



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2, 2022

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### Announcing New Assessment Technology for All K-12 Food Programs

#### The first evaluation platform to support scratch cooking in school meals

Boulder, CO – Just in time for summer meal planning for School Year 22/23, Chef Ann Foundation (CAF) has launched the Scratch Cooking Assessment & Learning Evaluation (SCALE) tool to increase scratch cooking and improve nutrition in school meal programs. Prior to COVID-19, 31 million children participated in the National School Lunch Program daily, making the quality and nutrition of school meals a top priority. As school districts grapple with supply chain and labor issues, they are seeking out ways to improve efficiencies while still providing nutritious, appealing meals for students.

For over 20 years, Chef Ann Cooper has worked closely with school districts through on-site assessments, trainings, and operational assistance. After starting her career as a white tablecloth chef, Chef Ann realized the massive impact and potential of healthy school food, and started advocating for school food programs across the country. Working in partnership with Anneliese Tanner, CAF Director of Research & Assessment, and school food expert Chef Beth Collins, CAF has spent the last two years building technology that offers the first comprehensive self-assessment focused on improving nutrition, enhancing school meal programs, and increasing scratch cooking. In-depth reports were previously only available to districts through an on-site assessment, and now thanks to SCALE are widely available for all districts through this innovative platform.

Many school districts want to improve their meal programs, but do not have the bandwidth or tools to assess their current operations or determine where to start. SCALE is a digital platform that supports school districts with free customized assessments, resources, and recommendations. It is available now at **no cost to schools nationwide** and is hosted on Chef Ann Foundation's [The Lunch Box website](#). The tool focuses on key areas: Food, Scratch Cooking, Finances, Facilities, Human Resources, and Marketing.

Districts from across the country are excited to use SCALE to enhance and improve their operations. Erin Primer, Food Service Director at San Luis Coastal Unified School District stated, "SCALE allows food service directors to have tangible, data-driven strategies to enhance our programs, and to articulate our needs to district counterparts who want to support us in the healthy food effort."

SCALE can help school districts develop strategic plans, guide program development, or garner support for improvements in school nutrition programs. According to Anneliese Tanner, SCALE has the opportunity to have a profound impact on school food programs across the nation. "Helping districts

understand their numbers, efficiencies, procurement options, and system change ideas is my passion. I wish I had something like SCALE when I was in the districts, it would have been a game changer," stated Tanner. SCALE was developed with support from Whole Kids Foundation and The Life Time Foundation.

For more information about the Chef Ann Foundation, visit: <https://www.chefannfoundation.org> and to access SCALE, visit <https://www.thelunchbox.org/scale>.

### **About the Chef Ann Foundation**

The [Chef Ann Foundation](https://www.chefannfoundation.org) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to ensure that school food professionals have the resources, funding and support they need to provide fresh, healthy, delicious, scratch cooked meals that support the health of children and our planet. To date, the organization has reached more than 13,500 schools and 3.3 million kids with healthy school programming. Learn more at [chefannfoundation.org](https://www.chefannfoundation.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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