



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKHARDT NAMED SILVER LEADERSHIP WINNER

NEW ORLEANS, La. – Jan. 21, 2018 – Executive Director, Food and Child Nutrition Services, Chris Burkhardt, SNS, of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD), Cleveland, Ohio, is the 2018 recipient of the National Foodservice Achievement Management Excellence's (FAME) Silver Leadership Award. Burkhardt was honored at the FAME award ceremony held at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans during the School Nutrition Association's 2018 School Nutrition Industry Conference. The Silver Leadership Award is awarded to a director who demonstrates outstanding leadership, dedication, fiscal achievement, and innovation in menuing and merchandising.

"I am humbled and deeply honored that my fellow colleagues feel that I am deserving of this award. I am grateful to work with such a committed group of professionals," said Burkhardt.

Since 2008, Burkhardt has developed child nutrition programs, first with the Lakota Local School District near Cincinnati and in his current position with the CMSD. In his nine years in Lakota District, Burkhardt erased deficit in the foodservice fund, operating with a positive fund balance during the last six years, and ended with an \$800,000 cash reserve which he invested in new induction cooking equipment, serving lines, and carts. In his new role with CMSD, Burkhardt implemented a cost-neutral operating budget for the 2017-18 school year. He also has made key contributions to the Ohio School Nutrition Association by designing a new budgeting process that stabilized the cash revenue and expenses by establishing a conference budget template and new platforms for industry membership.

At Lakota, Burkhardt implemented several fiscal changes, such as streamlining employee work hours and stabilizing the benefits system. He also eliminated the need for third-party vendors to bid on USDA Foods (commodities) directly, which granted the Lakota District net pricing for the processing and storage of commodity foods, a change that he led in other parts of Ohio as well. This change also resulted in the increased use of fresh fruits and vegetables in the child nutrition programs in Ohio.

Ensuring children get access to nutritious meals is a year-round challenge. Burkhardt improved the Summer Food Service Program in Lakota by putting mobile meals into action. He converted two aged school busses to lunch busses to serve meals in six remote sites and one stand-alone site where students had no access to meals. These innovative menu ideas earned Chris recognition as one of the 10 Top Influencers of the Industry by Foodservice Director Magazine. In Cleveland, the CMSD had never sponsored a Summer Food Service Program outside of the schools that offered summer school. He added the program at 28 sites this past summer and piloted a supper program at three sites.

In his new role with CMSD, Burkhardt faced significant challenges with staff vacancies and a lack of fundamental kitchen equipment. He instituted staffing standards in the District, which reduced the number of vacancies by nearly 82%. The District's former pre-plate and central kitchen approach left schools without adequate equipment. Burkhardt set an ambitious procurement plan to give school kitchens the necessary tools and converted the central kitchen to a warehouse for commodity storage and delivery.

For 29 years the FAME Awards have been honoring school nutrition professionals who raise the industry standards by tackling challenges within their school districts and communities. FAME event tickets can be obtained by visiting www.fameawards.net. For event updates throughout the year, visit www.fameawards.net or www.facebook.com/fameawards.

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For Additional Event Information, Please Contact:
Dana Clerkin
(703) 477-4172
clerkindp@gmail.com