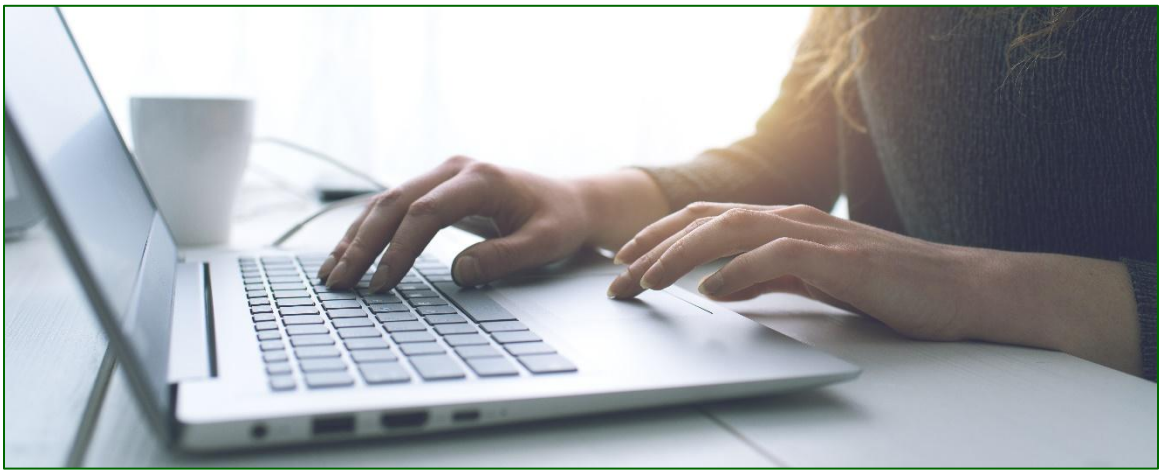
Guidance for Completing the Healthy Food Certification Compliance Survey

School Year 2026-27

This document provides important guidance for public school districts that implement Healthy Food Certification (HFC) under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). Successful compliance with the annual HFC documentation requirements ensures that HFC districts can maintain their HFC funding.

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HFC Documentation Due November 30, 2026

All public school districts that implement HFC must provide annual HFC compliance documentation to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) by **November 30** of each year. This documentation addresses the following foods and beverages available for sale to students in all schools in the district and all recipient schools that choose to participate in HFC under the district's interschool agreements:

- all foods available for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP);
- all foods and beverages served in afterschool snacks in the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP; and
- all beverages available for sale to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals, and separately from reimbursable afterschool snacks.

The HFC documentation must include all sources of these foods and beverages, such as cafeteria sales, vending machines, school stores, kiosks, concession stands, other school-based enterprises, fundraisers, and any other sources of food and beverage sales to students, e.g., culinary arts programs, family and consumer sciences classes, afterschool programs, and public schools under interschool agreements. This includes all commercial food and beverage products and foods made from scratch.

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Summary Chart of HFC Documentation Requirements

The chart below summarizes the required documentation that HFC districts must submit to the CSDE and includes links to instructions and forms for each requirement.

Public schools	Requirements	Guidance and forms
All HFC districts	**Submit online:** HFC Compliance Survey	• Guidance for Completing the HFC Compliance Survey • Preview of the HFC Compliance Survey Questions
Certain HFC districts: Refer to the CSDE's Districts Required to Submit Lists of Foods and Beverages	**Submit online:** HFC Compliance Survey **Email to CSDE:** Lists of foods and beverages (refer to "Submitting Lists of Foods and Beverages" on page 11 of the CSDE's Guidance for Submitting Lists of Foods and Beverages for HFC Documentation)	• Guidance for Completing the HFC Compliance Survey • Preview of the HFC Compliance Survey Questions • Guidance for Submitting Lists of Foods and Beverages for HFC Documentation • HFC Documentation Forms 1-9, as applicable, based on the district's sources of foods and beverages available for sale to students (refer to the "Requirements for Certain HFC Districts" section of the CSDE's HFC webpage

An overview of the HFC documentation requirements is available in the CSDE's training video, *Completing the Documentation Requirements for Healthy Food Certification*.

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Quick Tips

- **Submit only one survey per district:** The HFC contact person and food service director should coordinate to submit one survey for the district. To prevent multiple submissions, the survey allows only one submission from the same computer. Individuals who are responsible for more than one district must use a different computer to complete each district's HFC Compliance Survey or may email susan.fiore@ct.gov o temporarily unlock the survey for submitting multiple districts

- **Review the guidance:** Each section contains definitions and guidance for the questions in that section. Read this information before answering the questions.

