

## The School Lunch Tray: June 28, 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**

- Operational Memorandum No. 14-23: Local Food for Schools Incentive Program
- Reminder: Requesting an Exemption for the SY 2023-24 Paid Lunch Equity Requirement

### **Need to Know**

- Resource Roundup: CSDE's Training Program: What's in a Meal Module 12: Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement

### **Good to Know**

- School Nutrition Specialist Credential: Take the next step in your school nutrition career

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

### **Operational Memorandum No. 14-23: Local Food for Schools Incentive Program: Application Deadline is July 14, 2023**

[CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 14-23](#) addresses the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. This memo announces to school food authorities (SFAs) that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) allocated \$200 million in relief funding to state agencies, made available through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), and authorized under the CCC Charter Act [15 U.S.C. 714], known in Connecticut as the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP).

The LFSIP funding will be allocated in two phases. Phase 1 includes a base payment of \$2,000 to all eligible SFAs and a proportional amount of funding based on each SFA's share of statewide student enrollment. Phase 2 is available for those SFAs who participate in phase 1 and further commit to working closely with the CSDE and other partners to engage with socially disadvantaged groups or small business producers to create a sustainable, ongoing procurement relationship.

- SFA allocation amounts are linked in the memo.
- Please carefully review the document attached to the memo, *Questions and Answers for the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP)*, which answers the most common questions about the LFSIP.
- Informational sessions are planned for August 15, 2023, and August 22, 2023, at 2 p.m. to allow SFAs to ask questions and meet the Department of Agriculture and University of Connecticut Extension staff helping with the LFSIP.
- All SFAs must complete [the Application and Attestation Statement for the Local Food for School Incentive Program](#) by **July 14, 2023**. Even if the SFA chooses not to participate, this form must be completed by July 14, 2023.
- [Put Local on Your Tray](#) is ready to help, with tools, tips and offers for one-to-one assistance with finding local products.

This memo is available on the CSDE's [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Please review and share with all appropriate food service personnel. For questions, contact Monica Pacheco at [monica.pacheco@ct.gov](mailto:monica.pacheco@ct.gov).

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### **Reminder: Requesting an Exemption for the SY 2023-24 Paid Lunch Equity Requirement**

The CSDE recently issued [Operational Memorandum No. 13-23](#), Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for SY 2023-24, including the Paid Lunch Equity Tool (PLE). Note that exemptions are allowed. If a sponsor

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qualifies and wants to request an exemption, *one of the two authorized signers* will need to complete a brief online survey by **June 30, 2023**. *Please carefully read this memorandum.* **Qualifying sponsors that do not complete the online survey requesting an exemption by June 30, will be required to establish prices for paid lunches according to the PLE provisions.** This includes completing the SY 2023-24 PLE tool. Questions may be directed to your [school nutrition team member](#).

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### Need to Know

#### **Resource Roundup: CSDE's Training Program: What's in a Meal Module 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents**

This 70-minute module is the thirteenth in the CSDE's *What's in a Meal* training program and reviews the 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. Access this module and the other What's in a Meal modules on the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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### Good to Know

#### **School Nutrition Specialist Credential: Take the next step in your school nutrition career**

Want to move into the next phase in your school nutrition career? Consider becoming a credentialed School Nutrition Specialist (SNS). The summer is a perfect time to start prepping for the exam! Benefits of the SNS Credential include: formal recognition of professional achievement at a national level; increased ability to manage a complex foodservice operation; demonstrated commitment to the school nutrition profession; enhanced career opportunities; elevated self-esteem and pride in one's work; and more! To learn more about the SNS exam and how to prepare, visit the School Nutrition Association's [Credentialing](#) website.

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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\\_06\\_28\\_2023.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SLT/2023/SLT_06_28_2023.pdf).

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1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
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