

**Alabama State Department of Education  
Child Nutrition Programs  
School Nutrition Programs  
Highest-Ranking Official Policy**

1. The highest-ranking official of a public school, charter school, private school, or residential child-care institution is the person who holds ultimate administrative and financial responsibility for operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Special Milk Program (SMP), and Afterschool Snack Service Program (ASSP).
2. Only the highest-ranking official of an organization may sign a Permanent Agreement with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) to participate in any School Nutrition Program (SNP). The highest-ranking official receives notifications from ALSDE Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) related to application approvals or denials to participate in the Program, compliance reviews, serious deficiencies, proposed terminations, and terminations.
3. The name and contact information for the highest-ranking official is required for new and renewing sponsor applications. A school food authority (SFA) is responsible for notifying the ALSDE SNP section within 10 days when an individual is no longer serving as the highest-ranking official or when a new highest-ranking official is appointed.
  - a. The SFA CNP director is responsible for updating information in the sponsor application in the online portal.
  - b. Changes in public school superintendents are reported to the SNP section through internal ALSDE communications.
  - c. All other SFAs are responsible for notifying the ALSDE SNP section within 10 days in writing on the organization's official letterhead with the signature of an appropriate official when an individual is no longer serving as the highest-ranking official or when a new highest-ranking official is appointed.
4. If a vacancy occurs in the superintendent's position at a public local education agency (LEA), the chief school financial officer (CSFO) should be listed as the highest-ranking official until a new superintendent is in place.
5. The highest-ranking official is required to attend the full-day new sponsor training and required annual trainings unless an exception is granted by the ALSDE CNP Director. Exceptions are only granted when the highest-ranking official is unable to attend because of the nature of his or her job, such as a public-school superintendent requesting that the CSFO attend instead.

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