- **Navigating the survey:** Use the "NEXT" and "GO BACK" buttons in the blue box at the bottom of the screen to navigate between the questions.

- **Progress bar:** The black bar at the top of the survey shows the progress as each question is answered.

- **Leaving and reentering the survey:** Until the survey is submitted, the respondent may quit the survey and return at any time to continue.

- **Submitting the survey:** At the end of the survey, "End of HFC Compliance Survey" will display. Click "NEXT" to submit the survey and a message will appear to indicate that the submission is complete.

- **Correcting a survey after submission:** Answers cannot be edited after the survey is submitted. To correct a form after it is submitted, contact susan.fiore@ct.gov.

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All Districts Submit the HFC Compliance Survey

All HFC districts must submit the online HFC Compliance Survey. This survey is completed by the district's designated HFC contact person in consultation with the appropriate individuals responsible for each source of the district's food and beverage sales.

- The HFC contact person is the point person designated by the school district for coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the district's HFC under C.G.S. Section 10-215f. The district indicates this person in section 6A, "HFC District Contact Information," of the district's annual HFC Statement in the CSDE's Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Refer to number 2 in "Information Needed Before Beginning the Survey" in this document.

- Appropriate individuals include anyone responsible for food and beverage sales to students on school premises. Examples may include the school food service director, cafeteria managers, culinary arts teachers, family and consumer sciences teachers, athletic directors, parent groups, and individuals who coordinate fundraising activities, school stores, kiosks, other school-based enterprises, vending machines, and any other food or beverage sales to students.

Additional HFC Documentation Requirements for Certain Districts

In addition to submitting the HFC Compliance Survey, certain HFC districts must also submit lists of food and beverages. Districts that are required to submit these lists are identified in the CSDE's document, *Districts Required to Submit Food and Beverage Lists for School Year 2026-27*. These lists must include the following sources of foods and beverages in all district schools all recipient schools that choose to participate in HFC under the district's interschool agreements:

- all foods available for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals in the NSLP and SBP;
- all foods and beverages served in afterschool snacks in the ASP; and
- all beverages available for sale to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals, and separately from reimbursable afterschool snacks.

Districts must email these lists to the CSDE. For specific instructions on the requirements for completing and submitting the district's lists of foods and beverages, refer to the CSDE's

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Guidance for Submitting Lists of Foods and Beverages for Healthy Food Certification Documentation.

Districts not identified in the CSDE's document, *Districts Required to Submit Food and Beverage Lists for School Year 2026-27*, do not submit lists of foods and beverages.

Survey Logistics

The guidance below provides information about completing and submitting the online HFC Compliance Survey.

Time to complete: If the required information is collected in advance, the survey takes about 10 minutes to complete, depending on the type and amount of the district's food and beverage sales. To expedite the process, review the questions and guidance in the CSDE's *Preview of the HFC Compliance Survey Questions* and gather the required information before beginning the survey (refer to "Information Needed Before Beginning the Survey" in this document).

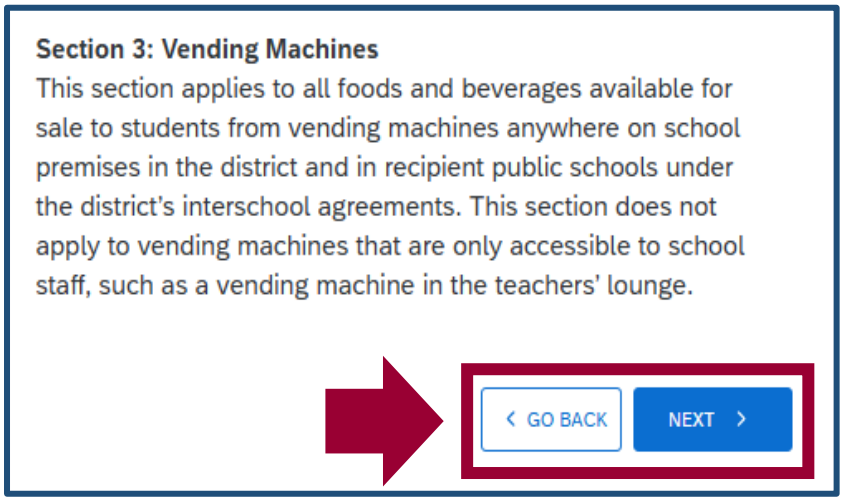
> **Note:** The *Preview of the HFC Compliance Survey Questions* is a PDF of the entire HFC Compliance Survey including all questions. Depending on the district's responses, the online version of the survey will not include all questions in the PDF version. This survey uses skip logic to go to a future point in the survey based on how questions are answered. For example, if the district indicates that they do not sell any foods and beverages in vending machines, the survey skips the questions related to vending machines and goes to the next section.

