

The School Lunch Tray: May 10, 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

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Sodium Target 1A Transitional Standard Effective July 1, 2023
- Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposals, Submissions, and Approvals: Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals and Free Milk: Comments Due July 7, 2023

Need to Know

- No Table Talk for May 11, 2023, and May 18, 2023
- Operational Memorandum No. 10-23: Payment of Fiscal Year 2022-23 State Funds for the National School Lunch Program
- Two New What's in a Meal Modules Available: Module 12: Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement and Module 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents
- Connecticut Farm to School Study (2022-23)
- Resource Roundup: CSDE's Training Program: What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation

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.



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Action Items

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Sodium Target 1A Transitional Standard Effective July 1, 2023

The CSDE reminds school food authorities (SFAs) that Sodium Target 1A, as promulgated by the final rule, [Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains and Sodium](#), goes into effect on **July 1, 2023**, in the NSLP only. There will be no change to sodium limits for breakfasts served through the School Breakfast Program (SBP). The NSLP Sodium Target 1A limits by grade level are summarized below. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Transitional Sodium Limits for the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#).

Transitional weekly sodium limits (milligrams) for the NSLP		
Grade group	Target 1: School Year 2022-23 <i>Effective July 1, 2022</i>	Target 1A: School Year 2023-24 <i>Effective July 1, 2023</i>
K-5	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,110
6-8	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,225
9-12	≤ 1,420	≤ 1,280
K-8 option *	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,110

* SFAs may use the optional K-8 meal pattern when students from different grades eat together during the same meal period. These meal patterns require a lower sodium limit because the weekly amounts cannot exceed the highest level for each grade group or go below the lowest level for each grade group.

As a reminder, Sodium Target 1A is included in the final rule, [Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium](#), published in February 2022. This final rule provided schools with short-term standards as they moved beyond COVID nutrition standard waivers. The proposed rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Revisions to Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), published in February 2023 aims to provide schools with long-term, durable nutrition standards in line with the latest nutrition science. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) plans to develop a final rule based on feedback gathered during the public comment period and publish that final rule in early 2024.

Resources for Implementing Sodium Target 1A

Schools can access lower sodium standardized recipes that meet school meal pattern requirements through the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#) and Team Nutrition's [Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Schools](#). Sodium reduction resources and online courses are available through the ICN's [Shaking it Up initiative](#), which features strategies and best practices for reducing sodium in school menus. For more resource, visit the "[Sodium](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposals, Submissions, and Approvals: Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals and Free Milk: Comments Due July 7, 2023

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the USDA's notice, [Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposals, Submissions, and Approvals: Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals and Free Milk](#) (88 FR 29623), invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on this proposed information collection. This collection is a revision of a currently approved collection for determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals and free milk as stated in USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regulations. These federal requirements affect eligibility under the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and the Special Milk Program and are also applicable to the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Summer Food Service Program when individual eligibility must be established.

Need to Know

No Table Talk for May 11, 2023, and May 18, 2023

Table Talk will not be held on the next two Thursdays, May 11 and May 18, due to Summer Meals training. Table Talk will resume on Thursday, June 1, 2023. To submit questions in advance, visit https://sdect.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5px5YKVBdQNQZDo.

Operational Memorandum No. 10-23: Payment of Fiscal Year 2022-23 State Funds for the National School Lunch Program

The CSDE's [Operational Memorandum No. 10-23](#) outlines the process used for the payment of fiscal year 2022-23 state funds ("state match") paid as reimbursement to SFAs that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The memo contains an attachment that lists the reimbursement amount that eligible SFAs will receive. Please review and share with appropriate staff members. This memo is available on the CSDE's [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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Two New What's in a Meal Modules Available: Module 12: Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement and Module 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents

Two new What's in a Meal modules for the grains component are now available on the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

- **Module 12: Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement:** This module reviews the weekly WGR requirement and the WGR criteria for the grains component. Topics include the WGR criteria for different types of grains (commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, and grain foods made from scratch), the limit for noncreditable grains and when to ignore noncreditable grains, how to determine if commercial grain products and standardized recipes are WGR, the required WGR documentation for commercial grain products, and when a PFS is required for WGR foods. This module also includes a knowledge check on how to determine if commercial grain foods meet the WGR criteria and describes resources for guidance and training on the WGR criteria.
- **Module 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents:** This module reviews the required ounce equivalents (oz eq) for the grains component. Topics include the USDA's oz eq chart for nine different grain groups (groups A-I), Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs, the required quantities for each grain group to provide 1 oz eq, considerations for crediting sliced breads, how to determine the oz eq contribution of a commercial grain food or standardized recipe using the two allowable methods (Exhibit A and creditable grains), choosing a calculation method, rounding rules for oz eq calculations, when method 2 (creditable grains) is required for commercial grain products, and examples of how to use methods 1 and 2. This module also describes resources for guidance and training on grain oz eq.

The CSDE is releasing the 16 *What's in a Meal* modules in stages. Modules 1-14 are available now. The CSDE will notify school food authorities when the two remaining modules are released.

Connecticut Farm to School Study (2022-23)

During school year 2022-23, the Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy at the University of Connecticut conducted the [Farm to School Study](#) to understand the state of local procurement post-COVID. This study included a survey of Connecticut's SFAs and semi-structured interviews with 19 directors from SFAs across the state. The study includes information on top produce items purchased, goals and challenges to serving local foods, and recommendations to increase local food procurement in Connecticut schools.

Resource Roundup: CSDE's Training Program: What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation

This sixth module in the CSDE's *What's in a Meal* training program reviews the meal pattern documentation requirements for school meals. Topics include menus, production records, standardized recipes, and crediting documentation for commercial processed foods, i.e., Child Nutrition (CN) labels and product formulation statements (PFS), and the USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs. This module also describes resources for guidance and training on meal pattern documentation and includes a knowledge check on how to review the creditable ingredients in a PFS. This module is available on the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



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_05_10_2023.pdf.

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