Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Effective June 8, 2026

This document summarizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Smart Snacks nutrition standards for competitive foods in schools.

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Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Introduction to Smart Snacks

The Smart Snacks nutrition standards apply to all competitive foods sold to students during the school day in all areas of the school campus and in all schools that participate in the NSLP and School Breakfast Program (SBP), including public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs).

- "Competitive foods" are all foods and beverages available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day, other than meals served in the USDA's school nutrition programs. This includes cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and any other sources where foods and beverages are available for sale to students. **Note:** Some state requirements are stricter and supersede the Smart Snacks requirements for competitive foods (refer to "Additional State Requirements for Competitive Foods" and "Additional state beverage requirements for public schools" in this document).

- "Sale" means the exchange of foods and beverages for a determined amount of money or its equivalent, such as tickets, coupons, tokens, and similar items. If students can redeem tickets, tokens, or similar items for foods and beverages, all foods and beverages must comply with Smart Snacks. Sales also include any activities that suggest a student donation in exchange for foods and beverages.

- The "school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

- The "school campus" is all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day.

The Smart Snacks standards include three categories: 1) entrees sold only a la carte; 2) snacks and side dishes; and 3) beverages. The food standards are the same for all grades. They include general standards (refer to table 1) and specific nutrient standards for calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, sodium, and caffeine (refer to table 2 for snacks and side dishes, and table 3 for entrees sold only a la carte). The beverage standards include different categories and portion size limits for elementary, middle, and high schools (refer to table 4).

Allowable competitive foods

To be allowed for sale to students, competitive foods must meet at least one general standard and all nutrient standards; and competitive beverages must meet the category requirements and portion size limits. Some food categories have exemptions for specific nutrient-rich foods that

are naturally higher in fat (such as reduced-fat cheese, seafood, nuts, seeds, and whole eggs) or sugars (such as dried fruit). If applicable, these are indicated in the "Exemptions" column for each standard in tables 1-3 of this document. There are no exemptions for the beverage categories.

School food authorities must evaluate foods and beverages for compliance with Smart Snacks based on the amount of the food or beverage item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, cream cheese, syrup, ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing.

> The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage identifies foods and beverages that comply with the federal and state requirements.

Legislation for Smart Snacks

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Smart Snacks nutrition standards for competitive foods in schools are required by the USDA's final rule, *National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the HHFKA of 2010* (Federal Register, Vol. 81, No. 146, July 29, 2016). These requirements are codified in 7 CFR 210.11 of the regulations for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Final rule updates effective July 1, 2024

The USDA's final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, implements two changes to the Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards, effective July 1, 2024.

1. **Elimination of trans fat standard:** The final rule removes the Smart Snacks synthetic trans fat standard. This change eliminates a requirement that the USDA determined is no longer necessary due to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) actions that eliminated synthetic trans fat from the U.S. food supply by 2021.

2. **Addition of exemption for bean dips from the total fat standard:** The final rule adds bean dips (as defined below) to the list of foods exempt from the Smart Snacks total fat standard. This exemption applies to products marketed as hummus and bean dips made from any variety of beans, peas, or lentils. Bean dips must still meet the Smart Snacks saturated fat standard and all other Smart Snacks requirements. This change allows schools to sell bean dips (including hummus) separately from reimbursable meals.

3. **Definition of bean dip:** A spread made from ground pulses (beans, peas, and/or lentils) with one or more of the following optional ingredients: ground nut/seed butter (such as tahini [ground sesame] or peanut butter; vegetable oil (such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil); seasoning (such as salt, citric acid); vegetables and juice for flavor (such as olives, roasted peppers, garlic, lemon juice); and for manufactured bean dip, ingredients necessary as preservatives and/or to maintain freshness.

Final rule updates effective July 1, 2025

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires limits for added sugars in flavored milk. Flavored milk cannot contain more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. In addition, flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools cannot contain more than 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

Final rule updates effective June 8, 2026

Effective June 8, 2026, the USDA final rule, *Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs*, codifies the milkfat requirements for fluid milk following the enactment of the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 (P.L. 119-69) on January 14, 2026. This final rule allows unflavored and flavored whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk as competitive foods under Smart Snacks, in addition to the previously allowed unflavored and flavored low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free milk. Flavored milk must meet the limits indicated above (refer to “Final rule updates effective July 1, 2025”).

