

Slate of Candidates

The Leadership Development Committee (LDC), led by MSNA Past President Cheryl Pick, Foley Public Schools; Kimberly Harren, Lakeville Area Schools; Jennifer Walters, Winona Area Public Schools, Amy Kimmel, Spring Lake Park School District; and Jess Peña, Red Wing Schools, announces the 2024-2025 slate of officers for the 2024 election to be held between May 1 and May 15, 2024.

Vice President

Ashley Schneider, Moorhead ISD

Secretary/Treasurer

Jess Peña, Red Wing Schools

Leadership Development Committee

Note: One Open Position Available

Renee Arbogast, Fridley Public Schools

Kristi Frank, Forest Lake Schools

Kari Rubitschung, Windom Area Schools

Scroll below for candidate bios

VICE PRESIDENT

Candidate

Ashley Schneider

Director of Food and Nutrition Services
Moorhead Area Public Schools

Level 4 Certificate

Positions Served

- Annual Conference, Chair (2023-2024)
- Ad Hoc Committee, Nutrition Lead (2022-23)
- Annual Conference Co-Chair (2022-2023)
- Annual Conference Workshop Chair (2021-2022)
- Annual Conference Workshop Co-Chair (2019-2020)

Speaking Experience/Attendance

- MSNA Annual Conference, Attendee (5+ years)
- SNA Annual National Conference, Attendee (2022)
- MSNA Annual Conference, Speaker (2016)



Leadership is the ability to inspire and motivate others to pursue a common goal. It also means supporting the team and giving them the tools to reach their goals and to inspire each other. One of MSNA's goals is to not only provide support and advocate for School Nutrition professionals. The work that we do is so important, as it ensures that students have access to nutritious and delicious meals while at school.

In order to provide these things to our students, it is important to recognize the needs of our members and look for ways to help support them. This is a fantastic organization with so much knowledge, and it is our duty to facilitate that and help to meet members where they are. No two districts are alike, and the needs of the students are changing. Having worked in all types of roles in School Nutrition for the last 12 years, my experience helps me to understand the needs at every level. During my time working with Minneapolis Public Schools, I was told by a program manager that I have GRIT, which is a personality trait characterized by perseverance and passion. School nutrition and teaching/helping others is my passion. This has helped me to lead a successful (and amazing team) of 65 employees for the last 3 years. My experience in both large and small districts helps me to understand that we are not a one-size-fits-all organization.

I am so excited for the opportunity to run for the Vice President position with MSNA. I have been involved in the Annual Conference planning for the last 5 years and am so proud of the growth and changes that I have seen as a member. I want to be a part of the leadership that will ensure MSNA remains a thriving organization that supports the growth and success of our members.

Goals

1. Establish pathways for school nutrition professionals who want to advance in school nutrition.
2. Diversify professional development to meet all members' needs.
3. Provide hands-on experiences for members to be able to successfully execute at their district.

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Candidate

Jess Peña

Director of Child Nutrition
Red Wing Public Schools

Level 4 Certificate

Positions Served

- MSNA Nutrition Chair (2021-2023)
- Annual Conference Volunteer (2017-Present)
- SNA Annual National Conference, Delegate Assembly Participant (2018)
- MSNA Annual Conference, Delegate Assembly Participant (2018)
- MSNA Public Policy Committee, Member (2018-2020)
- Nutrition Conference Committee, Member (2018)



Speaking Experience/Attendance

- SNA Legislative Action Conference, Speaker (2024)
- MSNA Annual Conference, Speaker (2022 & 2023)
- MSNA SNIP Conference, Speaker (2022)
- Attendee: MSNA SNIP Conference (2023, 2024), MN Legislative Action Day (2019, 2023, 2024), Chapter Leadership Conference (Various), MSNA Annual Conference (2015 to 2023), and Nutrition Conference (2018)

Chapter Positions

- Chapter 11, Co-President (2023-2024)
- North Ramsey Chapter, President (2018-2019)

Awards

- Manager of the Year Award (2019)
- Regional Manager of the Year (2019)

