K–12 Event Planning Guide

A K–12 guide to creating memorable school events with food trucks.

PREPARED BY CHICAGO FOOD TRUCK ASSOCIATION

Designed for: School Administrators • District Staff • PTO/PTA Leaders • Event Coordinators

From teacher appreciation to family nights, every school event is an opportunity to bring people together. Food trucks make those moments feel festive, memorable, and easier to organize.

01 Why Food Trucks Work

- Scales for events from 50 to 5,000+ attendees
- Wide variety of cuisines and dietary options
- Flexible setups for indoor and outdoor events
- Simple coordination with one booking partner
- Great for staff, students, and families
- Plan service windows around school schedules

02 Popular School Events

Teacher Appreciation · Back-to-School Night · Staff Lunches · Field Day · School Festivals · Conferences · Graduation · PTO/PTA Events

WHERE FOOD TRUCKS SHINE MOST

Teacher Appreciation makes staff feel genuinely celebrated
Field Day keeps students and volunteers energized
Back-to-School Night invites families to stay and connect

03 Customize Your Event Experience

What experience do you want to create?
The right setup depends on the atmosphere, menu variety, and flow you want — not attendance alone.

1 truck — **One Featured Truck**
Ideal for staff appreciation, smaller gatherings, or a featured treat such as lunch, dessert, or coffee.

2 trucks — **A Sweet & Savory Pair**
Pair a savory main with dessert or specialty drinks for a more complete experience.

3+ trucks — **Maximum Menu Variety**
Offer several cuisines side by side. Ideal for Field Day, festivals, and larger school-wide events.

04 Real Event Examples

Teacher Appreciation

Attendees
Teachers & staff

Servings
220

Trucks
1 food truck

Window
3-hour service

A specialty coffee truck, serving teachers and staff on their own schedule and turning a simple thank-you into something the whole staff looked forward to.

Back-to-School Fair

Attendees
Students, staff, parents

Servings
1,000

Trucks
4 food trucks

Window
2-hour service

A four-truck lineup with something for everyone, timed to feed roughly 1,000 students, parents, and staff in a two-hour window.

Planning Your Next School Event?

Whether you're planning a Teacher Appreciation event, field day, graduation, or a PTO/PTA gathering, our team can help create the right food truck experience for your school.

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