

The School Lunch Tray: December 6, 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-Participate in the 2023 Farm to School Census: Deadline December 15, 2023
- Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of November 2023 Purchases Due December 18, 2023

Need to Know

- Announcing a New CSDE Training Program: Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs
- Clarification on the Preschool Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Criteria for Ready-to-eat Breakfast Cereals
- SNACT's Winter Warm Up Conference January 9, 2024
- Resource Roundup: USDA's Taste-Testing Event Resources

Good to Know

- Enhanced Search Function Added to USDA's Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT)
- Fruit-and-Veggie-Forward School Breakfast Recipes

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-Participate in the 2023 Farm to School Census: Deadline December 15, 2023

The USDA's Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program is conducting the fourth Farm to School Census (The Census). The Census is the only national survey that examines local food purchasing, gardens, and agricultural education in schools. USDA encourages all public, private, and charter schools operating the National School Lunch Program in all 50 states and territories, to participate and make sure #LocalCounts. Census data, including trends, economic impacts, and challenges, is often used to inform decisions made by local, state, and national decision leaders. Your participation will allow the Farm to School Program to showcase your work and grow the farm to school movement!

Contact Monica Pacheco at monica.pacheco@ct.gov with any questions or if you did not receive your link (they are SFA specific). There's still time to make Local Count!

Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of November 2023 Purchases Due December 18, 2023

Districts that would like to receive reimbursement from their LFSIP funds allocation for purchases of locally grown or produced foods for the month of November 2023 must submit the [Monthly Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Reporting Form - Phase 1](#). Purchases made in November 2023 should be reported on the form by Monday, December 18, 2023.

Need to Know

Announcing a New CSDE Training Program: Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs

The CSDE is pleased to announce the new [Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs](#). This training program includes eight recorded modules that provide comprehensive guidance on complying with the preschool meal patterns 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. The modules include:

- 1: Introduction to Training (16 minutes)
- 2: Introduction to Preschool Meal Patterns (46 minutes)
- 3: Meal Pattern Comparison of Preschool and Grades K-12 (37 minutes)
- 4: Milk Component (32 minutes)
- 5: Meat/Meat Alternates Component (36 minutes)
- 6: Fruits Component and Vegetables Component (36 minutes)
- 7: Grains Component (38 minutes)
- 8: Meal Service for Preschoolers (26 minutes)

These modules are intended for sponsors of the school nutrition programs that serve meals and snacks to preschoolers, including public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs).

Clarification on the Preschool Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Criteria for Ready-to-eat Breakfast Cereals

To credit as a WGR food in the preschool meal patterns, ready-to-eat breakfast (RTE) breakfast cereals (group I) must meet two criteria: 1) The first ingredient must be a whole grain and the cereal must be fortified, or the cereal must be 100 percent whole grain; and 2) the cereal cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. Fortification is not required for RTE breakfast cereals that are 100 percent whole grain. The CSDE resources below have been updated to reflect this information.

- [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#)
- [How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#)
- [Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#)

Note: The meal patterns for preschool and grades K-12 have different WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals. The WGR criteria for the meal patterns for grades K-12 require a limit for noncreditable grains and do not require a sugar limit. RTE breakfast cereals that meet the WGR criteria for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 will also meet the preschool WGR criteria, if they meet the sugar limit.

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SNACT's Winter Warm Up Conference January 9, 2024

Winter and the time for ordering USDA Foods are coming! Join SNACT at the USDA Foods and Industry Food Show and Winter Conference. The conference is January 9, 2024, at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville, CT. There will be a special new directors' round table session, updates from the CSDE, and training from Patrick Garmon, Associate Director of Culinary Education and Training at the Institute of Child Nutrition.

- [Registration](#)
 - [Agenda](#)
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Resource Roundup: USDA's Taste-Testing Event Resources

Taste tests are a great way to introduce new menu items and get students excited to try healthy food choices. Check out the USDA's [Taste Test Resources](#) to help plan and host a successful taste-testing event.

Good to Know

Enhanced Search Function Added to USDA's Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT)

The [Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool \(PSTTT\)](#) is a voluntary and free web-based tool designed for school nutrition professionals to track their annual required professional standards training hours. The PSTTT now includes an enhanced search function which allows users to easily find existing training titles when logging training in the PSTTT. Users can narrow down the search results by entering in training provider information. Trainings older than three years old will no longer show when searching on the Log Training page. Additionally, for recent Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) trainings, direct links to the ICN iLearn website have been added under the Training Details page.

Fruit-and-Veggie-Forward School Breakfast Recipes

The [International Fresh Produce Association \(IFPA\)](#), through their non-profit Foundation for Fresh Produce, has developed [10 fruit-and-vegetable-forward breakfast recipes](#) for K-12 school foodservice programs. The recipes include on-trend, kid-friendly foods, while also spotlighting new ways to incorporate vegetables and fruit into school breakfast offerings. The IFPA toolkit includes nutrition and crediting info to assist with meeting meal pattern requirements, while also providing guidance on how to serve the recipes in a variety of settings, including grab-and-go and breakfast in the classroom. The recipes also align with proposed USDA updates that aim to limit added sugar in school breakfast. IFPA encourages schools to make one or more of these recipes during National School Breakfast Week, March 4-8, 2024. For more information, refer to the [IFPA's press release](#).



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_12_06_2023.pdf.

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