

The School Lunch Tray: March 29, 2023

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

- CSDE Operational Memorandum No.09-2023 Annual Notification Requirement for All Local Educational Agencies (LEAs): Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Due April 7, 2023
- Proposed Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools; Comments Due May 8, 2023
- Extension of the Comment Period for the Child Nutrition Programs: Revision to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guideline for Americans Proposed Rule: Due May 10, 2023
- Reminder: Schedule Board Meeting Now to Submit 2023-24 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement by July 1, 2023

Need to Know

- USDA Webinar on Proposed Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools: Thursday, March 30, 2023
- USDA Memo SP 08-2023: Free or Low-Cost Internet Services Available to All Households with Kids at Schools Participating in the Community Eligibility Provision
- USDA Memo SP 10-2023: Updated Title I Guidance for Making Within District Allocations
- CSDE Updates Presentation at School Nutrition Association of Connecticut (SNACT) Conference on March 15, 2023
- New Feature Available on USDA's Exhibit A Grains Tool
- Now available: Professional Standards Summary of Updates Flyer in Spanish
- Resource Roundup: Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP

Good to Know

- USDA's Food Safety Tips for School Gardens
- New Trays in Team Nutrition's School Meals Trays, Many Ways Collection

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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Action Items

CSDE Operational Memorandum No.09-2023 Annual Notification Requirement for All Local Educational Agencies (LEAs): Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Due April 7, 2023

CSDE [Operational Memorandum No. 09-2023](#) outlines the steps for collecting data to update the CEP notification lists. All National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) sponsors (regardless of participation or intent to participate in the CEP) **must submit** school-level CEP eligibility data to the CSDE no later than **April 7, 2023**. Residential child care institutions and Special Milk Program sponsors are not eligible to participate in the CEP and are exempt from this requirement. This memo is available on the CSDE's [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Proposed Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools; Comments Due May 8, 2023

On March 23, 2023, the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published a proposed rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools](#). The rule proposes to expand access to the CEP by lowering the minimum identified student percentage participation threshold from 40 percent to 25 percent, which would give states and schools greater flexibility to choose to invest non-federal funds to offer no-cost meals to all enrolled students. Written comments on this proposed rule should be received by **May 8, 2023**. Visit USDA's [Community Eligibility Provision](#) webpage for more information, including the [Summary of Proposed Rule](#), which highlights changes the proposed rule would have on CEP.

Extension of the Comment Period for the Child Nutrition Programs: Revision to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guideline for Americans Proposed Rule: Due May 10, 2023

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has [extended the deadline to submit comments](#) on the proposed rule, "[Child Nutrition Programs: Revision to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guideline for Americans](#)," to **May 10, 2023**. This extension is intended to give the public additional time to review the proposed rule and submit comments.

The USDA is proposing a gradual multi-year approach to implementing revised nutrition standards. The proposed rule indicates that USDA expects to issue a final rule in time for schools to plan for school year (SY) 2024-25. However, the proposed rule would not require changes from current meal patterns to take effect in SY 2024-25. As proposed, new requirements to the school meal patterns would not begin until SY 2025-26, at the earliest. The USDA encourages public comments on the proposed implementation timelines, in addition to the proposed changes to the regulatory text.

For additional information, including webinar recordings, comparison charts, and timelines, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/proposed-updates-school-nutrition-standards>.

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Reminder: Schedule Board Meeting Now to Submit 2023-24 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement by July 1, 2023

On March 1, 2023, the CSDE distributed [Operational Memorandum No. 08-23: Requirements for Submitting the HFC Statement for School Year 2023-24](#). This memo provides the required motion language and summarizes the **steps that all public schools must take now** to ensure the accurate and timely submission of the 2023-24 HFC Statement by the deadline of **July 1, 2023**. Training on the HFC application process is available in the CSDE's recorded training module, [Completing the Application Process for HFC](#). For more information, visit the "[Apply](#)" section of the CSDE's HFC webpage.

Need to Know

USDA Webinar on Proposed Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools: Thursday, March 30, 2023

The USDA FNS is hosting a webinar for school food authorities about the proposed CEP rule on Thursday, March 30, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. Register at https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_74rPI4iARJa-MZzzOiEGLA.

USDA Memo SP 08-2023: Free or Low-Cost Internet Services Available to All Households with Kids at Schools Participating in the Community Eligibility Provision

[USDA Memo SP 08-2023](#): Free or Low-Cost Internet Services Available to All Households with Kids at Schools Participating in the Community Eligibility Provision, from March 14, 2023, provides information on the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to lower internet costs. A household is eligible to participate in the ACP if a child in the household receives free or reduced-price school meals. Therefore, every household with a child attending a school participating in the CEP of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program is eligible for ACP benefits. The memo is also available on the CSDE's [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

USDA Memo SP 10-2023: Updated Title I Guidance for Making Within District Allocations

[USDA Memo SP 10-2023](#): Updated Title I Guidance for Making Within District Allocations, from March 17, 2023, shares updated guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for making within district Title I allocations under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The memo is also available on the CSDE's [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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CSDE Updates Presentation at School Nutrition Association of Connecticut (SNACT) Conference on March 15, 2023

The PowerPoint slides from the CSDE's presentation at the SNACT conference on March 15, 2023, are available in the "SNACT Conference" section of the CSDE's [Training for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. The direct link is https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/CSDE_Update_SNACT_3_15_2023.pdf.

New Feature Available on USDA's Exhibit A Grains Tool

The [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) contains a variety of tools to help operators of the Child Nutrition Programs purchase the right amount of food. The newest update to the Exhibit A Grains Tool, on both the FBG Web Tool and Mobile App, requires the Child Nutrition Program and meal to be selected to filter the search results to only creditable grain items for that specific program.

Now available: Professional Standards Summary of Updates Flyer in Spanish

The USDA's [Professional Standards Summary of Updates Flyer](#) provides an overview of the Professional Standards requirements, which consist of hiring standards and annual training requirements for school nutrition professionals. This [Spanish version](#), which was released in English in 2021, includes the hiring flexibilities established in 2019. More resources are available on the USDA's [Professional Standards Resources](#) webpage.

Resource Roundup: Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP

To credit as the meat/meat alternates component in the meal patterns for school nutrition programs, alternate protein products (APPs) must meet the requirements defined by appendix A of the NSLP and SBP regulations. School food authorities must maintain documentation to indicate that commercial products containing APPs (such as soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein) meet these requirements. Acceptable documentation includes a Child Nutrition (CN) label, or a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer with supporting documentation on company letterhead that the APP ingredient meets the USDA's requirements. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP](#), and the USDA's [Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products](#).

Good to Know

USDA's Food Safety Tips for School Gardens

The USDA's [Food Safety Tips for School Gardens](#) resource provides information about site selection, materials, and water use; chemical and fertilizer use; compost and manure use; growing and harvesting produce; using school garden produce in the school meals program; and addressing community donations.

New Trays in Team Nutrition's School Meals Trays, Many Ways Collection

Schools are working hard to serve healthy meals that give students fuel for the future. Check out the diversity of school breakfasts and lunches offered across the country to meet students' nutritional needs and preferences at Team Nutrition's [School Meals Trays, Many Ways](#). Ten new photographs of school meals trays have been added to this collection. All meals photographed were offered to high school students in School Year 2022-23 and meet the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium for School Year 2022-23.



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, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SLT/2023/SLT_03_29_2023.pdf.

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