



Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals

National School Lunch Program
School Breakfast Program

School Year 2026-27 (July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027)




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About This Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals* contains information and resources for implementing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) offer versus serve (OVS) provision for 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 NLSP and SBP sponsors in public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that implement OVS for grades K-12.

This guide is based on the OVS regulations for the NSLP (7 CFR 210.10 (e)) and SBP (7 CFR 220.8 (e)) and the USDA's resource, *Offer versus Serve Guidance for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.* It includes the recent updates to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns required by the USDA final rule on April 25, 2024, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025, effective January 14, 2026, and the USDA final rule, *Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs*, effective June 8, 2026.

> This guide reflects the USDA regulations and policies in effect as of the publication date. Please note that this information may change. The CSDE will update this guide whenever the USDA issues new OVS guidance for the school nutrition programs. Please check the CSDE's Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs webpage for the most current version. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/ovs_guide_snp.pdf.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA. Product names are used solely for clarification.

Questions regarding this guide may be directed to Susan Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator, at 860-807-2075 or susan.fiore@ct.gov.

CSDE Contact Information

For questions regarding the NSLP, SBP, and ASP, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE's Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs. The CSDE's resource, *County Assignments for School Nutrition Programs,* indicates each Connecticut county's assigned CSDE school nutrition team member who provides technical assistance for the USDA school nutrition programs.

For a list of all CSDE Child Nutrition Programs staff, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities*.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CN	Child Nutrition
CNP	Child Nutrition Programs
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
FBG	Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FNA	Food and Nutrition Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture
MMA	meats/meat alternates
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OVS	offer versus serve
oz eq	ounce equivalent
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



1 — Introduction to OVS

OVS is a concept that applies to menu planning and the determination of reimbursable meals for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

OVS must be implemented at lunch in senior high schools, but it is optional for all other grades. OVS is optional for all grades in the SBP and SSO. OVS is not allowed for the NSLP or SBP preschool meal patterns (ages 1-5) or the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP.

OVS allows students to decline a certain number of meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the meal and select the foods they prefer to eat. OVS is designed to reduce food cost and waste. It also allows school food authorities (SFAs) the flexibility to address student participation and selection trends to determine what and how much food to prepare.

OVS Requirements for the NSLP and SBP

OVS is implemented differently at lunch and breakfast, but some OVS requirements are the same for all meals. This section reviews the requirements and considerations for:

- meeting the meal pattern requirements and crediting documentation;
- unit pricing;
- point-of-service meal counts;
- offering choices within the meal components;
- meal identification signage;
- food service staff training;
- a la carte sales; and
- extra foods.

Table 1-1 provides an overview of the OVS requirements for grades K-12 at lunch and breakfast.







Table 1-1. Overview of OVS requirements for grades K-12

Criteria	Lunch	Breakfast
Implementation	Mandatory in senior high schools and optional for all other grade levels. Optional for the SSO. Not allowed for the preschool meal patterns or the ASP.	Optional for all grade levels. Optional for the SSO. Not allowed for the preschool meal patterns or the ASP.
Menu planning for reimbursable meals	SFAs must offer the minimum serving of five meal components (meats/meat alternates (MMA), grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk).	SFAs must offer the minimum serving of at least four food items from three meal components (grains/MMA, fruits including optional vegetable substitutions, and milk).
Required number of student selections for reimbursable meals	Students must select at least three meal components, including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.	Students must select at least three food items, including at least ½ cup of fruits (or vegetable substitutions, if offered) and the full serving of at least two other food items.
Pricing	Priced as a unit (same price regardless of number of meal components chosen).	Same
Extra foods	Not credited for OVS.	Same
Meal counts	Point of service	Same
Required signage	SFAs must post two types of signage: 1) identify all planned reimbursable meals including meal components and portions and 2) identify required student selections for reimbursable meals with OVS.	SFAs must post two types of signage: 1) identify all planned reimbursable meals including food items and portions and 2) identify required student selections for reimbursable meals with OVS.

Meal Pattern Requirements

OVS applies to the daily meal pattern requirements but SFAs must plan school menus to meet all daily and weekly meal pattern requirements for each grade group. These requirements include minimum daily and weekly servings of the meal components, weekly minimums or restrictions for certain foods, and the weekly dietary specifications.

Daily and weekly meal components

The NSLP meal patterns for grades K-12 require daily and weekly amounts of five meal components (MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk). The SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 require daily and weekly amounts of three meal components (grains/MMA, fruits including optional vegetable substitutions, and milk).

For detailed guidance on the meal pattern requirements, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program* and visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage. For information on crediting foods, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs,* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Weekly minimums or restrictions for certain foods

The NSLP meal patterns for grades K-12 require weekly minimums or restrictions for certain foods.

- A least 80 percent of all offered grains each week must be whole grain-rich (WGR).
- Lunch menus must include minimum servings of the five vegetable subgroups (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program*).
- Lunch menus must meet the weekly juice limit. Fruit juices cannot exceed half of the offered fruits. Vegetable juices cannot exceed half of the offered vegetables. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs*.
- Grain-based desserts cannot exceed 2 oz eq per week. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Grain-based Desserts in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

Schools that implement OVS at lunch must meet these requirements.

The SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 require weekly minimums or restrictions for certain foods.

- A least 80 percent of all offered grains in the weekly lunch menu must WGR.
- The combined amount of fruit and vegetable juices cannot exceed half of the offered fruits and vegetables. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Schools that implement OVS at breakfast must meet these requirements.

Weekly dietary specifications

The dietary specifications are the USDA's weekly nutrition standards for the lunch and breakfast meal patterns for grades K-12. School meals as averaged over the week must meet the dietary specifications for calories (minimum and maximum levels) and limits for saturated fat and sodium. Effective July 1, 2027, the dietary specifications also include a new limit for added sugars. For information on planning menus to meet the USDA's dietary specifications, refer the CSDE's *Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

Crediting Documentation

SFAs must maintain appropriate documentation to indicate that school meals meet the applicable crediting requirements for each grade group. This documentation is required for commercial processed products and foods prepared from scratch. The guidance below helps menu planners ensure that school menus meet the crediting requirements for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

Training on the crediting documentation requirements is available in Module 7: Meal Pattern Documentation for School Menus and Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Food Buying Guide

The USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) determines food yields and crediting information, and the specific contribution of foods toward the meal pattern requirements. The FBG indicates how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide, what quantity of raw product will provide the amount of ready-to-cook food in a recipe, and how much food to buy to provide a specific meal pattern contribution.

Child Nutrition (CN) labels and product formulation statements

SFAs must have a CN label or PFS to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial processed products that are not listed in the FBG. Commercial processed foods without this documentation do not credit. Some examples of commercial processed foods include:

- combination foods that contain more than one meal component, e.g., pizza, chicken nuggets, cheese ravioli, hummus and other bean dips, fruit and yogurt smoothies, fruit-filled pastries, and trail mixes with dried fruits and nuts;
- foods with added liquids, binders, and extenders, e.g., deli meats, hotdogs, and sausages;
- dried meat, poultry, and seafood products, e.g., jerky and summer sausages;
- fruits and vegetables with added ingredients, e.g., breaded onion rings, french fries, hash brown patties, coleslaw, and dried soup mix; and
- WGR or enriched grain products that also contain noncreditable grains (e.g., oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch, including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours), such as muffins, crackers, breakfast cereals, and grain-based-deserts like cookies, graham crackers, granola bars, and pastries. For more information on noncreditable grains, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

The requirements for crediting documentation for commercial processed foods are defined in USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs*, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs*, and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs*. Additional resources are available on the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Standardized recipes

SFAs must have standardized recipes that document the crediting information for all foods made from scratch. Menu planners can determine the recipe's meal pattern contribution per serving by following these steps: 1) use the FBG to determine the weight or volume of each creditable ingredient in the recipe; and 2) divide the weight or volume of each creditable ingredient by the number of servings.

The FBG's Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW) allows menu planners to search for creditable ingredients and calculate a recipe's meal pattern contribution. For more information, refer to the Institute of Child Nutrition's *USDA Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs*

and visit the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Unit Pricing

Meals must be priced as a unit. Students pay the same price regardless of whether they select three, four, or five meal components for lunch or three or more food items for breakfast. SFAs must establish one price for a complete reimbursable meal in the paid meal category and one price for a complete reimbursable meal in the reduced-price meal category.

Tiered pricing

SFAs may set different unit prices (tiered pricing) for various combinations of foods offered as a reimbursable breakfast or lunch, such as one price for a meal with a larger entree and another price for a meal with different combinations of foods. For example, SFAs could offer a variety of different lunch entree choices (such as hamburger, chef's salad, lasagna, and turkey sandwich) and set different unit prices for each type of lunch.

All students, including those eligible for free and reduced-price meals, must be allowed to select any reimbursable meal. Meals with a higher unit price must be available at no cost for all free-eligible students. For reduced-eligible students, the unit price cannot exceed 40 cents for lunch or 30 cents for breakfast.

Point-of-service Meal Counts

All meal counts of reimbursable meals must be recorded at the point of service. This is the moment in the meal service where staff can accurately determine that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal has been served to a student, i.e., the student has received the minimum portions of all required meal components. This typically occurs at the end of the serving line after the child has had the chance to receive all meal components of the reimbursable meal. For more information, visit the CSDE's Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

SFAs should ensure that school food service staff know how to identify reimbursable meals with OVS and provide training on recognizing reimbursable meals at the point of service. Training must also ensure that all staff implement correct meal counting and claiming procedures with OVS. For more information, refer to "Food service staff training" in this section.

Offering Choices within Meal Components

The lunch and breakfast meal patterns require a variety of milk choices (refer to "Milk Variety at Lunch" in section 4 and "Milk Variety at Breakfast" in section 5). In addition, the USDA encourages SFAs to offer students a variety of entrees and other menu items, such as fruits and vegetables. Offering choices increases the likelihood that students will select the foods and beverages they prefer, which increases consumption and reduces waste.

Offering variety alone is not implementing OVS

Offering a variety of choices within the meal components (lunch) and food items (breakfast) is not the same as implementing OVS. For example, if students are required to select a choice from every meal component, the school is not implementing OVS. OVS allows students to decline some meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) entirely.

SFAs determine variety and student selections

SFAs determine if the lunch and breakfast menus will offer variety and how much a student may select. For example, the breakfast meal pattern requires 1 cup of fruit for grades K-12. A breakfast menu could offer four ½-cup servings of fruit and allow students to select three or four servings. SFAs may offer more than the minimum requirements if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (refer to "Weekly dietary specifications" in this section).

SFA's signage must indicate choices for reimbursable meals

SFAs must indicate what choices or combination of choices students may select for a reimbursable meal. Signage must be near or at the beginning of the serving line, prior to the point of service, and located on the serving line near each meal component, as applicable. This prevents unintentional purchases of a la carte items and helps students choose a reimbursable meal.

- **Example of signage for food choices with OVS:** A lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers the required 1 cup of the fruits component as a variety of ½-cup fruit selections and allows students to choose two servings. The cafeteria signage near the fruits component must indicate that students may select one or two ½-cup servings of fruit with each meal. This provides a variety of food choices and shows students how to select a reimbursable lunch. It also constitutes OVS because students may choose to decline the fruits component entirely or take one or two ½-cup servings from the fruits offered. **Note:** Students who decline

the fruits component must select at least ½ cup of vegetables for a reimbursable meal.

For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

Food Service Staff Training

OVS training is critical for SFAs to ensure that staff implement correct meal counting and claiming with OVS. School food service staff must be able to:

- understand the OVS requirements;
- help students select the required quantities of the meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for a reimbursable meal; and
- accurately identify reimbursable meals at the point of service.

SFAs should conduct OVS training at least annually for cashiers, serving line staff, and other applicable staff. Training is also important whenever changes occur to the school nutrition programs, such as new staff, new grade configurations, and new menu items. OVS training is most effective when SFAs use actual examples from their own school lunch and breakfast menus.

Training on the OVS requirements is available in Module 17: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the National School Lunch Program and Module 18: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the School Breakfast Program of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*. Refer to the CSDE's resource, *Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What's in a Meal Training Modules*, for guidance on how to count the OVS training modules toward the annual training hours required by the USDA's professional standards.

USDA's professional standards requirements

OVS training meets the USDA's professional standards requirements for annual training. OVS is listed under the subcategory of "Serving Food (2200)" for the key area of "Operations (2000)" in the USDA's list of training topics for professional standards: 2220 Offer versus Serve and 2240 Serving Lines. For more information, refer to the USDA's Professional Standards Learning Objectives & Training Topics webpage and *Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals webpage.

Training for non-food service employees

Job-specific training is also required for non-food service employees whose responsibilities include duties related to the operation of school nutrition programs, such as teachers, teachers' aides, and other applicable staff who conduct in-classroom meal counting and claiming. For more information on OVS in the classroom, refer to "Classroom Meals" in section 2.

Recommended daily pre-service meeting

In addition to regular OVS training, a recommended best practice for cafeteria managers is conducting a daily pre-service meeting with all applicable staff to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. This helps ensure that all staff (including substitutes) can identify reimbursable meals at the point of service.

A La Carte Sales

A la carte sales include foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals. Some examples are cookies, chips, ice cream, and other snack foods, and milk, water, and juice. Foods and beverages offered as part of reimbursable meals may also be sold a la carte. For example, schools that offer a reimbursable meal of pizza, fruit, salad, and milk could allow students to purchase these foods and beverages as a la carte items.

Students and cashiers need to know which foods are considered meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for reimbursable meals with OVS, and which foods are a la carte items. SFAs must communicate this information by providing adequate training for staff and appropriate signage for students. For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

Meals are not reimbursable if students do not select the required meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast). If this occurs, SFAs may charge a la carte prices for each item selected by the student. To avoid problems at the point of service, the cafeteria signage must provide clear information regarding the required foods for a reimbursable meal.

Extra Foods

Extra foods are foods served in addition to the required meal components. Extra foods include creditable foods from the meal components, such as additional servings of grains, fruits, vegetables, MMA, and milk. They also include noncreditable foods that do not credit toward the meal patterns, such as potato chips, pudding, ice cream, maple syrup, cream cheese, bacon, and condiments (e.g., salad dressing, ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise).

Some noncreditable foods cannot be sold in school nutrition programs due to federal or state requirements. Examples include candy, soda, coffee, tea, and sports drinks. For more information, visit the CSDE's Competitive Foods in Schools webpage and Beverage Requirements webpage.

Schools may offer allowable noncreditable foods as a complement to reimbursable meals, such as serving ketchup with hamburgers or syrup with pancakes. Students may select noncreditable foods in addition to the meal but noncreditable foods do not count toward the required meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for a reimbursable meal under OVS. For information on noncreditable foods, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*.

> All extra foods (creditable and noncreditable) offered to students with reimbursable meals count toward the weekly dietary specifications for school meals (refer to "Weekly dietary specifications" in this section).

2 — Meal Service Systems with OVS

Schools and institutions may use several different meal service systems to offer reimbursable meals to students. Examples include cafeteria-style service, kiosks, classroom meals, and vending machines. At the senior high school level, OVS is required at lunch unless the SFA demonstrates to the CSDE that their meal service system does not accommodate OVS. This is most common in RCCIs.

This section addresses some of the meal service systems that might not readily accommodate OVS, and the requirements for ensuring compliance. The USDA strongly encourages SFAs to modify meal service systems to incorporate OVS whenever possible.

Classroom Meals

To implement OVS with meals served in the classroom, SFAs must offer choices that include the required amounts of each meal component (lunch) or food item (breakfast) and students must select the required amounts for a reimbursable meal.

SFAs must provide appropriate job-specific training for non-food service employees whose responsibilities include duties related to the operation of the school nutrition programs. For example, teachers, teacher aides, and other applicable staff who conduct in-classroom meal counting and claiming must receive appropriate training to ensure they perform their jobs effectively and in compliance with the USDA's regulations. SFAs should have a written procedure in place for meal counting in the classroom and provide regular staff training on these procedures. The CSDE strongly recommends that SFAs develop standard operating procedures (SOP) for classroom meals.

Non-food service employees whose responsibilities include duties related to the operation of school nutrition programs must be included in the SFA's annual professional standards tracking log. For more information on professional standards, refer to the USDA's *Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals webpage.

Meal counts in the classroom

The USDA requires that NSLP and SBP meal counts must be determined at the point of service (refer to "Point-of-service meal counts" in section 1). For classroom meals, the point of service is the point in the meal service where classroom staff can accurately determine that all required

meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for a reimbursable meal have been served to the child.

The USDA does not allow any other methods to determine classroom meal counts, such as student attendance, student orders for meals in advance of the meal service, or the number of meals sent to the classroom. Classroom staff must understand how to identify reimbursable meals with OVS and how to implement point-of-service meal counts.

Written OVS meal count instructions

SFAs should have clear written meal count instructions for classroom staff that indicate how to identify reimbursable meals (including reimbursable meals with OVS, if applicable), how to take point-of-service meal counts, and how to handle leftover meals or foods (including milk). As a best practice, SFAs should include these instructions with the delivery of the classroom meals. This helps prevent situations where staff do not understand the required procedures, such as when staffing variations occur due to teacher absences, substitutes, and parent volunteers.

Food safety requirements

Classroom meals must also comply with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). The SFA's SOP for classroom meals must include appropriate food safety procedures (such as ice packs and coolers) to ensure that classroom meals stay at proper temperatures during transportation and service.

For examples of SOPs, refer to the Iowa State University's handout, *Standard Operating Procedure: Breakfast in the Classroom*, the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) sample SOPs, *Transporting Food to Remote Sites (Satellite Kitchens)* and *Hot and Cold Holding for Time Temperature Control for Safe Foods*, and the ICN's Standard Operating Procedures webpage.

OVS not allowed in preschool classrooms

The USDA does not allow OVS for preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP, including classroom meals for preschoolers.

> For additional guidance on classroom meals, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Classroom Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Vending Machine Meals

Vending machines that provide reimbursable meals are part of the school food service program and are governed by the NSLP and SBP regulations. School meal vending machines must comply with the same procedures, menu planning requirements, and OVS requirements that apply to meals offered on the cafeteria serving lines, including the OVS requirements outlined in this guide. For additional guidance, refer to USDA Memo SP 03-2007: *Vending Machines in the School Meal Programs* and USDA Memo SP13-2008: *Use of Vending Machines in the School Meal Programs*.

Advance Ordering of Meals

SFAs may implement OVS when students order meals in advance of the meal service. To implement OVS with advance ordering of meals, SFAs must offer choices that include the required amounts of each meal component (lunch) or food item (breakfast) and students must select the required amounts for a reimbursable meal.

SFAs must carefully structure this type of meal system and check the resulting meals to ensure they are reimbursable. SFAs must also provide clear information to students and families regarding the choices and requirements for reimbursable meals.

Pre-plated Meals

Pre-plated meals offer all meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the minimum required quantities for each grade group in an entirely or partially pre-served manner. Pre-plated meals must include at least the full serving of each meal component required by the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

This type of meal service is often used by schools and institutions with logistical limitations for their meal service. Examples may include facility or space restrictions, or situations where children are unable to select the offered foods. Senior high schools that offer only pre-plated lunches must implement OVS for all or some components, unless the SFA has received prior approval from the CSDE not to implement OVS.

