



Takeaways From ANC 2025

It's Your Moment

Key Takeaways From The School Nutrition Association (SNA) Annual National Conference (ANC) 2025

Each year, the School Nutrition Association's Annual National Conference brings together school nutrition professionals and industry members from across the United States to share innovations, best practices, new approaches, and inspiring stories from the K-12 foodservice spectrum. ANC 2025 in San Antonio didn't disappoint, delivering vibrant conversations full of creative and strategic insight. Several key themes stood out to our Zee Zees team this year, each helping to shape the future of school meals in meaningful ways.

Prioritizing Student Access to K-12 Nutrition

Equitable access to school meals was a major focus at ANC. School nutrition programs are adopting flexible service models like breakfast in the classroom and grab-and-go to boost participation while meeting the updated USDA guidelines. At the same time, culturally relevant menus and inclusive cafeteria environments help students feel represented and supported. Directors' concerns around declining funding for programs like the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and universal free meal initiatives were highlighted. These programs are critical to advancing nutrition equity by reducing stigma and ensuring that all students—regardless of income or background—have access to healthy, nourishing meals.



Menu Innovation and Reimagining the School Kitchen

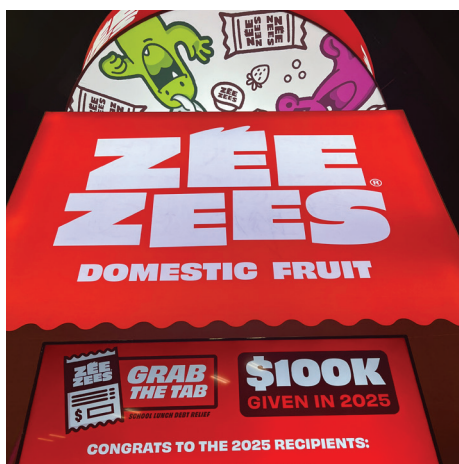
Menu innovation and creativity took center stage throughout the conference. Culinary demos and new products across the industry highlighted how schools can embrace scratch cooking, bold global flavors, and plant-based options—all while maintaining operational efficiency and compliance. A hot topic was capturing student feedback through taste testing and using current food trends to develop exciting, student-approved meals. When students love what's on the tray, participation rises—and so does impact.

Marketing & Engagement of K-12 Food Programs: Tell Your Story

Transforming the perception of K-12 foodservice was another standout theme at ANC 2025. Building trust and a positive awareness with parents is a key driver of student participation. Often, outdated memories shape public interpretation, so engaging in and educating the broader community is essential. Programs are using social media, school board presentations, and student and family tasting events to share the delicious and nutritious reality of today's school meals. More than ever, school nutrition teams are using every tray as an opportunity to tell their "student-first" story.

Advancing School Meals Through Digital Innovation

Technology continues to be a powerful tool for school nutrition teams seeking efficiency and modernization within their programs. From integrating AI platforms like ChatGPT and Copilot to assist with menu development, to exploring digital ordering systems and inventory tracking tools, directors are actively experimenting with solutions that streamline operations. These technologies offer exciting opportunities to optimize time, reduce waste, and elevate the overall cafeteria experience.



Conclusion

ANC provides an exciting representation of the latest and greatest innovations in the school nutrition industry. Exploration in technology, procuring local products, and satisfying children's emerging tastes and cultural needs are key indicators that all contributors are invested in the future of school nutrition. Industry and school partners are constantly creating unique ways to provide delicious, inventive, and healthy options for our nation's children.

About The School Nutrition Association

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) is a national, nonprofit professional organization representing 50,000 members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the country. Recognized as the authority on school nutrition, SNA has been advancing the availability, quality, and acceptance of school nutrition programs as an integral part of education since 1946.

About National Food Group

Founded in 1990, National Food Group is a leading U.S. wholesale foodservice manufacturer and distributor. Its brands include Zee Zees better-for-you snacks, Elated Plates® innovative meals, and Fare Promise® affordable, nutritious options. Key programs—Always Available®, Opportunity Buys®, and Commodity Processing™—simplify budgeting and planning. National Food Group is headquartered in Novi, Michigan and creates custom food solutions. Learn more at www.nationalfoodgroup.com.



About Zee Zees

Better-For-You Ingredients With Allergen-Friendly Options: We're about two things here at Zee Zees, making good foods for the K12 industry and making them in good ways. We believe in hearty, wholesome ingredients to energize kids of all ages, help them flourish as they grow, and make better snacking choices.



Amy King

K12 Area Sales Leader

National Food Group
46820 Magellan Dr., Novi, MI 48377
Phone: 800.886.6866
Email: aking@nationalfoodgroup.com