Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

This document summarizes the changes to the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs that are required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The school nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP.

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Introduction

On April 25, 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (89 FR 31962). This rulemaking finalizes long-term school nutrition requirements based on the goals of the *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, robust stakeholder input, and lessons learned from prior rulemakings. These updates represent continued progress toward supporting the nutrition quality of school meals, strengthening the Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs), and advancing USDA's commitment to nutrition security.

The final rule updates include changes to the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns, the Buy American Provision, professional standards, geographic preference, and the Smart Snacks nutrition standards. **This document includes only the meal pattern changes.** For additional guidance on all final rule requirements, refer to USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, and SFSP 12-2024: *Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and visit the "Meal Pattern Changes" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Applicable Meal Patterns

This document summarizes the final rule changes that apply to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 (refer to chart 1), the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns (refer to chart 2), and the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 (refer to chart 3). These changes also apply to the SSO, which follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

Implementation Timeline for Meal Pattern Changes

Some menu planning flexibilities take effect for school year (SY) 2024-25 (beginning July 1, 2024). These are indicated with the following statement: "☑ Menu planning flexibility."

Changes to school menus or operations are not required until SY 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2024). The charts in this document identify the changes that occur in each SY.

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Chart 1: Updates to NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

The chart below summarizes the final rule changes that apply to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage and Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage. A summary of the meal pattern crediting requirements is provided in the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*. For training on the NSLP and SBP meal patterns, refer to the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Requirements NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12	**SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)**	**SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)**
Terminology update for meal components	Changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "food component" to "meal component." Adds the following definition for meal component: "*Meal component* means one of the food groups which comprise reimbursable meals. The meal components are: fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk."	None
Traditional indigenous foods	Explicitly includes in the NSLP and SBP regulations that traditional Indigenous foods may be served in reimbursable school meals. This change is intended to support local efforts to incorporate traditional Indigenous foods into school meals.	None

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Requirements NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Milk component	**Allowable types of milk**: Continues to allow school food authorities (SFAs) to offer fat-free and low-fat milk (flavored and unflavored). **Nutrition standard for fluid milk substitutes:** Updates the units for vitamin A and vitamin D requirements for fluid milk substitutes to align with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling requirements. • For vitamin A, instead of 500 IUs, the unit requirement is now 150 mcg retinol activity equivalents (RAE) per 8 fluid ounces. • For vitamin D, instead of 100 IUs, the unit requirement is now 2.5 mcg per 8 fluid ounces. The amount of vitamin A and vitamin D required in fluid milk substitutes does not change; only the unit of measurement has changed to conform to FDA labeling requirements. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Identifying Products that Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the School Nutrition Programs*.	**Flavored milk:** Establishes a new sugars limit for flavored milk: no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. **Flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools:** Establishes a new sugars limit for flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools: no more than 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

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Requirements NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Vegetables component	**Substituting vegetables for fruits at breakfast:** Continues to allow schools to substitute vegetables for fruits in the SBP and simplifies the vegetable variety requirement. • Schools choosing to offer vegetables at breakfast one day per school week have the option to offer any vegetable, including a starchy vegetable. • Schools choosing to substitute vegetables for fruits at breakfast on two or more days per school week are required to offer vegetables from at least two different subgroups (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program*). ☑ Menu planning flexibility **Terminology update for beans, peas, and lentils:** Changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "legumes (beans and peas)" to "beans, peas, and lentils." **Beans, peas, and lentils at lunch:** Allows schools to count beans, peas, and lentils offered as a meat alternate at lunch to also count toward the weekly beans, peas, and lentils vegetable subgroup requirement. As with the current requirement, menu planners determine whether peas, and lentils count toward the vegetables component or the MMA component. Beans, peas, and lentils offered as either vegetables or meat alternates can count toward the weekly vegetable subgroup requirement to offer ½ cup of beans, peas, and lentils. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*.	None

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Requirements NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Fruits component	None	None
Meats/meat alternates (MMA) component	**MMA at breakfast:** Establishes a combined grains and MMA meal component in the SBP and removes the requirement for schools to offer 1 ounce equivalent of grains each day at breakfast. Schools may offer grains, MMA, or a combination of both, to meet the minimum daily and weekly ounce equivalents in this combined meal component requirement. ☑ Menu planning flexibility **Nuts and seeds:** Allows nuts and seeds to credit for the full MMA component in all meals and afterschool snacks, removing the previous 50 percent crediting limit for nuts and seeds at lunch. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs*. ☑ Menu planning flexibility	**Yogurt:** Establishes new sugars limit for yogurt. Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). For current crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

