are honored while securing a vibrant and sustainable food future for generations to come.

Beth Mincemoyer Egan

Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) Trainer

Beth Mincemoyer Egan is Associate Teaching Professor, Emerita, School of Hospitality Management at Penn State University. She earned bachelor's degrees from Penn State in education and management dietetics and a master's degree in adult and extension education. Beth completed her

dietetic internship in the Milwaukee Public Schools Food Services Division, became a Registered Dietitian, and has been working with school nutrition programs ever since.

She was a district director in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, and a school foodservice consultant for the State of Wisconsin. She is a past president of SNA of Wisconsin and has served on numerous boards and committees at the state and national levels of SNA. In addition, she currently serves as a trainer for the Institute of Child Nutrition.



Thank You!

Our appreciation and gratitude to the below vendors and brokers for their support and contributions to making the 58th AKSNA Conference a success:

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