SFAs that use pre-plated meals are not required to change their meal service systems to accommodate OVS. However, pre-plated meals must:

- offer all required meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the required quantities for each grade group, including a variety of milk choices; and
- meet the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements.

The USDA encourages SFAs to modify their meal service systems to include OVS opportunities whenever possible, such as allowing students a choice of different fruits and vegetables.

Pre-packaged Meals

Pre-packaged meals such as grab-and-go or bagged meals are similar to pre-plated meals. For senior high schools, pre-packaged meals are allowed only if the meal service system also has cafeteria lines that allow OVS. Senior high schools that offer only pre-packaged lunches must implement OVS for all or some components, unless the SFA has received approval from the CSDE not to implement OVS. Pre-packaged meals are allowed at all other grade levels.

Like pre-plated meals, SFAs using pre-packaged meals are encouraged to offer some choices, and the option to decline some meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) such as grains or milk. OVS is not required (even in senior high schools) if pre-packaged meals are offered as part of breakfast in the classroom, field trips, or for students leaving the campus for work-study.

Family-style Meals

Family-style meal service allows students to serve themselves from common dishes of food with assistance from supervising adults. While family-style meal service allows students to make choices in selecting foods, the supervising adult should initially offer the full serving of each meal component (lunch) or food item (breakfast) to each student.

Over the week, offered meals must meet the daily and weekly meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) and the weekly dietary specifications. However, since replenishment is immediately available at each table, the initial serving of a meal component or food item may be less than the full serving. The supervising adult should encourage additional portions and selections to meet the full serving as appropriate, provided the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (refer to "Weekly dietary specifications" in section 1).

> Since OVS requires that students must select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables, the supervising adult must ensure that each student selects at least ½ cup of fruit, vegetable, or both, during the family-style meal service.

For additional guidance on family-style meal service, 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*.

Salad Bars

The requirements and guidance in this section also apply to other types of food bars, such as pasta bars and baked potato bars.

One of the challenges of salad bars is ensuring that students take the minimum required portions for a reimbursable meal. SFAs must ensure that students and staff understand the required selections for a reimbursable meal.

The USDA encourages SFAs to use salad bars in the meal service to offer a wider variety of vegetables and fruits, and lower plate waste. The USDA permits salad bars with OVS because they enhance the choices available, which may assist students with selecting the foods they will consume. However, salad bars may not be a feasible OVS option for certain school food service operations.

> SFAs must carefully consider whether they can successfully implement the requirements for salad bars and ensure that students take the minimum required portions for a reimbursable meal.

There are many ways that schools can incorporate salad bars to facilitate service of reimbursable meals. Salad bars may include food options for the complete reimbursable meal (except for milk) or they may include a food or menu item that is part of a reimbursable meal, depending on the available foods and how they are structured. For example, SFAs could offer the MMA and grains components on the serving line, offer the vegetables and fruits components on a salad bar that is available to all students, and offer a variety of milk choices in the milk cooler.



SFAs can set up salad bars in a variety of ways. One option is providing pre-portioned and pre-packaged meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) that are grab-and-go to accommodate a high volume of students in a short period. Pre-portioning is an acceptable method to ensure that students select an appropriate amount from salad bars.

To ensure students and cashiers can easily identify reimbursable meals from salad bars, SFAs must follow the requirements below.

Ensure salad bar servings meet the meal patterns

When planning a salad bar as part of a reimbursable meal, the servings must be consistent with the meal pattern for the grade group. The planned serving should be an amount that is reasonable for that menu item. For example, 1 cup of lettuce is reasonable, but 1 cup of radishes is more than a child would normally consume. To meet the OVS requirements:

- the planned serving of fruits and vegetables must be at least ⅛ cup to credit toward the meal patterns;
- the combined amount of the offered fruits and vegetables must provide the full serving of the vegetables component and the fruits component for each grade group; and
- students must select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables for a reimbursable meal.

For information on the NSLP and SBP meal patterns, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage. For guidance on crediting fruits and vegetables, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Pre-portion foods

Pre-portioning foods in the proper serving allows staff to quickly identify if students have a reimbursable meal. If foods are not pre-portioned, SFAs must provide serving utensils in appropriate sizes and instruct students on how to select the required meal components and portions. SFAs must also train cashiers to accurately judge the quantities of self-serve foods on student trays to determine if the selected foods are a reimbursable meal.

Post salad bar signage

Cafeteria signage must indicate which foods and combinations of foods students may select for a reimbursable salad bar meal with OVS. SFAs must ensure that salad bar signage clearly identifies the meal components provided on the salad bar and the minimum serving size for each meal component. For self-service items, place signs at the location of the food on the salad bar as a visual aid to help students determine the minimum serving. For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

Provide guidance on minimum portions for fruits and vegetables

Salad bar signs should indicate the number or amount (using a specific serving utensil) that equals ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, such as eight baby carrots or two scoops of canned fruit. For guidance on the amounts of fruits and vegetables that provide ½ cup, refer to the USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs and the Start with Half a Cup portioning guides for fresh fruits and vegetables. For more resources, visit the "Salad Bars" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Locate salad bar before the point of service

Salad bars should be located before the point of service to ensure that each student's selections from the salad bar meet the required servings for a reimbursable meal. If a school cannot position the salad bar in a location prior to the point of service, the SFA may request approval from the CSDE for an alternative system. The alternative system must ensure that all students who use the salad bar select the required meal components to meet the meal pattern and OVS requirements. If the salad bar is located after the point of service, the SFA should:

- pre-portion items;
- instruct students on how to select the required meal components and quantities;
- provide appropriately sized serving utensils to help students select the required quantities;
- post visual reminders (such as signs and posters) to help students determine how to select foods; and
- provide staff to monitor meal selections and ensure that students take the meal components in the required serving sizes that were credited at the point of service. For younger students, schools could assign student "salad bar ambassadors" to assist in selecting the appropriate size portions from the salad bar.

Provide staff training on reimbursable salad bar meals

Train cashiers on what constitutes a reimbursable meal at the point of service. In addition to regular OVS training, the cafeteria manager should conduct a daily pre-service meeting with all servers and cashiers to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. For more information, refer to "Food service staff training" in section 1.

Ensure food safety

SFAs must ensure that salad bars and other food bars comply with HACCP. The SFA's SOPs for salad bars must include appropriate food safety procedures to ensure that foods stay at proper temperatures and are safe from contamination. For examples of SOPs, refer to the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) sample SOPs, Preventing Contamination at Food Bars, and the ICN's Standard Operating Procedures webpage.

For additional guidance on salad bars, refer to USDA Memo SP 41-2019: *Salad Bars in the National School Lunch Program*, and visit the "Salad Bars" section of the CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.



3 — Required Signage

The USDA requires SFAs to post cafeteria signage that provides clear information about the daily planned reimbursable meals and all allowable choices. SFAs must post two different types of signage that clearly communicate the meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for each daily menu choice and indicate what students must select for a reimbursable meal. The purpose of this signage is to prevent unintentional purchases of a la carte items and help students choose a reimbursable meal.

Requirement 1: Identify Foods and Amounts Offered for All Planned Reimbursable Meals

Section 7 CFR 210.10(a)(2) of the NSLP regulations and section 7 CFR 220.8(a)(2) of the SBP regulations require that SFAs must post signage to identify the planned reimbursable meals (i.e., all offered full meals), including the meal components and portions and any choices or combination of choices available within each meal component. This signage must be located near or at the beginning of each serving line.

> This requirement applies to all schools and institutions, including those that do not implement OVS and those that implement family-style meal service (refer to "Family-style Meals" in section 2).

Requirement 2: Identify Required Student Selections for Reimbursable Meals with OVS

Schools that implement OVS must indicate the minimum amount of each meal component (lunch) or food item (breakfast) that students must select for a reimbursable meal, based on the planned daily menu for each grade group. This signage must be posted at all applicable points in the serving line where the meal components or food items are available.

- **Example:** The meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires 1 cup of the fruits component and 1 cup of the vegetables component. A high school lunch menu offers fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings and allows students to select two servings of fruits and two servings of vegetables. The cafeteria signage must clearly communicate that students may select up to two servings of fruits and two

servings of vegetables with each meal. This signage must be located on the serving line where the fruit and vegetable options are available.

SFAs are not required to provide detailed information about the meal components, such as identifying the vegetable subgroups. However, the CSDE strongly encourages SFAs to provide detailed information whenever possible, within the constraints of the menu and serving line. This helps promote the school nutrition programs and makes it easier for students to understand what reimbursable meals include.

Types of Acceptable Signage

SFAs may choose how to identify the foods that are part of reimbursable meals, based on their facilities, layout, and other considerations. Some examples of acceptable signage include menu boards, posters, signs, labels, and table tents.

Examples of Language for OVS Signage

The examples below provide some ideas for OVS signage that SFAs may modify as applicable. The actual signage used by the SFA must be based on the specific choices offered in the school's daily lunch and breakfast menus, and the number of meal components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) that students must select for a reimbursable meal.

> The examples below might not be applicable to all SFAs depending on local menu offerings. Menu planners should use language that reflects the specific choices offered on the school's daily lunch and breakfast menus.

Sample language for lunch

- The five meal components include meats/meat alternates, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Choose at least three meal components including ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. For a nutritious meal choose all five!
- Choose any two fruits.
- Choose any two vegetables.
- Choose one fruit.
- Choose one or two vegetables.
- Try some veggies! Take one or two, it's up to you!
- Choose two fruits (limit of one juice).
- Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice.

- Choose one milk: low-fat, fat-free, or low-fat chocolate.
- Choose one or two grains.
- Choose one entree.

Sample language for breakfast

- Breakfast includes two grains, two fruits, and one milk. Choose at least three food items including at least one fruit. For a nutritious meal, choose all five!
- Breakfast includes one grain, two fruits, and one milk. Choose at least three food items including at least one fruit. For a nutritious meal, choose all four!
- Breakfast includes any two grains or meats/meat alternates, any two fruits or vegetables, and one milk. Choose at least three food items including at least one fruit or vegetable. For a nutritious meal, choose all five!
- Choose at least one fruit or vegetable.
- Choose one grain.
- Choose up to two grains.
- Choose two fruits (limit of one juice).
- Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice.
- Choose one milk.
- Choose one of the following: two servings of cereal, two servings of granola bar, or one serving of cereal and one serving of granola bar

Reviewing Signage for Compliance

The questions below help SFAs determine if cafeteria signage meets the USDA requirements. SFAs should answer these questions for each cafeteria serving line. If any answers are “no,” the SFA must update the cafeteria signage as applicable.

- Is signage available for each daily lunch and breakfast choice and each serving line?
- Is signage clearly visible?
- Is signage located at or near the beginning of each serving line?
- OVS only: Is signage located at the applicable points in the serving line near each meal component (lunch) or food item (breakfast)?

A helpful best practice strategy to determine if the cafeteria signage is clear and effective is to conduct a cafeteria walk-through from the perspective of students. Review the signage at the beginning of the serving line and continue through the entire serving line to the point of service.

When Signage is Not Required

Signage is not required for field trips, meals in the classroom, and other venues where signage may be problematic. SFAs that offer meal choices in these situations should use other methods to inform students about what to select and whether OVS is implemented.

Resources for Signage

Signage resources and templates are available in the "Required Signage for OVS" section of the CSDE's Offer versus Serve for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage. For examples of menu language for OVS at lunch, refer to "Sample Lunch Menus" in section 4. For examples of menu language for OVS at breakfast, refer to "Sample Breakfast Menus" in section 5. A summary of the signage requirements is available in the CSDE's resource, *Signage Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Training on the signage requirements for OVS is available in Module 17: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and Module 18: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.



4 — OVS at Lunch

The requirements for implementing OVS at lunch are defined by 7 CFR 210.10(e) of the USDA regulations for the NSLP. OVS must be implemented at lunch in senior high schools, but it is optional for all other grades and the SSO. The USDA encourages schools to use the OVS flexibility for all grade levels to reduce food waste and enhance student choice. OVS cannot be implemented for the ASP or the preschool meal patterns.

Lunch Meal Pattern Does Not Change with OVS

The lunch meal pattern requirements do not change with OVS. While OVS applies only to the daily meal pattern requirements, SFAs must still plan all lunch menus to meet the daily and weekly NSLP meal pattern requirements.

- **Daily lunch meal pattern:** The daily lunch meal pattern requires minimum amounts of the five meal components (MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk).

- **Weekly lunch meal pattern:** The weekly lunch meal pattern requires additional amounts of MMA and grains and specific amounts of the five vegetable subgroups, a juice limit (fruit juices cannot exceed half of the offered fruits and vegetable juices cannot exceed half of the offered vegetables), a WGR requirement (at least 80 percent of all offered grains must be WGR), and dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars (refer to "Weekly dietary specifications" in section 1).

SFAs must ensure that all lunch menus are planned to meet these requirements.



Two OVS Requirements for Lunch

There are two requirements for reimbursable lunches with OVS. One requirement applies to menu planning and the meals offered by the SFA and the other applies to the foods selected by the student.

1. **Menu planning:** SFAs must offer the minimum daily serving of the five meal components. These include MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk.

2. **Student selections:** Students must select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.

Lunches that meet these requirements are eligible for USDA reimbursement based on the student's eligibility for free, reduced-price, or paid meals.

Terms to know for OVS at lunch

The definitions below apply only to OVS at lunch. The definitions of food items and meal components are different for breakfast.

- A **meal component** is one of the five food groups that comprise the reimbursable lunch, including milk, MMA, vegetables, fruits, and grains.

- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the five meal components. It may contain one or more meal components. For example, a hamburger patty (MMA component) on a whole-grain bun (grains component) is one food item that contains two meal components. A selection of three different ½-cup servings of fruit (such as peaches, applesauce, and pears) includes three food items from one meal component (fruits).

  > This definition applies only to lunch. Food items credit differently for OVS at breakfast (refer to "Terms to know for OVS at breakfast" in section 5).

- The **full serving** is the minimum amount required for each grade group in the NSLP meal patterns.

SFAs must ensure that menu planners understand how these terms apply to OVS at lunch.

Overview of OVS Requirements for Lunch

For lunches to be reimbursable under OVS, SFAs must meet the criteria below.

Menu planning for lunch

Lunch menus must include the minimum full serving of the five meal components for each grade group.

- The full serving of the grains, fruits, and vegetables components may be offered as more than one food item. A best practice to encourage students' selections of reimbursable meals is offering all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings.
- The full serving of the MMA component must be offered as the main dish, or the main dish and one other food item.
- The full serving of the milk component must be offered as 1 cup.

SFAs may serve larger amounts of any meal component if the weekly lunch menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (refer to "Weekly dietary specifications" in section 1).

> SFAs must serve additional grains and MMA on some days to meet the NSLP meal pattern's minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8. For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Unit pricing for lunch

Meals must be priced as a unit, i.e., students pay the same price regardless of whether they select three, four, or five meal components. SFAs must establish one price for a complete reimbursable lunch in the paid meal category and one price for a complete reimbursable lunch in the reduced-price meal category. For more information, refer to "Unit Pricing" in section 1.

Required signage for lunch

SFAs must post two different types of cafeteria signage that clearly communicates the food items for each daily menu choice and indicates what students must select for a reimbursable meal.

- The first type of signage must identify all planned reimbursable lunches (i.e., all offered full meals), including the food items and portions and any choices or combination of choices available within each meal component. This signage must be near or at the beginning of each serving line.

- The second type of signage must indicate what meal components and amounts students may select for a reimbursable lunch with OVS, based on the planned daily menu for each grade group. This signage must be posted at all applicable points in the serving line where the food items are available.

For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

Required student selections for reimbursable lunches

Students must select at least three of the five meal components including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components. A student's selection of less than ½ cup of fruits/vegetables does not count toward the OVS requirements.

Declining foods at lunch

Students may decline any one or two of the required meal components, except for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. Students may take smaller portions of the declined meal components. However, selections of less than the full serving do not count toward the OVS requirements.

Selecting more than the full serving at lunch

SFAs may allow students to select more than the full serving of any meal component. However, selections of additional servings from the same meal component count as only one meal component for OVS.

Overview of OVS Requirements for the Lunch Meal Components

The next parts of this section explain the OVS requirements for each of the five lunch meal components. The key requirements for each meal component are summarized below.

Milk

- **Milk variety:** SFAs must offer at least two different choices of unflavored or flavored milk. At least one milk choice must be unflavored. Flavored milk cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.
- **Student's milk selection:** A student's selection of 1 cup of milk (minimum daily serving) counts as one meal component for OVS. Students are not required to select the milk component for a reimbursable meal.

MMA

- **Main dish requirement:** SFAs must offer the MMA component in the main dish or in the main dish and one other food. If the main dish or other food provides less than the full serving (such as two 1-oz eq servings for grades 9-12), students must select both foods to count as the MMA component for OVS. For more information refer to "Offering MMA Component as Main Dish and One Other Food" and "Offering Entree Choices with Different Oz Eq of MMA" in the "MMA Component with OVS at Lunch" section.
- **Student's MMA selection:** A student's selection of the full serving of the MMA component counts as one meal component for OVS. Students are not required to select the MMA component for a reimbursable meal.
- **Selecting more than full serving of MMA:** A student's selection of more than the full serving of MMA counts as only one meal component for OVS. For example, an elementary student's selection of 2 oz eq of MMA counts as one meal component and a high school student's selection of 3 oz eq of MMA counts as one meal component. For more information refer to "Offering Entree Choices with Different Oz Eq of MMA" in the "MMA Component with OVS at Lunch" section.

Fruits

- **Student's fruits selection:** Students must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables for a reimbursable meal. A student's selection of the full serving of the fruits component counts as either one meal component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both requirements in the same meal.

- **Selecting more than full serving of fruits:** A student's selection of more than the full serving of the fruits component counts as only one meal component for OVS. For example, a selection of 1 cup of fruit for students in grades K-5 or 6-8 counts as one meal component. For more information refer to "Student Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables" in the "Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch" section.

- **Fruit juice limit:** When the daily lunch menu offers ½-cup servings of fruit choices and fruit juice choices and allows students to select two servings, students cannot select two servings of fruit juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. For more information refer to "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Lunch" in the "Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch" section.

- **Required juice limit signage:** The school's lunch menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of fruit juice that students may select with each meal.



Vegetables

- **Student's vegetables selection:** Students must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables for a reimbursable meal. A student's selection of the full serving of the vegetables component counts as one meal component for OVS or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both requirements in the same meal.

- **Selecting more than full serving of vegetables:** A student's selection of more than the full serving of vegetables counts as one meal component for OVS. For example, a selection of 1½ cups of vegetables for students in grades 9-12 counts as one meal component. For more information refer to "Student Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables" in the "Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch" section.

- **Vegetable juice limit:** When the daily lunch menu offers ½-cup servings of vegetable choices and vegetable juice choices and allows students to select two servings, students cannot select two servings of vegetable juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. For more information refer to "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Lunch" in the "Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch" section.

- **Required juice limit signage:** The school's lunch menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of vegetable juice that students may select with each meal. For more information refer to section 3 and to "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Lunch" in the "Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch" section.

Grains

- **Student's grains selection:** A student's selection of the full serving of the grains component counts as one meal component for OVS. Students are not required to select the grains component for a reimbursable meal.

- **Selecting than full serving of grains:** A student's selection of more than the full serving of grains counts as only one meal component for OVS. For example, a student's selection of 3 oz eq of grains counts as one meal component for all grades. For more information refer to "Offering More Than Minimum Daily Grains" in the "Grains Component with OVS at Lunch" section.



