

The School Lunch Tray: September 11, 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

- Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of August 2024 Purchases Due September 18, 2024
- Four Weeks Until Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Week, October 7-11, 2024

Need to Know

- Table Talk will Resume in October
- Disclosure Information Issued to Superintendents and AP Coordinators
- Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance for the School Nutrition Programs: School Year 2024-25
- New CSDE Resource: Buy American Requirement for the School Nutrition Programs
- New Foods Available in the USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs
- Updated USDA Resource: Team Nutrition's Serving School Meals to Preschoolers training worksheet
- Resource Roundup: New Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Section on CSDE's Farm to School Webpage

Good to Know

- September is National Food Safety Education Month
- Webinar from the Institute of Child Nutrition's Produce Safety University (PSU): Hidden in Plain Sight: Navigating Food Allergens, Intolerance, and Labeling Practices: September 25, 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.



Action Items

Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of August 2024 Purchases Due September 18, 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 August 2024 must submit the [Monthly Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Reporting Form - Phase 1](#). Purchases made in August 2024 should be reported on the form by Wednesday, September 18, 2024.

Four Weeks Until Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Week, October 7-11, 2024

Join the next [Farm to School Collaborative Meeting](#) on September 18, 2024, from 3:30-4:30 p.m. to hear updates and stories from the Federal USDA and Connecticut State Local Food for Schools Incentive Programs. Monica Pacheco from the Connecticut State Department of Education and Hannah Carty from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture will present the two programs, their similarities and differences, and how school food authorities can participate in both, just in time for Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Week. The Farm to School Collaborative meets monthly for education, collaboration and networking with engaged stakeholders throughout the state.

- Link to join the Zoom Meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84925577656?pwd=SkNvTnFxV0VGUHBfDRlc2FZQ1Nodz09>

For questions or assistance contact Monica Pacheco at monica.pacheco@ct.gov or Jen Bove at jen.bove@ct.gov.

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Need to Know

Table Talk will Resume in October

The CSDE's Table Talk will resume in October. More information will be coming in the School Lunch Tray.

Disclosure Information Issued to Superintendents and AP Coordinators

Earlier this week, the CSDE Academic Office issued the announcement below to all AP Coordinators. Note that the first paragraph, which was issued to Superintendents on August 29, 2024, was included in the AP Coordinator announcement:

Using Free/Reduced Price Meal (FRPM) Eligibility for State Education Programs

The disclosure of FRPM eligibility is restricted. However, FRPM eligibility can be shared for the purposes of administration of a state education program. Dual credit courses that are offered in partnership with an institution of higher education, **Advanced Placement (AP) exams**, the PSAT and SAT tests, and the International Baccalaureate exams are all considered part of Connecticut's state education program. Therefore, coordinators for these projects (e.g. school counselors) may be granted access to students' FRPM eligibility status to ensure that students can receive fee waivers in these programs. Coordinators/counselors requesting access to FRPM eligibility data must complete the [Disclosure Release Request for Free or Reduced Eligibility Status of Students in the School Nutrition Programs](#) to ensure they have an understanding of the USDA regulations and do not use this information for other purposes. The completed form must be reviewed and approved by the district or school's determining official (i.e., the person who processes FRPM applications). Once approved, the determining official can provide the coordinator/counselor with the FRPM eligibility status for the applicable students.

The process for obtaining fee waivers for eligible students for the College Board's Advanced Placement test has not changed. For 2025 Advanced Placement® (AP) testing, AP coordinators must order tests for students by **November 15, 2024**. This is the deadline to submit exam orders for all full-year and first-semester AP courses, and exam only sections. The late [order fee](#) applies for exams ordered after this date. A [fee](#) also applies for exams cancelled after this date. Please visit the [College Board's AP Central](#) for more information.

