

The School Lunch Tray: July 24, 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

- Calendar of School Nutrition Program Requirements and Activities for School Year 2024-25
- New CSDE Resource: Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs
- Updated Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Handbook for School Year 2024-25
- Updated ASP Forms for School Year 2024-25
- Updated ASP Sample Menus for School Year 2024-25
- New "Snack Menu Ideas" Section of the CSDE
- 's ASP webpage
- Final Rule Changes to Meal Modifications for the School Nutrition Programs
- New "Added Sugars" Section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs Webpage
- Resource Roundup: New USDA Resource on Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast

Good to Know

- Team Nutrition Resource Bundles for School Breakfast

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.



Need to Know

Calendar of School Nutrition Program Requirements and Activities for School Year 2024-25

The CSDE's [Calendar of School Nutrition Program Requirements and Activities](#) is now available for school year 2024-25. This calendar helps school food authorities (SFAs) comply with the many requirements and due dates associated with operating the USDA's school nutrition programs. Please share this calendar with all staff members responsible for reporting and compliance in your school nutrition programs. **Note:** Schedules on this calendar are subject to change and do not represent all federal and state requirements for operating the USDA Child Nutrition Programs in schools and institutions.

New CSDE Resource: Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs

On April 25, 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (89 FR 31962). The CSDE's new [Summary of Final Rule Updates to the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs](#) summarizes the final rule changes and implementation dates that apply to the:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal patterns for grades K-12;
- NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) preschool meal patterns; and
- ASP meal pattern for grades K-12.

These changes also apply to the SSO, which follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

Note: This document includes **only** the meal pattern changes. For additional guidance on all final rule requirements, refer to [USDA Memo SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, and SFSP 12-2024: Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), and visit the "[Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Updated Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Handbook for School Year 2024-25

The updated [Afterschool Snack Program Handbook](#) for school year 2024-25 (dated July 2024) is now available. This handbook reflects the changes implemented by the USDA final rule, effective July 1, 2024, and includes updated content, resources, and links.

Updated ASP Forms for School Year 2024-25

Updated ASP resources and forms for school year 2024-25 (dated July 2024) are available in the [“Forms for the ASP”](#) section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage. These forms include the ASP menus forms, ASP On-site Monitoring Form, production records, snack count forms for site/area eligible schools, and snack count forms for schools that are not site/area eligible.

Updated ASP Sample Menus for School Year 2024-25

Updated sample snack menus grades K-12 and preschool for school year 2024-25 (dated July 2024) are available in the [“Snack Menu Ideas”](#) section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage or the direct links below.

- [Sample ASP Menu for Ages 3-5](#)
 - [Sample ASP Menu for Grades K-12](#)
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New “Snack Menu Ideas” Section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage

The new [“Snack Menu Ideas”](#) section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage includes resources to assist menu planners with developing snack menus for the ASP.

Final Rule Changes to Meal Modifications for the School Nutrition Programs

The USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the previous references in the regulations for Child Nutrition Programs from “medical authority” to “state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian.” The final rule defines a state licensed healthcare professional as an individual authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law. In Connecticut, this includes licensed physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN).

The final rule also outlines in regulation that state licensed healthcare professionals **and registered dietitians** may write medical statements to request meal modifications on behalf of participants with disabilities. SFAs are required to accept medical statements from registered dietitians by **July 1, 2025**, but may choose to implement this change prior to this deadline.

The final rule also updates and reorganizes the regulatory text to distinguish between disability and non-disability requests more clearly, and encourages schools, institutions, and facilities to meet children’s non-disability dietary preferences when planning and preparing school meals and afterschool snacks.

The CSDE will be updating all meal modification resources to reflect this information and will notify schools when the revised versions are available.

New “Added Sugars” Section of the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs Webpage

The USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), phases in limits for added sugars in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grade K-12. The CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage has a new “[Added Sugars](#)” section (under “Dietary Specifications” in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section). This section includes guidance and resources for lowering added sugars in school meals, including the USDA’s [Added Sugars](#) webpage, which provides information about the final rule changes for added sugars. Additional resources will be added as they become available.

Resource Roundup: New USDA Resource on Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast

The USDA recently released a new training guide for school nutrition professionals, [Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast](#). This guide indicates how to identify sources of added sugars and ways to reduce added sugars in school breakfast meals, to meet the added sugars limits included in the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). A Spanish version is also available: [Reducir los azúcares añadidos en el desayuno escolar](#).

Good to Know

Team Nutrition Resource Bundles for School Breakfast

The Team Nutrition Resource Bundles include a variety of resources that school nutrition professionals, teachers, parents/caregivers, and the entire school community can use to promote school breakfast.

- [Breakfast Bundle for Elementary Schools](#)
- [Breakfast Bundle for Secondary Schools](#)

More details about each bundle are available on our online order form at <https://pueblo.gpo.gov/TN/TNPubs.php>.

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_07_24_2024.pdf.

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