Milk Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the milk component at lunch. Milk may be used as a beverage, on cereal, or both.

For more information on the NSLP meal pattern requirements for milk, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Serving Size for Milk at Lunch

Milk credits based on volume (fluid ounces).

Minimum meal pattern servings for milk at lunch

The minimum daily serving of milk is 1 cup (8 fluid ounces) for all grades.

The minimum weekly serving is the sum of the minimum daily requirement.

Table 4-1. Required meal pattern servings for the milk component at lunch

Grade group	Minimum daily serving	Minimum weekly servings for five-day week	Minimum weekly servings for seven-day week
K-5	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
6-8	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

Minimum student selection of milk for OVS at lunch

A student's selection of the full serving milk counts as one meal component for OVS. Students are not required to select the milk component for a reimbursable meal.

Allowable Types of Milk at Lunch

The NSLP meal patterns for grades K-12 allow unflavored and flavored whole milk, reduced-fat (2%) milk, low-fat (1%) milk, and fat-free milk. Flavored milk served in reimbursable meals cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. Flavored milk sold la carte in middle and high schools cannot exceed 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

Other allowable types of milk include pasteurized lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk. SFAs may serve any of these types of milk. For guidance on lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Offering Lactose-Free and Lactose-Reduced Milk in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Milk Variety at Lunch

SFAs must offer a variety of at least two different choices of milk, either unflavored or flavored. At least one choice must be unflavored milk.



MMA Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the MMA component at lunch. For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for the MMA component, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Serving Size for MMA

The required quantities for the MMA component are in oz eq. The amounts in the MMA component refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients.

Minimum meal pattern servings for MMA at lunch

The minimum daily serving of MMA is 1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8 and 2 oz eq for grades 9-12. The daily MMA component must be served in the main dish or in the main dish and one other food (refer to "Offering MMA Component as Main Dish and One Other Food" in this section).

For grades K-5 and 6-8, the minimum weekly serving is larger than the sum of the minimum daily requirement. SFAs must serve additional MMA on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements. Menu planners may choose to provide additional MMA from a larger serving of one main dish MMA food (such as 3 oz eq of baked chicken instead of 2 oz eq of baked chicken) or from a main dish and one other food item (refer to "Offering MMA Component as Main Dish and One Other Food" in this section). These menu planning decisions affect students' selections of reimbursable meals with OVS.

For grades 9-12, the required weekly serving is the sum of the minimum daily requirement.

Table 4-2. Required meal pattern servings for the MMA component at lunch

Grade group	Minimum daily serving	Minimum weekly servings for five-day week	Minimum weekly servings for seven-day week
K-5	1 oz eq	8 oz eq	11 oz eq
6-8	1 oz eq	9 oz eq	12½ oz eq
9-12	2 oz eq	10 oz eq	14 oz eq

Minimum student selection of MMA for OVS at lunch

A student's selection of the full serving of MMA counts as one meal component for OVS. Students are not required to select the MMA component for a reimbursable meal.

Amounts of MMA required for 1 oz eq

A 1-oz eq serving of the MMA component equals:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish;
- 1 ounce of cheese;
- 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese, cheese food/spread, or cheese substitute;
- ¼ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), e.g., kidney beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), lentils, and split peas;
- ½ large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter, and sunflower seed butter;
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts;
- ¼ cup (2.2 ounces) of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein;
- 1 ounce of tempeh that contains specific ingredients;
- 3 ounces of surimi;
- ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt; and
- 1 ounce of APP that meets the USDA's APP requirements (appendix A of the NSLP and SBP regulations).

Menu planners should review the USDA's FBG to determine the specific yield and crediting information for foods in the MMA component (refer to "Food Buying Guide" in section 1).

Offering MMA Component as Main Dish and One Other Food

SFAs must serve the daily MMA component in the main dish or in the main dish and one other food. For example, a lunch menu could offer a turkey sandwich with the full MMA serving or a half turkey sandwich and yogurt that together provide the full MMA serving. SFAs cannot serve the MMA component in more than two foods.

Whether a student's choice counts as the MMA component for OVS depends on the serving size of the planned MMA menu items and the minimum daily serving for each grade group. Students must select at least the full serving to count as the MMA component for OVS.

- **Full serving:** If the main dish and the other food each provide the minimum daily serving, students may select either food to count as the MMA component for OVS.
- **Less than full serving:** If the main dish or the other food provides less than the minimum daily serving, students must select both foods to count as the MMA component for OVS. Student selections of less than the full serving do not count toward the OVS requirements.

SFAs must consider how these menu planning decisions affect students' selection of reimbursable meals with OVS. The examples below show how these requirements apply to each grade group.

Example 1: Offering MMA as two food items for grades K-5 and 6-8

A lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 offers 2 oz eq of MMA from ½ cup of low-fat yogurt (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce low-fat cheese stick (1 oz eq). Since each food item provides 1 oz eq, students may take both foods together, or either one alone, to count as the MMA component for OVS.

Student selects	Meal pattern contribution	Counts as full meal component for grades K-5 and 6-8	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup Low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce	2 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup	1 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
Low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce	1 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.

Example 2: Offering MMA as two food items for grades 9-12

A lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers the required 2 oz eq of MMA from ½ cup of low-fat yogurt (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce low-fat cheese stick (1 oz eq). Students must select both foods to count as the MMA component for OVS. If a student selects either the yogurt or cheese stick alone, the serving is less than 2 oz eq and does not count as the MMA component for OVS. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, SFAs may want to consider packaging foods with less than the full serving together.

Student selects	Meal pattern contribution	Counts as full meal component for grade 9-12	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup Low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce	2 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup	1 oz eq	No	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.
Low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce	1 oz eq	No	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.

Offering Entree Choices with Different Oz Eq of MMA

Menu planners may choose to offer daily lunch menus that include entree choices with different oz eq of MMA. Whether a student's choice counts as the MMA component for OVS depends on the oz eq of MMA and the minimum daily serving for each grade group.

- Entrees that contain the full serving count as one meal component for OVS.
- Entrees that contain more than the full serving count as one meal component for OVS.
- Entrees that contain less than the full serving do not count as a meal component for OVS.

SFAs should consider how entrees with different oz eq affect students' selection of reimbursable meals with OVS.

Examples of OVS contribution for different entree choices

The chart below shows some examples of different entree choices for grades K-12. The planned lunch menu includes four entree choices with at least 2 oz eq of MMA. Two entree choices are main dishes (beef stew and roast chicken). Two entree choices include a main dish and side item (chickpea salad with yogurt and peanut butter sandwich with cheese cubes).

For these examples, students may select any entree to count as the MMA component for OVS. However, if a student declines one of the two foods from the main dish and side item combinations, some choices are less than the full serving and do not count as the MMA component for OVS

Student selects	Additional foods for reimbursable meal	Considerations
Main dish: Beef stew, 3 oz eq cooked beef	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.	A student's selection of the beef stew counts as the MMA component for any grade. If the beef stew provides at least ½ cup of vegetables, the student only needs to select the full serving of at least one other meal component.
Main dish: Roast chicken, 2 oz eq	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.	A student's selection of the roast chicken counts as the MMA component for any grade.

Student selects	Additional foods for reimbursable meal	Considerations
Main dish and side item: Chickpea salad, 1 oz eq Yogurt, ½ cup (1 oz eq)	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.	The chickpea salad cannot count as the vegetables component because it already counts as the MMA component. A student's selection of the chickpea salad or yogurt alone counts as the MMA component for grades K-5 and 6-8 but not for grades 9-12.
Main dish and side item: Peanut butter sandwich, 2 tablespoons peanut butter (1½ oz eq) Low-fat cheese cubes, ½ ounce (½ oz eq)	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.	If the bread on the sandwich provides at least 2 oz eq of the grains component, the student only needs to select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. A student's selection of the peanut butter sandwich alone counts as the MMA component for grades K-5 and 6-8 but not for grades 9-12. A student's selection of the cheese cubes alone does not count as the MMA component for any grades.



Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the fruits component and vegetables component at lunch. For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for fruits and vegetables, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Vegetables" section and "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Creditable Vegetables

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. For example, a serving of canned corn cannot include the packing water and a serving of baked beans cannot include the sauce. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes) credit when rehydrated only if the manufacturer's PFS provides specific documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving.

Creditable Fruits

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned (in light syrup, water, or fruit juice), and dried fruits, and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed but cannot include water or syrup.



Serving Size for Vegetables

The required quantities for the vegetables component are in cups. All vegetables credit based on the served volume except raw leafy greens, which credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup of lettuce credits as ½ cup of the vegetable component. Examples of raw leafy greens include kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce (e.g., iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix).

Minimum meal pattern servings

The minimum daily serving of the vegetables component is ¾ cup for grades K-5 and 6-8 and 1 cup for grades 9-12. SFAs may choose to offer a combination of different vegetables to meet the daily requirement. For example, a lunch menu for grades K-5 could meet the required ¾ cup of vegetables with ½ cup of broccoli and ¼ cup of carrots.

The minimum weekly serving of the vegetables component is the sum of the minimum daily requirement. The weekly lunch meal patterns also require minimum servings of five vegetable subgroups (dark green, red/orange, starchy, beans, peas, and lentils, and other). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program*.

Table 4-3. Required meal pattern servings for the vegetables component at lunch

Grade group	Minimum daily serving	Minimum weekly servings for five-day week	Minimum weekly servings for seven-day week
K-5	¾ cup	3¾ cups	5¼ cups
6-8	¾ cup	3¾ cups	5¼ cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

Minimum student selection of vegetables for OVS at lunch

A student's selection of the full serving of vegetables counts as one meal component for OVS. A student's selection of ½ cup of vegetables meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

Serving Size for Fruits

The required quantities for the fruits component are in cups. All fruits credit based on the served volume except for dried fruits such as raisins, apricots, dried cherries, dried cranberries, dried blueberries, and mixed dried fruit. Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served. For example, ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.

Minimum meal pattern servings

The minimum daily serving of the fruits component is ½ cup for grades K-5 and 6-8 and 1 cup for grades 9-12. SFAs may choose to offer a combination of different fruits to meet the daily requirement. For example, a lunch menu for grades 9-12 could meet the required 1 cup of fruit with ½ cup of peaches and ½ cup of applesauce.

The required weekly serving of the fruits component is the sum of the minimum daily requirement.

Table 4-4. Required meal pattern servings for the fruits component at lunch

Grade group	Minimum daily serving	Minimum weekly servings for five-day week	Minimum weekly servings for seven-day week
K-5	½ cup	2½ cups	3½ cups
6-8	½ cup	2½ cups	3½ cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

Minimum student selection of fruits for OVS at lunch

A student's selection of the full serving of fruits counts as one meal component for OVS. A student's selection of ½ cup of fruits meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

Weekly Juice Limit at Lunch

The lunch meal pattern requires a weekly limit for fruit juices and vegetable juices.

- **Fruit juices:** Fruit juices cannot exceed half of the weekly amount of fruits offered at lunch. For example, a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 offers 2 cups of fruits over the week. The total amount of weekly fruit juices cannot exceed 1 cup.

- **Vegetable juices:** Vegetable juices cannot exceed half of the weekly amount of vegetables offered at lunch. For example, a five-day lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers 5 cups of vegetables over the week. The total amount of weekly vegetable juices cannot exceed 2½ cups.

If the weekly lunch menu includes larger amounts of fruits and vegetables, the weekly juice limit also increases. For example, if a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 offers 3 cups of the fruits component over the week, the weekly juice limit increases to 1½ cups of fruit juice.

SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice available to students during the week toward the weekly juice limit, including:

- juices that are fresh, frozen or made from concentrate;
- frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice; and
- pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies.

For more information on the juice limit and crediting juices, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*, and the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs*.

Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Lunch

When the daily lunch menu offers ½-cup servings of different fruits and fruit juices and allows students to select two servings, students may select two servings of fruits or one serving of fruit and one serving of fruit juice. Students cannot select two servings of fruit juice because this exceeds the weekly fruit juice limit

The same requirements apply to vegetables. When the daily lunch menu offers ½-cup servings of different vegetables and vegetable juices and allows students to select two servings, students may select two servings of vegetables or one serving of vegetable and one serving of vegetable juice. Students cannot select two servings of vegetable juice because this exceeds the weekly vegetable juice limit.

The school's lunch menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of juice that students may select with each meal. For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

Planned versus Selected Servings of Fruits and Vegetables

Except for the fruits component for grades K-5 and 6-8, the planned serving size for the fruits and vegetables components is different from the serving that students must select for a reimbursable meal. Table 4-5 summarizes the menu planning and OVS requirements for the fruits and vegetables components at lunch.

Table 4-5. Menu planning and OVS requirements for fruits and vegetables at lunch

Grade group	**Menu planning** SFA must plan and offer	**OVS** Student must select
K-5 and 6-8	½ cup of fruits ¾ cup vegetables	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
9-12	1 cup of fruits 1 cup of vegetables	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables

SFAs must always plan and offer the full serving of the fruits component and vegetables component for each grade group). However, students are not required to select the full planned serving of fruits and vegetables. For a reimbursable meal under OVS, students must select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two meal components.

Examples of student selections for ½ cup of fruits or vegetables

To meet the ½-cup requirement for OVS, students may select any combination of fruits and vegetables that total ½ cup. For example, students could select:

- ½ cup of one individual fruit;
- ½ cup of mixed fruits, e.g., fruit salad;
- ¼ cup of dried fruits, e.g., raisins or mixed dried fruits (credits as twice the volume served);
- ½ cup of one individual vegetable;
- ½ cup of mixed vegetables, e.g., peas and carrots;
- 1 cup of salad greens (credits as half the volume served);
- ½ cup combination of fruits and vegetables, e.g., ¼ cup pears and ¼ cup broccoli; or
- ½ cup of mixed fruits and vegetables, e.g., carrot-pineapple-raisin salad.

As a reminder, dried fruits and raw leafy greens credit toward the OVS requirements based on their meal pattern crediting volume. Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served. For example, a student's selection of ¼ cup of raisins counts as ½ cup of the fruits component for OVS. Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served. For example, a student's selection of 1 cup of lettuce counts as ½ cup of the vegetables component for OVS.

Counting Student Selections of Fruits and Vegetables

Whether a student's selection of fruits or vegetables counts as the full meal component or the minimum ½-cup serving for OVS depends on the selected amount and the required serving for the grade group. These requirements are summarized below.

Student selects full serving of fruits or vegetables

Student selections of the full serving of fruits or vegetables count as one meal component for OVS. This selection counts as either the full meal component or the minimum ½-cup serving for the OVS requirement but cannot count as both requirements in the same meal.

- **Student selects full fruits component:** A student who selects the full fruits component has one meal component. For a reimbursable meal, the student must also select the full serving of at least two other meal components or at least ½ cup of vegetables (OVS requirement) and the full serving of at least one other meal component.

- **Student selects full vegetables component:** A student who selects the full vegetables component has one meal component. For a reimbursable meal, the student must also select the full serving of at least two other meal components or at least ½ cup of fruit (OVS requirement) and the full serving of at least one other meal component.

Student selects more than the full serving of fruits or vegetables

Student selections of more than the full serving of the fruits component or the vegetables component count as one meal component for OVS. This selection counts as either the full meal component or the minimum ½-cup serving for the OVS requirement but cannot count as both requirements in the same meal.

- **Student selects more than full fruits component:** A student who selects more than the full fruits component has one meal component. For a reimbursable meal, the student must also select the full serving of at least two other meal components or at least ½ cup of vegetables (OVS requirement) and the full serving of at least one other meal component.

- **Student selects more than full vegetables component:** A student who selects more than the full vegetables component has one meal component. For a reimbursable meal, the student must also select the full serving of at least two other meal components or at least ½ cup of fruit (OVS requirement) and the full serving of at least one other meal component.

Student selects at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables

Student selections of at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables meet the OVS requirement. For a reimbursable meal, the student must also select the full serving of at least two other meal components.

Student selects less than ½ cup of fruits or vegetables

Student selections of less than ½ cup of fruits or vegetables do not count toward the OVS requirements unless they are combined with additional servings from the fruits component or vegetables component to meet the minimum requirement. For a reimbursable meal, the student must select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.

Meals without at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables are not reimbursable. Schools may charge a la carte prices for the selected foods (refer to "A La Carte Sales" in section 1).

To encourage selections of reimbursable meals at the point of service, cashiers should allow students to return to the serving line and select additional fruits or vegetables. Another strategy is offering fruit and vegetable selections at the point of service. For example, the cashier's station could have a basket of assorted whole fruits and bags of cut vegetables.

Offering Minimum Daily Fruits as Two or More Servings

SFAs may choose to serve a combination of fruits to meet the minimum daily requirement (refer to "Serving Size for Fruits" in this section). If the lunch menu offers the minimum daily fruits component as two or more servings, students must select all servings to count as the fruits component for OVS.

- **Full serving:** Selections of the full serving of the fruits component count as either the full fruits component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both in the same meal.

- **Less than full serving:** Selections of less than the full serving do not count as the fruits component, but ½ cup of fruit meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

The examples below show how these menu planning decisions apply to OVS.

Example 1: Offering ½ cup of fruit as two foods for grades K-5 and 6-8

A lunch menu for K-5 and 6-8 offers ½ cup of the fruits component from ¼ cup of strawberries and ¼ cup of oranges. Students must take both foods to count as the full fruits component or meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. The strawberries or oranges alone do not count toward the OVS requirements because each serving is less than ½ cup. SFAs may want to consider offering all fruit choices in ½-cup servings so any selection contains at least ½ cup of the fruits component for OVS.

Student Selects	Counts as at least ½ cup for OVS	Counts as full meal component for grades K-5 and 6-8	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
Strawberries, ¼ cup Oranges, ¼ cup	Yes	Yes	The full serving of at least two other meal components or at least ½ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
Strawberries, ¼ cup	No	No	At least ¼ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.
Oranges, ¼ cup	No	No	At least ¼ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.

Example 2: Offering 1 cup of fruit as two foods for grades 9-12

A lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers 1 cup of the fruits component from ½ cup of strawberries and ½ cup of oranges. Students must take both foods to count as the full fruits component but a student's selection of either strawberries or oranges meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

Student Selects	Counts as at least ½ cup for OVS	Counts as full meal component for grades 9-12	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
Strawberries, ½ cup Oranges, ½ cup	Yes	Yes	The full serving of at least two other meal components or at least ½ cup of vegetable and the full serving of at least one other meal component. **Note:** The full serving counts as either the full fruits component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both in the same meal.
Strawberries, ½ cup	Yes	No	The full serving of at least two other meal components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetable.
Oranges, ½ cup	Yes	No	The full serving of at least two other meal components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetable.

Offering Minimum Daily Vegetables as Two or More Servings

SFAs may choose to serve a combination of vegetables to meet the minimum daily requirement (refer to "Serving Size for Vegetables" in this section). If the lunch menu offers the minimum daily vegetables component as two or more servings, students must select all servings to count as the full vegetables component for OVS at lunch.

- **Full serving:** Selections of the full serving of the vegetables component count as either the full vegetables component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both in the same meal.
- **Less than full serving:** Selections of less than the full serving do not count as the vegetables component, but ½ cup of vegetable meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

The examples below show how these menu planning decisions apply to OVS.