Submit only one survey per district: The HFC contact person and food service director should coordinate to submit one survey for the district. To prevent multiple submissions from the same district, the online survey allows only one submission from the same computer. Individuals who are responsible for more than one district must use a different computer to complete each district's HFC Compliance Survey or may email susan.fiore@ct.gov to temporarily unlock the survey for submitting multiple districts.

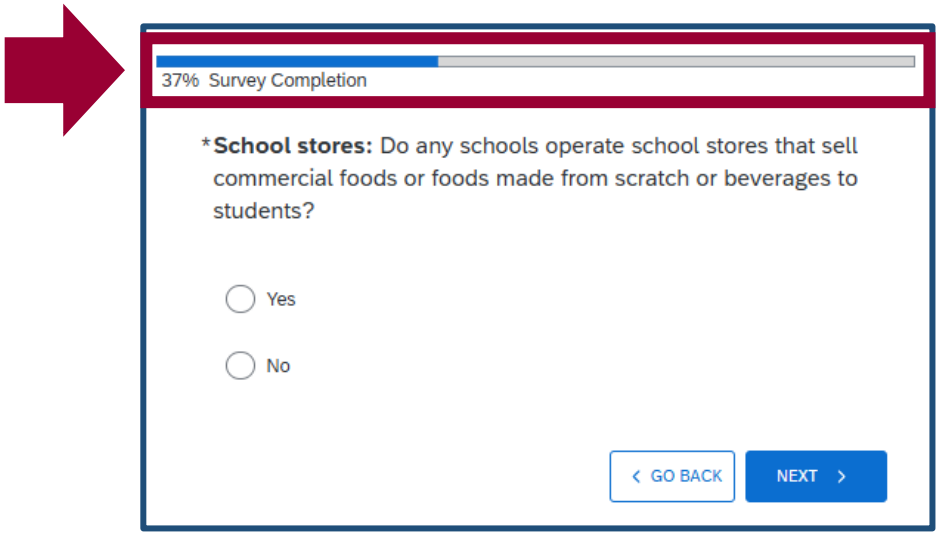
Review the guidance: Each section contains definitions and guidance for the questions in that section. Read this information before answering the questions.

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Navigating the survey: Use the “NEXT” and “GO BACK” buttons in the blue box at the bottom of the screen to navigate between the questions.



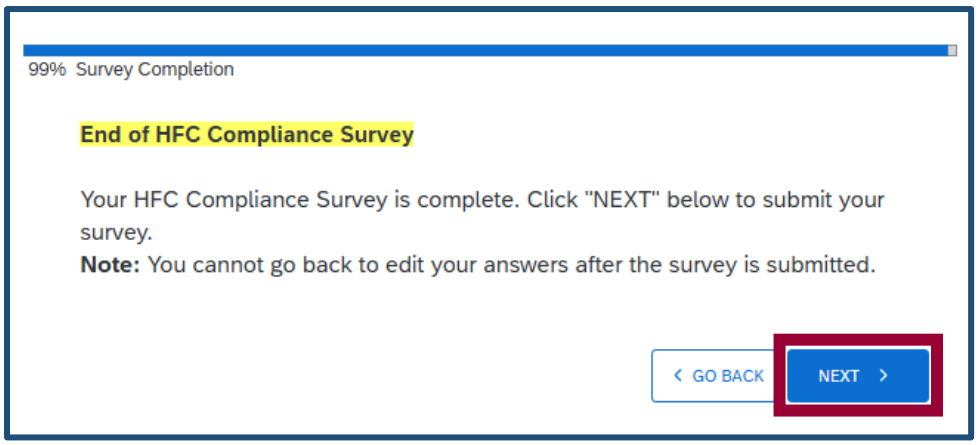
Progress bar: The blue bar at the top of the survey shows the respondent’s progress as each question is answered.



