

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 2023-24 (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024)



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Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs
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Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12

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About this Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12* provides comprehensive guidance and resources for school food authorities (SFAs) on planning menus to meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) 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. The requirements in this guide apply 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 rules, *Nutrition Standards for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* (77 FR 4088) and *Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium* (87 FR 6984), and are specified in 7 CFR 210.10 of the NSLP regulations and 7 CFR 220.8 of the SBP regulations. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

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 based on the current USDA regulations and policy as of the date of this publication. This information is subject to change. The CSDE updates this guide as the USDA issues new 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 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.

CSDE Contact Information


For questions regarding the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE’s Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs.

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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
MMA	meat/meat alternates
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OVS	offer versus serve
Oz eq	ounce equivalents
PFS	product formulation statement
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

For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Common Acronyms and Abbreviations in School Nutrition Programs*.