Example 1: Offering ¾ cup of vegetables as two foods for grades K-5 and 6-8

A lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 offers ¾ cup of the vegetables component from ⅜ cup of carrot sticks and ⅜ cup of green peas. Students must take both foods to count as the full vegetables component or meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. The carrots or peas alone do not count as the full vegetables component because each serving is less than ¾ cup. SFAs may want to consider offering all vegetable choices in ½-cup servings so any selection contains at least ½ cup of the vegetables component for OVS.

Student selects	Counts as at least ½ cup for OVS	Counts as full meal component for grades K-5 and 6-8	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
Carrot sticks, ⅜ cup Green peas, ⅜ cup	Yes	Yes	The full serving of at least two other meal components, one of which could be ½ cup of fruit.
Carrot sticks, ⅜ cup	No	No	At least ⅛ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of two other meal components.

Student selects	Counts as at least ½ cup for OVS	Counts as full meal component for grades K-5 and 6-8	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
Green peas, ⅜ cup	No	No	At least ⅛ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of two other meal components.

Example 2: Offering 1 cup of vegetables as two foods for grades 9-12

A lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers 1 cup of the vegetables component from ½ cup of carrot sticks and ½ cup of green peas. Students must take both foods to count as the full vegetables component but a student's selection of either peas or carrots meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

Student selects	Counts as at least ½ cup for OVS	Counts as full meal component for grades 9-12	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
Carrot sticks, ½ cup Green peas, ½ cup	Yes	Yes	The full serving of at least two other meal components or at least ½ cup of fruit and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
Carrot sticks, ½ cup	Yes	No	The full serving of at least two other meal components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit.
Green peas, ½ cup	Yes	No	The full serving of at least two other meal components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit.

Students Select Fruits, Vegetables, and One Other Meal Component

Depending on the serving size, a student could select fruits, vegetables, and one other meal component for a reimbursable meal. The OVS requirements for these selections for students in grades K-5 and 6-8 are different from students in grades 9-12 due to the different meal pattern servings for fruits and vegetables.

The lunch meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires ½ cup of the fruits component and ¾ cup of the vegetables component. If a student selects only fruits, vegetables, and one other meal component, either the fruit selection or the vegetable selection must be the full serving for both foods to count as meal components for OVS. For example, an elementary student has a reimbursable meal if they select ½ cup of fruit (full meal component), ½ cup of vegetable (less than full meal component but meets OVS requirement) and one other full meal component.

The lunch meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires 1 cup of fruits and 1 cup of vegetables. If a student selects only fruits, vegetables, and one other meal component, either the fruit selection or the vegetable selection must be the full 1-cup serving for both foods to count as meal components for OVS. For example, a high student has a reimbursable meal if they select 1 cup of fruit (full meal component), ½ cup of vegetable (less than full meal component but meets OVS requirement), and one other full meal component.



Example 1: Fruits, vegetables, and one meal component for grades K-5 and 6-8

A lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 offers 1 cup of the vegetables component from ½ cup of broccoli and ½ cup of corn and ½ cup of the fruits component from red grapes. A student's selection of ½ of broccoli or corn does not count as the full vegetables component but meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. A student's selection of ½ cup of red grapes counts as either the full fruits component or meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, a student who selects ½ cup of corn or broccoli and ½ cup of grapes must also select the full serving of at least one other meal component. A student who selects ½ cup of broccoli and ½ cup of corn and ½ cup of grapes must also select the full serving of at least one other meal component.

Planned lunch menu	Meal components
Grilled chicken, 1½ ounces cooked	MMA, 1½ oz eq
Whole-grain roll, 2 ounces	Grains, 2 oz eq
Broccoli, ½ cup	Vegetables, ½ cup
Corn, ½ cup	Vegetables, ½ cup
Red grapes, ½ cup	Fruits, ½ cup
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk, 1 cup

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and two other meal components
Broccoli Grapes Milk	Yes. The meal contains two full meal components (fruits and milk) and ½ cup vegetables.
Broccoli Grapes Chicken	Yes. The meal contains two full meal components (fruits and MMA) and ½ cup vegetables.
Broccoli Grapes Roll	Yes. The meal contains two full meal components (fruits and grains) and ½ cup vegetables.
Corn Grapes Milk	Yes. The meal contains two full meal components (fruits and milk) and ½ cup vegetables.

Example 2: Fruits, vegetables, and one meal component for grades 9-12

A lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers 1 cup of the vegetables component from ½ cup of broccoli and ½ cup of corn and 1 cup of the fruits component from two ½-cup servings of red grapes. A student's selection of ½ cup of broccoli or corn does not count as the full vegetables component but meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. A student's selection of ½ cup of red grapes does not count as the full fruits component but meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, a student who selects ½ cup of corn or broccoli and ½ cup of grapes must also select the full serving of at least two other meal components. A student who selects ½ cup of broccoli and ½ cup of corn (full vegetables component) and ½ cup of grapes must also select the full serving of at least one other meal component.

Planned lunch menu	Meal components
Grilled chicken, 2 ounces cooked	MMA, 2 oz eq
Whole-grain roll, 2 ounces	Grains, 2 oz eq
Broccoli, ½ cup	Vegetables, ½ cup
Corn, ½ cup	Vegetables, ½ cup
Red grapes, two ½-cup servings	Fruits, 1 cup
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk, 1 cup

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and two other meal components
Broccoli Grapes Milk	No. The meal contains 1 cup of vegetables and fruits combined and one full meal component (milk) but is missing at least on other meal component.
Broccoli Grapes Chicken	No. The meal contains 1 cup of vegetables and fruits combined and one full meal component (MMA) but is missing at least on other meal component.
Corn Grapes, two servings Milk	Yes. The meal contains two full meal components (fruits and milk) and ½ cup of vegetables.
Corn Grapes, two servings Chicken	Yes. The meal includes two full meal components (fruits and MMA) and ½ cup of vegetables.

Grains Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the grains component at lunch. For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for the grains component, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Serving Size for Grains

The required quantities for the grains component are in oz eq.

Minimum meal pattern servings for grains at lunch

The minimum daily serving of the grains component is 1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8 and 2 oz eq for grades 9-12. SFAs may choose to serve a combination of several different grains to meet the daily requirement. For example, a lunch menu for grades 9-12 could meet the required 2 oz eq of grains from ½ cup of brown rice (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll (1 oz eq).

The minimum weekly serving of the grains component for grades K-5 and 6-8 is larger than the sum of the minimum daily requirement. SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements. For grades 9-12, the required weekly serving of the grains component is the sum of the minimum daily requirement.

Table 4-6. Required meal pattern servings for the grains component at lunch

Grade group	Minimum daily serving	Minimum weekly servings for five-day week	Minimum weekly servings for seven-day week
K-5	1 oz eq	8 oz eq	11 oz eq
6-8	1 oz eq	8 oz eq	11 oz eq
9-12	2 oz eq	10 oz eq	14 oz eq

Minimum student selection of grains for OVS at lunch

A student's selection of the full serving of grains counts as one meal component for OVS. Students are not required to select the grains component for a reimbursable meal.

Offering Minimum Daily Grains as Two or More Foods

If the lunch menu offers the minimum daily serving of the grains component as two or more foods, students must select all foods to count as the grains component for OVS. Selections of less than the full serving do not count as the grains component for OVS. The examples below show how these menu planning decisions apply to OVS.

Example 1: Offering 1 oz eq of grains as two foods for grades K-5 and 6-8

A lunch menu for K-5 and 6-8 offers 1 oz eq of grains from ¼ cup of brown rice (½ oz eq) and a ½-ounce whole-grain roll (½ oz eq). Students must take both foods to count as the grains component for OVS. The brown rice or roll alone does not count as the grains component because each food is less than 1 oz eq. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, SFAs may want to consider packaging foods with less than the full serving together.

Student selects	Counts as full meal component for grades K-5 and 6-8	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
Brown rice, ½ oz eq Whole-grain roll, ½ oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
Brown rice, ½ oz eq	No	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.
Whole-grain roll, ½ oz eq	No	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.

Example 2: Offering 2 oz eq of grains as two foods for grades 9-12

A lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers 2 oz eq of grains from ½ cup of brown rice (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll (1 oz eq). Students must take both foods to count as the grains component for OVS. The brown rice or roll alone do not count as the grains component because each serving is less than 2 oz eq. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, SFAs may want to consider offering all grain items in at least the minimum oz eq.

Student selects	Counts as full meal component for grades 9-12	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
Brown rice, 1 oz eq Whole-grain roll, 1 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
Brown rice, 1 oz eq	No	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.
Whole-grain roll, 1 oz eq	No	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.



Offering More Than Minimum Daily Grains

SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly lunch meal pattern requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8. Menu planners may choose to provide additional grains from a larger serving of one grain food (such as a 2-oz eq roll instead of a 1-oz eq roll) or from a combination of different grain foods (such as 1 oz eq of spaghetti and a 1-oz eq whole-grain roll). These menu planning decisions affect students' selections of reimbursable meals with OVS.

Whether a student's choice counts as the grains component for OVS depends on the serving size of the planned grain menu items and the minimum daily serving for each grade group.

- **Full serving:** If each grain menu item provides the full serving (such as two 1-oz eq grains for grades K-5 and 6-8), students may select any grain food to count as the grains component for OVS.

- **Less than full serving:** If any grain menu item provides less than the full serving, students must select the food or combination of foods that provide at least the minimum daily serving. Student selections of less than the full serving do not count toward the OVS requirements.

- **More than full serving:** Student selections of more than the full (such two 1-oz eq WGR rolls for grades K-5 and 6-8) count as only one meal component for OVS.

Students must always select at least the full serving to count as the grains component for OVS. The examples below show how these menu planning decisions apply to OVS.

Example 1: Offering two 1-oz eq grain foods for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch

A lunch menu for K-5 and 6-8 offers 2 oz eq of the grains component from ½ cup of WGR spaghetti and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll. To count as the grains component for OVS, students may take the spaghetti and roll together or either one alone.

Student selects	Counts as full meal component for grades K-5 and 6-8	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
WGR spaghetti, 1 oz eq WGR roll, 1 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
WGR spaghetti, 1 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
WGR roll, 1 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.



Example 2: Offering two grain foods with different oz eq for grades 9-12 at lunch

A lunch menu for 9-12 offers 3 oz eq of the grains component from 1 cup of WGR spaghetti (2 oz eq) and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll (1 oz eq). To count as the grains component for OVS, students may take the spaghetti and roll together, or the spaghetti alone. The roll alone does not count toward the OVS requirements because the serving is less than 2 oz eq.

Student selects	Counts as full meal component for grades 9-12	Additional foods for reimbursable meal
WGR spaghetti, 2 oz eq WGR roll, 1 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
WGR spaghetti, 2 oz eq	Yes	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other meal component.
WGR roll, 1 oz eq	No	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.

Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch

SFAs decide how to offer the required meal components for OVS at lunch. These menu planning decisions determine the choices that students may select for reimbursable meals. Menu planners can increase the likelihood that students will select reimbursable meals by using strategies that encourage students to take at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components.

The three critical elements for successful OVS implementation include strategic menu planning, clear communication, and staff training. The guidelines below help simplify the menu planning process and make it easier for students to select (and school food service staff to identify) reimbursable lunches with OVS.

- **Offer combination entrees that provide the full serving of the MMA component and grains component.** Some examples include pizza and sandwiches. Students who choose the entree have already selected two full meal components and only need to select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables for a reimbursable meal.

- **Offer foods that provide the full serving of the grains component so they counts as a meal component for OVS.** For example, offer 1 cup of brown rice for grades 9-12 instead of ½ cup of brown rice and a 1-ounce WGR roll. For more information, refer to "Offering Minimum Daily Grains as Two or More Servings" in the "Grains Component with OVS at Lunch" section.

- **Package foods with less than the full serving together.** When a food contains less than the full serving of a meal component, package it together with another food from the same meal component so students must take both. For example, wrap a 1-oz eq yogurt (½ cup) and a 1-oz eq cheese stick together to provide 2 oz eq of MMA for grades 9-12, or wrap two ½-oz eq packages of crackers together to provide 1 oz eq of grains for grades K-5 and 6-8. For more information, refer to "Offering Minimum Daily Grains as Two or More Servings" in the "Grains Component with OVS at Lunch" section and "Offering MMA Component as Main Dish and One Other Food" in the "MMA Component with OVS at Lunch" section.

- **Offer all grades a variety of vegetable choices in ½-cup servings.** Allow students to select up to two servings. This makes it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. **Note:** This menu planning approach provides an additional ¼ cup of vegetables daily for grades K-5 and 6-8. SFAs may serve larger

amounts of any meal component if the menu does not exceed the weekly dietary specifications (refer to "Weekly dietary specifications" in section 1).

- **Offer all grades a variety of fruit choices in ½-cup servings.** Allow students in grades K-5 and 6-8 to select at least one serving. Allow students in grades 9-12 to select at least two servings. This makes it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

- **Plan fruit and vegetable choices to meet the weekly juice limit and review lunch menus for compliance.** Provide clear information on lunch menus and cafeteria signage that instructs students on the amount of juice they can select with each lunch. For more information, refer to "Weekly Juice Limit at Lunch" and "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Lunch" in the "Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch" section.

- **Provide clear signage.** Check that lunch menus and cafeteria signage clearly communicate all menu choices and what students must select for a reimbursable lunch. Check that signage is located on the serving line near the meal component to which it applies. A helpful strategy for determining if signage is clear and effective is to conduct a cafeteria walk-through from the beginning of the serving line to the point of service. For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

- **Provide staff training.** Provide regular OVS training to help school food service staff understand and identify the required NSLP meal pattern components, how food items credit for each meal choice on the lunch menu, and what constitutes a reimbursable meal at the point of service. A recommended best practice for cafeteria managers is to conduct a daily pre-service meeting with all applicable staff to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. For more information, refer to "Food service staff training" in section 1.

For more information on menu planning for lunch, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program* and *Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Sample Lunch Menus with OVS Examples

The SFA's menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate what students may select from each meal component for a reimbursable lunch, based on the planned daily lunch menu for each grade group. This section contains four sample daily lunch menus that show how SFAs could communicate the OVS requirements to students. To demonstrate how different menu planning choices affect OVS, each sample menu:

- offers the same food items within each meal component but changes the amounts that students may select; and
- offers all entrees as combination foods that provide at least the full serving of the grains component and at least the full serving of the MMA component.

Note: These sample lunch menus meet the daily meal pattern requirements for the purpose of illustrating the OVS requirements. They do not address the weekly meal pattern requirements (refer to "Meal Pattern Requirements" in section 1).



Sample lunch menu 1 for grades K-5 and 6-8

Each lunch includes five meal components: meat/meat alternates (MMA), grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Choose at least one fruit or vegetable and two other meal components. For a nutritious meal, take all five!

MMA 2 oz eq Grains 2 oz eq	Vegetables ¾ cup	Fruits ½ cup	Milk 1 cup
Choose one	**Choose one**	**Choose one**	**Choose one**
Baked chicken with WGR cornbread	Broccoli florets	Banana	Fat-free milk
Hamburger on WGR bun	Carrot sticks	Blueberries	Low-fat milk
Southwest chili with whole-grain roll	Confetti coleslaw	Green grapes	Low-fat chocolate milk
Turkey whole-grain wrap	Green beans	Pineapple chunks	
	Roasted potatoes	Sliced peaches	
	Seasoned corn		

This cafeteria signage is for a daily lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8. Students may select one choice from each meal component. Each menu item provides at least the full serving for both grade groups required by the NSLP meal pattern.

- **MMA and grains:** Each entree choice counts as the full MMA component and the full grains component (two meal components for OVS).
- **Vegetables:** Each ¾-cup vegetable choice counts as the full vegetables component (one meal component for OVS) or meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
- **Fruits:** Each ½-cup fruit choice counts as either the full fruits component (one meal component for OVS) or meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
- **Milk:** Each milk choice counts as the full milk component (one meal component for OVS).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices but must select at least one serving of fruits/vegetables and two other meal components.

OVS examples with student selections for sample lunch menu 1

The examples below show how OVS applies to some student selections with sample lunch menu 1.

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and two other meal components
Hamburger on whole-wheat bun Pineapple chunks	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of fruit and two full meal components (MMA and grains).
Carrot sticks Banana Milk	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of fruit and two full meal components (vegetables and milk).
Hamburger on whole-wheat bun Milk	No. The meal includes three full meal components (MMA, grains, and milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Baked chicken Cornbread Roasted potatoes	Yes. The meal includes ¾ cup of vegetables and two full meal components (MMA and grains).
Baked chicken Blueberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of fruit and two full meal components (MMA and milk).
Baked chicken Green grapes Broccoli florets	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of fruit and two full meal components (MMA and vegetables).
Southwest chili Whole-grain roll Milk	No. The meal includes three full meal components (MMA, grains, and milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. The beans in the chili cannot count as vegetables because they already count as MMA.
Turkey whole-grain wrap Confetti coleslaw Milk	Yes. The meal includes ¾ cup of vegetables and three components (MMA, grains, and milk).

Sample lunch menu 2 for grades K-5 and 6-8

Each lunch includes five meal components: meat/meat alternates (MMA), grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Choose at least one fruit or vegetable and two other meal components. For a nutritious meal, take all five!

MMA 2 oz eq Grains 2 oz eq	Vegetables ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	Milk 1 cup
Choose one	**Choose two**	**Choose one**	**Choose one**
Baked chicken with WGR cornbread	Broccoli florets	Banana	Fat-free milk
Hamburger on WGR bun	Carrot sticks	Blueberries	Low-fat milk
Southwest chili with whole-grain roll	Confetti coleslaw	Green grapes	Low-fat chocolate milk
Turkey whole-grain wrap	Green beans	Pineapple chunks	
	Roasted potatoes	Sliced peaches	
	Seasoned corn		

This cafeteria signage is for a daily lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8. Students may select one choice from the milk, fruits, grains, and MMA components, and two choices from the vegetables component. Each menu item provides at least the full serving for both grade groups required by the NSLP meal pattern.

- **MMA and grains:** Each entree choice counts as the full MMA component and the full grains component (two meal components for OVS).
- **Vegetables:** Each ½-cup vegetable choice meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables but does not count as the full vegetables component. Students may select two different vegetables or two servings of the same vegetable because the planned menu allows any two choices from the vegetables component. Selections of two ½-cup vegetable servings count as one meal component for OVS.
- **Fruits:** Each ½-cup fruit choice counts as either the full fruits component (one meal component for OVS) or meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
- **Milk:** Each milk choice counts as the full milk component (one meal component for OVS).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices but must select at least one serving of fruits/vegetables and two other meal components.

OVS examples with student selections for sample lunch menu 2

The examples below show how OVS applies to some student selections with sample lunch menu 2.