Requirements NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Grains component	**Whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement:** Maintains the current requirement that at least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered in the NSLP and SBP for grades K-12 must be whole grain-rich, based on ounce equivalents. For guidance on the WGR requirement, visit the "Whole Grain-rich Requirements" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage. **WGR definition:** Adds the following WGR definition in NSLP and SBP regulations: "Whole grain-rich is the term designated by FNS to indicate that the grain content of a product is between 50 and 100 percent whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched." This definition does not change the meaning of WGR. SFAs can continue to identify WGR products as described in current USDA guidance. For guidance on identifying WGR foods, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*. **Substituting vegetables for grains in tribal communities:** Allows SFAs and schools that are tribally operated, operated by the Bureau of Indian Education, and that serve primarily American Indian or Alaska Native children to serve vegetables to meet the grains requirement for the NSLP and SBP. ☑ Menu planning flexibility	**Breakfast cereals:** Establishes new sugar limit for breakfast cereals: no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For current crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

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Requirements NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Dietary specifications	**Synthetic trans fat:** Removes the dietary specification prohibiting synthetic trans fat in the NSLP and SBP and the Smart Snacks nutrition standards for foods sold to children on campus during the school day. 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. **Sodium:** Maintains the current sodium limits for the NSLP and SBP through the end of school year 2026-27 and codifies a single sodium reduction for both programs. For guidance on the sodium requirements, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Sodium Limits for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.	**Sodium for the NSLP:** By **school year 2027-28**, schools must implement a reduction of about 15 percent from current sodium levels. **Sodium for the SBP:** By **school year 2027-28**, schools must implement a reduction of about 10 percent from current sodium levels. **Added sugars:** By **school year 2027-28**, schools must implement a new weekly dietary limit (dietary specification) for added sugars in school meals. By **school year 2027-28**, added sugars must be less than 10 percent of calories per week. This weekly limit is in addition to the product-based limits for breakfast cereals, yogurt, and flavored milk.

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Requirements NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Meal modifications	**Terminology update:** Changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "medical authority" to "state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian." **Definition of state licensed healthcare professional:** Defines a state licensed healthcare professional as an individual authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law. In Connecticut, this includes licensed physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN). **NSLP and SBP regulations:** Updates and reorganizes the regulatory text to distinguish between disability and non-disability requests more clearly, and encourages schools, institutions, and facilities to meet children's non-disability dietary preferences when planning and preparing school meals and afterschool snacks. For guidance on the requirements for meal modifications, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.	**Medical statements from registered dietitians:** Outlines in regulation that state licensed healthcare professionals and registered dietitians may write medical statements to request meal modifications on behalf of participants with disabilities. Requires SFAs to accept medical statements from registered dietitians by July 1, 2025. SFAs may choose to implement this change prior to this deadline.

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Requirements NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Potable water requirements	Maintains the requirement that schools must make potable water available and accessible without restriction to children at no charge in the places where lunches are served during the meal service and when breakfast is served in the cafeteria. Adds the word "plain" to the potable water regulations to clarify this requirement. For guidance on implementing the potable water requirement, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* and visit the CSDE's Water Availability for School Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on the potable water requirements is available in Module 16: Water Availability During Meal Service of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.	None

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Chart 2: Updates to NSLP, SBP, and ASP Preschool Meal Patterns

The chart below summarizes the final rule changes that apply to the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns. For guidance on the preschool meal pattern and crediting requirements, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage. A summary of the preschool meal pattern crediting requirements is provided in the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*. Training on the preschool meal patterns, is available in the CSDE's *Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs*.

