




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program

FROM: John D. Frassinelli, Division Director 
School Health, Nutrition and Family Services

DATE: March 1, 2023

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum No. 08-23
Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for
School Year 2023-24

The Healthy Food Certification (HFC) statute ([C.G.S. Section 10-215f](#)) requires that each local board of education or governing authority (BOE) for public schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) each year must certify whether all food items sold to students (separately from reimbursable meals) will or will not meet the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) (CNS). This includes all public schools, regional educational service centers, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS), charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, and endowed academies. This memo provides the required BOE motion language and instructions for the HFC application process for school year (SY) 2023-24. Please review carefully to ensure accurate and timely submission of the HFC Statement.

HFC Eligibility Requirements for BOEs opting to implement HFC

To be eligible for HFC during SY 2023-24 (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024), the BOE must conduct the HFC votes by **July 1, 2023**. All votes must use the **exact motion language** provided in attachment 1.

- All BOEs must vote on whether to participate in the healthy food option of HFC.
- If the BOE votes “yes” to the healthy food option, a vote on whether to allow food exemptions is required. The BOE may also choose to vote on whether to allow beverage exemptions.
- If the BOE votes “no” to the healthy food option, a vote on whether to allow food exemptions is not required. The BOE may choose to vote on whether to allow beverage exemptions.

Note: Beverage exemptions are defined by a separate statute (C.G.S. Section 10-221q) and are not part of the annual HFC Statement. If the BOE does not vote to allow beverage exemptions, noncompliant beverages cannot be sold to students on school premises at any time.

Refer to attachment 1 for the required motion language and a summary chart of the required votes.

HFC Application Process for SY 2023-24

All public school sponsors of the NSLP must complete the steps below to meet the HFC application deadline of **July 1, 2023** for school year 2023-24.

1. Carefully review the requirements in this memorandum and Attachment 1 to ensure accurate and timely submission of the HFC Statement.
2. Schedule the required HFC votes at a BOE meeting **well before** July 1, 2023, to allow sufficient time for the BOE to approve the **draft** minutes before they are submitted to the CSDE. The HFC Statement must include the **final** BOE-approved minutes. If the district chooses to allow beverage exemptions, the CSDE recommends that the BOE conducts the vote on beverage exemptions at the same time as the HFC votes.
3. Conduct the BOE votes and prepare the BOE minutes. The final BOE-approved minutes must: 1) include the required language in attachment 1; and 2) indicate the results of each vote. Do not submit the final BOE-approved minutes until requested by the CSDE (refer to step 4).
4. **May 2023:** Complete the online HFC application module in the CSDE's Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Upload the final BOE-approved minutes indicating the results of the HFC votes. **Note:** The CSDE will notify sponsors when the HFC application module and instructions are available. Do not access the CNP System prior to receiving this notification.

For more information, visit the “[Apply](#)” section of the CSDE's HFC webpage. Training on the HFC application process is available in the CSDE's recorded training module, *[Completing the Application Process for HFC](#)*.

Refer to attachment 2 for a list of HFC compliance resources. Training on the HFC requirements is available in the CSDE's training program, *[Complying with Healthy Food Certification](#)*, and the district's HFC contact person is required to complete the training by DATE.

For questions or additional information, please contact Susan Fiore at 860-807-2075 or susan.fiore@ct.gov or Teri Dandeneau at 860-807-2079 or teri.dandeneau@ct.gov.

JDF:sff

Attachments: (2)

Important: This is a numbered Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) operational memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain for future reference. All CSDE operational memoranda are posted on the CSDE's [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Attachment 1

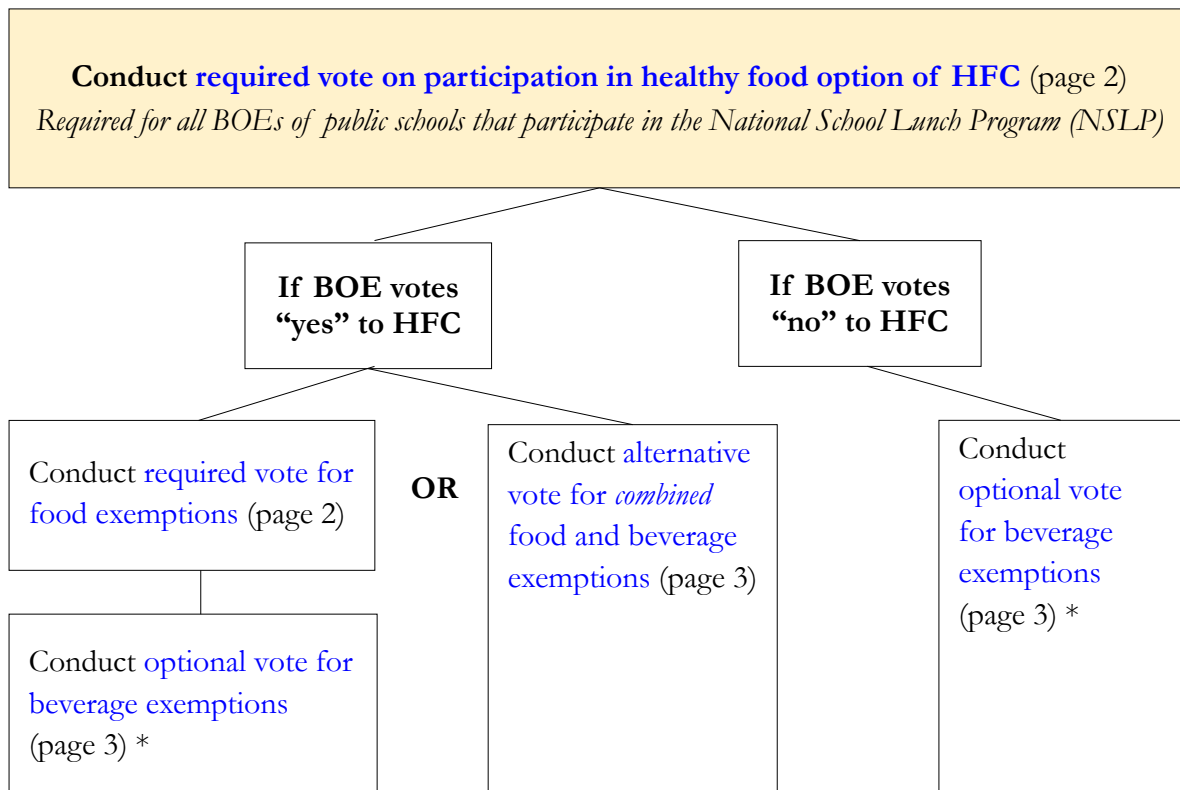
Required Motion Language for the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement

School Year 2023-24

This attachment accompanies the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Operational Memorandum No. 07-23: *Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2023-24*. It provides the required motion language for the board of education or governing authority's (BOE) votes and the final BOE-approved minutes that must be submitted to the CSDE with the annual HFC Statement. The HFC Statement and final BOE minutes are due to the CSDE on July 1, 2023.

Use the exact motion language on pages 2-3 to conduct the required HFC votes and the optional vote for beverage exemptions (if applicable). Figure 1 summarizes the required BOE votes.

Figure 1. Summary of BOE Votes



* Beverage exemptions are defined by a separate statute (C.G.S. Section 10-221q) and are not part of the annual HFC Statement. BOEs may choose whether to allow beverage exemptions. If the BOE does not vote to allow beverage exemptions, noncompliant beverages cannot be sold to students on school premises at any time.

Required Motion Language for HFC Statement

Required Language for BOE Votes and Minutes for HFC

Each BOE must complete their HFC votes using the required motion language below.

Vote 1: Required vote for participation in healthy food option of HFC

This vote is required for all BOEs that participate in the NSLP. Each BOE must vote “yes” or “no” to participate in the healthy food option of C.G.S. Section 10-215f and follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS). The motion and BOE-approved meeting minutes must include the **exact motion language** below:

Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the *(insert name of board of education or governing authority)* certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

Vote 2: Required vote for food exemptions for BOEs choosing healthy food option of HFC

This vote is required for all BOEs that vote “yes” to participate in the healthy food option. The motion and BOE-approved meeting minutes must reflect a “yes” or “no” vote to allow food exemptions using the **exact motion language** below.

The *(insert name of board of education or governing authority)* will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food sales.

Note: If the BOE votes “no” to participation in the healthy food option, a vote on whether to allow food exemptions is **not** required.

Required Motion Language for HFC Statement

Required Language for BOE Votes and Minutes on Beverages

The state beverage requirements (C.G.S. Section 10-221q) apply to all public schools, regardless of whether the district participates in the NSLP or certifies for the healthy food option of HFC. BOEs may choose whether to allow beverage exemptions. Districts without a beverage exemption in place can never sell noncompliant beverages to students on school premises.

Vote 3: Optional vote for beverage exemptions for all BOEs

If the BOE chooses to allow beverage exemptions, the BOE motion must include the **exact motion language** below.

The (*insert name of board of education or governing authority*) will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

Required Language for Option to Combine Food and Beverage Exemptions

BOEs that vote “yes” to participate in the healthy food option may choose to combine the two separate food and beverage exemptions into one motion, by using the **exact motion language** below. This combined option replaces votes 2 and 3 above.

Required motion language for combined food and beverage exemptions: The (*insert name of board of education or governing authority*) will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

Attachment 2

Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Resources

This attachment accompanies the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Operational Memorandum No. 08-23: *Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2023-24*. It includes CSDE resources and websites that provide guidance on meeting the federal and state requirements for foods and beverages in HFC public schools. For a comprehensive list of resources, refer to the CSDE's document, *Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools*.

- [Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Public Schools](#)
- [Beverage Requirements \(CSDE webpage\)](#)
- [Beverage Requirements for Connecticut Public Schools](#)
- [Connecticut Nutrition Standards \(CSDE webpage\)](#)
- [CSDE Training Module: Completing the Application Process for Healthy Food Certification](#)
- [CSDE Training Program: Complying with Healthy Food Certification](#)
Recorded modules on meeting the HFC requirements and related state laws
- [Ensuring District Compliance with HFC](#)
- [Evaluating Foods for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#)
(“How To” section of CSDE’s Connecticut Nutrition Standards webpage)
- [Guidance on Evaluating Recipes for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#)
- [Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)
- [Healthy Food Certification \(CSDE webpage\)](#)
- [How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the CNS](#)
- [How to Evaluate Purchased Foods for Compliance with the CNS](#)
- [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages \(CSDE webpage\)](#)
- [Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations](#)
- [Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Food and Beverages](#)
- [Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)
- [Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in HFC Public Schools](#)
- [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in HFC Public Schools](#)
- [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in HFC Public Schools](#)
- [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in HFC Public Schools](#)
- [Summary Chart: Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)
- [Summary of Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#)