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and two other meal components
Hamburger on whole-wheat bun Sliced peaches	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of fruit and two full meal components (MMA and grains).
Corn Green beans Milk	No. The meal includes two full meal components (vegetables and milk) but is missing either another full meal component or ½ cup of fruit.
Hamburger on whole-wheat bun Milk	No. The meal includes three full meal components (MMA, grains, and milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Baked chicken Cornbread Roasted potatoes Roasted potatoes	Yes. The meal includes 1 cup of vegetables and two full meal components (MMA and grains). Students may select two servings of the same vegetable because the menu allows any two choices from the vegetables component.
Baked chicken Pineapple chunks Milk	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of fruit and two full meal components (MMA and milk).
Baked chicken Green grapes Broccoli florets	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of vegetables and two full meal components (MMA and fruits).
Southwest chili Whole-grain roll Milk	No. The meal includes three full meal components (MMA, grains, and milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. The beans in the chili cannot count as vegetables because they already count as MMA.
Turkey whole-grain wrap Confetti coleslaw Milk	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of vegetables and three full meal components (MMA, grains, and milk).

Sample lunch menu 3 for grades 9-12

Each lunch includes five meal components: meat/meat alternates (MMA), grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Choose at least one fruit or vegetable and two other meal components. For a nutritious meal, take all five!

MMA 2 oz eq
Grains 2 oz eq

Choose one

Baked chicken with WGR cornbread

Hamburger on WGR bun

Southwest chili with whole-grain roll

Turkey whole-grain wrap

Vegetables ½ cup

Choose two

Broccoli florets
Carrot sticks
Confetti coleslaw
Green beans
Roasted potatoes
Seasoned corn

Fruits ½ cup

Choose two

Banana
Blueberries
Green grapes
Pineapple chunks
Sliced peaches

Milk 1 cup

Choose one

Fat-free milk
Low-fat milk
Low-fat chocolate milk

This cafeteria signage is for a daily lunch menu for grades 9-12. Students may select one choice from the milk, grains, and MMA components; two choices from the fruits component; and two choices from the vegetables component. Each menu item provides at least the full serving required by the NSLP meal pattern. All fruits and vegetables are offered in ½-cup servings to make it easier for students to select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

- **MMA and grains:** Each entree choice counts as the full MMA component and the full grains component (two meal components for OVS).
- **Vegetables:** Each ½-cup vegetable choice does not count as the full vegetables component but meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. Students may select two different vegetables or two servings of the same vegetable because the planned menu allows any two choices from the vegetables component. Selections of two ½-cup vegetable servings count as one meal component for OVS.
- **Fruits:** Each ½-cup fruit choice does not count as the full fruits component but meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. Students may select two different fruits or two servings of the same fruit because the planned menu allows any two choices from the fruits component. Selections of two ½-cup fruit servings count as one meal component for OVS.
- **Milk:** Each milk choice counts as the full milk component (one meal component for OVS).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices but must select at least one serving of fruits/vegetables and two other meal components.

OVS examples with student selections for sample lunch menu 3

The examples below show how OVS applies to some student selections with sample lunch menu 3.

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and two other meal components
Baked chicken Peaches Confetti coleslaw	No. The meal includes one full meal component (MMA) and 1 cup of fruit and vegetable combined but is missing another full meal component.
Southwest chili Carrot sticks Carrot sticks Milk	Yes. The meal includes 1 cup of vegetables and two full meal components (MMA and milk). Students may select two servings of the same vegetable because the menu allows any two choices from the vegetables component.
Turkey wrap Confetti coleslaw Milk	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of vegetable and three full meal components (MMA, grains, and milk).
Southwest chili Whole-grain roll Milk	No. The meal includes three full meal components (MMA, grains, and milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. The beans in the chili cannot count as vegetables because they already count as MMA.
Green beans Seasoned corn Blueberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes ½ cup of fruit and two full meal components (vegetables and milk).
Baked chicken Corn bread Green grapes Roasted potatoes	Yes. The meal includes 1 cup of fruit and vegetable combined and two full meal components (MMA and grains).



5 — OVS at Breakfast

The OVS requirements for breakfast are different from the OVS requirements for lunch. The requirements for implementing OVS for breakfast are defined by 7 CFR 220.8(e) of USDA's SBP regulations.

OVS is optional for all grades at breakfast. The USDA encourages schools to use the OVS flexibility for all grade levels to reduce food waste and enhance student choice. Without OVS, SFAs must offer the minimum daily serving of the three meal components and students must select all three meal components.

Breakfast Meal Pattern Does Not Change with OVS

The breakfast meal pattern requirements do not change with OVS. While OVS applies only to the daily meal pattern requirements, SFAs must still plan all breakfast menus to meet the daily and weekly SBP meal pattern requirements.

- **Daily breakfast meal pattern**: The daily breakfast meal pattern requires minimum amounts of the three meal components (grains/MMA, fruits with optional vegetable substitutions, and milk).

- **Weekly breakfast meal pattern:** The weekly breakfast meal pattern requires additional amounts of grains/MMA, a juice limit (fruit and vegetable juices cannot exceed half of the offered fruits and vegetables), a WGR requirement (at least 80 percent of all offered grains must be WGR), and dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars (refer to "Weekly dietary specifications" in section 1).

SFAs must ensure that all breakfast menus are planned to meet these requirements.

Two OVS Requirements for Breakfast

There are two requirements for reimbursable breakfasts with OVS. One requirement applies to menu planning and the meals offered by the SFA and the other applies to the foods selected by students.

1. **Menu planning:** The breakfast menu must meet all daily and weekly requirements of the SBP meal pattern. SFAs must offer at least four food items from the three meal components (grains/MMA, fruits with optional vegetable substitutions, and milk). The planned serving for each food item must be at least the minimum daily serving for each grade group.

2. **Reimbursable breakfast:** Students must select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items. These requirements apply regardless of the number of food items offered. For example, if a breakfast menu offers five or six food items, students must still select at least the required three food items.

Breakfasts that meet these requirements are eligible for USDA reimbursement based on the student's eligibility for free, reduced-price, or paid meals.

Terms to know for OVS at breakfast

OVS at breakfast requires a minimum number of food items instead of meal components. The definitions below apply only to OVS at breakfast.

- A **meal component** is one of the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts, including grains/MMA, fruits (with optional vegetable substitutions), and milk.

- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the three meal components for the breakfast meal pattern. One food item equals 1 oz eq of the grains/MMA component, ½ cup of the fruits component (including vegetable substitutions), and 1 cup of the milk component. **Note:** This definition applies only to breakfast. Food items credit differently for OVS at lunch (refer to "Terms to know for OVS at lunch" in section 4).

SFAs must ensure that menu planners understand how these terms apply to OVS at breakfast.

Examples of Food Items at Breakfast

The examples below show how some menu offerings credit as food items at breakfast.

- **Example 1: Whole-grain bagel:** A 2-ounce whole-grain bagel (2 oz eq) contains one meal component (grains) that provides as two food items (two grains). Menu planners may also choose to credit the bagel as one food item. For more information, refer to "Counting Grains/MMA with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast" in the "Grains/MMA Component with OVS at Breakfast" section

- **Example 2: Variety of assorted fruit choices:** A variety of ½-cup servings of fruit (such as apples, oranges, blueberries, and red grapes) is one meal component (fruits) that contains four food items (four fruits). The menu planner may also choose to credit two separate ½-cup servings of the same fruit as two food items for breakfast. For more information, refer to "Counting Fruit Items at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

- **Example 3: Fruit and milk smoothie:** A smoothie made with ½ cup of pureed fruit and 1 cup of milk contains two meal components (fruit and milk) that provide two food items (one fruit and one milk). Pureed fruits in smoothies credit only as juice and count toward the weekly juice limit. Amounts less than 1 cup of milk do not count as a food item for OVS. For more information, refer to "Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section and "Milk Variety at Breakfast" in the "Milk Component with OVS at Breakfast" section, and the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- **Example 4: Yogurt parfait:** A yogurt parfait made with ½ cup (1 oz eq) of low-fat yogurt (MMA), ½ cup of fresh fruit, and ¼ cup (1 oz eq) of whole-grain granola contains two meal components (grains/MMA and fruit) that provide three food items (one MMA, one grain, and one fruit).

These crediting examples apply only to breakfast. Food items at lunch credit differently.



Examples of Acceptable Breakfast Menus for OVS

Breakfast menus must include at least four food items from the three meal components (milk, fruits including vegetable substitutions, and grains/MMA). SFAs may offer more than one food item from the fruits component and grains/MMA component but only one food item from the milk component.

Menu planners may choose to count 1 cup of fruits/vegetables as either one or two food items, depending on their menu planning needs (refer to "Counting Fruit Items at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section). To encourage student selections of reimbursable meals, SFAs should offer all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings.

The examples below show some breakfast menus that meet the OVS menu planning requirements for grades K-12.

Example 1: Four food items	**Meal Component**	**Food Item**
WGR waffles, 2 ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Blueberries, 1 cup	Fruits 1 cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Example 2: Five food items	**Meal Component**	**Food Item**
Vanilla yogurt, ½ cup	MMA 1 oz eq	1 MMA
Whole-grain granola cereal, ¼ cup	Grains 1 oz eq	1 grain
Fruit salad, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Fruit salad, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Example 3: Five food items	**Meal Component**	**Food Item**
Whole-grain corn muffin, 2½ ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Orange juice, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Strawberries, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Example 4: Seven food items	**Meal Component**	**Food Item**
Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce 1	Grains, 1 oz eq	1 grain
Cheese omelet, 1 egg and 1 ounce cheese	MMA 3 oz eq	3 MMA
Hash-brown potatoes, ½ cup	Vegetables, 1 cup	1 vegetable
Sliced peaches, ½ cup	Fruits, 1 cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Overview of OVS Requirements for Breakfast

SFAs must meet the criteria below for breakfasts to be reimbursable under OVS.

Menu planning for breakfast

Breakfast menus must include the minimum daily serving (full serving) of the three meal components for each grade group, which must be offered in at least four food items. The four food items may include:

- two servings of grains/MMA (either two of the same grain or MMA, two different grains or MMA, or one grain and one MMA); or
- two servings of fruits or vegetable substitutions (either two of the same fruit or vegetable, two different fruits or vegetables, or one fruit and one vegetable).

The four food items cannot include two servings of milk. Menu planners may choose to offer more than four food items. SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly breakfast menu does not exceed the dietary specifications (refer to "Weekly dietary specifications" in section 1).

Allowing duplicate student selections at breakfast

Duplicate selections are two servings of the same food, such as two apples or two bagels. SFAs may choose to allow students to select duplicate servings by offering two or more choices from the grains/MMA component or the fruits component (including vegetable substitutions) and allowing students to select any two choices. The examples below show how this option applies.

- **Example 1 for grains/MMA component:** The breakfast menu offers a variety of 1 oz eq grain choices and 1 oz eq MMA choices and allows students to select any two choices (same or different). Students may select two servings of the same grain or MMA, such as two servings of cereal, two cheese sticks, or two granola bars. For more information, refer to "Duplicate Student Selections of Grains/MMA at Breakfast" in the "Grains/MMA Component with OVS at Breakfast" section

- **Example 2 for fruits component:** The breakfast menu offers a variety of ½-cup servings from the fruits component, including vegetable substitutions, and allows students to select any two choices (same fruits/vegetables or different fruits/vegetables). Students may select two servings of the same fruit or vegetable, such as two servings of fruit salad or two servings of hash-brown potatoes. For more information, refer to "Duplicate Student Selections of Fruits at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

SFAs must clearly communicate this information on the breakfast menu and cafeteria signage and must train food service staff to recognize reimbursable meals with duplicate servings. For more information on signage and communication, refer to section 3.

Unit pricing for breakfast

Meals must be priced as a unit, i.e., students pay the same price regardless of whether they take three or more food items. SFAs must establish one price for a complete reimbursable breakfast in the paid meal category and one price for a complete reimbursable breakfast in the reduced-price meal category. For more information, refer to "Unit Pricing" in section 1.

Required signage for breakfast

SFAs must post two different types of cafeteria signage that clearly communicates the food items for each daily menu choice and indicates what students must select for a reimbursable meal.

- The first type of signage must identify all planned reimbursable breakfasts (i.e., all offered full meals), including the food items and portions and any choices or combination of choices available within each meal component. This signage must be near or at the beginning of each serving line.
- The second type of signage must indicate what food items and amounts students may select for a reimbursable breakfast with OVS, based on the planned daily menu for each grade group. This signage must be posted at all applicable points on the serving line where the food items are available.

For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

Required student selections for reimbursable breakfasts

Students must select at least three food items, including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items. Selections of less than ½ cup of fruits/vegetables do not count as a food item for OVS, unless the student also selects additional fruits/vegetables to provide at least ½ cup.

> To encourage student selections of reimbursable meals, SFAs should offer all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings.

Declining foods at breakfast

After selecting the required three food items (including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables), students may decline any other food items or may take smaller portions of the declined food items. However, selections of less than the full serving do not count as a food item for OVS. For example, if the breakfast menu provides 1 oz eq of grains from two ½-oz eq WGR mini blueberry muffins, students must take both muffins to count as one food item for OVS. One muffin (½ oz eq) does not count toward the OVS requirements because it is less than the full serving.



Overview of OVS Requirements for the Breakfast Meal Components

The next parts of this section review the OVS requirements for each of the three breakfast meal components. The key requirements for each meal component are summarized below.

Milk

- **Milk variety:** SFAs must offer at least two different choices of unflavored or flavored milk. At least one milk choice must be unflavored. Flavored milk cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.
- **SFA's menu planning:** 1 cup of milk credits as one food item.
- **Student's milk selection:** A student's selection of 1 cup of milk counts as one food item for OVS. Students are not required to select the milk component for a reimbursable meal.

Grains/MMA

- **SFA's menu planning:** 1 oz eq of grains or 1 oz eq of MMA credits as one food item.
- **Student's selection of grains/MMA:** A student's selection of 1 oz eq of grain or MMA counts as one food item for OVS.
- **Duplicate servings:** SFAs may allow students to select duplicate servings of grains/MMA by offering a variety of 1 oz eq of grains/MMA and allowing any two choices. Students may select two of the same grains/MMA (duplicate selections) or two different grains/MMA to count as two food items for OVS. For more information, refer to "Duplicate Student Selections of Grains/MMA at Breakfast" in the "Grains/MMA Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

Fruits and Vegetables

- **Vegetable substitutions**: Vegetables may substitute for the fruits component at any breakfast but most follow certain requirements. For more information, refer to "Vegetable Substitutions at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.
- **SFA's menu planning:** ½ cup of fruit/vegetable credits as one food item. SFAs may choose to count 1 cup of fruits/vegetable as one or two food items.

- **Student's selection of fruits/vegetables:** A student's selection of ½ cup of fruits/vegetables counts as either one food item or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both requirements in the same meal.

- **Duplicate servings:** SFAs may allow students to select duplicate servings of fruits/vegetables by offering a variety of fruits/vegetables in ½-cup servings and allowing any two choices. Students may select two of the same fruits/vegetables (duplicate selections) or two different fruits/vegetables to count as two food items for OVS. For more information, refer to "Duplicate Student Selections of Fruits at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

- **Juice limit:** When the daily lunch menu offers ½-cup servings of fruits/vegetables and fruit/vegetable juice choices and allows students to select two servings, students cannot select two servings of fruit/vegetable juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. For more information refer to "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

- **Required juice limit signage:** The school's lunch menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of juice that students may select with each meal. For more information refer to section 3 and "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section



Milk Component with OVS at Breakfast

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the milk component at breakfast. Milk may be used as a beverage, on cereal, or both.

For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for milk, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Serving Size for Milk at Breakfast

Milk credits based on volume (fluid ounces).

Minimum meal pattern servings for milk at breakfast

The minimum daily serving of milk is 1 cup (8 fluid ounces) for all grades.

The minimum weekly serving of milk is the sum of the minimum daily requirement.

Table 5-1. Required meal pattern servings for the milk component at breakfast

Grade group	Minimum daily serving	Minimum weekly servings for five-day week	Minimum weekly servings for seven-day week
K-5	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
6-8	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

Minimum student selection of milk for OVS at breakfast

A student's selection of the full serving of milk counts as one food item for OVS. Students are not required to select milk for a reimbursable meal.

Allowable Types of Milk at Breakfast

The SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 grades K-12 allow unflavored and flavored whole milk, reduced-fat (2%) milk, low-fat (1%) milk, and fat-free milk. Flavored milk served in reimbursable meals cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. Flavored milk sold la carte in middle and high schools cannot exceed 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

Other allowable types of milk include pasteurized lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk. SFAs may serve any of these types of milk. For guidance on lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Offering Lactose-Free and Lactose-Reduced Milk in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Milk Variety at Breakfast

SFAs must offer a variety of at least two different choices of milk, either unflavored or flavored. At least one choice must be unflavored milk.

Milk with OVS at Breakfast

OVS at breakfast requires at least four food items, which cannot include two servings of milk. Students must select the full serving of milk to count as one food item for OVS.

SFAs may offer larger servings of milk but cannot count them as more than one food item for OVS. In addition, a student's selection of more than 1 cup of milk counts as only one food item for OVS.

Milk in Breakfast Smoothies

Milk used in fruit or vegetable smoothies credits as the milk component. The requirements below apply to counting smoothies as food items for OVS at breakfast.

- One cup of milk counts as one food item for OVS. Smoothies that contain less than 1 cup of milk do not count as a food item for OVS.
- Smoothies made with at least 1 cup of milk and ½ cup of any combination of pureed fruits/vegetables or 100 percent juices count as two food items (one milk and one fruit).
- When smoothies include milk, SFAs must also offer a variety of fluid milk on the serving line to meet the USDA's requirement for a variety of milk options (refer to "Milk Variety at Breakfast" in this section).
- Milk in commercial smoothies does not count as a food item for OVS. Commercial smoothies do not meet the USDA's requirements for fluid milk because they do not comply with the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) standard of identity for milk.

The examples below show how OVS applies to smoothies with different food items. For additional OVS crediting information for smoothies, refer to "Fruits and Vegetables in Breakfast Smoothies" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section. For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*.



Example 1: Counting a smoothie as one food item at breakfast for grades K-12

A breakfast menu for grades K-12 offers four food items, including a smoothie made with ½ cup of pureed fruit and ½ cup of low-fat milk. The pureed fruit in the smoothie credits as juice and counts as one food item (one fruit). The milk does not count as a food item for OVS because it is less than 1 cup. For a reimbursable meal, a student who selects the smoothie must also select as least two other food items.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
WGR corn muffin, 2½ ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Kiwi, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Strawberry smoothie		
½ cup of low-fat milk	None	None
½ cup of pureed strawberries	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Smoothie	No. The meal includes only one food item (one fruit).
Smoothie Milk	No. The meal includes only two food items (one fruit and one milk).
Smoothie Corn muffin	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one fruit and two grains).
Smoothie Kiwi	No. The meal includes only two food items (two fruits).
Kiwi Corn muffin Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one fruit, two grains, and one milk).
Smoothie Corn muffin Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one fruit, two grains, and one milk).

Example 2: Counting a smoothie as two food items at breakfast for grades K-12

A breakfast menu for grades K-12 offers five food items, including a smoothie made with 1 cup of low-fat milk and ½ cup of pureed fruit. The pureed fruit in the smoothie credits as juice and counts as one food item (one fruit). The milk in the smoothie counts with the other milk choices as one food item (one milk). For a reimbursable meal, a student who selects the smoothie must also select as least one other food item.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
WGR corn muffin, 2½ ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Kiwi, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Strawberry smoothie		
1 cup of low-fat milk		
½ cup of pureed strawberries	Fruits 1 cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk in smoothie		
or milk from milk variety, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Smoothie	No. The meal includes only two food items (one fruit and one milk).
Smoothie Milk	No. The meal includes only two food items (one fruit and one milk). The second serving of milk does not count as another food item for OVS.
Smoothie Corn muffin	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one fruit, one milk, and two grains).
Smoothie Kiwi	Yes. The meal includes four food items (two fruits and one milk).
Kiwi Corn muffin Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one fruit, two grains, and one milk).
Smoothie Corn muffin Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one fruit, one milk, and two and grains). The second serving of milk does not count as another food item for OVS.