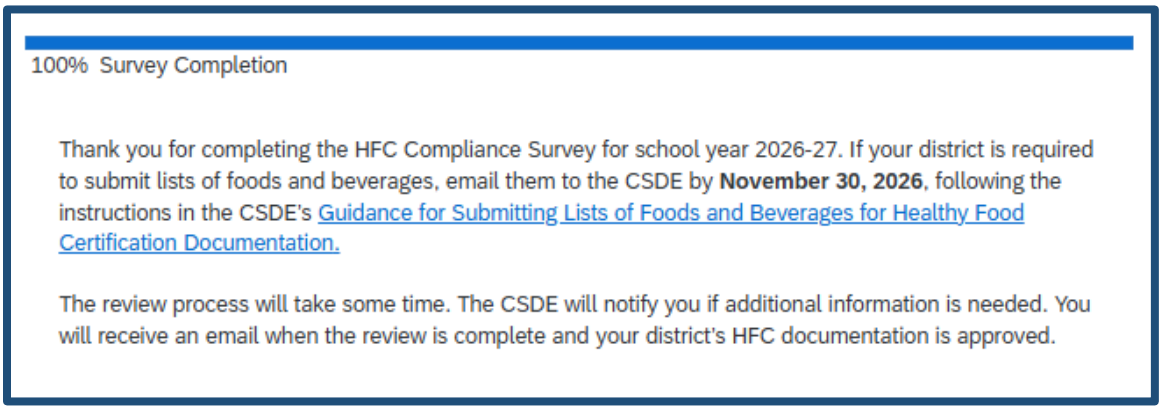
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Leaving and resuming the survey: Until the survey is submitted, the respondent may quit the survey and return at any time to continue.

Submitting the survey: At the end of the survey, the respondent will see the message below, "End of HFC Compliance Survey." Click "NEXT" to submit the survey. **Note:** Answers cannot be edited after the survey is submitted.



The message below will appear to indicate that the submission is complete. Answers cannot be edited after the survey is submitted.



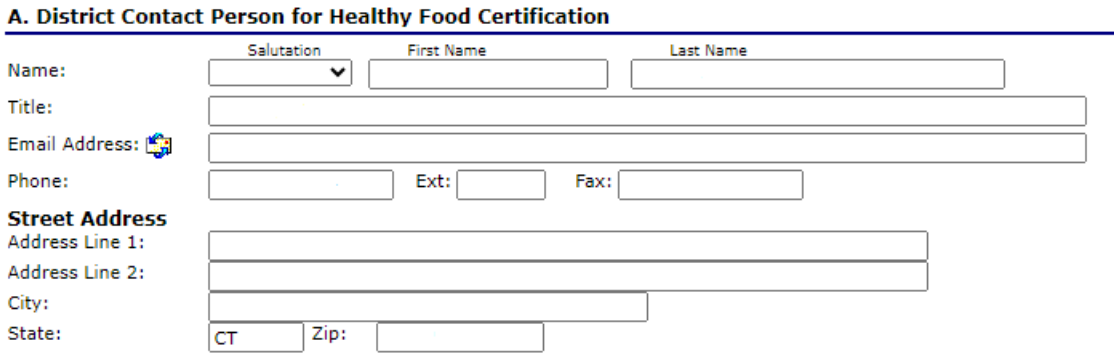
Correcting a survey after submission: To correct a survey after it is submitted, *contact Susan Fiore, HFC Coordinator, at* susan.fiore@ct.gov.

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Information Needed Before Beginning the Survey

1. **Sponsor agreement number:** This is the five-digit number on the sponsor's online agreement for Child Nutrition Programs, located in the CNP System.

2. **Name of district's designated HFC contact person:** This is the person indicated in section 6A, "HFC District Contact Information," of the district's annual HFC Statement in the CNP System. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Responsibilities of District Contact Person for Healthy Food Certification*.



3. **Section 1 – Cafeteria beverage sales:** This section asks for information about beverages sold in school cafeterias in the district and in recipient public schools under the district's interschool agreement: What beverages are available for sale to students separately from and as part of reimbursable meals? Is the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages used to identify allowable beverages?

4. **Section 2 – Cafeteria food sales:** This section asks for information about foods sold in school cafeterias in the district and in recipient public schools under the district's interschool agreement: What commercial food products and foods made from scratch are available for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals (a la carte sales)? Is the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages used to identify allowable commercial foods? What are the district's procedures to ensure that a la carte foods made from scratch comply with the CNS? Is the following documentation available for all a la carte foods made from scratch: 1) a standardized recipe that indicates the nutrition information per serving; and 2) the appropriate completed CNS worksheet to indicate that the recipe's serving complies with the CNS?

5. **Section 3 – Vending machines:** This section asks for information about the vending machines in the district and in recipient public schools under the district's interschool agreement: How many vending machines are accessible to students in all schools? Do vending machines sell beverages, foods, or both? Is the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages used to identify allowable commercial foods and beverages?