Requirements for Fundraisers

The Smart Snacks nutrition standards apply to all fundraisers selling foods and beverages to students on school campus during the school day. “Fundraisers” are any activities during which money or its equivalent (such as tickets, coupons, tokens, and similar items) is exchanged for the purchase of a product in support of the school or school-related activities. This includes any activities that suggest a student donation in exchange for foods and beverages, since funds may be raised as a result.

- Foods and beverages that comply with the Smart Snacks standards can be sold at fundraisers on school campus during school hours, provided they comply with the state competitive foods regulations and any additional state restrictions.

- Foods and beverages that do not comply with the Smart Snacks standards can only be sold at fundraisers on the school campus after the end of the school day, provided they comply with any additional state restrictions.

- The Smart Snacks standards do not apply to foods and beverages sold during non-school hours, weekends, or off-campus fundraising events. However, some additional state restrictions apply.

> The CSDE does not allow exemptions for fundraisers. All fundraisers sold to students during the school day must meet the Smart Snacks nutrition standards. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *State Agency Fundraiser Elections and Exemptions for Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards*.

For more information on the state restrictions for competitive foods, refer to "Additional State Requirements for Competitive Foods" in this document. For detailed guidance on complying with the Smart Snacks fundraiser requirements, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Non-HFC Public Schools* and *Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions*.

Additional State Requirements for Competitive Foods

Some stricter provisions of Connecticut statutes and regulations supersede Smart Snacks and require additional restrictions for foods and beverages sold to students in schools.

- **Public schools** that choose the healthy food option of Connecticut's Healthy Food Certification (HFC) under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) must comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS), which exceeds Smart Snacks. HFC public schools must also comply with the Smart Snacks beverage standards and the stricter provisions of state statutes and regulations, including the state beverage statute (C.G.S. Section 10-221q), the state statute requiring healthy food choices (C.G.S. Section 10-221p), and the state competitive foods regulations (Sections 10-215b-1 and 10-215b-23 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Public Schools*, *Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations*, and *Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools*.

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- **Non-HFC public schools** must comply with the Smart Snacks standards for foods and beverages and the stricter provisions of state statutes and regulations, including the state beverage statute (C.G.S. Section 10-221q), the state statute requiring healthy food choices (C.G.S. Section 10-221p), and the state competitive foods regulations (Sections 10-215b-1 and 10-215b-23 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Public Schools*, *Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations*, and *Requirements for Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools*.

- **Private schools and RCCIs** must comply with the Smart Snacks standards for foods and beverages and the stricter provisions of the state competitive foods regulations (Sections 10-215b-1 and 10-215b-23 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations* and *Requirements for Competitive Foods in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions*.

For more information, visit the CSDE's HFC, CNS, and Beverage Requirements webpages.

Public schools that choose to implement the healthy food option of HFC under C.G.S. Section 10-215f must comply with the CNS instead of the USDA Smart Snacks standards. For more information, visit the CSDE's Connecticut Nutrition Standards webpage and Healthy Food Certification webpage.

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Smart Snacks General Standards for Foods

The Smart Snacks nutrition standards (7 CFR 210.11(c)) define general standards that apply to all competitive foods in the categories of entrees sold only a la carte and side dishes (refer to table 1). Entree items offered as part of the NSLP or SBP are exempt from all competitive food standards if they are sold as a competitive food on the day of service or the day after service in the lunch or breakfast program and are offered in the same or smaller portion sizes as the NSLP and SBP, and with the same accompaniments (7 CFR 210.11(c)(3)(i)). For information on the nutrient standards for entrees, refer to table 2.

General standards

To be allowable, a competitive food item must meet all of the competitive food nutrient standards (refer to table 1 and table 2) **AND**:

1. be a grain product that contains 50 percent or more whole grains by weight or has whole grains as the first ingredient*; **OR**
2. have as the first ingredient* one of the non-grain main food groups: fruits, vegetables, dairy, or protein foods (meat, beans, poultry, seafood, eggs, nuts, seeds, etc.); **OR**
3. be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup fruit and/or vegetable.

