

The School Lunch Tray: March 6, 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

- Final Reminder: Orders for USDA Foods for School Year 2024-25 Due March 8, 2024

Need to Know

- Happy National School Breakfast Week: March 4-8, 2024
- Table Talk Tomorrow: Thursday, March 7, 2024
- USDA Foods Update: Planning Remaining Deliveries for USDA Foods
- Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of February 2024 Purchases due March 15, 2024
- Recording and Slides Available for USDA Community Eligibility Provision 101 Webinar
- Updated CSDE Resources: Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP, Grain Ounce Equivalents for the NSLP and SBP Preschool Meal Patterns, and Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12
- Revised CSDE Crediting Summary Charts: Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12, Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs, and Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs
- Resource Roundup: Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Good to Know

- USDA Resources for School Breakfast
- Ways to Celebrate School Breakfast
- Apply for a Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Breakfast Trailblazer Award
- Celebrate National Nutrition Month 2024: Beyond the Table
- Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Webinar: School Breakfast 101: Implementing Innovative Breakfast Models, Thursday, March 7, 2024

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

Final Reminder: Orders for USDA Foods for School Year 2024-25 Due March 8, 2024

The Connecticut Food Distribution Program's (FDP) catalog for USDA Foods for school year (SY) 2024-25 in Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) closes on **March 8, 2024**. Recipient Agencies (RAs) that miss the ordering deadline will not receive USDA Foods.

Please carefully review and follow the CSDE's [Instructions for Ordering USDA Foods for School Year 2024-25](#). This document and the [USDA Foods Ordering Worksheets for School Year 2024-25](#) are available in the "[WBSCM](#)" section of the CSDE's FDP webpage. For questions, please contact the [FDP staff](#).

Need to Know

Happy National School Breakfast Week: March 4-8, 2024

Healthy futures start with school breakfast. Every day, about 15 million students across the nation receive a healthy school breakfast. School breakfasts play a big role in helping children get the nutrition they need to learn, grow, and be healthy. Students who eat school breakfast eat more foods that children do not get enough of—whole grains, fruits, and dairy. For more information about National School Breakfast Week (including, key messages, resources, and social media content), visit the USDA's [National School Breakfast Week 2024](#) webpage.

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Vegetable Substitutions at Breakfast for School Year 2023-24

As a reminder, for school year 2023-24, school food authorities (SFAs) may substitute any vegetables from the five subgroups (including starchy vegetables like hash brown potatoes) for the fruits component at any breakfast. For guidance on the types of vegetables in each subgroup refer to the CSDE's [Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP](#).

Table Talk Tomorrow: Thursday, March 7, 2024

Join the CSDE's school nutrition programs staff tomorrow, Thursday, March 7, 2024, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. for this week's Table Talk. To submit questions in advance, visit <https://forms.office.com/g/GWS7DCbbgo>.

Registration is not required. Please use the link below to join Table Talk on Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

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Meeting ID: 225 336 668 44

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USDA Foods Update: Planning Remaining Deliveries for USDA Foods

Only three or four USDA Foods deliveries remain for the 2023-24 school year. All of Connecticut's USDA Foods have been delivered to the HPC warehouse. Recipient Agencies (RAs) should review their USDA Foods allocations now. This allows RAs to plan the remaining deliveries appropriately to take delivery of and utilize all available USDA Foods. RAs that cannot take delivery of any of their inventory should contact the [Food Distribution Program](#) staff.

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Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of February 2024 Purchases due March 15, 2024

Districts that would like to receive reimbursement from their LFSIP funds allocation for purchases of locally grown or produced foods for the month of February 2024 must submit the [Monthly Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Reporting Form - Phase 1](#). Purchases made in February 2024 should be reported on the form by Friday, March 15, 2024.

The CSDE submitted a claim for reimbursement to USDA for August 2023 through December 2023, and will provide an update when payments are ready for participating districts.

Recording and Slides Available for USDA Community Eligibility Provision 101 Webinar

The recording of the USDA's Community Eligibility Provision 101 webinar and presentation slides are now available in the Technical Assistance Resources section of the USDA's [CEP Resource Center](#) webpage.

Updated CSDE Resources: Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP, Grain Ounce Equivalents for the NSLP and SBP Preschool Meal Patterns, and Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

Updated versions (March 2024) are available for the grain ounce equivalents and grains/breads servings resources below.

- **Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP:** [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#). The updates include additional crediting guidance; color coding to distinguish between grain-based desserts allowed only for lunch, and grain-based desserts allowed for breakfast and lunch; and reformatting the grain oz eq chart to two pages for easy printing.
- **Grades K-12 in the ASP:** [Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#). The updates include additional crediting guidance and reformatting the grains/breads servings chart to two pages for easy printing.
- **Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP:** [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Preschool Meal Patterns](#). The updates include additional crediting guidance and reformatting the grain oz eq chart to two pages for easy printing.

