

**2017 FAME SILVER SPIRIT AWARD
DANIEL ELLNOR**

1. Describe how your nominee demonstrates a high level of professional commitment to school nutrition programs.

Dan Ellnor has been a critical member of the nutrition services team at Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) in Louisville, Kentucky for the past nine years. He started his career in school nutrition as Nutrition Services Equipment and Food Safety Coordinator overseeing the procurement of supplies, large and small equipment, and services. Most recently, Dan serves as Manager of the Nutrition Services Center, the central food production facility for the district overseeing 76+ staff members, menu planning, food procurement, HACCP, and shipping and logistics. Dan has spent the past 17 years in the food service industry bringing expertise in HACCP and food safety to Nutrition Services from his experience as Chief Food Specialist for the Floyd County Health Department. Dan holds a Bachelor's degree in biology from Indiana University and holds certifications from the International HACCP Alliance and is a Certified Food Safety Professional through the National Environmental Health Association.

Dan's professional commitment to school nutrition programs is evident in his work to implement Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) at JCPS. He led the development of the food delivery systems to successfully implement BIC. Dan believes that BIC is hugely beneficial to students as it removes many barriers to participation, but getting buy-in from principals, teachers, and custodial staff can be a challenge. Dan developed three delivery system models: grab and go, remote kiosks, and insulated classroom delivery. He and the team worked with each individual school to further customize the delivery system that worked best for that school. Dan knew that to be successful, the entire building staff needed to be engaged. He streamlined waste management with the custodial staff and ensured that classroom teachers understood and executed proper point of sale monitoring. He wrote the specifications and procured all equipment for the successful implementation of the program. Dan's efforts contributed to a 34 percent increase in breakfast participation.

Dan's commitment to nutrition reaches beyond the schools to the local agricultural community through a robust Farm to School program. Each year Dan contracts with farmers to supplement fresh produce procurement. Dan added fresh produce processing equipment to the Nutrition Services Center allowing the delivery of fresh farm produce from six local farmers. The farm produce is cleaned and packaged for use in central kitchen recipes as well as sent directly to schools. With 147 school sites and 69,000 lunches served daily, local farmers cannot possibly serve the entire school district, but Dan insures that all schools receive some locally grown products that are supplemented with produce procured through foodservice distribution. He also contracts with two local processors that process butternut squash and corn for JCPS. Under Dan's leadership as Manager of the Nutrition Services Center, JCPS increased their local produce procurement by almost 170 percent in the last three years under his leadership, having an economic impact of nearly \$200,000 on the local farm economy.

Dan is always working to recruit new farmers to the Farm to School program. He actively works with the City of Louisville Economic Development Coordinator and the state Farm to School Coordinator. Each year Dan attends the University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture sponsored Meet the Buyer Forum. As Dan says, "We recruit new farmers anyway we can, through word of mouth and various community events." Dan also makes connections through local produce distributors to identify local farmers and suppliers. Dan invites local farmers, local produce distributors, and broad line distributors to an annual pre-bid conference to discuss possible new products and provide a collaborative forum for all stakeholders. Dan keeps parents and the community informed about Farm to School efforts through social media, posting pictures of local produce in schools. During Farm to School week, Dan procures over 20,000 pounds of local, No Antibiotic Ever, pasture raised chicken. Dan is passionate about farm to school as it speaks to his philosophy about school nutrition, the better you operate your program, the more you can reinvest in your community, students and staff.

Dan is an active member of the Kentucky School Nutrition Association. He was appointed to the Executive Board as Region 3 Director and elected Administrative Chair for 2014-15, Vice President for 2015-16, and President-Elect for 2016-17. He is SNA certified.

2. Give an example of how your nominee has made a difference for people in their school community (Include measurable results achieved).

When it comes to supporting the community, Dan's most impactful accomplishment was the addition of two mobile feeding buses to the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). JCPS does not have neighborhood schools, it is a bussing district. In 2014, Dan was challenged with designing, procuring, and implementing a mobile feeding bus for the SFSP to bring the meals to the neighborhoods where children in need live. And he had only 3 months to execute the program from start to finish. The program was so successful that Dan designed a second bus in 2015, The buses include cold storage located behind the driver's seat to keep the food safe while in transport. Dan designed countertops that run down each side of the bus where bench seats would normally be placed. Stools are bolted to the floor to provide sit down dining inside the bus. The outside of the buses are wrapped in colorful graphics bringing a welcoming site to its many locations. But some neighborhoods in Louisville are so unsafe that it is dangerous for children to gather even a few blocks from their homes. So Dan received permission from the Kentucky State Agency to allow children to pick-up their food and return home to eat it. In Dan's words, "We need to get to locations where kids are, on their own terms." The program was so popular in the first year that Dan had to revise the menu to include modified meals for very young children coming to the sites with their older siblings. In 2016, two refrigerated box trucks were added to the mobile feeding program to service additional sites. The box trucks visit sites with outdoor seating such as parks and recreation centers. The trucks are equipped with tarps that are used in inclement weather. The mobile program increased to 19 sites in 2016 representing almost 10 percent of all meals served.

Dan's commitment to feeding children goes beyond his job at JCPS. While JCPS is the largest SFSP sponsor in Jefferson County, each year Dan reaches out to other organizations that sponsor the SFSP such as churches and community organizations. He brings the sponsors together in a meeting to discuss the community needs and determine feeding sites. He then publishes all of the sites, including those not sponsored by JCPS, using NutriSlice technology. Parents and stakeholders can use the NutriSlice app to locate feeding sites on a map.