Example 3: Counting a smoothie as three food items at breakfast for grades K-12

A breakfast menu for grades K-12 offers seven food items, including a smoothie made with 1 cup of yogurt, ½ cup of low-fat milk, and ½ cup of pureed fruit. The pureed fruit in the smoothie credits as juice and counts as one food item (one fruit). The yogurt counts as two food items (two MMA). The milk does not count as a food item for OVS because it is less than 1 cup. A student who selects the smoothie has a reimbursable meal.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
WGR corn muffin, 2½ ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Kiwi, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Strawberry smoothie		
1 cup of yogurt	MMA 1 cup	2 MMA
½ cup of low-fat milk	Milk ½ cup	None
½ cup of pureed strawberries	Fruits 1 cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Smoothie	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one fruit and two MMA).
Smoothie Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one fruit, two MMA, and one milk).
Smoothie Corn muffin	Yes. The meal includes five food items (one fruit, two MMA, and two grains).
Smoothie Kiwi	Yes. The meal includes four food items (two fruits and two MMA)
Kiwi Corn muffin Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one fruit, two grains, and milk).
Smoothie Corn muffin Milk	Yes. The meal includes six food items (one fruit, two MMA, two grains, and one milk).

Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the fruits component at breakfast, including optional vegetable substitutions. For guidance on the crediting requirements for fruits and vegetables, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Vegetables" section and "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Creditable Fruits

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned (in light syrup, water, or fruit juice), and dried fruits, and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed but cannot include water or syrup.

Creditable Vegetables

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. For example, to credit as ½ cup of the vegetables component, ½ cup of canned corn cannot include the packing water and ½ cup serving of baked beans cannot include the sauce in which it is packed. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes) credit when rehydrated only if the manufacturer's PFS provides specific documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving.



Serving Size for Fruits and Vegetables

The required quantities for the fruits component are in cups. All fruits and vegetable substitutions credit based on the volume served, except for dried fruits and raw leafy greens. Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served. Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served.

Minimum meal pattern servings for fruits at breakfast

The minimum daily serving of the fruits component is 1 cup for all grades. SFAs may choose to offer a combination of several different fruits and optional vegetable substitutions. For example, a breakfast menu could offer ½ cup of peaches and ½ cup of applesauce or ½ cup of oranges and ½ cup of hash-brown potatoes.

The minimum weekly serving of the fruits component is the sum of the minimum daily requirement.

Table 5-2. Required meal pattern servings for the fruits component at breakfast

Grade group	Minimum daily serving	Minimum weekly servings for five-day week	Minimum weekly servings for seven-day week
K-5	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
6-8	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

Minimum student selection of fruits for OVS at breakfast

Students must select at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or a combination of both for a reimbursable meal. A student's selection of ½ cup counts as one food item and meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

Vegetable Substitutions at Breakfast

Vegetables may substitute for the fruits component at any breakfast. Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires that vegetable substitutions at breakfast must comply with the requirements below.

- **One day per school week:** SFAs that choose to offer vegetable substitutions on one day per school week may offer any vegetables from any subgroups. For example, a school that serves fruit on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday could offer any vegetable on Friday.

- **Two or more days per school week:** SFAs that choose to offer vegetable substitutions on two or more days per school week must offer vegetables from at least two different subgroups. For example, a school that offers the beans, peas, and lentils vegetable subgroup on Monday and the starchy vegetable subgroup on Wednesday, may choose to offer vegetables from any subgroup on Thursday and Friday.

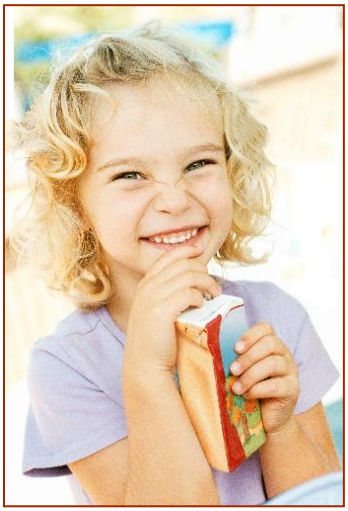
For additional guidance, refer to USDA Memo SP 02-2025, *Substitution of Vegetables for Fruit Flexibility in the School Breakfast Program: Q&As for Program Operators*



Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast

The total cups of fruit juices together with vegetable juices (including fruit and vegetable juice blends) offered at breakfast during the week cannot exceed half of the total cups of fruits and vegetables offered at breakfast during the week. SFAs must calculate the weekly juice limit based on the total cups of fruits and vegetables that students are allowed to select at a given meal, regardless of the number of options or variety of available fruits/vegetables.

- **Example:** A five-day breakfast menu for grades 9-12 offers 5 cups of fruits/vegetables over the week. The breakfast menu may offer up to 2½ cups of fruit/vegetable juices over the week.



When calculating the total amount of juices offered during the week, SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juices available to students at breakfast during the week. This includes juices that are fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate, frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies. For more information on the juice limit and crediting juices, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Juice limits for daily breakfast menus offering larger amounts of fruits/vegetables

If the daily breakfast menu offers more than 1 cup of the fruits component, the maximum amount of juice that students may select also increases.

- **Example:** A five-day breakfast menu for grades 9-12 offers a variety of ½-cup fruit/vegetable choices and allows students to select up to four servings each day (2 cups total). Students may select up to 1 cup of juice daily.

Each school's breakfast menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of juice that students may select with each meal.

Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast

When the daily breakfast menu offers ½-cup servings of different fruits, vegetables, and juices and allows students to select two servings, students may select two servings of fruits/vegetables or one serving of fruit/vegetable and one serving of fruit/vegetable juice. Students cannot select two servings of juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit

> Each school's breakfast menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of juice that students may select with each meal.

Sample language for offering 1 cup of assorted fruit/vegetable and juice choices

The examples below provide some sample language for breakfast menus that offer assorted daily fruit/vegetable and juice choices and allow students to select two ½-cup servings with each meal.

- Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice.
- Choose two fruits/vegetables or one fruit/vegetable and one juice.
- Choose up to two fruits (no more than one juice).
- Choose up to two fruits/vegetables (no more than one juice).
- Choose two fruits (limit of one juice).
- Choose two fruits/vegetables (limit of one juice).

Menu planners should use language that reflects the specific choices offered on the school's daily breakfast menus.



Counting Fruit Items at Breakfast

At breakfast only, ½ cup of fruits/vegetables counts as one food item for OVS. SFAs may choose to count 1 cup of fruits/vegetables as either one or two food items, depending on their menu planning needs. The examples below show how counting 1 cup of fruit as one or two food items affects a student's selections for reimbursable breakfasts with OVS.

Example 1: Counting 1 cup of fruit as one food item

The menu planner chooses to count 1 cup of blueberries as one food item (one fruit). This breakfast menu offers four food items.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component crediting	Food Item
WGR blueberry muffin, 4 ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Blueberries, 1 cup	Fruits 1 cup	**1 fruit**
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

A student selects blueberries and milk. Is the meal reimbursable?

- No. Students cannot select only the blueberries (one fruit) and milk (one milk) for a reimbursable breakfast because this meal includes only two food items.

Example 2: Counting 1 cup of fruit as two food items

The menu planner chooses to count 1 cup of blueberries as two food items (two fruits). This breakfast menu offers five food items.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component crediting	Food Item
WGR blueberry muffin, 4 ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Blueberries, 1 cup	Fruits 1 cup	**2 fruits**
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

A student selects blueberries and milk. Is the meal reimbursable?

- Yes. Students could select the blueberries (two fruits) and milk (one milk) for a reimbursable breakfast because this meal includes three food items, including at least ½ cup of fruit.

Deciding how to count 1 cup of fruits or vegetables

Offering all fruit and vegetable choices in ½-cup servings is a best practice to help encourage students' selections of reimbursable meals. However, in some situations it may be beneficial to count 1 cup of fruit as one item.

- **Example:** A breakfast menu offers a variety of fresh fruit choices, including 125-138 count apples, 150-count bananas, and 138-count oranges. The FBG indicates that the apple credits as 1 cup of fruit (which could count as two food items for OVS) and the banana and orange each credit as ½ cup of fruit (which each count as one food item for OVS). It could be confusing to students and food service staff to count one apple as two food items but count one banana or one orange as only one food item. In this case, it might be simpler to count all fresh fruit choices as one food item.

When deciding how to count 1 cup of fruits/vegetables, menu planners should make it easy for students and staff to identify the required food items for reimbursable meals.

Fruits and Vegetables in Breakfast Smoothies

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit as juice. SFAs must count pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies with all other juices toward the weekly juice limit (refer to "Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast" in this section). For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*, and USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: *Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

Counting other food items in smoothies at breakfast

One cup of milk in smoothies credits as one food item (milk). For example, a smoothie made with ½ cup of pureed fruit and 1 cup of milk counts as two food items (one fruit and one milk). If the breakfast menu offers at least four food items, students who select the smoothie (two food items) must also select at least one other food item for a reimbursable meal. For OVS examples with a milk and fruit smoothie, refer to "Example 2: Counting a smoothie as two food items at breakfast for grades K-12" under "Milk in Breakfast Smoothies" in the "Milk Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

One-half cup of yogurt or soy yogurt in smoothies credits as one food item (MMA). For example, a smoothie made with ½ cup of pureed fruit and 1 cup of low-fat yogurt counts as three food items (one fruit and two MMA). If the breakfast menu offers at least four food items, students who select the smoothie (three food items) have a reimbursable meal. For OVS examples with a

yogurt and fruit smoothie, refer to "Example 3: Counting a smoothie as three food items at breakfast for grades K-12" under "Milk in Breakfast Smoothies" in the "Milk Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

Duplicate Student Selections of Fruits at Breakfast

The SBP meal pattern requires at least 1 cup of the fruits component daily for all grades. If the SFA offers a variety of ½-cup servings of fruits/vegetables, students must be allowed to select up to two choices but no more than one juice (refer to "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in this section). Students may select two of the same fruits/vegetables (duplicate selections) or two different fruits/vegetables to count as two food items for OVS. To count as one food item for OVS, students must select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

The examples below show how OVS applies when a breakfast menu allows duplicate selections of fruits.

Example 1: Offering Duplicate Student Selections of Fruits at Breakfast

This menu is planned to allow any two fruit choices. Students may select two servings of blueberries, two servings of strawberries, or one serving of blueberries and one serving of strawberries. Each ½-cup serving of fruit counts as one food item for OVS.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
WGR pancakes, 2 ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Choose any 2:		
Blueberries, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Strawberries, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Pancakes Strawberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (two grains, one fruit, and one milk).
Pancakes Blueberries	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two grains and one fruit).

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Strawberries Blueberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one milk).
Strawberries Strawberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one milk). Students may select two servings of the same fruit because the planned menu allows any two fruit choices.
Pancakes Milk	No. The meal includes three food items (two grains and one milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Pancakes Blueberries Strawberries	Yes. The meal includes four food items (two grains and two fruits).
Pancakes Blueberries Blueberries	Yes. The meal includes four food items (two grains and two fruits). Students may select two servings of the same fruit because the planned menu allows any two fruit choices.



Dried Fruits

Dried fruits (such as raisins, apricots, dried cherries, dried cranberries, dried blueberries, and mixed dried fruit) credit as twice the volume served. For example, ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component, i.e., one food item for OVS at breakfast. SFAs may choose to count ½ cup of dried fruit as one or two food items for OVS at breakfast. For more information, refer to "Counting Fruit Items at Breakfast" in this section.

Example of offering ½ cup of dried fruit as two food items

The examples below show how OVS applies when a breakfast menu credits ½ cup of raisins as two food items. This menu includes five food items. Students who select the raisins (two food items) must select one other food item for a reimbursable breakfast.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
WGR banana muffin, 2 ounces	Grains 1 oz eq	1 grain
Whole-grain granola cereal, ¼ cup	Grains 1 oz eq	1 grain
Raisins, ½ cup	Fruits 1 cup	2 fruits
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Raisins Banana muffin	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one grain).
Raisins Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one milk).
Cereal Banana muffin Milk	No. The meal includes three food items (two grains and one milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruit.
Cereal Raisins Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one grain, two fruits and one milk).
Cereal Banana muffin Raisins	Yes. The meal includes four food items (two grains and two fruits).

Grains/MMA Component with OVS at Breakfast

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the combined grains/MMA component at breakfast. For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for the grains component and the MMA component, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Grains" section and "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Serving Size for Grains/MMA

The required quantities for the grains/MMA component are in oz eq.

Minimum meal pattern servings for grains/MMA at breakfast

The minimum daily serving for the grains/MMA is 1 oz eq daily for all grades. Menu planners may offer 1 oz eq grains, 1 oz eq MMA, or a 1 oz eq combination of both.

The minimum weekly serving for the grains/MMA is larger than the sum of the minimum daily requirement. SFAs must serve additional grains/MMA on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements.

Table 5-3. Required meal pattern servings for the grains/MMA component at breakfast

Grade group	Minimum daily serving	Minimum weekly servings for five-day week	Minimum weekly servings for seven-day week
K-5	1 oz eq	7 oz eq	10 oz eq
6-8	1 oz eq	8 oz eq	11 oz eq
9-12	1 oz eq	9 oz eq	12½ oz eq

Minimum student selection of grains/MMA for OVS at breakfast

A student's selection of the full serving of grains or MMA counts as one food item for OVS. Students are not required to select grains/MMA for a reimbursable meal.

Different Rounding Rules for Grains with OVS

The process for counting grains as food items for OVS at breakfast differs from the method for crediting grains in the SBP meal patterns. Each process has a different rounding requirement.

- **Meal pattern:** When crediting grain products toward the WGR requirement and the minimum daily and weekly servings for the SBP meal pattern, SFAs must round down the total oz eq to the nearest ¼ oz eq. SFAs may choose to credit a 2-oz eq grain product as one or two food items (refer to "Counting Grains/MMA with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast" in this section).

- **OVS:** When counting grain products as food items for OVS, SFAs must round down the total oz eq to the nearest whole number of oz eq (refer to "Counting Grains with Multiple Oz Eq" in this section). Amounts less than the full oz eq do not count as a food item for OVS.

For example, a 1.9-oz eq WGR product credits as 1¾ oz eq of grains toward the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements but counts as only one food item for OVS. The table below shows some examples of crediting grains toward the SBP meal pattern and the OVS requirements.

Table 5.4. Crediting grains for the SBP meal pattern and OVS

Planned grains component	Product weight (ounces)	Exhibit A Grain Group	Exhibit A Required weight	Meal pattern contribution	Food items for OVS
Whole-grain bagel	2	B	1 ounce	2 oz eq	2
Whole-grain roll	1.49	B	1 ounce	1.25 oz eq	1
WGR pancakes	2.75	C	1.2 ounces	2.25 oz eq	2
WGR corn muffin	2	C	1.2 ounces	1.5 oz eq	1
WGR apple muffin	2	D	2 ounces	1 oz eq	1
WGR French toast	4	E	2.4 ounces	1.5 oz eq	1

Counting Grains/MMA with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast

The USDA allows SFAs to decide how to count grains and MMA for maximum menu planning flexibility. These decisions are at the SFA's discretion and apply only to breakfast menus.

Breakfast menu items that provide more than 1 oz eq of grains or MMA may count as more than one food item for OVS, if the additional amount provides at least 1 oz eq. For example, SFAs may credit a 2-oz eq WGR muffin as two food items, a 3-oz eq WGR bagel as three food items, and a 2-oz eq omelet as two food items.

SFAs may also choose to count menu items that provide more than 1 oz eq of grains or MMA as only one food item. For example, SFAs may choose to count a 2-oz eq grain or MMA as one or two food items and a 3-oz eq grain or MMA product as one, two, or three food items.

Amounts less than 1 oz eq do not count as a food item for OVS. When counting grains and MMA as food items for OVS, SFAs must round down to the nearest whole number of oz eq. For example, 1½ oz eq counts as one food item for OVS. The table below shows some examples of counting grains/MMA as food items for OVS at breakfast.

Table 5-5. Counting grains and MMA for OVS at breakfast

Amount	Meal pattern contribution	Number of food items for OVS
¼ oz eq	¼ oz eq	0
½ oz eq	½ oz eq	0
¾ oz eq	¾ oz eq	0
1 oz eq	**1 oz eq**	**1**
1¼ oz eq	1¼ oz eq	1
1½ oz eq	1½ oz eq	1
1¾ oz eq	1¾ oz eq	1
2 oz eq	**2 oz eq**	**2**
2¼ oz eq	2¼ oz eq	2
2½ oz eq	2½ oz eq	2
2¾ oz eq	2¾ oz eq	2
3 oz eq	**3 oz eq**	**3**

SFAs must clearly communicate the crediting information for grains and MMA at breakfast to staff and students to minimize confusion and ensure that students are selecting reimbursable meals. Signage must be located at the beginning of the serving line and near each meal component to indicate what and how much students can take for a reimbursable meal. For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

The examples below show how counting 2 oz eq of grains as one or two food items affects reimbursable meals with OVS.

Example 1: Counting 2 oz eq of grains as one food item

The menu planner chooses to credit a 2 oz eq WGR blueberry muffin as one food item. This breakfast menu offers four food items.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
WGR blueberry muffin, 4 ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	1 grain
Strawberries, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Orange juice, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

A student selects the blueberry muffin and strawberries. Is the meal reimbursable?

- No. Students cannot select the blueberry muffin (one grain) and strawberries (one fruit) for a reimbursable breakfast because this meal includes only two food items. Students must select at least one additional food item (juice or milk) for a reimbursable meal.

Example 2: Counting 2 oz eq of grains as two food items

The menu planner chooses to credit a 2 oz eq WGR blueberry muffin as two food items. This breakfast menu offers five food items.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
WGR blueberry muffin, 4 ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Strawberries, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Orange juice, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

A student selects the blueberry muffin and strawberries. Is the meal reimbursable?

- Yes. Students could select the blueberry muffin (two grains) and strawberries (one fruit) for a reimbursable breakfast because this meal includes three food items, including at least ½ cup of fruit.

OVS examples of counting a 2-oz eq grain as two food items at breakfast

The menu planner chooses to credit a 2-oz eq whole-grain bagel as two food items. This breakfast menu offers five food items.

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
Whole-grain bagel, 2 ounces	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Orange, ½ cup	Fruits 1 cup	1 fruit
Banana, ½ cup	Fruits 1 cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Orange Milk	No. The meal includes only two food items (one fruit and one milk).
Bagel Orange	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two grains and one fruit).
Bagel Milk	No. The meal includes three food items (two grains and one milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Orange Banana Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one milk).
Bagel Orange Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (two grains, one fruit, and one milk).

Deciding how to count grains and MMA with multiple oz eq

The advantage of counting grains/MMA with multiple oz eq as more than one food item is helping to increase reimbursable meals. Students who select a grain/MMA that counts as more than one food item only need ½ cup of fruits/vegetables for a reimbursable breakfast.

