



## **What is a District of Excellence in Child Nutrition?**

The Keys to Excellence was developed and produced by the School Nutrition Association and the Child Nutrition Foundation, with support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health, and the National Dairy Council. The District of Excellence in Child Nutrition is a child nutrition program (or district) that demonstrates its knowledge and fulfillment of superior performance in providing nutritious food and a healthy educational environment for all students. Districts of Excellence in Child Nutrition embody "nutrition integrity" throughout the school environment. They benchmark their quality, demonstrate and validate commitment to excellence and win respect from others in the school community.

### **Key Areas of Achievement**

There are four Key Areas that are evaluated to become a District of Excellence. These areas are Administration, Communications and Marketing, Nutrition and Nutrition Education and Operations. The key achievements under these areas are as follows:

#### **Administration**

The school food and nutrition program's goals and sound business practices provide the basis for planning. The school food and nutrition program uses sound financial and accounting practices. School food and nutrition personnel are qualified to implement the goals of the school food and nutrition program. The school food and nutrition program works in concert with the school community to maintain a healthy school environment.

#### **Communications and Marketing**

A comprehensive marketing plan promotes a positive image of the school food and nutrition program. The school food and nutrition program is a resource for meeting the community's food and nutrition needs. School food and nutrition personnel work with the school community and allied organizations to promote nutritious food and nutrition education. School food and nutrition personnel assist in developing policies to support nutrition integrity.

#### **Nutrition and Nutrition Education**

School meals/snacks and a la carte foods contribute to healthy eating habits. School food and nutrition personnel are actively involved in nutrition education at the school level.

#### **Operations**

Menus are planned to ensure a balance between optimal nutrition and student acceptance. Ethical purchasing practices ensure the use of high quality and safe ingredients and products. Appropriate receiving and storage practices are followed to ensure quality, quantity, and safety of all food and non-food products. Management procedures assure the production and service of high quality and safe foods to all students. An environment for safe and secure food and worker safety is maintained. A commitment to responsible waste management and water and energy conservation exists in the school food and nutrition program.

The School Nutrition Association awarded Mesa Public Schools Food and Nutrition Department this prestigious award on May 1, 2006.