

The School Lunch Tray: November 2, 2022

Dear School Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs:

The School Lunch Tray contains the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) weekly email notifications for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. This week's topics are listed below.

Action Items

- Notice to Conclude School Meal Assistance Revenue Transition (SMART) Funds

Need to Know

- Mandatory School Food Authority Survey on School Food Supply Chain Disruption and Student Participation
- USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Update
- Updates to the Food Buying Guide (FBG) for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based Tool and FBG Interactive Mobile App
- Resource Roundup: Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

Good to Know

- None

Please review and share with appropriate staff members. For previous versions of the School Lunch Tray, visit the CSDE's [School Lunch Tray and Table Talk](#) webpage.



Action Items

Notice to Conclude School Meal Assistance Revenue Transition (SMART) Funds

All SFAs currently utilizing SMART Funds must notify the CSDE of the conclusion date using the [Notice to Conclude SMART Funds form](#). This form is located on the “[How To](#)” section of the CSDE’s webpage, Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19.

What, when, and how does an SFA notify the CSDE of its SMART funds conclusion date?

- **What:** *Notice to Conclude SMART Funds* and *SMART funds Projection Calculator* must be completed. The Notice to Conclude must be signed by one of the SFA’s two authorized signers.
- **When:** The *Notice to Conclude SMART Funds* and *SMART funds Projection Calculator* should be submitted at least 30 days prior to the last day of the final full month that the SFA will pay the household share for reduced-price and paid school meals using monthly SMART funds reimbursements.
- **How:** Email the completed and signed *Notice to Conclude SMART Funds* and *SMART funds Projection Calculator* to CNPermanentAgreement@ct.gov

SFAs can use excess funds in their nonprofit school foodservice account (NPSFA) to continue providing meals at no cost to all students. SFAs with excess funds (i.e., funds exceeding the SFA’s three-month operating expenses) in the nonprofit school foodservice account (NPSFA) are allowed to use those excess funds to eliminate charges to households that qualify for reduced-price and paid meals. If the SFA does not have excess funds in the NPSFA, the NPSFA funds cannot be used to provide all meals to students at no cost. SFAs that are continuing meals at no cost with or without the use of SMART funds must still complete the [Notice to Conclude SMART Funds](#).

SFAs must assess their current operating position to determine if the SFA has funds exceeding the SFA’s three-month operating expenses to support continuing meals at no cost to students. If the SFA spent down its excess fund balance since June 30, the SFA might not have excess funds to use.

Need to Know

Mandatory SFA Survey on School Food Supply Chain Disruption and Student Participation

The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is conducting a web survey of all SFAs that operate the Child Nutrition Programs and needs your input. The survey seeks to collect information on the continued challenges SFAs are facing due to ongoing food and labor supply chain disruptions, as well as the ways in which the transition to standard operations is impacting student participation in nutrition programs.

Your participation is vital to providing FNS with information they need to support school districts during this difficult time. Please take advantage of this opportunity to share your experiences from this school year and communicate the specific issues you are facing in your community directly to FNS.

FNS will send out a link to complete the web survey in mid-November. The survey has a maximum of 31 questions and is estimated to take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Update

Many districts are well on their way to spending down USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable (DoD) funds. If your district has funds in FFAVORS for this school year but has not started using these funds, you must start placing orders, or funds may be moved to another district.

A significant amount of additional funding will be available for the DoD Program this school year. Districts with less than 10 percent of their initial funds remaining in FFAVORS may request more.

Districts that are not currently participating in the DoD Program but would like to participate may submit a request to the [Food Distribution Program \(FDP\) staff](#).

Updates to the Food Buying Guide (FBG) for Child Nutrition Programs Interactive Web-based Tool and FBG Interactive Mobile App

The following new food yields are available in the USDA's [FBG](#): frozen cherries; frozen cauliflower rice; frozen diced carrots; frozen legumes (black-eyed peas, navy beans, and garbanzo beans); mini sweet peppers; and pearled farro. Additionally, a new feature is now available on the FBG Interactive Web-based Tool and FBG Interactive Mobile App. This new feature allows a "Favorites List" and "Compare Items List" to be exported as an Excel file for ease of use.

Resource Roundup: Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

Meals served on field trips must meet specific requirements to be reimbursable. School food authorities (SFAs) must ensure that all school staff involved with field trips (including food service staff and non-food service staff such as teachers, teacher aides, and other applicable staff) understand and implement these requirements for offsite reimbursable meals. The CSDE's [*Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*](#) provides guidance on allowable meal service methods for field trips and important tips for food safety and ensuring that meals are reimbursable, including point-of-service meal counts.



For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [School Lunch Tray and Table Talk](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, School Health, Nutrition and Family Services, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SLT/2022/SLT_11_02_2022.pdf.

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1400 Independence Avenue, SW
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2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** program.intake@usda.gov

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