The advantage of counting grains/MMA with multiple oz eq as one food item is encouraging students to select additional foods for a more nutritious breakfast. Students who select a grain/MMA that counts as one food item must also select at least two more food items for a reimbursable breakfast, including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.

There are several factors for menu planners to consider when determining which option might work best for their SBP. Some considerations include the types of food items offered, the number of other food items offered in the meal, what meals students typically select (based on production record data), the cost of menu items, and how the offered food items affect students' ability to select reimbursable meals and staff's ability to recognize reimbursable meals.



Offering Minimum Daily Grains/MMA as Two Servings

If the breakfast menu offers the minimum daily 1 oz eq of the grain/MMA component as two servings, students must select both servings to count as one food item for OVS. Student selections of less than 1 oz eq do not count as a food item for OVS.

Example 1: Offering 1 oz eq of grains from two ½-oz eq mini muffins

A breakfast menu offers 1 oz eq of grains from two WGR blueberry mini muffins that are each ½ oz eq. Students must take both muffins to count as one food item for OVS. One muffin alone does not count toward the OVS requirements because the serving is less than 1 oz eq. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, SFAs may want to consider packaging foods with less than the full serving together.

Student Selects	Meal pattern contribution	OVS contribution (food items)	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
2 muffins	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other food item.
1 muffin	½ oz eq	None	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items.

OVS examples for breakfast menu with two ½-oz eq mini muffins

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
WGR blueberry mini muffins, two 1 ounce	Grains 1 oz eq	1 grain
Orange, ½ cup	Fruits 1 cup	1 fruit
Strawberries, ½ cup	Fruits 1 cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Mini muffins Orange juice Strawberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one grain, two fruits, and one milk).
Mini muffin, one Strawberries Milk	No. The meal includes only two food items (one fruit and one milk). Selections of less than 1 oz eq of grains do not count as a food item for OVS (refer to "Counting Grains/MMA with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast" in this section).
Mini muffins Orange juice Strawberries	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain and two fruits).
Mini muffins Orange juice Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one fruit, and one milk).
Mini muffins Milk	No. The meal includes only two food items (one grain and one milk) and is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Orange juice Strawberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one milk).

Offering More Than the Minimum Daily Grains/MMA

SFAs must serve additional grains/MMA on some days to meet the minimum weekly breakfast meal pattern requirements for all grades.

Options for serving additional grains/MMA

SFAs have the flexibility to determine how to serve additional grains/MMA in breakfast menus.

- Menu planners may choose to provide additional grains/MMA from a larger serving of one grain/MMA food. Some examples include offering a 2-oz eq muffin that counts as two food items or offering 1 cup of yogurt (2 oz eq) that counts as two food items.

- Menu planners may also choose to provide a combination of different grains/MMA. Some examples include offering:
    - 1 oz eq of breakfast cereal (one grain) and a 1-oz eq whole-grain granola bar (one grain);
    - 1 oz eq of cheese (one MMA) and 1 oz eq of peanut butter (one MMA); or
    - 1 oz eq of cereal (one grains) and 1 oz eq of yogurt (one MMA);

These menu planning decisions affect students' selections of reimbursable meals with OVS.

- If the grains/MMA component is two separate foods that are each at least 1 oz eq, students may select either food to count as one food item for OVS.

- If the grains/MMA component more than the 1 oz eq from two separate foods with different servings, only the food that provides at least 1 oz eq counts as one food item for OVS. Servings of less than 1 oz eq do not count as a food item for OVS.

SFAs should consider these requirements when planning breakfast menus to optimize students' selection of reimbursable meals. The examples below show how these menu planning decisions apply to OVS.

Example 1: Offering 2 oz eq grains

A breakfast menu offers 2 oz eq of grains from ½ cup of oatmeal (1 oz eq) and a 1.2 ounce WGR corn muffin (1 oz eq). Students may take both foods together or either food alone to count as one food item for OVS.

Student Selects	Meal pattern contribution	OVS contribution (food items)	Additional food items for reimbursable breakfast
Oatmeal, ½ cup WGR corn muffin, 1.2 ounces	2 oz eq	2	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Oatmeal, ½ cup	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items.
WGR corn muffin, 1.2 ounces	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items.

Example 2: Offering 2 oz eq MMA

A breakfast menu offers 2 oz eq of MMA from ½ cup of yogurt (1 oz eq) and 1 ounce of cheese (1 oz eq). Students may take both foods together or either food alone to count as one food item for OVS.

Student Selects	Meal pattern contribution	OVS contribution (food items)	Additional food items for reimbursable breakfast
Yogurt, 1 cup Cheese, 1 ounce	2 oz eq	2	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Yogurt, 1 cup	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items.
Cheese, 1 ounce	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items.

Example 3: Offering 2 oz eq MMA and 1 oz eq grain

A breakfast menu offers 3 oz eq of grains/MMA from a hard-boiled egg (2 oz eq) and 1 ounce of WGR toast (1 oz eq). Students may take both foods together or either food alone to count as one food item for OVS.

Student Selects	Meal pattern contribution	OVS contribution (food items)	Additional food items for reimbursable breakfast
Hard-boiled egg, 1 Toast, 1 ounce	2 oz eq	2	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Hard-boiled egg, 1	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items.
Toast, 1 ounce	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items.

Example 4: Offering 1 oz eq grain and ½ oz eq MMA

A breakfast menu offers 1½ oz eq of grains/MMA from a mini whole-wheat bagel (1 oz eq) and 1 tablespoon of peanut butter (½ oz eq). Students must take both foods together or the bagel alone to count as one food item for OVS. The peanut butter is less than 1 oz eq and does not count as a food item for OVS.

Student Selects	Meal pattern contribution	OVS contribution (food items)	Additional food items for reimbursable breakfast
Mini whole-wheat bagel, 1 ounce Peanut butter, 1 tablespoon	1½ oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other food item.
Mini whole-wheat bagel, 1 ounce	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least one other food item.
Peanut butter, 1 tablespoon	½ oz eq	None	At least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items.

Duplicate Student Selections of Grains/MMA at Breakfast

SFAs may choose whether to allow students to select duplicate grains/MMA at breakfast. With this option, the breakfast menu offers two or more 1-oz eq servings of different grains/MMA and students may select any two grains/MMA; either two servings of the same grains/MMA or two different grains/MMA. A student's selection of two of the same grain/MMA (duplicate selections) counts as two food items for OVS.

The school's meal identification signage must clearly instruct students on how much food to select daily from each meal component for a reimbursable meal, based on the planned serving sizes for each grade group. This signage must be located on the serving line near the grains/MMA component. For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

Example of Offering duplicate grains/MMA selections at breakfast

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
Choose any two:		
Whole-grain cereal, 1 ounce	Grains 1 oz eq	1 grain
Whole-grain granola bar, 2 ounces	Grains 1 oz eq	1 grain
Cheese stick, 1 ounce	MMA 1 oz eq	1 MMA
Yogurt, ½ cup	MMA 1 oz eq	1 MMA
Choose any two:		
Cantaloupe, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Peaches, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Mandarin oranges, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Cereal Cantaloupe Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one fruit, and one milk).
Toast Cantaloupe Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one fruit, and one milk).

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Cereal, 2 servings Cantaloupe	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two grains and one fruit). Students may select two servings of cereal because the planned menu allows any two grains/MMA.
Granola bar, 2 servings Peaches	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two grains and one fruit). Students may select two granola bars because the planned menu allows any two grains/MMA.
Cereal Yogurt Milk	No. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one MMA, and one milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Cereal Toast Cantaloupe	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two grains and one fruit).
Peaches Cantaloupe Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one milk).
Cheese stick, 2 servings Mandarin oranges	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two MMA and one fruit). Students may select two cheese sticks because the planned menu allows any two grains/MMA.
Yogurt Cantaloupe	No. The meal includes only two food items (one MMA and one fruit).

Combination Breakfast Foods

Combination breakfast foods contain more than one food item. Some examples include breakfast burritos with scrambled eggs (MMA) in a whole-corn tortilla shell (grains) and breakfast sandwiches with ham and cheese (MMA) on a whole-wheat English muffin (grains). The examples below show OVS with some breakfast menus that offer a combination breakfast food.

Example 1: Offering a combination food with two food items (grains and MMA)

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
Breakfast burrito with scrambled egg (½ egg) in whole-corn tortilla shell (1 ounce)	Grains 1 oz eq MMA 1 oz eq	1 grain 1 MMA
Garden salsa, ½ cup	Vegetables ½ cup	1 vegetable
Cantaloupe slices, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Breakfast burrito Garden salsa Cantaloupe wedges	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one grain, one MMA, one vegetable, and one fruit).
Breakfast burrito Cantaloupe wedges Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one grain, one MMA, one fruit, and one milk).
Breakfast burrito Garden salsa	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one MMA, and one vegetable).
Breakfast burrito Cantaloupe wedges	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one MMA, and one fruit).
Breakfast burrito Milk	No. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one MMA, and one milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Garden salsa Cantaloupe wedges Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one vegetable, one fruit, and one milk).

Example 2: Offering a combination food with three food items (grains and MMA)

Planned breakfast menu	Meal component	Food Item
Egg sandwich (½ egg) with		
ham and cheese (½ ounce total)	MMA 1½ oz eq	1 MMA
on whole-wheat English muffin (2 ounces)	Grains 2 oz eq	2 grains
Green grapes, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Apple juice, ½ cup	Fruits ½ cup	1 fruit
Choice of milk, 1 cup	Milk 1 cup	1 milk

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Egg sandwich Green grapes Milk	Yes. The meal includes five food items (two grains, one MMA, one fruit, and one milk).
Egg sandwich Milk	No. The meal includes four food items (two grains, one MMA, and one milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Egg sandwich Green grapes	Yes. The meal includes four food items (two grains, one MMA, and one fruit).
Egg sandwich Apple juice	Yes. The meal includes four food items (two grains, one MMA, and one fruit).
Green grapes Apple juice Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one milk).



Strategies for OVS Implementation at Breakfast

SFAs decide how to offer the required food items for OVS at breakfast. These menu planning decisions determine the choices that students may select for reimbursable meals. Menu planners can increase the likelihood that students will select reimbursable breakfasts by using strategies that encourage students to take at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two food items.

The three critical elements for successful OVS implementation include strategic menu planning, clear communication, and staff training. The following guidelines help simplify the menu planning process and make it easier for students to select (and school food service staff to identify) reimbursable breakfasts with OVS.

- **Be consistent with crediting food items.** For example, decide whether to count a 2 oz eq WGR bagel as one or two food items, then count it the same way for all breakfast menus. Consistent crediting makes it easier for students to understand what foods they can choose and helps staff to identify reimbursable meals.

- **Offer all grades a variety of fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings and allow students to select up to two servings.** This makes it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. Provide clear information on breakfast menus and cafeteria signage that instructs students on the amount they can select with each breakfast. For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

- **Plan fruit and vegetable choices to meet the weekly juice limit and review breakfast menus for compliance.** Provide clear information on breakfast menus and cafeteria signage that instructs students on the amount of juice they can select with each breakfast. For more information, refer to "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

- **Offer at least 1 oz eq of all grain/MMA choices so any choice counts as at least one food item for OVS.** For example, offer a 1-oz eq muffin (one grain) instead of two ½-oz eq muffins (one grain). For more information, refer to "Counting Grains/MMA with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast" in the "Grains/MMA Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

- **Offer the same oz eq for all choices within a meal component so each choice counts as the same number of food items for OVS.** For example, offer 1 oz eq for all grain choices like muffins, bagels, and RTE breakfast cereals or offer 1 oz eq for all MMA choices like yogurts, cheese sticks, and peanut butter. This makes it easier for students to understand what they can take and simpler for staff to identify reimbursable meals. When choices include different sizes, such as a 1 oz eq grain and a 2 oz eq grain, it can be confusing for students and staff to understand what food items are required for a reimbursable meal.

- **Offer breakfast choices that provide at least two food items**. Some examples include a 2 oz eq WGR muffin (two grains), a 3-oz eq whole-grain bagel (three grains), and a breakfast sandwich made with 2 oz eq English muffin and 1 oz eq egg (two grains and one MMA). Students who select a menu choice with at least two food items only need ½ cup of fruits/vegetables for a reimbursable breakfast. For more information, refer to "Counting Grains/MMA with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast" in the "Grains/MMA Component with OVS at Breakfast" section.

- **Provide clear signage.** Check that breakfast menus and cafeteria signage clearly communicate all menu choices and what students must select for reimbursable breakfasts. Schools must have signage located on the serving line near each meal component that informs students of the menu choices. A helpful strategy for determining if signage is sufficient and effective is to conduct a cafeteria walk-through from the beginning of the serving line to the point of service. For more information on signage, refer to section 3.

- **Provide staff training.** Provide regular OVS training to help school food service staff understand and identify the required SBP meal pattern components, how food items credit for each meal choice on the breakfast menu, and what constitutes a reimbursable meal at the point of service. A recommended best practice for cafeteria managers is to conduct a daily pre-service meeting with all applicable staff to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. For more information, refer to "Food service staff training" in section 1.

For more information on menu planning for breakfast, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the School Breakfast Program* and *Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Sample Breakfast Menus with OVS Examples

The SFA decides the number of food items that students may select from each meal component. The menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate how many food items students may select daily from each meal component for a reimbursable breakfast, based on the planned daily breakfast menu for each grade group.

This section contains three sample daily breakfast menus that show how SFAs could communicate the OVS requirements to students. To demonstrate how different menu planning choices affect OVS, each sample menu offers the same food items within each meal component but changes the amounts that students may select from each meal component.

Note: These sample breakfast menus meet the daily meal pattern requirements for the purpose of illustrating the OVS requirements. They do not address the weekly meal pattern requirements (refer to "Meal Pattern Requirements" in section 1).



Sample breakfast menu 1 for Grades K-5

Choose at least three of the four food items, including at least one fruit. For a nutritious meal, choose all four!

Grains/MMA	Fruits	Milk
Choose one	**Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice**	**Choose one**
Cereal, WGR	Banana	Fat-free milk
Oatmeal	Canned peaches	Low-fat milk
Corn muffin, WGR	Orange slices	Low-fat chocolate milk
Mini bagel, whole grain	Strawberries	
Cheese stick	Fruit juice (apple, orange, grape, or pineapple)	
Yogurt		

This cafeteria signage is for a daily breakfast menu for grades K-5 that allows students to select four food items. Each menu item provides at least the full serving required by the SBP meal pattern.

- **Grains/MMA:** Students may select one food item (1 oz eq).
- **Fruits:** Students may select two food items (½ cup each), either two fruits or one fruit and one juice. These selections may include duplicate fruits (two servings of the same fruit) or two different fruits because the planned menu allows any two choices (refer to "Duplicate Student Selections of Fruits at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section). Students cannot select two servings of juice because this would exceed the juice limit (refer to "Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast" and "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section).
- **Milk:** Students may select one milk (1 cup).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all four food items but must select at least three food items, including ½ cup of fruit and two other food items.

OVS examples with student selections for sample breakfast menu 1

The examples below show how OVS applies to some student selections with sample breakfast menu 1.

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Oatmeal Corn muffin Canned peaches	No. The meal includes only two food items (one grain and one fruit). The second grain does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one grains/MMA choice.
Corn muffin Banana Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one fruit, and one milk).
Cereal Cereal Orange juice	No. The meal includes only two food items (one grain and one fruit). The second cereal does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one grains/MMA choice.
Mini bagel Strawberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one fruit, and one milk).
Fruit juice Orange slices Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one milk).
Oatmeal Corn muffin Canned peaches	No. The meal includes only two food items (one grain and one fruit). The second grain does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one grains/MMA choice.
Yogurt Pineapple juice Pineapple juice	No. The meal includes two food items (one MMA and one fruit). Students cannot select two servings of juice because this exceeds the juice limit (refer to "Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast" and "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section).

Sample breakfast menu 2 for Grades 6-8

Choose at least three of the five food items, including at least one fruit. For a nutritious meal, choose all five!

Grains	MMA	Fruits	Milk
Choose one	**Choose one**	**Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice**	**Choose one**
Cereal, WGR	Cheese stick	Banana	Fat-free milk
Oatmeal	Yogurt	Canned peaches	Low-fat milk
Corn muffin, WGR		Orange slices	Low-fat chocolate milk
Mini bagel, whole grain		Strawberries	
		Fruit juice (apple, orange, grape, or pineapple)	

This cafeteria signage is for a daily breakfast menu for grades 6-8 that allows students to select five food items. Each menu item provides at least the full serving required by the SBP meal pattern.

- **Grains:** Students may select one food item (1 oz eq).
- **MMA:** Students may select one food item (1 oz eq).
- **Fruits:** Students may select two food items (½ cup each), either two fruits or one fruit and one juice. These selections may include duplicate fruits (two servings of the same fruit) or two different fruits because the planned menu allows any two choices (refer to "Duplicate Student Selections of Fruits at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section). Students cannot select two servings of juice because this would exceed the juice limit (refer to "Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast" and "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section).
- **Milk:** Students may select one milk (1 cup).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all five food items but must select at least three food items, including ½ cup of fruit and two other food items.

OVS examples with student selections for sample breakfast menu 2

The examples below show how OVS applies to some student selections with sample breakfast menu 2.

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Mini bagel Cheese stick Strawberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes four food items (one grain, one MMA, one fruit, and one milk).
Corn muffin Canned peaches Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one fruit, and one milk).
Oatmeal Yogurt Milk	No. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one MMA, and one milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables.
Apple juice Yogurt Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one fruit, one MMA, and one milk).
Yogurt Yogurt Banana	No. The meal includes only two food items (one MMA and one fruit). The second yogurt does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one MMA choice.
Oatmeal Grape juice Grape juice	No. The meal includes two food items (one grain and one fruit). Students cannot select two servings of juice because this exceeds the juice limit (refer to "Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast" and "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section).

Sample Breakfast Menu 3 for Grades 9-12

Choose at least three of the five food items, including at least one fruit. For a nutritious meal, choose all five!

Grains/MMA	Fruits	Milk
Choose two	**Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice**	**Choose one**
Cereal, WGR	Banana	Fat-free milk
Oatmeal	Canned peaches	Low-fat milk
Corn muffin, WGR	Orange slices	Low-fat chocolate milk
Mini bagel, whole grain	Strawberries	
Cheese stick	Fruit juice (apple, orange, grape, or pineapple)	
Yogurt		

This cafeteria signage is for a daily breakfast menu for grades 9-12 that allows students to select five food items. Each menu item provides at least the full serving required by the SBP meal pattern.

- **Grains/MMA:** Students may select two food items (1 oz eq each), including duplicate grains or MMA (such as two bagels or two cheese sticks) because the planned menu allows any two choices. For more information, refer to "Duplicate Student Selections of Grains/MMA at Breakfast" in this section.

- **Fruits:** Students may select two food items (½ cup each), either two fruits or one fruit and one juice. These selections may include duplicate fruits (two servings of the same fruit) or two different fruits because the planned menu allows any two choices (refer to "Duplicate Student Selections of Fruits at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section). Students cannot select two servings of juice because this would exceed the juice limit (refer to "Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast" and "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section).

- **Milk:** Students may select one milk (1 cup).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all five food items but must select at least three food items, including ½ cup of fruit and two other food items.

OVS examples with student selections for sample breakfast menu 3

The examples below show how OVS applies to some student selections with sample breakfast menu 3.