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Revised CSDE Crediting Summary Charts: Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12, Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs, and Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs

Revised versions (dated March 2024) of the CSDE's Crediting Summary Charts below are available. The changes include new and updated resource links, the addition of crediting information for hummus to the meat/meat alternates chart and vegetables chart, and additional guidance for crediting grain-based desserts in the grains chart.

- **Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP:** [Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#)
- **Grades K-12 in the ASP:** [Crediting Summary Charts for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#)
- **Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP:** [Crediting Summary Charts for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#)

Resource Roundup: Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

Ready-to-eat (RTE) and cooked breakfast cereals must meet two criteria to credit as the grains component in the preschool meal patterns: 1) a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) must be the first ingredient or the cereal must be fortified; and 2) sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. SFAs that serve the same breakfast cereals to preschoolers and grades K-12 must check to make sure these cereals comply with the preschool sugar limits. Creditable breakfast cereals may be served as the grains component at any preschool meal or snack. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#).

Good to Know

USDA Resources for School Breakfast

USDA and Team Nutrition have resources to help schools improve the nutritional quality of school breakfast, including helping children develop a healthy eating pattern that is lower in added sugars. These resources provide schools with tips including ways to identify sources of added sugars, menu planning ideas, crediting information, sample menus, and more.

- [Best Practices for Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast](#)
- [Offering Meats and Meat Alternates at School Breakfast](#)
- [Offering Smoothies as Part of Reimbursable School Meals](#)

USDA Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators can request free printed copies of certain Team Nutrition materials, while supplies last, at <https://pueblo.gpo.gov/TN/TNPubs.php>. For more resources, visit the USDA's [School Breakfast Materials](#) webpage.

Ways to Celebrate School Breakfast

The Team Nutrition resources below help schools celebrate school breakfast.

- **Host events and get social:** Spread the word about the benefits of school breakfast. Visit Team Nutrition's [Celebrating School Breakfast](#) webpage for ideas, shareable graphics, and sample social media messages.
- **Teach students:** Help students learn how to choose a healthy breakfast with these classroom lessons:
 - [Discover MyPlate: Nutrition Education for Kindergarten](#): Starting Our Day with MyPlate (Lesson 5)
 - [Serving Up MyPlate](#): Fun with Food Groups (Grades 1 and 2), The Science of “Sometimes Foods” (Grades 3 and 4), and MyPlate Quiz Show (Grades 5 and 6)
 - Fueling My Healthy Life: [Start Right with Breakfast](#) (Grade 6)
- **Test it out:** Test your knowledge about breakfast nutrition with the [School Breakfast Quiz](#).
- **Try a new recipe:** Check out USDA Recipes for School Breakfast, including recipes developed by state agencies through the [Fiscal Year 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grants](#), such as [Butternut Muffin](#) (Pennsylvania), [Cheesy Bacon Grits](#) (Iowa), and [Rise n' Shine Strawberry Oats](#) (Virginia).

For more USDA recipes for school breakfast, visit the Institute of Child Nutrition's [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#). Links to resources in Spanish are available at <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFNS/bulletins/38ab4ec>.

Apply for a Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Breakfast Trailblazer Award

Celebrate the amazing work of your school nutrition program by applying for a HMI Recognition Award. USDA and Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) recognize schools who strive to improve the nutritional quality of their school breakfasts with the HMI [Breakfast Trailblazer Awards](#). These awards focus on highlighting strategies used to provide a nutritious breakfast with less added sugars. Spanish translation services are available upon request with the AFHK support team at support@healthymealsincentives.org.

Check out the Streamlined HMI Recognition Awards which make the application process easy and faster for busy school nutrition professionals. To learn more, visit healthymealsincentives.org or tune in to the HMI Recognition Awards [Informational Webinar](#) on Wednesday, March 6, from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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Celebrate National Nutrition Month 2024: Beyond the Table

National Nutrition Month is an annual campaign established in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND). This year's theme is “Beyond the Table,” which addresses the farm-to-fork aspect of nutrition, from food production and distribution to navigating grocery stores and farmers markets — and even home food safety and storage practices. Visit the AND’s [National Nutrition Month](#) webpage for more information and 50 ways to get involved. The websites below provide more promotional ideas and resources.

- [Celebrate National Nutrition Month](#) (Action for Healthy Kids)
- [Make Every Bite Count During National Nutrition Month](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
- [Personalize Your Plate for National Nutrition Month](#) (USDA)
- [Resources to Help Celebrate National Nutrition Month](#) (USDA)
- [WIC Works Resource System](#) (USDA)

Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Webinar: School Breakfast 101: Implementing Innovative Breakfast Models, Thursday, March 7, 2024

The School Breakfast Program supports student health and learning and improves school attendance; however, traditional breakfast models, where breakfast is served before the start of the school day, hinder participation. Innovative breakfast models, such as Breakfast After the Bell, are effective ways to boost participation and ensure children start their day ready to learn. Join FRAC this National School Breakfast Week to learn how schools are supporting student success through innovative breakfast models.

Date and time: Thursday, March 7, 3:00 p.m.

Registration: [registration link](#)



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_03_06_2024.pdf.

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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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