6. **Section 4 – School stores, kiosks, and similar school-based enterprises:** This section asks for information about school stores, kiosks, and similar school-based enterprises in the district and in recipient public schools under the district's interschool agreement: How many school stores are in the district? Do school stores sell beverages, foods, or both? Is the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages used to identify allowable commercial foods and beverages? What are the district's procedures to ensure that foods made from scratch comply with the CNS? Is the following documentation available for each food made from scratch: 1) a standardized recipe that indicates the nutrition information per serving; and 2) the appropriate completed CNS worksheet to indicate that the recipe's serving complies with the CNS?

7. **Section 5 – Fundraisers:** This section asks for information about food and beverage fundraisers in the district and in recipient public schools under the district's interschool agreement: Do food and beverage fundraisers meet all HFC requirements? Does the district conduct fundraisers only at the location of exempted events held after the school day or on the weekend? For fundraisers held during the school day or outside of BOE exempted events: What are the district's procedures to ensure that food and beverage fundraisers comply with HFC requirements? Is the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages used to identify allowable commercial foods and beverages? Is the following documentation available for all foods made from scratch: 1) a standardized recipe that indicates the nutrition information per serving; and 2) the appropriate completed CNS worksheet to indicate that the recipe's serving complies with the CNS?

8. **Section 6 – Afterschool Snack Program (ASP):** This section asks for information about foods and beverages served in the ASP in the district and in recipient public schools under the district's interschool agreement: Is the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage used to identify allowable commercial foods and beverages? What are the district's procedures to ensure that foods made from scratch comply with the CNS? Is the following documentation available for each food made from scratch: 1) a standardized recipe that indicates the nutrition information per serving; and 2) the appropriate completed CNS worksheet to indicate that the recipe's serving complies with the CNS?

9. **Section 7 – Food and beverage sales from other sources:** This section asks for information about any other sources of foods and beverages available for sale to students in the district and in recipient public schools under the district's interschool agreement, that are not already included in the previous sections 1-6. Examples of other sources include:

    - adult education programs operated by the BOE;
    - afterschool enrichment or other programs charging a fee for participation that includes the cost of foods and beverages provided to students;
    - culinary arts programs;
    - family and consumer sciences classes;
    - family resource centers;
    - Summer school programs (e.g., enrichment or exploratory) operated by BOE;
    - Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) operated by the BOE (applies only to a la carte sales);
    - sports programs charging a fee for participation that includes the cost of foods and beverages provided to students;
    - any other programs or organizations selling foods and beverages to students on school premises.

    What other programs and organizations sell foods and beverages to students? Is the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages used to identify allowable commercial foods and beverages? What are the district's procedures to ensure that all foods made from scratch comply with the CNS? Is the following documentation available for all foods made from scratch: 1) a standardized recipe that indicates the nutrition information per serving; and 2) the appropriate completed CNS worksheet to indicate that the recipe's serving complies with the CNS?

Questions

Contact Susan Fiore, HFC Coordinator, at susan.fiore@ct.gov or 860-807-2075.

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Resources

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

Annual HFC Documentation (CSDE's Healthy Food Certification (HFC) webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification/annual-hfc-documentation

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

Completing the Documentation Requirements for Healthy Food Certification (CSDE training module):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification/annual-hfc-documentation#DocumentationTrainingModule

Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System):
https://ct.cnpus.com/prod/Splash.aspx

Ensuring District Compliance with Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/ensuring_district_compliance_hfc.pdf

Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/connecticut-nutrition-standards/evaluating-foods-for-cns-compliance

Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/food_beverage_exemptions_public_schools.pdf

Guidance on Evaluating Recipes for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/evaluating_recipes_cns_compliance.pdf

Healthy Food Certification Compliance Survey for School Year 2026-27 (CSDE):
https://sdect.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dbDcWrcDXWG6uUK

How to Evaluate Commercial Food Products for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/evaluate_commerical_food_products_cns.pdf

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How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/evaluate_scratch_foods_cns_compliance.pdf

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

Preview of the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Compliance Survey Questions (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/doc/preview_hfc_compliance_survey.pdf

Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/questions_answers_connecticut_statutes_school_foods_beverages.pdf

Summary of Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/cns/connecticut_nutrition_standards_summary.pdf

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For more information, visit the "Annual HFC Documentation" section of the CSDE's HFC webpage or contact the HFC coordinator in the CSDE's 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/hfc/doc/guidance_completing_hfc_compliance_survey.pdf.

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