

The School Lunch Tray: August 2, 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

- Required Training for Public Schools that Implement Healthy Food Certification (HFC): Complete by September 30, 2023

Need to Know

- Operational Memorandum No. 16-23: Determining Eligibility for Severe Need Reimbursement for the School Breakfast Program and the Two-cent Differential Reimbursement for the National School Lunch Program in School Year 2023-24
- Operational Memorandum No. 17-23: Federal Meal Reimbursement Rates for School Year (SY): July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024
- Direct Certification Rollover for SY 2023-24
- Updated CSDE Civil Rights PowerPoint Presentation for School Year 2023-24
- Updated CSDE Resources on State and Federal Laws for Competitive Foods
- Updated Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) Worksheets for Evaluating Foods for Compliance: School Year 2023-24
- Reminder: State Regulation Prohibiting Selling and Giving Candy, Coffee, Tea, and Soft Drinks to Students while Child Nutrition Programs are Operating (Section 10-215b-1)
- Reminder: State Regulation for Accrual of Income from Sales of Competitive Foods to Students while Child Nutrition Programs are Operating (Section 10-215b-23)
- Reminder: State Statute Requiring Nutritious and Low-fat Foods in Public Schools (C.G.S. Section 10-221p)
- Reminder: State Statute for Permissible Use of Vending Machine Income by ADS-BESB (C.G.S. Section 17a-818)
- Release of Child Nutrition (CN) Database, Release 26 (CN26)
- Resource Roundup: Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools

Good to Know

- USDA's Crediting Fruits, Meats/Meat Alternates, and Milk in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheets in Spanish

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

Required Training for Public Schools that Implement Healthy Food Certification (HFC): Complete by September 30, 2023

The district's HFC contact person is required to complete the CSDE's [Complying with Healthy Food Certification](#) training program by **September 30, 2023**. This training is also recommended for individuals that coordinate sales of competitive foods to students on school premises, such as food service directors and managers, culinary programs staff, fundraising coordinators, vending machine operators, and school store operators. **Note:** The HFC contact person is the point person identified on the annual HFC Statement by the school district for coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the district's HFC. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Responsibilities of District Contact Person for Healthy Food Certification](#).

Complying with Healthy Food Certification is a series of six recorded modules on how to meet the requirements for HFC under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes and the related state and federal laws for competitive foods in schools. The modules have been updated for school year 2023-24 to include additional guidance and resources.

- All modules include an overview of the included topics.
- All modules include new "chapters" and "search transcript" features in the toolbar that allow users to quickly find specific topic. The "chapters" feature is useful for resuming a topic when the user exits the video or would like to return to a specific topic to listen again. *Module 1: Introduction to Training and HFC* contains an overview of how to access the toolbar and how its features work.
- *Module 4: Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance* includes a new section on compliance strategies to ensure that all competitive foods comply with the CNS and all sources of food sales meet the HFC requirements.
- *Module 6: Fundraisers* includes a new section on compliance strategies to ensure that all fundraisers meet the state and federal laws for HFC schools.

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School nutrition personnel in HFC public schools may use the *Complying with Healthy Food Certification* training program to count toward the annual training requirements of the USDA's professional standards requirements. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the Complying with Healthy Food Certification Training Modules](#).

Operational Memorandum No. 16-23: Determining Eligibility for Severe Need Reimbursement for the School Breakfast Program and the Two-cent Differential Reimbursement for the National School Lunch Program in School Year 2023-24

[Operational Memorandum No. 16-23](#) addresses the guidelines used to determine a school food authority's (SFA) eligibility for severe need breakfast and lunch in school year 2023-24. This memorandum is available in the "[School Nutrition Memos 2023](#)" section of the CSDE's Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Operational Memorandum No. 17-23: Federal Meal Reimbursement Rates for School Year (SY): July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

[Operational Memorandum No. 17-23](#) summarizes the annual adjustments to the federal reimbursement rates for local educational agencies (LEAs) for lunches, breakfasts, afterschool snacks, and milk served to students participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), and Special Milk Program (SMP); and the NSLP reimbursement rate for USDA donated foods for SY 2023-24. This memorandum is available in the "[School Nutrition Memos 2023](#)" section of the CSDE's Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Direct Certification Rollover for SY 2023-24

Sometime next week, the direct certification web application will be closed and the CSDE IT department will be working on completing the first direct certification match for school year 2023-24. The CSDE will email all sponsors when it is available.