* If water is the first ingredient, the second ingredient must be one of the above.

Exemptions

- **Fresh fruits and vegetables** with no added ingredients except water are exempt from all nutrient standards.
- **Canned and frozen fruits** with no added ingredients except water, or that are packed in 100 percent juice, extra light syrup, or light syrup, are exempt from all nutrient standards.
- **Low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables** with no added fats are exempt from all nutrient standards.

Note: Paired exempt foods retain their individually designated exemption for total fat, saturated fat, and sugar when packaged together and sold, but are required to meet the designated calorie and sodium standards (refer to "paired exempt foods" in the Glossary).

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Smart Snacks Nutrient Standards for Foods

The nutrient standards in table 1 apply to all competitive foods in the category of snacks and side dishes. This category includes all foods that do not meet the definition of entree items. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried);
- pasta, rice, and cooked cereal grains, e.g., quinoa, bulgur, and bulgur;
- snack foods such as chips, crackers, popcorn, rice cakes, hard pretzels, pita chips, snack mix, and trail mix;
- breakfast cereals, e.g., cold ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals and cooked hot cereals such as oatmeal;
- nuts and seeds;
- peanut butter and other nut butters, e.g., almond butter and sunflower seed butter;
- dried meat snacks, e.g., beef jerky and meat sticks;
- bakery items, e.g., pastries, toaster pastries, muffins, waffles, pancakes, French toast, soft pretzels, rolls, and buns;
- desserts, e.g., cookies, brownies, cake, pie, and pudding;
- frozen desserts, e.g., frozen fruit bars, ice cream, and ice cream novelties;
- cereal bars and granola bars;
- cheese, e.g., low fat cheese sticks and low-fat cheese cubes;
- yogurt and soy yogurt; and
- school-made fruit/vegetable smoothies. **Note:** Smoothies that also contain a meat/meat alternate such as yogurt or peanut butter meet the entree definition (refer to "Smart Snacks entree definition" in this document).

Snacks and side dishes are evaluated for compliance with the Smart Snacks nutrient standards based on the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, margarine, oil, cream cheese, jam, jelly, syrup, sugar, salt, ketchup, mustard, relish, salad dressing, barbeque sauce, gravy, dipping sauce, sour cream, and whipped cream.

Exemption for sugar-free chewing gum

Sugar-free chewing gum is exempt from all Smart Snacks standards, provided the sales comply with the state competitive foods regulations. Section 10-215b-23 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies requires that the income from any foods and beverages sold to students anywhere on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after any of the USDA's school nutrition programs must accrue to the nonprofit food service account. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods*

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Regulations, and CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 1-18: *Accrual of Income from Sales of Competitive Foods in Schools*.

Table 1. Nutrient standards for snacks and side dishes

Standards for Snacks/Side Dishes	Exemptions
Calories: No more than 200 calories per item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, cream cheese, and salad dressing.	**Entree items served as a NSLP or SBP entree** are exempt on the day of or day after service in the program meal.
Total fat: No more than 35 percent of calories from total fat as served, including any added accompaniments.	• **Reduced fat cheese** (including part-skim mozzarella) is exempt from the total fat standard. • **Nuts and seeds and nut/seed butters** are exempt from the total fat standard. • Products consisting of only **dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds** with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats are exempt from the total fat standard. • **Seafood with no added fat** is exempt from the total fat standard. • **Whole eggs without added fat** are exempt from the total fat standard. • **Bean dips** (including products marketed as hummus and bean dips made from any variety of beans, peas, or lentils) are exempt from the total fat standard. Combination products other than paired exempt foods are not exempt and must meet all the nutrient standards (refer to "paired exempt foods" in the Glossary).

