

## The School Lunch Tray: December 18, 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**

- Save the Date: CSDE 2025-26 Annual Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Request for Proposals (RFP) Process Training for SFAs, January 30, 2025
- Updates to What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2024-25: Modules 8 and 10
- Updated CSDE Resource: Buy American Requirement for the School Nutrition Programs
- Updated CSDE Buy American Justification Form for the School Nutrition Programs
- New CSDE Training Module: Buy American Requirement for the School Nutrition Programs
- Reminder About Marketing Foods and Beverages in Schools
- Resource Roundup: Updated Buy American Requirement section of the CSDE's Procurement for School Nutrition Programs webpage

### **Good to Know**

- New Recipes Available in the Child Nutrition Recipe Box (CNRB)
- Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Webinar: A Deep Dive into Community Eligibility in the 2023–2024 School Year, December 19, 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.



## Need to Know

### **Save the Date: CSDE 2025-26 Annual Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Request for Proposals (RFP) Process Training for SFAs, January 30, 2025**

The CSDE will conduct the annual FSMC RFP Process training on Thursday, January 30, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams. This training is mandatory for all SFA staff (e.g., business officials, administrative staff, town/city procurement specialists) involved specifically in the procurement of a new FSMC contract. Registration information will be provided in the next School Lunch Tray. The CSDE will announce an additional training for FSMC staff only later.

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### **Updates to What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2024-25: Modules 8 and 10**

The CSDE is in the process of updating [What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) for school year 2024-25, to reflect the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), new content and resources, updated links, and the CSDE's new logo.

The updates are occurring in stages. The two What's in a Meal modules below are available now on the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. The CSDE will notify school food authorities as additional modules are released.

- Module 8: Meats/Meats Alternates Component
- Module 10: Vegetables Component

All updated modules indicate "Updated for School Year 2024-25" in the description.

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### **Updated CSDE Resource: Buy American Requirement for the School Nutrition Programs**

An updated version (December 2024) of the CSDE's [Buy American Requirement for the School Nutrition Programs](#) is available. This document provides guidance on the USDA's Buy American requirement for the school nutrition programs, as required by the regulations for the school nutrition programs ([7 CFR 210.21 \(d\)](#) and [7 CFR 220.16 \(d\)](#)), and the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

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### Updated CSDE Buy American Justification Form for the School Nutrition Programs

An updated version (December 2024) of the CSDE's [Buy American Justification Form for the School Nutrition Programs](#) is available. This form reflects the requirements of the NSLP and SBP regulations, and the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). SFAs must complete this form when both conditions below apply.

1. Funds from the [nonprofit school food service account \(NSFSA\)](#) are used to purchase non-domestic food products.
2. The non-domestic food product is not listed on the [Federal Acquisitions Regulations \(FAR\) Non-available Articles List \(FAR 25.104\)](#) or competitive bids reveal the cost of the U.S. product is significantly higher than the non-domestic product.

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### New CSDE Training Module: Buy American Requirement for the School Nutrition Programs

The CSDE has a new 15-minute training module on the [Buy American Requirement for the School Nutrition Programs](#). This 15-minute module reviews the USDA's Buy American requirement for the school nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

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### Reminder About USDA Restrictions for Marketing Foods and Beverages in Schools

The USDA final rule, [Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the HHFKA of 2010](#), permits marketing on the school campus during the school day of **only** those foods and beverages that meet the USDA's [Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards](#) for competitive foods. **Note:** Public schools that participate in Healthy Food Certification (HFC) already meet Smart Snacks because the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) are stricter.

Local educational agencies are permitted to market foods and beverages that may be sold on the school campus during the school day, i.e., those foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks standards. Marketing of noncompliant foods and beverages is not permitted during the school day but may occur at events that happen after the end of the school day. For additional guidance, refer to Q2 and Q9 through Q19 of [USDA Memo SP 24-2017: Local School Wellness Policy: Guidance and Q&A](#).

### Resource Roundup: Updated Buy American Requirement section of the CSDE's Procurement for School Nutrition Programs webpage

The CSDE recently updated the "[Buy American Requirement](#)" section of the CSDE's Procurement for School Nutrition Programs webpage to include the new CSDE training module and a link to the FAR Non-available Articles List (FAR 25.104). This section also includes general guidance, the justification form for non-domestic products, and applicable USDA memos.

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### Good to Know

#### New Recipes Available in the Child Nutrition Recipe Box (CNRB)

The USDA recently announced the addition of fifteen new standardized recipes to the [Child Nutrition Recipe Box \(CNRB\)](#). This update includes seven revised favorites that align with the final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), as well as eight innovative new recipes to enhance breakfast and lunch offerings.

- The eight new recipes include Whole Wheat Pancakes, Cauliflower Rice, Chicken Salad, Griddle Corn Cakes, Breakfast Bowl, Taco Salad, Sweet Potato Hummus, and Quinoa Bowl.
- The seven revised recipes are Pumpkin Bread, Oatmeal Muffin Squares, Kati Kati Chicken, Jerk Fish Wrap, Orange Glazed Carrots, Orange Glazed Sweet Potatoes, and Vegetable Frittata.

These USDA Standardized Recipes are designed to provide appealing and practical menu options for the NSLP and SBP.

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#### Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Webinar: A Deep Dive into Community Eligibility in the 2023-2024 School Year, December 19, 2024

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a powerful tool in combatting childhood hunger by increasing students' access to healthy school meals. The CEP has been shown to strengthen food security, improve children's diet quality, and bolster school meal participation, all while reducing administrative and operational burdens for school nutrition departments.

The 2023-2024 school year saw significant increases in CEP adoption nationwide. Join the Food Research & Action Center for a 30-minute deep dive detailing the findings from their latest report, [Community Eligibility: The Key to Hunger-Free Schools — School Year 2023–2024](#).

- *Date and time:* Thursday, December 19, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
  - *Registration:* [Registration link](#)
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## The School Lunch Tray: December 18, 2024

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\\_12\\_18\\_2024.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2024/slt_12_18_2024.pdf).

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2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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