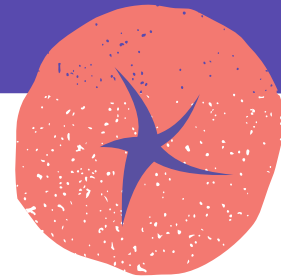


collaboration
culture
community
courage

The 4C's behind the
business of child nutrition





Collaboration workbook 01

NextUp has partnered with LINQ to explore the 4 C's behind child nutrition. The 4 C's include:

- collaboration
- culture
- communication
- courage

If school food service professionals have learned anything over the last few years, it's the importance of collaboration. It takes a village to ensure that every child's needs are met, and that's certainly true of child nutrition programs.

In the first episode of "The 4 C's Behind the Business of Child Nutrition", a four-part video series hosted by NextUp, school nutrition professionals discuss the various ways they collaborate both internally and with outside partners to support their teams and make sure students are fed. They also share examples of creative collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic and offer advice to their colleagues.



Meet the Panel

From Left: Shannon Soloman, Jessica Shelly,
Roy R. Pistone II, Katie Cossette



Collaboration summary

PANEL MODERATOR

Shannon Soloman
School Nutrition Professional



Feeding thousands of students every day isn't easy. The pandemic has made this task even harder. School closings have challenged food service departments to make sure that students learning from home don't go hungry. Supply chain issues have left many school systems scrambling for food and other supplies. Labor shortages have made it harder for schools to serve meals to students.

Nimble thinking and creative problem solving are essential to meeting these challenges. School food service directors can't solve these problems on their own.

To provide a better idea of what effective collaboration looks like in school nutrition programs, panel moderator Shannon Soloman led a conversation with panelists Roy R. Pistone II, Jessica Shelley and Katie Cossette to discuss what's working in their home districts. In regards to collaboration, Shannon says, *'Collaboration is the fact that we're not alone.'*

"If we've learned anything over the last years, it's that collaboration is about taking the village and school nutrition [strategy] across this country. We all know that siloing ourselves is not what's going to work for our community and districts."

Keep reading to hear more from the conversation! 



Collaboration within your department

FEATURED COLLABORATOR

Roy R. Pistone II

Food Service Director at Citrus County



Like other panelists, Roy R. Pistone II, Food Service Director at Citrus County, credits his entire food service team with rising to the challenge during the pandemic. As a leader, he asks for everyone's input in meetings and brainstorming sessions.

"I have a great team," Pistone says. "I tell them, 'Everybody bring something to the table. I want to hear everybody's ideas. How do we figure this out?"

Collaborating with other departments in your school system is equally critical.

"Our transportation department was fundamental in getting food out to the community when schools were shut down," Pistone explains. "Right now, if we're short (on food service staff), we have bus drivers who will finish a morning route and they'll come help us serve when we can't find substitutes. Our superintendent of schools will even come serve meals if we need help. That's how we roll."

"Our superintendent of schools will even come serve meals if we need help. That's how we roll."

Collaboration within your other school systems and state agencies

FEATURED SPEAKER

Jessica Shelley

MBA, SNS, REHS, Director of Student Dining Services for Cincinnati Public Schools in Ohio



Networking and learning from colleagues in other districts is important as well.

"We're so focused internally sometimes that we forget to reach out (beyond our district)," says Jessica Shelley, MBA, SNS, REHS, Director of Student Dining Services for Cincinnati Public Schools in Ohio.

"Find those lifelines that are our fellow directors and nutrition superheroes across the country," Shelley advises. *"It's a really great opportunity to learn and grow yourself. I'm in Ohio, and it's great to hear what's happening (in other areas) and then take those ideas back to my district. That's the kind of collaboration I'm really learning from."*

Follow LINQ on LinkedIn to hear more from those making a difference in nutrition within their districts!