3. Give an example of an innovative program (e.g. marketing, training, customer service) implemented by your nominee (Include measurable results achieved).

Dan implemented a district-wide wireless temperature control system that revolutionized the food safety and quality control process for school foodservice in response to USDA HACCP requirements. Dan worked closely with Smart Systems, a company with years of experience in agribusiness and supply chain management to create and pilot a system specific to school foodservice. The system monitors temperatures throughout the entire supply chain, from Listeria control at central production in work areas to cold storage, delivery trucks, cooking, and serving at school sites.

Prior to implementing the system, site managers were required to update 15 different temperature logs daily. The logs were manually sent from 141 site locations to area consultants who monitored the reports, looking for potential problems. This lagging indicator prompted corrective action, but with a delay in response that could be problematic with enforcing food safety. The new system uses cloud-based technology that captures temperature readings in real time. Central office staff like Dan and the area consultants can not only monitor freezer and cooler temperatures at all sites, they can also monitor cooking temperature as well as holding temperatures.

Kitchen staff members are equipped with handheld monitors that allow them to check food temperatures during the cooking and holding process. The handheld devices have preset temperature ranges for the food items. If an item is undercooked, the device will prompt the employee to continue to cook the food. The real time feedback prevents over and under cooking of foods that not only prevents food safety issues, it also improves product quality by preventing over-cooking. The handheld units are also used to monitor food temperatures during serving. Serving times vary at each school, so the system can be adjusted to reflect the number and length of the lunch periods. Area consultants can view this real time data to determine if temperatures are being taken throughout the production and service period from their desk in the district office.

Since this was the first-of-its-kind control system for school foodservice, Dan was instrumental in developing and beta-testing reports from the system. There is one report that became a real game changer for food quality. The report lists the top 10 overcooked products and the top 10 undercooked products by school site. The area coordinators use this report for manager coaching and employee training. Another report tracks equipment temperature ranges over time. The report is used to prompt equipment calibration and maintenance. Checking food temperatures is

ineffective if the thermometers are not calibrated often and correctly. The handheld units walk the employee step-by-step through the entire calibration process to ensure proper temperature readings. Area consultants can view a report showing when and how often thermometers are being calibrated.

The system saved the school district thousands of dollars during a major disaster a few years ago. Severe flooding caused power outages in the Louisville area. Dan was able to monitor the outages using the cloud-based system providing vital information to the maintenance department for emergency response. It also indicated which freezers in the district maintained proper temperatures during the outage mitigating disposal of foods.

4. Describe how your nominee contributes to high morale of work associates and/or professional colleagues.

Jefferson County Public Schools converted to the Community Eligibility Program in all but 17 schools in the school district. They also eliminated the reduced price meals, providing them at no charge, at the 17 non CEP schools to further minimize the burden on working poor families. The impact of CEP increased the number of meals served and the production output for the Nutrition Service Center. The program was so successful that the paid lunch participation increased by three percent, in spite of annual lunch price increases driven by the USDA Paid Lunch Equity provision. The way Dan looks at it, JCPS is the largest foodservice franchise in the state of Kentucky. But, the increased output put pressure on central production and the employees.

Dan is a broad thinker who looks at things globally, and is also a good steward of public funds. So, he embarked on a mission to streamline processes and employ Lean Management principles to JCPS operations. He logically started with rewriting the menus. JCPS' philosophy is to provide variety and the best food they can afford for their students. He changed the menu to a four week cycle to provide as many menu slots possible to meet the rigorous requirements of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act. He also revamped recipes to minimize pantry staples for example using one SKU of chicken in multiple entrée choices including ethnic choices to address the ever changing demographics of the student body. JCPS has 130 spoken languages in the district and prints their nutrition program communication to parents in 30 languages. Dan's efforts to streamline production allowed employees to work smarter, not harder, improving employee morale and sense of accomplishment.

The foodservice warehouse was under the control of the school district procurement department at the time of CEP implementation. Inventories were heavy and precious dollars were tied-up in floor stock. Illustrating his success at implementing Lean Management at the Nutrition Services Center, Dan was able to convince the Chief Operating Officer of the school district to transfer management of the warehouse to Nutrition Services. Dan inherited a warehouse with a standing inventory of \$1.8 million. In one year, he cut the inventory in half at the same time food production increased significantly. As Dan puts it, "We needed to gain control of our own destiny."

Dan's next challenge was to improve the very inefficient Summer Food Service Program. He worked with the district transportation department to utilize routing software to layout SFSP routes to minimize fuel costs and improve service. Dan added labor hours to the new routing scheme to determine the cost of each stop. He determined breakeven points for drops and established minimum orders. He was then able to identify the benefits of sending food in bulk to the SFSP locations, shifting the control to site-based management. This effort reduced the work load at the Nutrition Services Center without affecting food costs. Dan has not only improved morale by simplifying and reducing work load, he was able to reduce expenses by nine percent in the last two years. The 2016 revenue has increased by 19 percent from the previous year.

Dan has a very strong moral compass founded in ethics. He is a lifelong member of the Boy Scouts of America obtaining the rank of Eagle Scout and an adult leader his entire life. Cheryl Sturgeon, retired Executive Director of JCPS Nutrition Services says of Dan, "I appreciate Dan because he knows and does the right thing."