

The School Lunch Tray: February 7, 2024

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

- None

Need to Know

- Press Release for CSDE's Summer Meal Programs
- List of Connecticut Sponsors of the NSLP and SBP for School Year 2023-24
- Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for School Year 2024-25
- Using Electronic Production Records
- Updated CSDE Resource: Determining if Nondairy Beverages Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in School Nutrition Programs
- Updated CSDE Resource: Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs
- Update CSDE Guide: Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs
- USDA Webinar: Community Eligibility Provision 101, February 21, 2024 (Second Training Date)
- Resource Roundup: Key Information for Connecticut Claims Preparers for School Nutrition Programs

Good to Know

- Teach, Grow, and Learn with FoodCorps: Now Accepting Service Member Applications
- Tyson K-12 Hunger Heroes: Due March 14, 2024
- FoodCorps Free Download of Fruit and Veggie Valentines

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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Need to Know

Press Release for CSDE's Summer Meal Programs

On Tuesday, January 30, 2024, the CSDE released a [press release for the Summer Meal Programs](#). This press release announces opportunities for organizations to become authorized sponsors of the 2024 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to provide meals to children in eligible Connecticut locations.

List of Connecticut Sponsors of the NSLP and SBP for School Year 2023-24

The CSDE's list of [Connecticut Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#) for school year 2023-24 is now available.

Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for School Year 2024-25

The CNS for school year 2024-25 will remain the same as the CNS for the current school year. Visit the CSDE's [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) webpage for the CNS summary and the full CNS document. Training on the CNS is available in *Module 3: Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS)* of the CSDE's training program, [Complying with Healthy Food Certification](#).

Public school districts that choose to implement the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification under C.G.S. Section 10-215f must follow the CNS for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable school meals on school premises, at all times and from all sources, including a la carte sales in the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, culinary programs, and any other sources of food sales to students. For additional guidance, visit the CSDE's [Healthy Food Certification](#) webpage.

Using Electronic Production Records

Districts choosing to use electronic production records must still have a physical written copy of the production records and all applicable standardized recipes available at each site to guide the daily menu production. SFAs must regularly review and update their electronic production records to ensure accuracy and compliance with all federal and state regulations. For more information on the production record requirements, refer to the CSDE's [Requirements for Production Records in the NSLP and SBP](#).

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Updated CSDE Resource: Determining if Nondairy Beverages Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in School Nutrition Programs

An updated version (February 2024) of the CSDE's [Determining if Nondairy Beverages Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in School Nutrition Programs](#) is available. This document indicates how to determine if nondairy beverages like soy milk credit as a milk substitutes in the USDA's meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschoolers (ages 1-4). This version updates the percent Daily Values (% DV) for each nutrient required by the USDA in 1 cup of a fluid milk substitute, based on the current daily values and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) labeling laws.

Updated CSDE Resource: Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs

An updated version of the CSDE's [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#) (February 2024) is available. This document summarizes the requirements for meal modifications for children without a disability who cannot drink milk. This version updates the percent Daily Values (% DV) for each nutrient required by the USDA in 1 cup of a fluid milk substitute, based on the current daily values and the FDA's labeling laws.

Update CSDE Guide: Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs

An updated version of the CSDE's [Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs](#) (February 2024) is available. This version updates table 5 in section 3 to reflect the percent Daily Values (% DV) for each nutrient required by the USDA in 1 cup of a fluid milk substitute, based on the current daily values and the FDA's labeling laws.

USDA Webinar: Community Eligibility Provision 101, February 21, 2024

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is hosting the **Community Eligibility Provision 101** webinar for school food authorities on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. This webinar provides an overview of the CEP. After years of successful implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), on September 26, 2023, FNS published a final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Community Eligibility Provision-Increasing Options for Schools](#), with an effective date of October 26, 2023. The final rule lowered the minimum Identified Student Percentage (ISP) threshold from 40 percent to 25 percent. As a result, more students, households, and schools have the opportunity to experience CEP's benefits, such as increasing access to school meals at no cost, eliminating unpaid meal charges, minimizing stigma, and streamlining meal service operations.

- **Registration:** [Zoom webinar](#)
- **Closed captioning:** This webinar will be offered with closed captioning. Participants who require a different accessibility tool to participate in this webinar should contact SM.FNS.HRD.ReasonableAccommodations@usda.gov for assistance as soon as possible.
- **Questions:** For questions about webinar logistics or content, please contact SM.FN.CNDInternet@usda.gov.

USDA Webinar: Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meals Programs, February 29, 2024 (Second Training Date)

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Civil Rights Division will provide a second training on “Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meals Programs” on Thursday February 29, 2024, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. This webinar will last approximately 1 hour and may include a Q&A opportunity at the conclusion of the training.

Registration is required for this event (at least 24 hours in advance): [Registration link](#)

Please log on at least 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the session as access to the training will be restricted 15 minutes into the session.

Automated Closed Captioning will be available during this meeting. Participants who require a different accessibility tool to participate in this meeting may contact FNS.HRD.ReasonableAccommodations@usda.gov for assistance at least 10 days prior to the training date.

Resource Roundup: Key Information for Connecticut Claims Preparers for School Nutrition Programs

The CSDE’s [Key Information for Connecticut Claims Preparers for School Nutrition Programs](#) provides an overview of important information and resources for Connecticut claims preparers regarding about entering accurate claims for reimbursement of meals and milk in the USDA school nutrition programs operated by the district’s school food authority (SFA). Claims preparers who are new to the position or need a refresher should review this important information.

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Good to Know

Teach, Grow, and Learn with FoodCorps: Now Accepting Service Member Applications!

The application is now open to serve as an AmeriCorps member with FoodCorps for the 2024-25 school year. FoodCorps AmeriCorps service members spend a year working with school food professionals, teachers, and administrators to connect kids to the joy and power of food. Service members earn a stipend, a year's worth of training and professional development resources, and a network of passionate food educators and school nutrition leaders. FoodCorps is accepting applications until March 29, 2024, at www.foodcorps.org/apply.

Tyson K-12 Hunger Heroes: Due March 14, 2024

Share your story with Tyson K-12 about yourself or someone in your school foodservice program who has gone above and beyond to bring a smile to a child's face while serving nutritious and delicious meals. Tyson will select five Hunger Hero stories to become the next Tyson K-12 Hunger Heroes and be awarded a \$5,000 prize to their school foodservice program. Submit entries at <https://www.tysonfoodservice.com/who-we-serve/k-12/2024-k-12-hunger-heroes-entry-page> by **March 10, 2024**.

FoodCorps Free Download of Fruit and Veggie Valentines

FoodCorps is *berry* excited to bring back their [FoodCorps Valentine's Day Cards](#) with new designs for 2024. Download, print, and gift these a-*maiz*-ing paper greetings for your upcoming Valentine's, Palentine's, or "just because" celebrations. Print in full color or in black and white to add your own color and pizzazz to these fun designs.



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/2024/SLT_02_07_2024.pdf.

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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