Requirements for NSLP, SBP, and ASP Preschool Meal Patterns	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Terminology update for meal components	Changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "food component" to "meal component." Adds the following definition for meal component: "*Meal component* means one of the food groups which comprise reimbursable meals. The meal components are: fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk."	None
Traditional indigenous foods	Explicitly includes in the NSLP and SBP regulations that traditional Indigenous foods may be served in reimbursable school meals. This change is intended to support local efforts to incorporate traditional Indigenous foods into school meals.	None

Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

Requirements for NSLP, SBP, and ASP Preschool Meal Patterns	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Milk component	**Nutrition standard for fluid milk substitutes:** Updates the units for vitamin A and vitamin D requirements for fluid milk substitutes to align with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling requirements. • For vitamin A, instead of 500 IUs, the unit requirement is now 150 mcg retinol activity equivalents (RAE) per 8 fluid ounces. • For vitamin D, instead of 100 IUs, the unit requirement is now 2.5 mcg per 8 fluid ounces. The amount of vitamin A and vitamin D required in fluid milk substitutes does not change; only the unit of measurement has changed to conform to FDA labeling requirements. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Identifying Products that Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the School Nutrition Programs*.	None
Vegetables component	**Terminology update for beans, peas, and lentils:** Changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "legumes (beans and peas)" to "beans, peas, and lentils." For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*.	None
Fruits component	None	None

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Requirements for NSLP, SBP, and ASP Preschool Meal Patterns	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
MMA component	**Quantities for MMA:** Updates the MMA quantities from ounces to ounce equivalents (oz eq). The amount of MMA that credits as 1 oz eq is the same. **Nuts and seeds:** Allows nuts and seeds to credit for the full MMA component in all meals and snacks, removing the previous 50 percent crediting limit for nuts and seeds at lunch. For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the School Nutrition Programs*. ☑ Menu planning flexibility	**Yogurt:** Changes the product-based limit for yogurt from total sugars to added sugars. Yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). For current crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Yogurt in the School Nutrition Programs*.
Grains component	**Substituting vegetables for grains in tribal communities:** Allows SFAs and schools that are tribally operated, operated by the Bureau of Indian Education, and that serve primarily American Indian or Alaska Native children to serve vegetables to meet the grains requirement for the NSLP and SBP. ☑ Menu planning flexibility	**Breakfast cereals:** Changes the product-based limit for breakfast cereals from total sugars to added sugars. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For current crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

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Requirements for NSLP, SBP, and ASP Preschool Meal Patterns	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Meal modifications	**Terminology update:** Changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "medical authority" to "state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian." **Definition of state licensed healthcare professional:** Defines a state licensed healthcare professional as an individual authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law. In Connecticut, this includes licensed physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN). **NSLP and SBP regulations:** Updates and reorganizes the regulatory text to distinguish between disability and non-disability requests more clearly, and encourages schools, institutions, and facilities to meet children's non-disability dietary preferences when planning and preparing school meals and afterschool snacks. For guidance on the requirements for meal modifications, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.	**Medical statements from registered dietitians:** Outlines in regulation that state licensed healthcare professionals and registered dietitians may write medical statements to request meal modifications on behalf of participants with disabilities. Requires SFAs to accept medical statements from registered dietitians by July 1, 2025. SFAs may choose to implement this change prior to this deadline.

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Requirements for NSLP, SBP, and ASP Preschool Meal Patterns	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Potable water requirements	Maintains the requirement that schools must make potable water available and accessible without restriction to children at no charge in the places where meals and snacks are served during the meal or snack service. Adds the word "plain" to the potable water regulations to clarify this requirement. For guidance on implementing the potable water requirement, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* and visit the CSDE's Water Availability for School Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on the potable water requirements is available in Module 16: Water Availability During Meal Service of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.	None

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Chart 3: Updates to ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the final rule aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) snack meal pattern for children. The snack meal pattern will consist of five meal components instead of the current four meal components. Reimbursable snacks must include two of the five meal components (milk, vegetables, fruits, MMA, and grains).

The final rule also changes all regulatory references in 7 CFR 210 from "meal supplements" to "afterschool snacks" and revises the definition of "child" to clarify that children who are age 18 and under at the start of the school year may receive reimbursable NSLP snacks.

The chart below summarizes the final rule changes that apply to the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. For guidance on the ASP meal pattern and crediting requirements, visit the CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage. A summary of the meal pattern crediting requirements is provided in the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*.

