

# Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12

*Meeting the U.S. Department of Agriculture's meal pattern requirements  
for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*

**School Year 2021-22 (July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022)**



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# Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12

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## About this Guide

This guide contains information and guidance on planning menus to meet USDA’s meal patterns for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, based on USDA regulations and policy and Connecticut statutes and regulations. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. This guide applies to all public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the NSLP and SBP.

The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 are defined by the final rule, *Nutrition Standards for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* (77 FR 4088), as required by the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (Public Law 111-296). The USDA provides additional guidance on the meal pattern requirements through the policy memos on the USDA’s [FNS Documents & Resources](#) webpage. Links to the USDA’s regulations and final rules for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns are available in the “[Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Each section of this guide contains links to other sections when appropriate, and to websites with relevant information and resources. These resources can be accessed by clicking on the blue text throughout the guide.

The contents of this guide are subject to change. The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policies and guidance regarding the meal patterns for school nutrition programs. Please check the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) webpage for the most current version. For more information, contact Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator, at [susan.fiore@ct.gov](mailto:susan.fiore@ct.gov) or 860-807-2075.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA.



## USDA Nationwide Waivers for COVID-19

Pursuant to the [COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act \(H.R. 6201, Title II\)](#), and the exceptional circumstances of the current COVID-19 public health emergency, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has established a variety of nationwide waivers to support access to nutritious meals, while enforcing recommendations from public health experts with regard to social distancing measures. For more information, visit the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Operation of Child Nutrition Programs during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreaks](#) webpage.

School food authorities (SFAs) must apply to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to implement any of the current USDA waivers. If a sponsor has received approval from the CSDE to implement any of the national waiver provisions, these approvals supersede the applicable requirements in this guide. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Operation of Child Nutrition Programs during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreaks](#) webpage.

For information on the NSLP and SBP meal pattern flexibilities for 2021-22, refer to “[Meal Pattern Flexibilities During COVID-19](#)” in section 1.

# CSDE Contact Information


For questions regarding the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE’s Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education.

| School Nutrition Programs Staff  |   |
|--|---|
| County   | Consultant  |
| <b>Fairfield County</b> (includes Region 9)<br><b>Litchfield County</b> (includes Regions 1, 6, 7, 12, and 14)   | Fionnuala Brown<br><a href="mailto:fionnuala.brown@ct.gov">fionnuala.brown@ct.gov</a><br>860-807-2129 |
| <b>Hartford County</b> (includes Region 10)<br><b>Middlesex County</b> (includes Regions 4, 13, and 17)  | Teri Dandeneau<br><a href="mailto:teri.dandeneau@ct.gov">teri.dandeneau@ct.gov</a><br>860-807-2079    |
| <b>New Haven County</b> (includes Regions 5, 15, and 16)<br><b>New London County</b><br><b>Tolland County</b> (includes Regions 8 and 19)<br><b>Windham County</b> (includes Region 11)                  | Susan Alston<br><a href="mailto:susan.alston@ct.gov">susan.alston@ct.gov</a><br>860-807-2081          |
| Connecticut State Department of Education<br>Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education<br>Child Nutrition Programs<br>450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504<br>Hartford, CT 06103-1841 |   |

For information on the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), visit the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| APP    | alternate protein product                                    |
| AR     | Administrative Review  |
| ASP    | Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP                        |
| CFR    | Code of Federal Regulations                                  |
| C.G.S. | Connecticut General Statutes                                 |
| CN     | Child Nutrition  |
| CNP    | Child Nutrition Programs                                     |
| CSDE   | Connecticut State Department of Education                    |
| FBG    | <i>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</i> (USDA) |
| FDP    | Food Distribution Program                                    |
| FDA    | Food and Drug Administration                                 |
| FNS    | Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture   |
| HHFKA  | Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296)   |
| ICN    | Institute of Child Nutrition                                 |
| LEA    | local educational agency                                     |
| NSLP   | National School Lunch Program                                |
| OVS    | offer versus serve   |
| PFS    | product formulation statement                                |
| POS    | point of service   |
| RCCI   | residential child care institution                           |



|      |                                    |
|------|------------------------------------|
| SBP  | School Breakfast Program           |
| SFA  | school food authority              |
| SSO  | Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP |
| USDA | U.S. Department of Agriculture     |
| WGR  | whole grain-rich                   |