

The School Lunch Tray: April 10, 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

- Interest Survey for Summer Meals 2024 Sponsors: Due April 17, 2024
- Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of March 2024 Purchases due April 19, 2024
- Reminder for Public Schools: Schedule Board Meeting Now for the 2024-25 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement

Need to Know

- New Foods in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs
- USDA Child Nutrition Database, Release 27 (CN27)
- Resource Roundup: Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) Shaking It Up: Small Changes Lead to Big Flavors Webpage

Good to Know

- Shaping Tomorrow Together: School Nutrition Association (SNA) Annual National Conference, July 14-16, 2024
- Free Training Webinars from the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN)
- New Article Details the Process Used to Develop the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- ICN Recorded Webinar: STAR: Effective Menu Planning Strategies: A Step-by-Step Approach
- ICN Webpage: Shaking It Up: Small Changes Lead to Big Flavors

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

Interest Survey for Summer Meals 2024 Sponsors: Due April 17, 2024

For sponsors planning to participate in Summer Meals 2024, the [Summer Meals Interest Survey](#) is due by close of business on **Wednesday, April 17, 2024**. The survey is only six questions and will take less than 2 minutes to complete.

Sponsors indicating an interest to participate in Summer Meals 2024 on behalf of their district are not locked into participating and are not approved by the CSDE as eligible to participate. Completing the survey simply allows the CSDE Summer Meals staff to plan adequate technical assistance and support for districts that expect to participate.

The interest survey is **not** the application to participate. The SFSP application will come later in the spring and is much more involved. For questions, please contact your [Summer Meals team member](#).

Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of March 2024 Purchases due April 19, 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 March 2024 must submit the Monthly Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Form - Phase 1. Purchases made in March 2024 should be reported on the form by **Friday, April 19, 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.

Reminder for Public Schools: Schedule Board Meeting Now for the 2024-25 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement

As a reminder, districts need to plan several months ahead to 1) schedule the board meeting for the HFC votes; and 2) allow sufficient time to obtain the final board of education (BOE)-approved minutes by the deadline **of July 1, 2024**. Make sure to account for the BOE's timeframe for approving final minutes. If the HFC votes do not occur until June, the district will not have final minutes to submit to the CSDE by the July 1 deadline.

For detailed guidance on the requirements for the annual HFC Statement, refer to [Operational Memorandum No. 07-24: Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\) Statement for School Year 2024-25](#), and visit the "[Apply](#)" section of the CSDE's HFC webpage.

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Need to Know

New Foods in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

The USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs \(FBG\)](#) is the go-to resource for determining the amount of food to purchase and the contribution that foods make toward meal pattern requirements. New food yield data continues to be added, with the latest additions being USDA Foods canned mixed fruit and canned beef, smoked salmon fillet, cactus fruit (prickly pear), purple rice, instant long grain brown rice, and quick cooking medium grain brown rice. In addition, the latest additions to the Tool menu include the Ounces to Pounds Calculator and When to Use a Preparation Yield flow chart.

USDA Child Nutrition Database, Release 27 (CN27)

The [Child Nutrition Database, Release 27 \(CN27\)](#) is now available. The CNDB is a required database for nutrient analysis software approved by USDA for use in school meals. For more information, refer to USDA Memo TA 02-2024: Twenty-seventh Release of the Child Nutrition Database.

Action steps for school food authorities (SFA) and local schools: After July 9, 2024, SFAs and local schools should verify with their nutrient analysis software company that the software includes the most current version, CN27, of the Child Nutrition Database (CNDB).

Resource Roundup: Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) Shaking It Up: Small Changes Lead to Big Flavors Webpage

The ICN's [Shaking It Up: Small Changes Lead to Big Flavors](#) webpage provides sodium resources with tangible, practical guidance for school nutrition professionals to implement sodium reduction best practices and strategies in their school foodservice operations. Materials include a range of educational resources and training materials, including training worksheets and online courses.

Good to Know

Shaping Tomorrow Together: School Nutrition Association (SNA) Annual National Conference, July 14-16, 2024

The SNA's Annual National Conference, Shaping Tomorrow Together, will be held on July 14-16, 2024, in Boston, MA. For more information and to register, visit <https://anc.schoolnutrition.org/>

Free Training Webinars from the ICN

- April 25, 2024: School Nutrition Strategies, Trainings, Action Plans, and Resources (STAR) Webinar - Best Practices for Financial Management in Schools
- May 5, 2024: Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition (CICN) Webinar - Recognition of School Chefs - Spotlight on School Meals Innovation

[Subscribe](#) to the ICN newsletter to receive webinar and registration information for these upcoming webinars. A link to register will be sent to subscribers one week before the webinar date. View past webinars on ICN's [iLearn](#) learning management system.

New Article Details the Process Used to Develop the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

When it comes to healthy eating and nutrition, the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) is one of America's best tools to help individuals get and stay healthy. As the nation's leading source of science-based recommendations on dietary intake to meet nutrient needs, promote health, and prevent disease, the Dietary Guidelines gives the nation an actionable playbook to lead healthier lives.

A new article, [Addressing Misinformation about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), was recently published in American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Authored by staff from the U.S. Department of Health and Services and the USDA, this publication explains how the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee is formed and vetted, how it considers the scientific evidence on nutrition and health, and what information is included in the scientific report that the Committee delivers to the federal government. The article also highlights the steps taken to ensure that the Dietary Guidelines reflects the diverse cultural foodways and nutrition needs that exist in the United States.

ICN Recorded Webinar: STAR: Effective Menu Planning Strategies: A Step-by-Step Approach

The ICN's [Effective Menu Planning Strategies: A Step-by-Step Approach](#) webinar is designed to equip school nutrition professionals with tried-and-true tips for crafting innovative menus that are appealing and inclusive to students. By participating in this webinar, school nutrition professionals will gain insight and practical tools for implementing a systematic approach to menu planning that caters to students' preferences, enhances their dining experience, and promotes overall well-being.



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_04_10_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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