Requirements for ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12	**SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)**	**SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)**
Terminology update for meal components	Changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "food component" to "meal component." Adds the following definition for meal component: "*Meal component* means one of the food groups which comprise reimbursable meals. The meal components are: fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk."	None

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Requirements for ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Milk component	**Allowable types of milk**: Continues to allow SFAs to offer fat-free and low-fat milk (flavored and unflavored). **Nutrition standard for fluid milk substitutes:** Updates the units for vitamin A and vitamin D requirements for fluid milk substitutes to align with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling requirements. • For vitamin A, instead of 500 IUs, the unit requirement is now 150 mcg retinol activity equivalents (RAE) per 8 fluid ounces. • For vitamin D, instead of 100 IUs, the unit requirement is now 2.5 mcg per 8 fluid ounces. The amount of vitamin A and vitamin D required in fluid milk substitutes does not change; only the unit of measurement has changed to conform to FDA labeling requirements. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Identifying Products that Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the School Nutrition Programs*.	**Flavored milk:** Establishes a new sugars limit for flavored milk: no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. **Flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools:** Establishes a new sugars limit for flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools: no more than 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

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Requirements for ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Vegetables/ fruits component	**Terminology update for beans, peas, and lentils:** Changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "legumes (beans and peas)" to "beans, peas, and lentils." For crediting guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*.	**Vegetables component and fruits component**: The previous vegetables/fruits component changes to two separate components (vegetables component and fruits component). **Crediting raw leafy greens:** Raw leafy greens (such as lettuce and spinach) credit as half the volume served, e.g., ½ cup of raw leafy greens credits as ¼ cup of the vegetables component. **Crediting dried fruits:** Dried fruits (such as raisins, dried apricots, and dried mixed fruits) credit as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. **Juice limit:** The NSLP weekly juice limit applies to ASP snacks. Juice cannot exceed half of the fruits and vegetables offered during the week. For example, if the snack menu offers 1 cup of fruits and vegetables during the week, juice cannot exceed ½ cup.

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Requirements for ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
MMA component	None	**MMA servings:** The serving size changes from ounces to ounce equivalents (oz eq). The quantity of meat or meat alternate that credits as 1 ounce or 1 oz eq is the same. **Yogurt:** Establishes new sugar limit for yogurt: no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

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Requirements for ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Grains/breads component	None	**Grains component:** The previous grains/breads component changes to the grains component. **Required quantities:** The required quantities change from grains/breads servings to grains ounce equivalents (oz eq). **WGR requirement:** The NSLP and SBP weekly whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement applies. At least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at snack must be WGR, based on oz eq of offered grains. **WGR criteria:** The NSLP WGR criteria are used to identify WGR grains for ASP snacks. For guidance on identifying WGR foods, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*. **Breakfast cereals:** Establishes new sugar limit for breakfast cereals: no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. **Grain-based desserts:** Grain-based desserts cannot credit. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Grain-based Desserts in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

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Requirements for ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Meal modifications	**Terminology update:** Changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from "medical authority" to "state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian." **Definition of state licensed healthcare professional:** Defines a state licensed healthcare professional as an individual authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law. In Connecticut, this includes licensed physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN). **NSLP and SBP regulations:** Updates and reorganizes the regulatory text to distinguish between disability and non-disability requests more clearly, and encourages schools, institutions, and facilities to meet children's non-disability dietary preferences when planning and preparing school meals and afterschool snacks. For guidance on the requirements for meal modifications, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.	**Medical statements from registered dietitians:** Outlines in regulation that state licensed healthcare professionals and registered dietitians may write medical statements to request meal modifications on behalf of participants with disabilities. Requires SFAs to accept medical statements from registered dietitians by July 1, 2025. SFAs may choose to implement this change prior to this deadline.

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Requirements for ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12	SY 2024-25 (effective July 1, 2024)	SY 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025)
Potable water requirement	Maintains the requirement that schools must make potable water available and accessible without restriction to children at no charge in the places where lunches are served during the meal service and when breakfast is served in the cafeteria. Adds the word "plain" to the potable water regulations to clarify this requirement. For guidance on implementing the potable water requirement, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meal Service Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* and visit the CSDE's Water Availability for School Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on the potable water requirements is available in Module 16: Water Availability During Meal Service of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*. **Note:** While the language in the final rule refers to "meals," the water requirement also applies to snack service in the ASP, which falls under the jurisdiction of the NSLP. Schools and institutions participating in the ASP must make plain potable water available without restriction to children at no charge during the snack service (refer to USDA Memo SP 28-2011: *Revised: Water Availability During National School Lunch Program Meal Service*).	None

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For more information, visit the "Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs 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/nslp/mealpattern/summary_final_rule_snp_meal_patterns.pdf.

Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov.

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Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

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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