Collaboration with restaurants, distributors, nonprofits, and other organizations

FEATURED SPEAKER

Katie Cossette

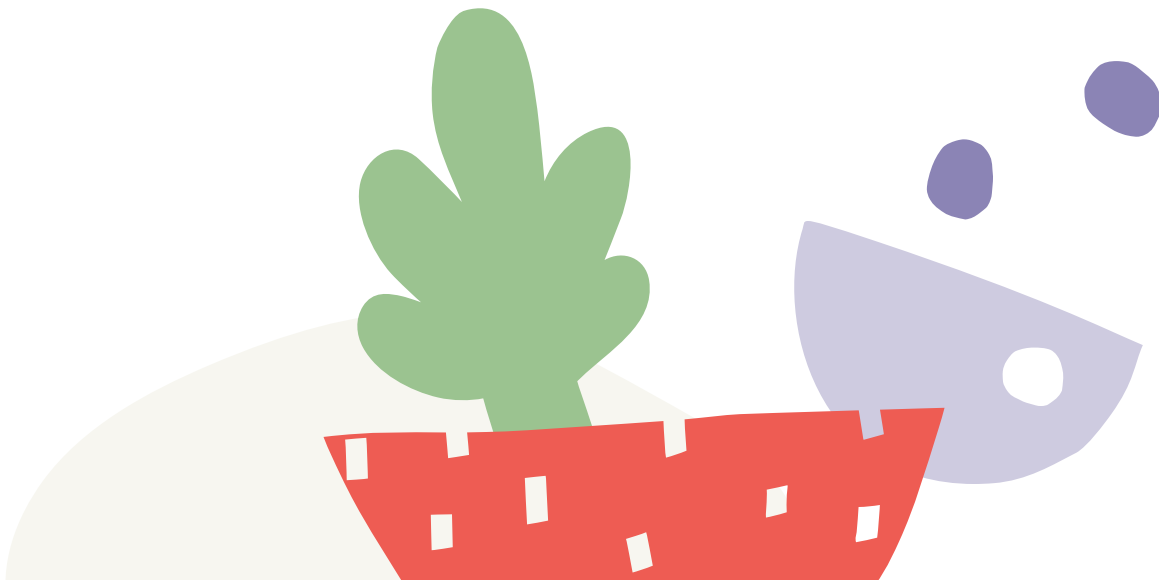
MDA, RDN, SNS, Director of Nutrition Services
for Englewood Schools in Colorado



During the pandemic, when supply chain issues and labor shortages have disrupted operations, *"I have found that working with local manufacturers, restaurants, and distributors has really helped us a lot,"* says Katie Cossette, MDA, RDN, SNS, Director of Nutrition Services for Englewood Schools in Colorado.

Shelley's district collaborated with local nonprofit organizations to ensure that students didn't go hungry when schools were shut down.

"By collaborating with our local YMCA, recreational centers, and food banks, we were able to figure out how we could become a one-stop-shop for families, so families could pick up meals for their kiddos," she explains. "They could also pick up a family box of produce, dry goods, or household items that were supplied by our community partners. We wanted to make sure we were a wraparound service for our community."





Collaboration

Key Takeaways

Be resourceful.



Think outside the box when considering which local businesses and organizations might be able to offer support. Consider partnering with a nearby community college to develop a pipeline of food service staff or connecting with farmers to source fresh produce.

Don't hesitate to ask for help.



Success requires transparency, and at times, vulnerability. Connecting with colleagues to discuss common challenges often leads to effective solutions.

Make sure you help others as well.



Collaboration is all about helping each other. Share your experiences, positive or negative, and embrace your nutrition community.

Collaboration Resources

In this guide we discussed collaborating within your district and surrounding communities. Check out the attached resource from the [Institute of Child Nutrition – Website for the Institute of Child Nutrition](#) to learn more about additional collaboration methods, including with community health professionals!

Download the Resource! →

In the next chapter workbook, discover how to create a culture where all K-12 food service team members can thrive.