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Standards for Snacks/Side Dishes	Exemptions
Saturated fat: Less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat as served, including any added accompaniments.	• **Reduced fat cheese** (including part-skim mozzarella) is exempt from the saturated fat standard. • **Nuts and seeds and nut/seed butters** are exempt from the saturated fat standard. • Products consisting of only **dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds** with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats are exempt from the saturated fat standard. • **Whole eggs without added fat** are exempt from the saturated fat standard. Combination products other than paired exempt foods are not exempt and must meet all the nutrient standards.
Sugar: No more than 35 percent of weight from total sugar, as served.	• **Dried whole fruits or vegetables**; dried whole fruit or vegetable pieces; and dehydrated fruits or vegetables with no added nutritive sweeteners are exempt from the sugar standard. • **Dried whole fruits or pieces**, with nutritive sweeteners that are required for processing and/or palatability purposes (i.e., dried cranberries, tart cherries, or blueberries) are exempt from the sugar standard. • Products consisting of only **exempt dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds** with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats are exempt from the sugar standard.
Sodium: No more than 200 milligrams of sodium per item as served, including any added accompaniments.	None

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Standards for Snacks/Side Dishes	Exemptions
Accompaniments: Use of accompaniments is limited when competitive food is sold to students in school. The accompaniment must be included in the nutrient profile as part of the food item served and meet all proposed standards. Examples of accompaniments include butter, margarine, oil, cream cheese, jam, jelly, syrup, sugar, salt, ketchup, mustard, relish, salad dressing, barbeque sauce, gravy, dipping sauce, sour cream, and whipped cream.	None

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Standards for Snacks/Side Dishes	Exemptions
Caffeine • **Elementary and Middle Schools:** Foods and beverages must be caffeine-free with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine substances. • **High School:** Foods and beverages may contain caffeine**.** **Note:** For public schools, the stricter caffeine standards of C.G.S. Section 10-221q supersede the Smart Snacks beverage standards. The state beverage statute prohibits sales of caffeinated beverages (such as tea and coffee) to students in public schools **at all times**, unless the beverages meet specific exemption criteria. For more information, refer to "Additional state beverage requirements for public schools" in this document and visit the CSDE's Beverage Requirements webpage.	None

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Nutrient Standards for Foods

Any entree item offered as part of the NSLP or SBP is exempt from all competitive food standards if it is sold as a competitive food on the day of service or the day after service in the lunch or breakfast program. Exempt entrees that are sold as competitive foods must be offered in the same or smaller portion sizes as the NSLP and SBP and with the same accompaniments.

Entrees are evaluated for compliance with the Smart Snacks nutrient standards based on the amount of the food item **as served**, including any added accompaniments such as butter, margarine, oil, cream cheese, jam, jelly, syrup, sugar, salt, ketchup, mustard, relish, salad dressing, barbeque sauce, gravy, dipping sauce, sour cream, and whipped cream.

Smart Snacks entree definition

An "entree item" is a main dish food from one of following three categories:

- a combination food of meat/meat alternate (MMA) and whole grain-rich (WGR);
- a combination food of vegetable/fruit and meat/meat alternate; or
- a MMA alone, except for yogurt, low-fat or reduced fat cheese, nuts, seeds, nut and seed butters, and meat snacks.

School-made fruit/vegetable smoothies that also contain a MMA such as yogurt or peanut butter meet the entree definition.

At breakfast only, the entree definition also includes WGR grain-only items, such as bagels, muffins, and waffles (refer to "grain-only entrees" in the Glossary). The USDA allows schools to determine which grain-only items are defined as entree items for breakfasts offered as part of the SBP.

Table 2 summarizes the nutrient standards for entrees sold only a la carte.

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Table 2. Nutrient standards for entrees sold only a la carte

Standards for Entrees	Exemptions
Calories: No more than 350 calories per item as served including any added accompaniments.	**Entree items served as a NSLP or SBP entree** are exempt on the day of or day after service in the program meal.
Total fat: No more than 35 percent of calories from total fat as served including any added accompaniments.	**Seafood with no added fat** is exempt from the total fat standard.
Saturated fat: Less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat as served including any added accompaniments.	None
Sugar: No more than 35 percent of weight from total sugar as served.	None
Sodium: No more than 480 milligrams of sodium per item as served including any added accompaniments.	None
Caffeine **Elementary and middle school:** Foods and beverages must be caffeine-free except for trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine substances.	None

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Nutrient Standards for Beverages

The Smart Snacks nutrition standards (7 CFR 210.11(m)) define five categories of beverages that may be sold to elementary and middle students, and seven categories of beverages that may be sold to high school students (refer to table 3). There are no exemptions for these beverage categories.