Updated CSDE Civil Rights PowerPoint Presentation for School Year 2023-24

Updated versions (August July 2023) of the CSDE's Civil Rights presentation and overview of the presentation (six slides per page) are available under the "[School Nutrition Programs](#)" section of the CSDE's [Civil Rights for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Please discard any previous versions. As a reminder, the USDA requires that all staff members who work with program applicants or participants must receive annual Civil Rights training. This includes front line staff, supervisors, determining officials, verifying officials, and hearing officials.

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Updated CSDE Resources on State and Federal Laws for Competitive Foods

As the school year begins, it's important to remember that all schools must comply with the applicable state and federal laws for selling and giving competitive foods to students. General guidance on the requirements for competitive foods is available in the updated resources below (dated July 2023).

- [Overview of Federal and State Laws for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools, Private Schools, and Residential Child Care Institutions](#),
- “[Overview of Requirements](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage
- [Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations](#)

These laws apply differently to HFC public schools, non-HFC public schools, and private schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs). The updated resources below (dated July 2023) provide guidance on how these laws apply to a variety of settings within each type of school (such as cafeterias, fundraisers, school stores, vending machines, and culinary arts programs) and indicate strategies to prevent common noncompliance issues. Please discard any previous documents and replace with the updated versions.

HFC Public Schools

- Overview of Requirements: [Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)
- Culinary Programs: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in HFC Public Schools](#)
- Fundraisers: [Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in HFC Public Schools](#)
- School Stores: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in HFC Public Schools](#)
- Vending Machines: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in HFC Public Schools](#)
- Summary Chart: [Summary Chart: State and Federal Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)

Non-HFC Public Schools

- Overview of Requirements: [Requirements for Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- Culinary Programs: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- Fundraisers: [Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- School Stores: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- Vending Machines: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
- Summary Chart: [Summary Chart: State and Federal Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)

Private Schools and RCCIs

- Overview of Requirements: [Requirements for Competitive Foods in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
- Culinary Programs: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)

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- Fundraisers: [Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
 - School Stores: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
 - Vending Machines: [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
 - Summary Chart: [Summary Chart: Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
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Updated Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) Worksheets for Evaluating Foods for Compliance: School Year 2023-24

The CSDE's CNS worksheets for school year 2023-24 (dated July 2023) are now available in the "[How To Evaluate Foods for CNS Compliance](#)" section of the CSDE's CNS webpage. HFC public schools must use these worksheets to evaluate standardized recipes for foods made from scratch and any commercial food products that are not on the [CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage. Please discard any previous documents and replace with the updated versions.

Reminder: State Regulation Prohibiting Selling and Giving Candy, Coffee, Tea, and Soft Drinks to Students while Child Nutrition Programs are Operating (Section 10-215b-1)

Section 10-215b-1 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies prohibits selling and giving candy, coffee, tea, and soft drinks to students anywhere on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of any Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). The CNPs include the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#), [School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#), [Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\)](#) of the NSLP, [Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\)](#) of the NSLP, [Special Milk Program \(SMP\)](#), [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program \(FFVP\)](#), [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\) At-risk Afterschool Meals](#) operated in schools, and [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#) operated in schools.

This regulation ***applies differently*** to HFC public schools, non-HFC public schools, and private schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) because other state and federal laws for competitive foods (such as the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS), state beverage statute (C.G.S. Section 10-221q), and USDA's Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards) supersede this regulation and each other, depending on the type of school and when CNPs operate. For detailed guidance on how Section 10-215b-1 applies to each type of school, refer to the CSDE's [Overview of Connecticut's Competitive Foods Regulations](#) and the resources below.