Student selects	Reimbursable meal: At least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
Yogurt Yogurt Canned peaches	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two MMA and one fruit). Students may select two servings of yogurt because the planned menu allows any two grains/MMA.
Oatmeal Whole fruit Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one fruit, and one milk).
Cheese stick Cheese stick Banana	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two MMA and one fruit). Students may select two cheese sticks because the planned menu allows any two grains/MMA.
Cereal Cereal Milk	No. The meal includes three food items (two grains and one milk) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables. Students may select two servings of cereal because the planned menu allows any two grains/MMA.
Corn muffin Strawberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (one grain, one fruit, and one milk).
Strawberries Strawberries Milk	Yes. The meal includes three food items (two fruits and one milk). Students may select two servings of strawberries because the planned menu allows any two fruits.
Mini bagel Orange juice Orange juice	No. The meal includes two food items (one grain and one fruit). Students cannot select two servings of juice because this exceeds the juice limit (refer to "Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast" and "Offering Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast" in the "Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast" section).



6 — Resources

This section includes links to resources and websites that assist SFAs with meeting the NSLP and SBP meal pattern, crediting, and OVS requirements for grades K-12. Topics include CSDE guides and resource lists, crediting and meal pattern resources, menu planning guidance, regulations and policy, and related websites.

More links to information on the federal and state requirements and guidance for school meals are available on the CSDE's Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs webpages. For a detailed list of resources for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns and crediting requirements for grades K-12, refer to the CSDE's *Meal Pattern and Crediting Resources for the School Nutrition Programs*.

Meal Components and Crediting

Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs

Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs

Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/crediting_summary_ charts_ snp.pdf

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg

Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/guide_wgr_requirement_snp_ grades_k-12.pdf

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

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

Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_foods_snp.pdf

What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials

Meal Patterns and Menu Planning

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

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

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

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

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

Menu Planner for School Meals (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner

Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Forms for School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/forms-for-school-nutrition-programs #MenuPlanning ChecklistsLunchGradesK-12

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning

Nutrition Standards for School Meals (USDA webpage):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/schoolmeals/nutrition-standards

Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/offer-versus-serve-for-school-nutrition-programs

Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition//-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/ovs_guide_snp.pdf

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/overview_menu_planning_nslp_grades_k-12.pdf

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sbp/overview_menu_planning_sbp_grades_k-12.pdf

Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/preschool-meal-pattern-training

Sodium Limits for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/sodium_limits_nslp_sbp.pdf

What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials

OVS

Lunch Meal Pattern Components Poster (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition//-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/lunchpostercomp.pdf

Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/offer-versus-serve-for-school-nutrition-programs

Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition//-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/ovs_guide_snp.pdf

Offer versus Serve Posters for Breakfast and Lunch (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/nslp/offer-versus-serve-posters

Offer versus Serve Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: National School Lunch Program (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/offer-vs-serve-lunch-program-tip-sheet

Offer versus Serve Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: School Breakfast Program (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/offer-vs-serve-breakfast-program-tip-sheet

Overview of Offer versus Serve in the National School Lunch Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/overview_ovs_nslp.pdf

Overview of Offer versus Serve in the School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/overview_ovs_sbp.pdf

Signage Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/ovs/signage_requirements_nslp_sbp.pdf

USDA Memo SP 14-2025: Offer versus Serve Flexibilities for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/schoolmeals/offer-vs-serve-flexibilities

USDA Memo SP 35-2011 and CACFP 23-2011: Clarification on the Use of Offer versus Serve and Family Style Meal Service:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/clarification-use-offer-vs-serve-and-family-style-meal-service

USDA Memo SP 41-2015: Updated Offer vs Serve Guidance for the NSLP and SBP Beginning SY 2015-16:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/updated-offer-vs-serve-guidance-nslp-and-sbp-beginning-sy2015-16

USDA Regulations for the NSLP: Offer versus serve for grades K through 12 (7 CFR 210.10(e)):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-210#p-210.10(e)

USDA Regulations for the SBP: Offer versus serve for grades K through 12 (7 CFR 220.8(e)):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-220#p-220.8(e)

What's in a Meal Module 17: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the National School Lunch Program (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials#module17

What's in a Meal Module 18: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the School Breakfast Program (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials#module18

Policy and Guidance

C.G.S. Section 10-221q. Sale of beverages:
https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_170.htm#sec_10-221q

Child Nutrition Programs Legislation and Regulations (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/legislation-regulations

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the National School Lunch Program (7 CFR 210) (USDA):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-210

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the School Breakfast Program (7 CFR 220) (USDA):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-220

Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) Documents & Resources (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/resources

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/laws-and-regulations-for-child-nutrition-programs

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/manuals-and-guides-for-child-nutrition-program

Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/operational-memoranda-for-school-nutrition-programs

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/program-guidance-school-nutrition-programs

Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/hfc/questions_answers_connecticut_statutes_school_foods_beverages.pdf

School Lunch Tray and Table Talk (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/school-lunch-tray-and-table-talk

Training for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/training-for-child-nutrition-programs

USDA Final Rule: Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs (77 FR 4087):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-012612

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (89 FR 31962):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-042524

USDA Final Rule: Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs (91 FR 25073):
https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/08/2026-09212/expanding-fluid-milk-options-in-child-nutrition-programs

USDA Memo SP 17-2025: Reimbursement for Off-Site Meal Consumption:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/schoolmeals/reimbursement-offsite-meal-consumption

USDA Memo SP 05-2022: Meal Requirements Under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Questions and Answers for Program Operators Updated to Support the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Effective July 1, 2022:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/sp052022-questions-answers-program-operators

USDA Memo SP 17-2012: Procurement Questions and Answers to Assist in the Implementation of the final rule titled Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/procurement-qas-assist-implementation-final-rule

Glossary

a la carte sales: Foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks in the USDA's school nutrition programs. For more information, refer to "competitive foods" in this section.

Afterschool Snack Program (ASP): The USDA's federally assisted snack program implemented through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The ASP provides cash reimbursement to help schools serve snacks to children in afterschool activities aimed at promoting the health and well-being of children and youth. Schools must provide children with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities, e.g., mentoring/tutoring programs. Programs must meet state or local licensing requirements and health and safety standards. For more information, visit the CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program webpage.

age/grade groups: The three age/grade groupings (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) of the USDA's meal breakfast and lunch patterns for grades K-12. The classification of age/grade groups is based on children's nutritional needs and the ages that typically correspond with these grade levels (ages 5-10 for grades K-5, ages 11-13 for grades 6-8, and ages 14-18 for grades 9-12).

alternate protein products (APPs): Food ingredients processed from soy or other vegetable protein sources (e.g., dehydrated granules, particles, or flakes) that may be used alone or in combination with meat, poultry, or seafood. Some examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. The USDA has specific requirements for the crediting of APPs in Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the School Nutrition Programs*.

beans, peas, and lentils (pulses): The dried edible seeds of legumes (such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas) that are one of the five vegetable subgroups recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Pulses include all beans, peas, and lentils cooked from dry, canned, or frozen, such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, pink beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas, pigeon peas, mung beans, and lentils. The meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs allow beans, peas, and lentils to credit as either the MMA component or the vegetables component.

Child Nutrition (CN) label: A statement approved by the USDA that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. Products eligible for CN labels include main dish entrees that provide at least ½ oz eq of the MMA component, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. CN labels usually indicate the contribution of other meal components (such as vegetables, grains, and fruits) that are part of these products. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the "Child Nutrition Labels" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Child Nutrition Programs: The USDA's federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, visit the CSDE's Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

combination foods: Foods that contain more than one meal component, such as pizza, burritos, and smoothies made with milk and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains) and cheese (meats/meat alternates). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as pizza and burritos) or are not intended to be separated (such as a hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).

creditable food: A food or beverage that counts toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

creditable grains: The ingredients in a commercial grain product or standardized recipe that credit toward the grains component. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. For more information, refer the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*.

dietary specifications: The USDA's nutrition standards for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12, that include weekly calorie ranges and weekly limits for saturated fat and sodium. For information on the specific dietary specifications for each age/grade group, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage. For guidance on meeting the dietary specifications, 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*.

> Effective with school year 2026-27 (beginning July 1, 2027), the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires a new weekly dietary specification for added sugars (less than 10 percent of calories). 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.

edible portion: The portion of a food that can be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed, for example, cooked, lean meat without bone, and fruit without seeds or pits.

enriched grains: Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have some vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the FDA, and include thiamin (B_1), riboflavin (B_2), niacin (B_3), folic acid, and iron. For more information, refer the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*.

enrichment: Adding back nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) originally present in a food that were lost during processing. Enrichment nutrients are added back in approximately the same levels as were originally present in the food. For more information, refer to "enriched grains" in this section.

entree: Refer to "main dish" in this section.

Exhibit A chart: The USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* chart that indicates the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for different types of grain foods to provide 1 oz eq of the grains component. For guidance on applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements for each school nutrition program, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*.

extra foods: Refer to "noncreditable foods" in this section.

fluid milk substitutes: Plant-based beverages designed to replace cow's milk, such as soy milk. Fluid milk substitutes may replace regular cow's milk in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks for children who do not consume regular milk due to non-disability reasons, if they meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Only certain brands of fluid milk substitutes meet these standards. For more information, refer to "nutrition standards for milk substitutes" in this section and the CSDE's resources, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Determining if Nondairy Milk Substitutes Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in School Nutrition Programs*.

meal components: The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the NSLP (milk, meats/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains) and the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts in the SBP (grains with optional meat/meat alternate substitutions, fruits with optional vegetable substitutions, and milk). For more information on the individual meal components, refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

food item: A specific food offered within the meal components that comprise reimbursable meals in the USDA school nutrition programs. A food item may contain one or more meal components or more than one serving of a single component. For example, an entree could provide 1 oz eq of the grains component and 1 oz eq of the MMA component, and a 2 ounce whole grain or enriched bagel could provide 2 oz eq of the grains component.

fortification: Adding nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) that were not originally present in a food or beverage, or adding nutrients at levels that are higher than originally present. Fortification is used for naturally nutrient-rich products based on scientifically documented health needs (such as fortifying milk with vitamin D to increase the body's absorption of calcium), or to enhance the perceived nutritional value of products with little or no natural nutritional value, e.g., fortifying "energy" bars made from processed flour with multiple vitamins and minerals. Fortification nutrients are added to products in varying amounts, from small percentages up to amounts greater than recommended intakes.

fruits component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings. For more information, visit the "Fruits" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

full meal component: The daily quantity designated by the menu planner (no less than the established minimum) to meet the required weekly ranges.

full serving: Refer to "full meal component" in this section.

full-strength fruit or vegetable juice: An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen, or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state or as an ingredient in a recipe. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: "juice," "full-strength juice," "100 percent juice," "reconstituted juice," or "juice from concentrate." For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juices in the School Nutrition Programs*.

grade groups: Refer to "age/grade groups" in this section.

grains component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of cereal grains and products made from their flours. Creditable grain foods include products and recipes that are whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched. Creditable cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals include products that are WGR, enriched, or fortified. For more information, visit the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

legumes: Plants that grow in pods. Legumes include pulses, which are the edible dried seeds of plants in the legume family, such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas. Pulses include all beans, peas, and lentils cooked from dry, canned, or frozen, such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, pink beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas, pigeon peas, mung beans, and lentils. The meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs allow legumes to credit as either the meats/meat alternates component or the vegetable component. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Beans, Peas, and Lentils in the School Nutrition Programs*.

local educational agency (LEA): A public board of education or other public or private nonprofit authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public or private nonprofit elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public or private nonprofit elementary schools or secondary schools. The term also includes any other public or private nonprofit institution or agency having administrative control and direction of a public or private nonprofit elementary school or secondary school, including residential child care institutions, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and educational service agencies and consortia of those agencies, as well as the state educational agency in a state or territory in which the state educational agency is the sole educational agency for all public or private nonprofit schools.

main dish: The main dish is generally considered the main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. Examples of main dish items include pizza, chicken stir-fry, and chef's salad with ham, hard-boiled egg, and cheese.

meal pattern: The required meal components and minimum servings that schools and institutions participating in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and afterschool snacks served to children. For more information, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage and Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage, and the "Meal Patterns and Crediting" section of the CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program webpage.

meal components: The five food groups (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and MMA) that comprise reimbursable meals in the NSLP and SBP and reimbursable snacks in the ASP.

meals: Refer to "reimbursable meals" in this section.

meat alternates: Foods that provide a similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products, cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans and peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut, and coconut), yogurt, soy yogurt, commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein in a ¼-cup (2.2 ounces) serving, and tempeh. For more information, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

meats/meat alternates (MMA) component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the school nutrition programs that includes meats (e.g., beef, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans, peas, and lentils, nuts, and seeds. For more information, visit the "Meats and Meat Alternates" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

menu item: Any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk that is part of the reimbursable meal. Menu items consist of food items. For more information, refer to "food item" in this section.

milk component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns for the school nutrition programs that includes pasteurized fluid milk that meets federal and state regulations. The milk component also includes fluid milk substitutes that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to "fluid milk substitutes" and "nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes" in this section, and visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP): The USDA's federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. It was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, visit the CSDE's National School Lunch Program webpage.

noncreditable foods: Foods and beverages that do not contribute toward the meal patterns for the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. Noncreditable foods and beverages are either in amounts too small to credit (i.e., foods and beverages that do not provide the minimum creditable amount of a meal component) or they do not meet the crediting requirements of the meal components. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*.

noncreditable grains: Grain ingredients that do not contribute to the grains component. Examples include oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes: The nutrition requirements for plant-based beverages (such as soy milk) used as fluid milk substitutes in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA requires that any fluid milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk and meet the following nutrients per cup (8 fluid ounces): 276 milligrams (mg) of calcium; 8 grams (g) of protein; 150 micrograms (mcg) retinol activity equivalents (RAE) of vitamin A; 2.5 mcg of vitamin D; 24 mg of magnesium; 222 mg of phosphorus; 349 mg of potassium; 0.44 mg of riboflavin; and 1.1 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin B-12. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-Disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs*.

offer versus serve (OVS): A provision that applies to menu planning and the determination of reimbursable meals for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP. OVS allows students to decline a certain number of meal components or food items in the meal. SFAs must offer the required meal components to each student. For the NSLP, students must select at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables and the full serving of at least two other meal components. For the SBP, students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered). OVS must be implemented in senior high schools for lunch but is optional for breakfast. OVS is optional for breakfast and lunch in junior high, middle, and elementary schools. OVS does not apply to the SMP or ASP, or to preschool meals in the NSLP and SBP.

ounce equivalent (oz eq): A weight-based unit of measure for the grains component and MMA component in the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs. Oz eq account for dry versus cooked grains and variations in MMA. One oz eq of the MMA component is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food's density and nutritional content. One oz eq of the grains component is less than a measured ounce for some grain foods (e.g., pretzels, breadsticks, and crackers), equal to a measured ounce for some grain foods (e.g., bagels, biscuits, bread, rolls, cereal grains, and RTE breakfast cereals), and more than a measured ounce for some grain foods (e.g., muffins and pancakes). For more information, refer to "Exhibit A chart" in this section and the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*.

point-of-service meal count: The point in the food service operation where staff can make an accurate determination that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal has been served to an eligible child. This is typically at the end of the serving line after the child has had the chance to receive all components of the reimbursable meal.

product formulation statement (PFS): An information statement developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's meal patterns, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. A PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. The USDA requires that SFAs must verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the "Product Formulation Statements" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

recognizable food item: A food that is visible in the offered breakfast or lunch and allows students to identify the food groups and amounts recommended for consumption at mealtime. Foods must be recognizable to credit in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns. The USDA allows some exceptions, such as yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and pasta made with 100 percent vegetable flours.

reimbursable meals: Meals and ASP snacks that meet the meal pattern requirements of the USDA's regulations for Child Nutrition Programs. Reimbursable meals contain the minimum serving of each required meal component.

residential child care institution (RCCI): RCCIs include, but are not limited to homes for the mentally, emotionally or physically impaired, and unmarried mothers and their infants; group homes; halfway houses; orphanages; temporary shelters for abused children and for runaway children; long-term care facilities for chronically ill children; and juvenile detention centers. A long-term care facility is a hospital, skilled nursing facility, intermediate care facility, or distinct part thereof, which is intended for the care of children confined for 30 days or more.

School Breakfast Program (SBP): The USDA's federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The SBP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free breakfasts to children each school day. The program was established under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to ensure that all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors. For more information, visit the CSDE's School Breakfast Program webpage.

school food authority (SFA): The governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and has the legal authority to operate the USDA school nutrition programs.

school nutrition programs: The USDA's school nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools. For more information, visit the CSDE's School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP (SSO): The USDA's federally assisted summer feeding program that combines features of the NSLP, SBP, and SFSP, and serves meals free of charge to children ages 18 and younger from low-income areas. School districts participating in the NSLP or SBP are eligible to apply to the CSDE to participate in the SSO. SSO meals follow the meal patterns of the NSLP and SBP. For more information, visit the Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP webpage.

serving size or portion: The weight, measure, number of pieces, or slices of a food or beverage. SFAs must provide the minimum serving sizes specified in the USDA meal patterns for meals and snacks to be reimbursable.

Special Milk Program (SMP): The USDA's federally assisted program that provides milk to children in schools and child care institutions that do not participate in other federal meal service programs. The SMP reimburses schools for the milk they serve. Schools in the NSLP or SBP may also participate in the SMP to provide milk to children in half-day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs where children do not have access to the school meal programs. For more information, visit the CSDE's Special Milk Program webpage.

standardized recipe: A recipe that a food service operation has tried, adapted, and retried at least three times and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield, and portion size. For more information, refer to the Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition's *USDA Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs,* and visit the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

surimi: Pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood usually made from pollock (fish). A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 oz eq of the meats/meat alternates component.

tempeh: A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 oz eq of the MMA component. This method of crediting applies only to tempeh products whose ingredients are limited to soybeans (or other beans, peas, and lentils), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. SFA must obtain a PFS for tempeh products that contain different ingredients.

USDA Foods: Foods available to the USDA Child Nutrition Programs through the CSDE's Food Distribution Program. USDA Foods are available to schools in several ways, including Direct Delivery USDA Foods, Further Processed USDA Foods, the USDA Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Pilot, and the SFSP USDA DoD Pilot. For more information, visit the USDA's USDA Foods Programs webpage and the CSDE's Food Distribution Program webpage.

vegetable subgroups: The five categories of vegetables within the vegetables component that are required over the week in the NSLP meal patterns for grades K-12. The subgroups include dark green, red/orange, beans, peas, and lentils, starchy, and other vegetables. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program*, and visit the "Vegetables" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

whole fruits and vegetables: Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables that are unprocessed or minimally processed, and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, or sodium.

whole grain-rich: For the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12, whole grain-rich foods must contain at least 50 percent whole grains, any other grain ingredients must be enriched, and any noncreditable grains must be less than two percent (¼ ounce equivalent) of the product formula. For more information, refer to the CSDE's guide, *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

whole grains: Grains that consist of the entire kernel, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. All grains start out as whole grains but many are processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes many of the nutrients. Whole grains are nutrient rich, containing vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and health-enhancing phytonutrients such as lignans and flavonoids. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, brown rice, whole rye, whole barley, wild rice, buckwheat, and bulgur (cracked wheat). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*.


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