For high schools only, certain low-calorie beverages are allowed. These beverages must be evaluated for compliance with the Smarts Snacks nutrition standards based on the amount of the beverage item as served, including any added accompaniments, e.g., coffee with milk, cream and sugar, tea with milk, cream and honey, and hot chocolate with milk and marshmallows.

Private schools and RCCIs must comply with the Smart Snacks beverage standards. Public schools (HFC and non-HFC) must comply with the Smart Snacks beverage standards and the stricter provisions of the additional state beverage requirements indicated below. Beverages that comply with all federal and state requirements are included on the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage.

Note: Effective June 8, 2026, the USDA final rule, *Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs*, allows unflavored and flavored whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk as competitive foods under Smart Snacks, in addition to the previously allowed unflavored and flavored low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free milk (refer to "Final rule updates effective June 8, 2026" in this document).

Additional state beverage requirements for public schools

In addition to complying with Smart Snacks, all Connecticut public school districts must comply with the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q. This state statute does not apply to private schools or RCCIs.

The Smart Snacks beverage standards apply only to beverages sold to students separately from reimbursable meals during the school day, in schools and institutions that participate in the USDA's school nutrition programs. The state beverage statute applies to all public schools, regardless of whether they participate in the USDA's school nutrition programs, and to all beverages available for sale to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals.

Some stricter provisions of the state beverage statute supersede the Smart Snacks beverage standards. Beverages that do not meet the requirements of state statute cannot be sold to students in public schools unless the local board of education or school governing authority

votes to allow exemptions, and the beverages are sold at the location of an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekend, provided they are not sold from a vending machine or school store. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools*.

For more information on the state beverage requirements for public schools, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Schools* and visit the CSDE's Beverage Requirements webpage.

Table 3. Standards and portion size limits for beverages

Beverage category	Smart Snacks Requirements	Additional state requirements for public schools (C.G.S. Section 10-221q)
Water, **plain,** with or without carbonation	Elementary, middle, and high: Unlimited	No added sugars, sweeteners, artificial sweeteners, or caffeine.
Milk, whole, reduced-fat (2%), low-fat, and fat-free, unflavored or flavored, including nutritionally equivalent milk alternatives permitted by the school meal requirements	• Elementary: No more than 8 fluid ounces (fl oz) • Middle and high: No more than12 fl oz **Limit for added sugars** • All grades: No more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces • Sold as competitive food in middle and high schools: No more than 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces	**Milk:** No more than 4 grams of sugar per ounce. No artificial sweeteners. **Nondairy milk alternatives:** No more than 4 grams of sugar per ounce, 35 percent of calories from fat, and 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. No artificial sweeteners. For information on allowable products, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs*.

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Beverage category	Smart Snacks Requirements	Additional state requirements for public schools (C.G.S. Section 10-221q)
100% fruit or vegetable juice, with or without carbonation	• Elementary: No more than 8 fluid ounces (fl oz) • Middle and high: No more than12 fl oz	No added sugars, sweeteners, or artificial sweeteners.
100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water and no added sweeteners, with or without carbonation	• Elementary: No more than 8 fluid ounces (fl oz) • Middle and high: No more than12 fl oz	No added sugars, sweeteners, or artificial sweeteners. Must meet the requirements specified in the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Beverages Containing Water and Juice*.
Water, **flavored,** calorie free, with or without carbonation	• Elementary and middle: Not permitted • High: No more than 12 fl oz	No added sugars, sweeteners, artificial sweeteners, or caffeine.
Low-calorie beverages Less than 5 calories per 8 fluid ounces or no more than 10 calories per 20 fluid ounces	• Elementary and middle: Not permitted • High: No more than 12 fl oz. Must be evaluated for compliance with the calorie limits based on the amount of the beverage item as served, including any added accompaniments, e.g., coffee with milk or cream and sugar; tea with milk and honey; and hot chocolate with milk and marshmallows.	Except for water/juice beverages that meet the requirements of state statute, beverages in this category (such as soda, sports drinks, coffee, tea, and caffeinated beverages) do not comply with C.G.S. Section 10-221q and cannot be sold to students unless the sales meet specific exemption criteria (refer to "Additional state beverage requirements for public schools" in this document).

