

The School Lunch Tray: April 12, 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

- Reminder: Comments Due May 8, 2023, for USDA's Proposed Rule: *Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools*
- Reminder: Comments Due May 10, 2023, for USDA's Proposed Rule: Revision to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guideline for Americans

Need to Know

- Reminder: Buy American Requirement
- Graham Crackers and Animal Crackers Cannot Be Served with Daily Lunch Choices for Grades K-12
- USDA Webinar Recording Available: Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools Proposed Rule
- Resource Roundup: CSDE's Training Program: What's in a Meal Module 3: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Meal Pattern

Good to Know

- Request for Applications: Healthy Meals Incentives Grants for Small and/or Rural School Food Authorities (SFAs)

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

Reminder: Comments Due May 8, 2023, for USDA’s Proposed Rule: *Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools*

Comments on the USDA’s proposed rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools](#), must be submitted by **May 8, 2023**. Visit the USDA’s [Community Eligibility Provision](#) webpage for more information.

Reminder: Comments Due May 10, 2023, for USDA’s Proposed Rule: *Revision to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guideline for Americans*

Comments on the USDA’s proposed rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Revision to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guideline for Americans](#),” must be submitted by **May 10, 2023**. Visit the USDA’s webpage, [Proposed Updates to the School Nutrition Standard](#), for more information, webinar recordings, comparison charts, and timelines.

Need to Know

Reminder: Buy American Requirement

The CSDE reminds school food authorities (SFAs) that the [Buy American Justification Form](#) must be used when, on those rare occasions, SFAs find it necessary to purchase non-domestic products. During recent administrative reviews of the school nutrition programs, the CSDE has observed that many SFAs do not have a Buy American Justification form for 4-ounce juices. While the box may not indicate the sources of the juice, the 4-ounce individual cartons often do, and the label may indicate that the juices are from a variety of foreign countries. Make sure to review all products to determine if a Buy American Justification form is required.

The Buy American requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 38-2017: Compliance with and Enforcement of the Buy American Provision in the NSLP](#). For additional resources, visit the “[Buy American Provision](#)” section of the CSDE’s Procurement for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Graham Crackers and Animal Crackers Cannot Be Served with Daily Lunch Choices for Grades K-12

Graham crackers and animal crackers are grain-based desserts. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts offered in the NSLP cannot exceed 2 ounce equivalents. For example, the lunch menu may include a 2-ounce equivalent grain-based dessert once per week or a 1-ounce equivalent grain-based dessert twice per week.

SFAs cannot offer graham crackers, animal crackers, or any other grain-based desserts as the grains component of a **daily** lunch choice because this exceeds the weekly limit. For example, a daily lunch choice that includes 2 ounce equivalents of graham crackers equals 10 ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts over the week, which exceeds the weekly limit of 2 ounce equivalents. For more information on the restrictions for grain-based desserts, refer the CSDE's resource, [*Crediting Grain-based Desserts for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).

USDA Webinar Recording Available: Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools Proposed Rule

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) webinar recording, "Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools Proposed Rule," and presentation slides are now available on the their website, [Proposed Rule: Community Eligibility Provision – Increasing Options for Schools Webinar](#).

Resource Roundup: CSDE's Training Program: What's in a Meal Module 3: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Meal Pattern

This 15-minute module is the third in the CSDE's *What's in a Meal* training program. Module 3 reviews the lunch meal pattern requirements (including the daily and weekly servings of each food component, the weekly requirements for vegetable subgroups and whole grain-rich (WGR) foods, the weekly limits for grain-based desserts and juice, and the weekly dietary specifications) and describes resources for guidance and training on the NSLP meal pattern. This module is available on the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Good to Know

Request for Applications: Healthy Meals Incentives Grants for Small and/or Rural School Food Authorities (SFAs)

As part of a cooperative agreement to develop and implement the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) [Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative](#), Action for Healthy Kids is offering competitive grants (up to \$150,000 per SFA) for small and/or rural SFAs to support efforts to improve the nutritional quality of their school meals. The deadline for submitting a [grant application](#) is 5:00 p.m. on May 26, 2023.

Eligibility Criteria:

- SFA must participate in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program.
- SFA must meet the following definitions of small and/or rural:
 - **Small SFA:** SFA with an enrollment of less than or equal to 5,000 students.
 - **Rural SFA:** The majority of students within the SFA are enrolled in a rural school as defined by a locality code of 41, 42, or 43, according to the [National Center for Education Statistics online tool](#).

The Healthy Meals Incentives Grants for small and/or rural SFAs are a key part of USDA FNS' [Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative](#), which was established to improve the nutritional quality of school meals through food systems transformation, school food authority recognition and technical assistance, the generation and sharing of innovative ideas and tested practices, and grants.



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_04_12_2023.pdf.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
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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