Menu Planning for Shorter or Longer Weeks in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

This guidance applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal patterns for grades K-12. The NSLP and SBP preschool meal patterns (ages 1-5) do not have weekly requirements. For guidance on the preschool meal patterns, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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School Weeks Shorter or Longer Than Five Days

The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 are based on a five-day week. When a school week **regularly** operates on a shorter or longer cycle, menu planners must increase or decrease the weekly requirements by 20 percent for each day that deviates from the standard five-day week. For the vegetables component, adjustments are made only to the "additional vegetables" category. Due to the smaller size of the weekly vegetable subgroup requirements, the 20 percent adjustment is not practical for the five vegetable subgroups.

The charts in this document summarize these requirements. All amounts are rounded to the nearest ½ ounce equivalent (oz eq) and ¼ cup. Meal patterns for five-day weeks and seven-day week are available on the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

School Weeks with Occasional Decreases

Schools with occasional decreases in the school week due to holidays, snow days, or other reasons are not required to adjust the weekly requirements. However, school menus must be consistent with the intent of the meal patterns. For example, menu planners must ensure that school menus do not consistently fail to offer certain vegetable subgroups.

Daily Requirements and Dietary Specifications

The daily meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications are unaffected by a longer or shorter week. Since the dietary specifications are daily averages, either fewer or more days are averaged together to meet the specified targets for calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

The dietary specifications are the USDA's nutrition standards for NSLP and SBP meals. They include weekly calorie ranges and limits for saturated fat and sodium. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* and visit the "Dietary Specifications" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on the dietary specifications is available in Module 6: Dietary Specifications of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

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Weekly Requirements for Lunch

The charts below apply to NSLP meal patterns.

Three-day school week for lunch

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	1½	1½	3
Vegetables (cups)	2¼	2¼	3
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	½	½	1
Beans, peas, and lentils	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	¼	¼	½
Additional vegetables to reach total	0	0	0
Grains (oz eq)	5-5½	5-6	6-7
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	5-6	5½-6	6-7
Fluid milk (cups)	3	3	3

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Four-day school week for lunch

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	2	2	4
Vegetables (cups)	3	3	4
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	¾	¾	1¼
Beans, peas, and lentils	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	½	½	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	¼	¼	½
Grains (oz eq)	6½-7	6½-8	8-9½
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	6½-8	7-8	8-9½
Fluid milk (cups)	4	4	4

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Six-day school week for lunch

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	3	3	6
Vegetables (cups)	4½	4½	6
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	¾	¾	1¼
Beans, peas, and lentils	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	½	½	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	1¾	1¾	2½
Grains (oz eq)	9½-11	9½-12	12-14½
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	9½-12	11-12	12-14½
Fluid milk (cups)	6	6	6

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Seven-day school week for lunch

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	3½	3½	7
Vegetables (cups)	5¼	5¼	7
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	¾	¾	1¼
Beans, peas, and lentils	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	½	½	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	2½	2½	3½
Grains (oz eq)	11-12½	11-14	14-17
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	11-14	12½-14	14-17
Fluid milk (cups)	7	7	7

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Weekly Requirements for Breakfast

The charts below apply to SBP meal patterns. The SBP meal patterns require a combined grains and MMA component. The weekly requirements for the grains/MMA component below apply to the total oz eq of grains and MMA in the weekly breakfast menu.

Three-day school week for breakfast

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	3	3	3
Grains/MMA (oz eq)	4-6	5-6	5½-6
Fluid milk (cups)	3	3	3

Four-day school week for breakfast

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	4	4	4
Grains/MMA (oz eq)	5½-8	6½-8	7-8
Fluid milk (cups)	4	4	4

Six-day school week for breakfast

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	6	6	6
Grains/MMA (oz eq)	8½-12	9½-12	11-12
Fluid milk (cups)	6	6	6

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Seven-day school week for breakfast

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	7	7	7
Grains/MMA (oz eq)	10-14	11-14	12½-14
Fluid milk (cups)	7	7	7

Resources

Dietary Specifications (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/dietary-specifications

Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_dietary_specifications_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf

Guide to the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_meal_patterns_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf

Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/meal_pattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_snp.pdf

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs

Menu Planning Guidance for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning-guidance-for-school-meals

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) 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/weekly_adjustments_nslp_sbp.pdf.

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