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Beverage category	Smart Snacks Requirements	Additional state requirements for public schools (C.G.S. Section 10-221q)
Low-calorie beverages [2] No more than 40 calories per 8 fluid ounces or no more than 60 calories per 12 fluid ounces	• Elementary and middle: Not permitted • High: No more than 12 fl oz. Must be evaluated for compliance with the calorie limits based on the amount of the beverage item as served, including any added accompaniments, e.g., coffee with milk or cream and sugar; tea with milk and honey; and hot chocolate with milk and marshmallows.	Except for water/juice beverages that meet the requirements of state statute, beverages in this category (such as soda, sports drinks, coffee, tea, and caffeinated beverages) do not comply with C.G.S. Section 10-221q and cannot be sold to students unless the sales meet specific exemption criteria (refer to "Additional state beverage requirements for public schools" in this document).

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Glossary

a la carte sales (also known as "competitive foods"): Foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals in the USDA's school nutrition programs. A la carte items include, but are not limited to, foods and beverages sold in the cafeteria serving lines, a la carte lines, kiosks, vending machines, school stores, and snack bars located anywhere on school grounds.

added sugars: According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), "Added sugars include sugars that are added during the processing of foods (such as sucrose or dextrose), foods packaged as sweeteners (such as table sugar), sugars from syrups and honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices. They do not include naturally occurring sugars that are found in milk, fruits, and vegetables." Examples include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, and syrup.

artificial sweeteners: A category of nonnutritive sweeteners used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. The six artificial sweeteners approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) include acesulfame potassium (Ace-K) (e.g., Sweet One®, Sunett ®, and Sweet & Safe®); advantame; aspartame (e.g., Nutrasweet®, Equal®, and Sugar Twin®; neotame (e.g., Newtame®); saccharin (e.g., Sweet and Low®, Sweet Twin®, and Necta Sweet); and sucralose (Splenda®). These nonnutritive sweeteners are calorie-free except for aspartame, which is very low in calories.

bean dip: A spread made from ground pulses (beans, peas, and/or lentils) with one or more of the following optional ingredients: ground nut/seed butter (such as tahini [ground sesame] or peanut butter; vegetable oil (such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil); seasoning (such as salt, citric acid); vegetables and juice for flavor (such as olives, roasted peppers, garlic, lemon juice); and for manufactured bean dip, ingredients necessary as preservatives and/or to maintain freshness.

competitive foods (applies to Smart Snacks only): All foods and beverages available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day, other than meals served in the USDA's school nutrition programs. This includes cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and any other sources where foods and beverages are available for sale to students. **Note:** Some state requirements are stricter and supersede the Smart Snacks requirements for competitive foods (refer to "Additional State Requirements for Competitive Foods" and "Additional state beverage requirements for public schools" in this document).

entree items (applies to Smart Snacks only): A main dish food item that belongs to one of the following three categories: 1) a combination food of meat/meat alternate and WGR food; 2) a combination food of vegetable/fruit and meat/meat alternate; and 3) a meat/meat alternate alone, except for yogurt, low-fat or reduced fat cheese, nuts, seeds, nut and seed butters, and meat snacks. At breakfast only, the entree definition also includes WGR grain-only items, such as bagels, muffins, and waffles.

grain-only entrees (applies to Smart Snacks only): WGR grain items that are served as the main dish in a school breakfast, such as bagels, muffins, and waffles. Grain-only entrees are exempt from all Smart Snacks standards if they are offered as competitive foods on the day of or the day after they are served in the SBP. Exempt grain-only entree items offered as competitive foods must be offered in the same or smaller portion sizes as the SBP and with the same accompaniments, e.g., pancakes with syrup and bagel with cream cheese. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Grain-only Entrees at Breakfast under the Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards*.