The CSDE and College Board will cover the entire cost of the **2025 AP** exam fees for all students from low-income families who attend public school in Connecticut. The AP coordinators will indicate in the AP Registration and Ordering (APRO) site a student's low-income status. The CSDE will be directly billed for the cost of exams for students from low-income families as long as the AP coordinator indicates this in the APRO. **Since the AP, PSAT, and SAT are considered part of a CSDE State Educational Program, the AP, PSAT, and SAT coordinator can be given access to a student's income eligibility status.**

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Please note that once the AP, PSAT, or SAT coordinator/counselors requesting access to FRPM eligibility data must complete the [Disclosure Release Request for Free or Reduced Eligibility Status of Students in the School Nutrition Programs](#) to ensure they have an understanding of the USDA regulations and do not use this information for other purposes. The completed form must be reviewed and approved by the district or school's determining official (i.e., the person who processes FRPM applications). Once approved, the determining official can provide the coordinator/counselor with the FRPM eligibility status for the applicable students.

The deadline for the AP coordinator to indicate in APRO students who are eligible for the fee waiver is **April 30, 2025**. [Learn more about AP Exam fee reductions](#).

Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance for the School Nutrition Programs: School Year 2024-25

The CSDE's recently updated the previous *Menu Planning Guide for the School Nutrition Programs* to a new series of five separate guides, which are available on the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guidance for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) webpage. These guides provide comprehensive information and resources to assist school food authorities (SFAs) with meeting the USDA meal patterns and meal service requirements for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP.

- Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program
- Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Crediting Guide for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Guide to Menu Documentation for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Guide to the Meal Service Requirements for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

These guides are based on current USDA regulations and policy and Connecticut statutes and regulations and apply to school year 2024-25. They include updated information to reflect the changes required by the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

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New CSDE Resource: Buy American Requirement for the School Nutrition Programs

The CSDE's new resource, [Buy American Requirement for the School Nutrition Programs](#), summarizes the Buy American requirement under the federal regulations for the NSLP (7 CFR 210.21 (d)) and SBP (7 CFR 220.16 (d)), and the requirements of the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

New Foods Available in the USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

New yield data is available in the Interactive Web-based Tool and Mobile App of the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#). The new items include foods identified as traditional Indigenous foods in Tribal communities: Huckleberries, bison, canned steelhead trout, halibut, walleye, white perch, and whitefish.

Updated USDA Resource: Team Nutrition's Serving School Meals to Preschoolers training worksheet

The USDA has updated the English and Spanish version of Team Nutrition's Serving School Meals to Preschoolers training worksheet to be consistent with the final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). This four-page worksheet assists sponsors of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program with planning menus that meet the preschool meal pattern. T

- English: [Serving School Meals to Preschoolers](#)
 - Spanish: [Servir comidas escolares a niños preescolares](#)
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Resource Roundup: New Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Section on CSDE's Farm to School Webpage

Guidance on the Connecticut LFSIP and Federal LFSIP is now located on the CSDE's [Farm to School](#) webpage. Resources include implementation guidance and a [comparison chart of the state and federal programs](#).

Good to Know

September is National Food Safety Education Month

National Food Safety Education Month is a great time to refocus on preventing foodborne illness, explore new food safety resources, and improve food safety knowledge. The FNS Food Safety Team is continuing its commitment to champion safe school meals and support those who prepare and serve them every day through new in-person and virtual training programs, continuing education webinars, and new food safety resources for child nutrition programs.

The Institute of Child Nutrition's [2024 Back to School Toolbox](#) contains food safety trainings and resources like "Food Allergies in School Nutrition Programs", "Introduction to HACCP for SNPs", food safety mini-posters, hand-washing training videos, and more. For more food safety resources, visit the USDA's [Food Safety](#) website.

Webinar from the Institute of Child Nutrition's Produce Safety University (PSU): Hidden in Plain Sight: Navigating Food Allergens, Intolerance, and Labeling Practices: September 25, 2024

This webinar will delve into the various food allergens and intolerances beyond the Top 9 that affect children and adults today. Some of them can even be fruits and vegetables. The panelists will also address the recent challenges posed by the addition of sesame to foods that traditionally did not contain it, which has significant implications for school food service programs. In this webinar, we will discuss strategies for managing lesser-known food allergens and intolerances and explore industry labeling practices that impact school food programs. This webinar will provide valuable information and practical solutions to help navigate these challenges.

- Date and time: September 25, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
- Registration: [Registration link](#)

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's [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_09_11_2024.pdf.

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1400 Independence Avenue, SW
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2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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