



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PONCE NAMED SILVER LEADERSHIP WINNER AT NATIONAL FAME CEREMONY

ORLANDO, Fla. – Jan. 23, 2017 – School Nutrition Services Director Kevin Ponce, SNS, Oklahoma City (OKC) Public Schools, Oklahoma City, Okla. received the Silver Leadership Award at the National Foodservice Achievement Management Excellence (FAME) award ceremony on Jan. 22, 2017. This year’s ceremony was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Orlando, Fla., during the School Nutrition Association’s (SNA) 2017 School Nutrition Industry Conference (SNIC).

Over the last twelve years, Ponce has developed and administered child nutrition programs in three Oklahoma school districts. Combined, these districts employ 700 staff members and require management of over \$36 million in funds for 120 schools. A major feat Ponce achieved was saving \$2 million in procurement costs through a procedure change – taking the program from line item bidding to prime vendor awards. This change also reduced the number of delivery trucks at each school site which ultimately reduced intense labor on bid administration.

Ponce was responsible for implementation of a Farm-to-School program at Western Heights. This program was one of the first of its kind in Oklahoma. He was able to provide students with the freshest local produce while increasing nutrition education. He has since implemented a similar, readily-accepted program at Mid Del schools and his current employer, OKC public schools. Today, over 400 schools feature Made in Oklahoma products.

Free breakfast was an area Ponce tackled by making provisions for 14,500 students to receive breakfast during National School Breakfast week. He worked to provide these free meals in conjunction with standardized testing week knowing how nutrition correlates with students’ ability to perform at optimum levels. Today, participation in the school breakfast program has increased by 36 percent.

Ponce continues to use his fiscal acumen to promote menu modifications and cafeteria renovations. He has lobbied for bond issues and cost cutting measures to fund these needed improvements. Ponce has also devised ways to invest in his most precious resource – his staff. He has helped his staff grow professionally by initiating the Child Nutrition Credential Incentive Pay Plan.

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Ponce leverages his leadership skills to help the advancement of his district, but also the local community and trade organizations he belongs to, including the SNA. Ponce has made key contributions to the SNA Education Committee to help develop standards for school nutrition professionals.

For 28 years the FAME Awards have been honoring school nutrition professionals who raise the industry standards by tackling challenges within their school districts and communities. This prestigious program is sponsored by Basic American Foods, Schwan's Food Service, Inc. and Tyson Foods, Inc. For more event details, visit www.fameawards.net or www.facebook.com/fameawards.

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