- **HFC public schools:** [Requirements for Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
 - **Non-HFC public schools:** [Requirements for Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools](#)
 - **Private schools and RCCIs:** [Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in Private Schools and RCCIs](#)
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Reminder: State Regulation for Accrual of Income from Sales of Competitive Foods to Students while Child Nutrition Programs are Operating (Section 10-215b-23)

Section 10-215b-23 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies requires that the gross income from all foods and beverages sold to students anywhere on school premises from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of any Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) must accrue to the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA). The NSFSA is the restricted revenue account used only for the operation or improvement of the nonprofit school food service. This regulation applies to all public schools, private schools, and RCCIs that operate any CNPs. For more information on Section 10-215b-23, refer to the CSDE's [Overview of Connecticut's Competitive Foods Regulations](#) and [Operational Memorandum No. 1-18: Accrual of Income from Sales of Competitive Foods in Schools](#).

Reminder: State Statute Requiring Nutritious and Low-fat Foods in Public Schools (C.G.S. Section 10-221p)

Section 10-221p of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) requires that whenever foods are available for sale to students in public schools during the school day, nutritious and low-fat foods must also be available for sale at the same time, either at the location of the food sales or elsewhere in the school. The statute defines “nutritious and low-fat foods” as low-fat dairy foods (such as low-fat cheese and low-fat or nonfat yogurt) and fresh or dried fruit. Low-fat milk is a beverage and cannot be used to meet the statutory requirement for low-fat foods. Entities that sell foods to students during the school day must also sell low-fat dairy foods and fresh or dried fruit unless these foods are available for sale to students elsewhere on school premises at the same time. For more information on C.G.S. Section 10-221p, refer to section 4 of the CSDE's [Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages](#).

Reminder: State Statute for Permissible Use of Vending Machine Income by ADS-BESB (C.G.S. Section 17a-818)

[C.G.S. Section 17a-818](#) (formerly Section 10-303) requires that the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services, Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (ADS-BESB) has the right of first refusal to place vending machines in public buildings, including schools. A school district must grant a permit to ADS-BESB to operate a vending machine if the school district has determined that a vending machine is desirable in the location. School districts cannot allow another organization to place a vending machine in a school building unless 1) the school district has first offered to grant a permit to ADS-BESB to operate the vending machine; and 2) ADS-BESB has declined the opportunity. C.G.S. Section 17a-818 does not apply to vending machines that are owned and operated by the school district without outside assistance. For additional guidance, refer to [“Placement of Vending Machines \(ADS-BESB\)”](#) in the “Laws/Regulations” section of the CSDE's Competitive Foods in Schools webpage.

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Release of Child Nutrition (CN) Database, Release 26 (CN26)

The Child Nutrition (CN) Database, Release 26 (CN26) is now available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/child-nutrition-database>. The CNDB is a required database for nutrient analysis software approved by USDA for use in school meals. To maintain USDA approval, software companies must submit their nutrient analysis and certification of compliance software, updated to include CN26, to the USDA Software Evaluation Team by Monday, September 18, 2023. After September 18, 2023, SFAs and local schools should verify with their nutrient analysis software company to ensure that the software includes the most current version of the Child Nutrition Database (CN26).

Resource Roundup: Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools

The CSDE's [Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools](#) includes webpages and resources to assist schools with meeting the requirements of the federal and state laws for competitive foods in schools.

Good to Know

USDA's Crediting Fruits, Meats/Meat Alternates, and Milk in the Child Nutrition Programs Tip Sheets in Spanish

The USDA's tip sheets on Crediting Fruits, Meats/Meat Alternates, and Milk in the Child Nutrition Programs are now available in Spanish at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-meats-meat-alternates-child-nutrition-tip-sheet>. These simple tip sheets highlight the basics of crediting for these three meal components across all Child Nutrition Programs. Printed versions of the tip sheets will be available later.



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_08_03_2023.pdf.

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