My ability to communicate well with others and build a rapport with many personalities allows me to be an effective leader. My goal setting and self-setting timelines help me persevere and reach goals within a reasonable time and inch my way to completing the total picture and hit my target. My dedication, and unwavering commitment to MSNA and all things School Nutrition make me a good candidate for this position. I have the ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues and have strong interpersonal and communication skills, which are invaluable in fostering a collaborative and cohesive work environment. My belief is to keep this organization running strong, and I show my commitment to MSNA and SNA by volunteering in any way necessary to continue strengthening our organization. ***Continue reading for goals...***

Jess Peña's Goals

1. Continued promotion the Association's Strategic Plan of Action.
 2. Support members in any way necessary including attending Chapter Meetings when asked to attend.
 3. Effectively communicate and present reports to MSNA members about our financial standings.
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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Candidate #1

Renee Arbogast

Director of Nutritional Services
Fridley Public Schools

SNS Credentialed

Positions Served

- Nutrition Committee, Member (2018-2019)

Attendance

- MSNA SNIP Conference, Attendee (2019)
- MSNA Annual Conference, Attendee (2019, 2022, 2023)
- MSNA Nutrition Conference, Attendee (2019)



I am a quiet, soft spoken leader. I am able to listen to a variety of viewpoints and bring people together to form a consensus. I feel that I have strong communication and listening skills which are important for working with a variety of people. I am passionate about helping child nutrition professionals grow and learn new skills. I have been a School Food Service professional for 11 years. Prior to working in school food service I had held previous leadership positions in health care organizations.

Goals

1. To collaborate with other committee members to recruit qualified candidates.
2. Work with committee members to determine other ways to expand leadership opportunities of members.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Candidate #2

Kristi Frank

Assistant Supervisor
Forest Lake Schools

Positions Served

- MSNA Public Policy Committee, Member (2022-2024)

Speaking Experience/Attendance

- MSNA Annual Conference, Speaker (2023)
- MSNA Annual Conference, Attendee (3 years)
- MSNA SNIP Conference, Attendee (2 years)



Training and professional development has always been a passion of mine with any job/role that I have held previously. In my role as Assistant Supervisor at the Forest Lake Schools, I'm involved with the training of new managers, long and short hour staff. I have implemented and improved training for new hires. I modernized our new hire orientation packet to include specific details on training courses that are required and made the packet more concise and informative. I created a new hire checklist that site managers can utilize on the first day the new hire works. That has helped with consistency and ensured all important details are covered.

Professional development is important for all roles in school nutrition. I would make a priority to ensure the best educational opportunities are selected for the annual state conference. I have received feedback from my direct staff that the options for site managers is limited. I would make that a goal to ensure more opportunities are available for site managers and site staff.

Goals

1. Gain an understanding of all MSNA members and recognize who would be a good fit for open positions in MSNA.
2. Build new networks and relationships with committee members.
3. Build and create new relationships with all SNA members

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Candidate #3

Kari Rubitschung

Food Service Director
Windom Area Schools

Level 4 Certificate

Positions Served

- MSNA Annual Conference, Workshop Chair (2024)
- Chapter President (2024)
- Public Policy Committee, Member (2021)

Attendance

- MSNA SNIP Conference, Attendee (3 years)



As a member of MSNA since 2012, I have had opportunity to meet a host of people from around the state, through the MSNA Annual Conference, LAC '21, SNIP and chapter meetings and events. Since starting as a cook manager with Jackson County Central, taking on the Food Service Director role and recently accepting the position of Food Service Director at Windom Area Schools, I have worked with all levels of food service professionals. I enjoy teaching and training new staff, providing continuing education for seasoned staff - and have always received good feedback in those instances. I enjoy collaborating with colleagues and tend to build a good rapport with new acquaintances. I am a strong believer in the importance of MSNA and would love the opportunity to contribute to the association's growth.

Goals

1. Recruit eligible members for MSNA positions.
2. Increase awareness of the importance of MSNA.
3. Promote MSNA.