

Meet the Member

ANDREW LEHRKE
KITCHEN MANAGER

**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



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Tell us about your role:

This is my 11th year as the Columbia Heights kitchen manager. Prior to my current position, I spent several years with Edina Public Schools.

What do you enjoy most about your current position, and what motivates you to work in school nutrition?

I very much enjoy being part of a successful team and building that team to be better and better. Listen to each other, be kind to each other, and have fun. What motivates me and the team is to have happy customers - the students!

What do you think people often overlook about school nutrition that they should understand better? What challenges do you face in your role?

Most people don't realize how fast paced and how challenging it can be. Trying to please a diverse student population is not an easy task. The quality of the food served has come a long way over the last 20 years.

How does your team support one another in accomplishing daily goals?

Teamwork is the key to any successful kitchen. We are all aware of the clock and what needs to be accomplished for service. We try to keep the mood upbeat, but focused. Pay attention to your surroundings and help each other when needed.

What advice would you give someone interested in working in school nutrition?

Check it out and give it a chance. School nutrition has come a long way in the last decade and it continues to grow with new opportunities. I was not aware of how satisfying and rewarding it can be to work in school nutrition until I opened my eyes to it.

What's the most popular meal on your lunch menu? Do you have a personal favorite, and why?

It is hard to pick just one, but the two that come to mind and seem to be the most well received would be the beef nachos and breakfast for lunch. I have always been a big fan of breakfast - who doesn't like breakfast for lunch?