



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234  
Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education  
School Operations and Management  
Child Nutrition Program Administration, Room 55, Albany, NY 12234-0055  
Telephone (518) 473-8781; Fax (518) 473-0018

December 2003

**To:** District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Schools  
Chief School Officers of Nonpublic Schools  
Executive Directors of Residential Child Care Institutions  
Chancellor of New York City Public Schools

**From:** Frances N. O'Donnell, Coordinator

**Subject:** New York State Best Practices Awards

Do you have a success story in your Child Nutrition Programs that could benefit others? If so, we strongly encourage you to share your experience with us. We are looking for nominations of best practices that resulted in improved operations. Our plan is to acknowledge achievement in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs by recognizing outstanding practices in these areas:

- ◆ Improving the Financial Status of Child Nutrition
- ◆ Managing After School Snacks
- ◆ Promoting Healthy Choices/Nutrition Education
- ◆ Recruiting New Employees
- ◆ Accommodating A Special Population (e.g., ethnic foods, vegetarian meals, special needs diets, religious preferences)
- ◆ Improving the Cafeteria Environment
- ◆ Retaining Child Nutrition Employees

Nominations of creative or innovative ideas are encouraged! One State winner will be selected in each category. State awards will be presented at the 2004 New York State School Food Service Association (NYSSFSA) Conference in October in Buffalo.

These awards are an excellent way to recognize extraordinary accomplishments in school food service and to share creative ideas with other school food authorities (SFAs). Being selected as a winner brings a sense of pride and validation to your program, your school, and your community.

We are very proud of the many innovative and successful programs in New York State and hope that you will share your best practices with others. Entries will only be accepted from schools or SFAs that participate in both the school lunch and school breakfast programs. If your program is outstanding in one or more of the categories, we suggest you take the time to prepare a nomination packet for each category. A list of the categories with ideas for each, the judging criteria, and what a submission should consist of is attached.

Submissions should be comprehensive, complete, and document your initiatives. Entries longer than **four** pages will not be accepted (maximum of 1,500 words, 12 point size font). You may submit additional information such as newspaper articles and flyers that further describe the activity or initiative. The award entry form, the newspaper articles and flyers will not be counted in the four-page limit.

All nominations must be submitted to Diane Hepburn, Child Nutrition Program Administration, New York State Education Department, Room 55, Albany, New York 12234-0055 no later than June 25, 2004.

Questions should be directed to the Child Nutrition Representative in your area or to Diane Hepburn at (518) 473-1525.

Attachments

## "Best Practices Awards" for 2003-2004

A nomination should consist of:

- ◆ A completed awards entry form for each entry
- ◆ A 2-4 page summary (12 point font, maximum of 1,500 words) describing the practice/program for each entry submitted in one or more of the six categories
- ◆ Additional information, such as newspaper articles and flyers, that further describes the activity or initiative. The newspaper articles and flyers will not be counted in the four-page limit.

Entries will be judged based on the criteria outlined in "Best Practices Awards Criteria".

Nominations from the following categories will be considered for these awards:

### 1. **Improving the Financial Status of Child Nutrition**

The award will be presented to an SFA that has made changes to operate self-sustaining Child Nutrition Programs. Emphasis will be placed on the implementation of creative strategies to increase participation, increase revenues and reduce expenses. Questions to consider when applying for this category include:

- ◆ Why did you make changes?
- ◆ What strategies did you try?
- ◆ How has the overall quality of your program improved?
- ◆ What data supports your improving status?
- ◆ What challenges did you encounter?
- ◆ What role has the school administration taken to help achieve your effort?

### 2. **Managing After School Snacks**

The award will be presented to an SFA that operates a successful after school snack operation. It could involve the promotion of snacks as part of an after school education or enrichment program. Questions to answer include:

- ◆ Why did you decide to offer snacks?
- ◆ What challenges did you face? (menus, staffing, accountability, cooperation)
- ◆ Were you successful?
- ◆ How did you measure your success?
- ◆ How did students react to your strategies?
- ◆ How will you ensure your efforts are ongoing?
- ◆ How were the administration, teaching staff and community involved in this effort?

### 3. **Promoting Healthy Choices/Nutrition Education**

The award will be presented to an SFA that makes special efforts to integrate nutrition education in the classroom, cafeteria, community and the total school environment, by enhancing the nutritional content of meals offered, or providing for cultural diversity of foods served. Questions to consider include:

- ◆ What types of nutrition education activities have been conducted?
- ◆ What new strategies did you try?
- ◆ Were members of the community recruited to assist in these activities?
- ◆ Did you meet with any resistance?
- ◆ To what extent are nutrition education activities ongoing and/or implemented into your school's curriculum?
- ◆ To what extent have nutrition education activities resulted in increased participation and/or consumption of nutritious foods?
- ◆ What data supports your results?