nonnutritive sweeteners: Ingredients without calories that are hundreds of times sweeter than sugars and that are used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Nonnutritive sweeteners include the six FDA-approved artificial sweeteners (acesulfame potassium (Ace-K), advantame, aspartame, neotame, saccharin, and sucralose) and three plant-based sweeteners (stevia, monk fruit, and thaumatin) that are Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) by the FDA. For more information on nonnutritive sweeteners, refer to the FDA's Aspartame and Other Sweeteners in Food webpage.

paired exempt foods (applies to Smart Snacks only): Section 7 CFR 210.11(a)(6) of the NSLP regulations defines "paired exempt foods" as food items that have been designated as exempt from one or more of the nutrient requirements individually which are packaged together without any additional ingredients. These paired exempt foods retain their individually designated exemption for total fat, saturated fat, and sugar when packaged together and sold, but are required to meet the designated calorie and sodium standards. For example, peanut butter is exempt from the total fat and saturated fat limits. When peanut butter is paired with a vegetable or fruit (such as celery or apples), the paired snack retains the total fat and saturated fat exemptions and may be served if it meets the calorie and sodium limits. **Note:** Entree items sold a la carte do not qualify as paired exempt foods. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Paired Exempt Foods*.

portion size: The amount of the item as packaged or served. The individual serving size or package cannot exceed 480 calories for entrees or 200 calories for all other foods.

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

reimbursable school meal: A meal that meets the meal pattern requirements of the USDA's National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP). For more information, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage or Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Sale (applies to Smart Snacks only): The exchange of foods and beverages for a determined amount of money or its equivalent, such as tickets, coupons, tokens, and similar items. If students can redeem tickets, tokens, or similar items for foods and beverages, all foods and beverages must comply with Smart Snacks. Sales also include any activities that suggest a student donation in exchange for foods and beverages.

school day: The period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

school campus: All areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day.

total sugars: All sources of sugars including the naturally occurring sugars in foods (such as fruits, vegetables, and milk) and sugars added to foods (e.g., brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, and syrup).

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Resources

A Guide to Smart Snacks in School (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school

Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Public Schools (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/allowable_beverages_public_schools.pdf

Beverage Requirements (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/beverage-requirements

Comparison of the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and the USDA's Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/comparison_chart_connecticut_nutrition_standards_and_smart_snacks.pdf

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 1-18: Accrual of Income from Sales of Competitive Foods in Schools:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/memos/om2018/om01-18.pdf

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/list-of-acceptable-foods-and-beverages

Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/overview_ct_competitive_ foods_regulations.pdf

Overview of Federal and State Laws for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools, Private Schools, and Residential Child Care Institutions (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/overview_federal_state_laws_competitive_foods.pdf

Requirements for Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/requirements_competitive_foods_nonhfc.pdf

Requirements for Competitive Foods in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/requirements_competitive_foods_private_rcci.pdf

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Non-HFC Public Schools (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/fundraiser_requirements_nonhfc.pdf

Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/fundraiser_requirements_private_rcci.pdf

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/culinary_programs_requirements_hfc.pdf

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in Non-HFC Public Schools (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/culinary_programs_requirements_nonhfc.pdf

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in Non-HFC Public Schools (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/school_store_requirements_nonhfc.pdf

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/school_store_requirements_private_rcci.pdf

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in Non-HFC Public Schools (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/vending_machine_requirements_nonhfc.pdf

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/vending_machine_requirements_private_rcci.pdf

Requirements for Grain-only Entrees at Breakfast under the Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/smart_snacks_grain_only_entrees_breakfast.pdf

Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/resources_federal_state_requirements_competitive_foods.pdf

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/smart-snacks-nutrition-standards

Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Paired Exempt Foods (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/smart_snacks_paired_exempt_foods.pdf.

State Agency Fundraiser Elections and Exemptions for Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/state_agency_fundraiser_elections_smart_snacks.pdf

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (89 FR 31962):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-042524

USDA Final Rule: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the HHFKA of 2010:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-072916d

Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

For more information, visit the CSDE's Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards webpage and Beverage Requirements webpage or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/summary_smart_snacks_nutrition_standards.pdf.

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Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
   Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
   1400 Independence Avenue, SW
   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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