

The School Lunch Tray: November 16, 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

- None

Need to Know

- No Table Talk on Thursday, November 17, 2022
- Updated USDA Resource: Whole Grain Resource for The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs
- Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the Grains Component: Grades K-12
- New CSDE Resources for Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in NSLP and SBP Menus for Grades K-12
- Reminder: Limit for Noncreditable Grains Applies to Enriched Foods
- Update on Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) Benefits
- Resource Roundup: Determining Foster Children's Eligibility for Free Meals or Milk in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program

Good to Know

- Dairy Grant Opportunity for School Meals: Deadline December 16, 2022

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.



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Need to Know

No Table Talk on Thursday, November 17, 2022

Table Talk will not be held on Thursday, November 17, 2022.

Updated USDA Resource: Whole Grain Resource for The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

The USDA recently revised the [Whole Grain Resource for The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#) to reflect the USDA final rule, [Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium](#) (87 FR 6984). Printed copies will be available later for schools participating in the NSLP.

Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for the Grains Component: Grades K-12

The CSDE has revised the grains component crediting resources below to reflect the USDA final rule, [Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium](#) (87 FR 6984), and updated information in the USDA's [Whole Grain Resource for The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#). The revised versions are dated November 2022. Please discard any previous versions downloaded prior to today and replace with the updated versions.

- [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#)
- [Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#)
- [Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#)
- [Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#)
- [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#)
- CSDE Guide: [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#)

These resources are available in the "[Grains Component for Grades K-12](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

New CSDE Resources for Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in NSLP and SBP Menus for Grades K-12

Effective July 1, 2022, the USDA's final rule, [Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium](#) (87 FR 6984), requires that at least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at lunch and breakfast for grades K-12 must be whole grain-rich (WGR). The CSDE has two new resources to assist school food authorities (SFAs) with meeting this requirement.

- **Handout:** [Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the NSLP and SBP](#) identifies the steps for calculating the weekly percentage of WGR menu items and describes the difference between the weekly meal pattern requirements for the grains component and the percentage of weekly WGR menu items.
- **Excel worksheet:** [Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in School Lunch and Breakfast Menus for Grades K-12](#), calculates the percentage of WGR grains in the weekly lunch or breakfast menu.

Note: SFAs must calculate the weekly percentage of WGR menu items **separately** for lunch and breakfast. This documentation will be reviewed by the CSDE during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

Reminder: Limit for Noncreditable Grains Applies to Enriched Foods

As indicated in USDA Memo SP 05-2022: [Meal Requirements Under the NSLP & SBP: Q&A for Program Operators Updated to Support the Transitional Standards Effective July 1, 2022](#) (question 58), effective July 1, 2022, enriched grains must comply with the same limit for noncreditable grains as WGR foods. Any noncreditable grains in enriched commercial grain products or recipes used to meet the enriched grain requirements must be less than 2 percent of the product formula (or less than ¼ ounce equivalent). To meet this limit, noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G or 6.99 grams per portion for group H. Some examples of noncreditable grains include oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours).

Menu planners must review the ingredients statement for all grains (WGR and enriched) to ensure they meet this requirement, and obtain a [product formulation statement](#) (PFS), if applicable. For more information on noncreditable grains, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's guide, [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

Update on Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) Benefits

The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) in collaboration with the CSDE announced that \$32.5 million in special food assistance benefits is scheduled to be distributed beginning Monday, November 7, 2022, by 5:00 p.m. These benefits will be distributed to households of more than 65,770 schoolchildren who are enrolled in the free or reduced-price meals program and who do not receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), or Medicaid (HUSKY A) assistance from DSS. This is the next distribution of food benefits that will go to a total of approximately 286,360 schoolchildren through the federal **Summer Pandemic EBT: Children in School** program covering the 2022 summer months. For questions about eligibility and more, visit the DSS [Pandemic EBT \(P-EBT\)](#) webpage.

Resource Roundup: Determining Foster Children's Eligibility for Free Meals or Milk in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program

There are two methods that determining officials may use to determine if a foster child is eligible to receive free meals or milk. These include the household application and direct certification. For guidance and resources on these two methods, refer to the CSDE's document, [*Determining Foster Children's Eligibility for Free Meals or Milk in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program*](#).

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Good to Know

Dairy Grant Opportunity for School Meals: Deadline December 16, 2022

Connecticut Dairy and New England Dairy are pleased to announce a funding opportunity from Connecticut Dairy Farmers to eligible schools in Connecticut to support food service needs related to expanding school meal programs or serving new dairy menu items in the spring of 2023. Schools can apply for a [turn-key smoothie kit](#). Visit CTDairy.org for the application and more details. The application deadline is **December 16, 2022**.

Funding for this program is provided by the Connecticut Milk Promotion Board and New England Dairy.



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_16_2022.pdf.

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