



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the School Child Nutrition Programs

FROM: John Frassinelli, Chief
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: July 11, 2013

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #40-13
Extending Flexibility for Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCIs) in the
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

This memorandum supersedes the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Operational Memorandum 36-12](#), Residential Child Care Institutions Exception for Safety if Serving Multiple Age/Grade Groups, dated July 18, 2012.

Operational Memorandum 36-12 outlined the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) provision that allowed RCCIs, with state agency approval, to serve the NSLP meal pattern in effect for the highest age/grade group served to all residential students. To utilize this flexibility, the RCCI must meet all three of the following criteria:

1. be a juvenile detention or correctional facility;
2. serve children in different age/grade groups; and
3. have legitimate safety concerns or state juvenile justice laws or regulations related to offering meals with varying amounts of food within the same meal period.

Since the date that the USDA issued this provision, school food service operators and state agencies have asked the USDA to consider offering additional flexibility for RCCIs that are not juvenile justice facilities but serve specific special populations of students, due to the unique needs of these populations. This memorandum extends additional meal pattern and dietary specifications flexibility to RCCIs for both lunch and breakfast, as discussed below.

Extension of Meal Pattern Flexibility to Additional RCCIs

One particular challenge that RCCIs have identified with the meal standards is the potential for violence among students at certain types of facilities when students are not served meals with the same portion sizes. RCCIs that serve special populations, such as students with severe cognitive disabilities or who are at risk for incarceration, often have legitimate concerns about student unrest at meal times but cannot use the flexibility granted in the previous USDA provision (Operational Memorandum 36-12) because they are not considered juvenile detention centers or correctional facilities.

This memorandum extends the USDA provision for meal pattern flexibility – service of the highest age/grade group in residence to all students – to RCCIs that are alternative schools for students of different age/grade groups that can demonstrate **operational limitations to**

separating age/grade groups and can show **legitimate safety concerns** if students are served different portions. To utilize this flexibility, the RCCI must submit a request to the CSDE using the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Exception Request Form](#). This form must clearly articulate the RCCI's safety concerns to the satisfaction of the CSDE. The CSDE will consider RCCI requests to implement this option on a case-by-case basis if the above criteria are met.

The USDA anticipates that the extension of this flexibility will help address the safety concerns raised by RCCIs and result in an overall improvement of the meals they serve. This will continue to facilitate implementation of the new meal pattern in school year 2013-14 and beyond. The USDA continues to encourage feedback from school food authorities regarding this provision.

For additional information on the RCCI meal pattern requirements, see the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Residential Child Care Institutions](#) Web page.

Questions pertaining to this memorandum may be directed to the following:

COUNTY ASSIGNMENTS	CONSULTANT
Litchfield County New London County	Fionnuala Brown fionnuala.brown@ct.gov 860-807-2129
Fairfield County Middlesex County (towns/cities beginning with C-E) New Haven County (towns/cities beginning with A-M)	Jackie Schipke jackie.schipke@ct.gov 860-807-2123
Middlesex County (towns/cities beginning with F-W) Tolland County Windham County	Susan Alston susan.alston@ct.gov 860-807-2081
Hartford County New Haven County (towns/cities beginning with N-W)	Teri Dandeneau teri.dandeneau@ct.gov 860-807-2079

JF:sff

Important: This is a numbered Operational Memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain in a binder for your future reference. Operational Memoranda are also posted on the Child Nutrition Web site at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320676>.