



Connecting with Schools to Discuss Produce Sales Opportunities

If you want to sell to your local schools, but do not know where to begin, this simple step-by-step guide will provide a roadmap for how to reach the school administrator in charge of foodservice programs.

- If you want to sell to a specific school, you must first determine the school district that this school belongs to.
- Next, visit the school district's website and look for office that oversees school meals. The name of this department is typically called, "Child Nutrition Services" or "Food and Nutrition Services". In some school districts, you may have to look for the "Business Office" since the child nutrition/foodservice department may be part of this office. It's not uncommon for the foodservice administrator to report to the school district's chief business officer or CFO.
- Once you arrive at the website for the school district's Office of Child Nutrition/Food and Nutrition Services, look for the contact information for the Director. This person oversees menu planning and food purchasing for all schools in the school district, amongst other roles.
- Typically, the email and phone # for this official is listed on their school district's website. A phone call or email to introduce yourself is appropriate, as well as asking for a meeting to share about the products and services your company can provide. Also, sharing how your company works with other school customers would be helpful for a school foodservice director to understand. Sometimes school districts have special times of the year dedicated to meeting with vendors, so you may not be able to secure a meeting right away. A phone call may be best.
- Prior to any meeting, it would be helpful to familiarize yourself with the school district's meal and snack programs, as well as how they currently procure fresh fruits and vegetables, and which produce items may be most appropriate for each of the programs they manage.
- Questions that might be helpful to ask, include: Do they offer fresh fruit/veg at breakfast? Do they do breakfast in the classroom/breakfast after the bell? How and where is lunch served? Do their schools have salad bars? Vending machines? Cold-cases for grab-and-go salads and sandwiches? Are they able to get the variety of produce they would like to offer for their students? Do any of the schools in the district participate in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)? Does the school district offer an after-school snack or supper program? All programs must include fruits and/or vegetables.
- In addition to a Foodservice Director, other members of the foodservice/child nutrition team can include a school district chef, menu planner, dietician, procurement and marketing specialists, amongst others.
- A school foodservice director is responsible for managing a department that is not unlike a small business. They manage finance, procurement, logistics, warehouse operations, regulatory compliance, marketing, public relations, and many other roles.

For questions about this document or other best practices for connecting with school foodservice administrators, contact [Andrew Marshall](#), Director of Foodservice and Foundation Partnerships at (202) 303-3407.