4. **Recruiting New Employees**

The award will be presented to an SFA that addressed the challenge of finding and hiring new employees. Questions to consider include:

- ◆ Why was it difficult to hire?
- ◆ What strategies were unsuccessful and why?
- ◆ What strategies were successful and why?
- ◆ What was the impact on your program?
- ◆ What costs did you incur?
- ◆ Is there any advice you would give to others?
- ◆ Did you partner with others to achieve your goal?

5. **Accommodating A Special Population?** (ethnic meals, vegetarian meals, special needs diets, religious preferences)

The award will be presented to a school or SFA that has developed and implemented a strategy to accommodate a special population. Questions to consider include:

- ◆ Why did you decide to accommodate this population?
- ◆ What policies have you successfully implemented to accommodate the children?
- ◆ What kinds of menus/diets are you providing?
- ◆ How frequently do you make these accommodations?
- ◆ What costs do you incur?
- ◆ How have these changes affected your participation?
- ◆ Did you involve the community or others in making these changes?

6. **Improving the Cafeteria Environment**

The award will be presented to an SFA that effectively improves the cafeteria environment so that students are accommodated more efficiently or that changes are made to provide a positive eating environment. Questions to consider include:

- ◆ What were the issues?
- ◆ What options were considered to resolve the challenges?
- ◆ Who participated in the discussions?
- ◆ What costs were involved?
- ◆ What changes were made?
- ◆ What has been the impact of the changes?

7. **Retaining Child Nutrition Employees**

The award will be presented to an SFA that has addressed the challenge of retaining Child Nutrition employees. Questions to consider include:

- ◆ Why is it difficult to retain Child Nutrition employees?
- ◆ What retention strategies were unsuccessful and why?
- ◆ What retention strategies were successful and why?
- ◆ What impact does retention of Child Nutrition employees have on your program?
- ◆ What costs were incurred due to retention strategies? Do these costs outweigh the costs associated with high employee turnover?
- ◆ Is there any advice you would share with others regarding retention strategies?
- ◆ Did you partner with others to achieve your goal?

Ensure your submission addresses the specific questions listed above.

# Best Practices Awards Criteria

## 1. Community Partnerships/Sustained Excellence (Maximum 15 points)

Maximum score will be awarded to partners who effectively work together to establish positive relationships and increase overall quality and management of the lunch and breakfast programs. Schools and SFAs that have had a superior program for some length of time will receive the highest score in this area. Partnerships could involve State agencies, sponsors, community groups, advocacy organizations, public agencies, businesses, schools, teachers, students, coaches and/or families. Activities could include designing and implementing outreach initiatives, media campaigns, volunteer programs, learning activities for children, nutrition education programs, innovative and effective training, and/or careful evaluation of the school lunch and breakfast programs.

## 2. Innovation (Maximum 15 points)

Maximum score will be awarded to creative ideas; innovative and successful ways of dealing with challenging or unusual situations; or successful additions to program operation.

## 3. Increased Quality of Service (Maximum 20 points)

Maximum score will be awarded to improved program access, increased program participation, and increased quality of service. Also considered will be indications of increased support or recognition from students, parents, teachers, and community members and school administration.

## 4. Sustainability/Transferability (Maximum 15 points)

Maximum score will be awarded to ideas and programs that can demonstrate:

Commitment to program excellence on the part of school leaders, family members, students, and/or school administration; and

Overall usefulness of the idea and ease of incorporating it in other states, SFAs and schools

Long term incorporation and implementation of the best practice.

## 5. Cost Effectiveness (Maximum 15 points)

Maximum score will be awarded for ideas that make good use of available resources, labor and budget. High scores will be awarded to a program that is “doing more with less,” for a cost-effective idea or program that uses a minimum expense with a maximum result.

## 6. Presentation (Maximum 20 points)

The material should be neatly presented, well organized, well written, complete, clear, and concise. Nominations should not exceed the stated **limit of 4 pages** (not including the additional information such as newspaper articles or flyers).

**2004 BEST PRACTICES AWARDS  
National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs  
AWARDS ENTRY FORM**

Please attach this form to the first page of the summary of each entry submitted. Entries will not be accepted after June 25, 2004.

**Name of Nominee (School or SFA):**

**Address of Nominee:**

**Name of Superintendent or Chief Administrative Officer:**

**Telephone Number of Superintendent or Chief Administrative Officer:**

**Fax Number of Superintendent or Chief Administrative Officer:**

**E-mail Address (if available):**

**Award Category (Circle One)**

Improving the Financial Status of Child Nutrition

Managing After School Snacks

Promoting Healthy Choices/Nutrition Education

Recruiting New Employees

Accommodating A Special Population

Improving the Cafeteria Environment

Retaining Child Nutrition Employees

**Average Daily Participation of Program:**

**Lunch:**

**Breakfast:**

**Name and Title of Person Submitting This Form:**

**Address:**

**Telephone Number:**

**Fax Number:**

**E-mail Address (if available):**

