

The School Lunch Tray: February 19, 2025

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

- Reminder: Required Webinar on Rudd Center's New Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) Website, February 27, 2025- *USDA Triennial Assessment due 6/30/2025*

Need to Know

- Now Available: CSDE's List of Area Eligible Schools and List of Site Eligible Schools for School Year 2024-25
- CSDE Summer Meal Programs Training on Area Eligibility: Thursday, February 20, 2025
- Updated Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for School Year 2025-26
- Updated CSDE Webpage: Competitive Foods in Schools
- Posting of USDA Webinar on Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs
- Resource Roundup: Foundation for Fresh Produce Have a Plant Influence Toolkit: Seasonality

Good to Know

- None

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

Reminder: Required Webinar on Rudd Center's New Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellsAT) Website, February 27, 2025- USDA Triennial Assessment due 6/30/2025

On February 27, 2025, from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m., the University of Connecticut Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health will conduct a webinar on their new WellsAT website. Every NSLP sponsor is obligated to have someone attend.

As a reminder, the USDA's final rule, [Local School Wellness Policy \(LSWP\) Implementation Under the HRFKA of 2010](#), requires that each local LEA must complete an assessment of their LSWP at least once every three years. The second triennial assessment is due **June 30, 2025**, and is conducted using WellsAT.

This webinar will occur during the Table Talk time slot. Registration is not required. Please use the link below to join Table Talk on Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams meeting

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Meeting ID: 225 336 668 44

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Phone Conference ID: 920 756 855#

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Need to Know

Now Available: CSDE's List of Area Eligible Schools and List of Site Eligible Schools for School Year 2024-25

The CSDE's [List of Area Eligible Schools](#) and [List of Site Eligible Schools](#) (February 2025) include schools with at least 50 percent of children eligible for free and reduced-price meals in the USDA's school nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). These lists can be used to determine school eligibility to participate in the Summer Food Service Program, Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP, Afterschool Snack Program, and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. These lists are available on the CSDE's [Area Eligibility for Child](#)

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[Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. A Link to the USDA's [CACFP and SFSP Area Eligibility Mapper](#) is also available at the bottom of this webpage.

Area Eligibility for Summer Meals 2024: For questions about using school or census data to determine the eligibility of a potential Summer Meal Program site, please contact the CSDE's [Summer Food Service Program staff](#) and [Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\) of the NSLP staff](#).

CSDE Summer Meals Training on February 20, 2025: Area Eligibility and Rural Non-congregate Meal Service

The CSDE Summer Meals Team is kicking off planning for Summer 2025 with a two-part webinar training on **Thursday, February 20, 2025**.

- **Area Eligibility: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.:**
All Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP sponsors are required to attend
- **Rural Non-congregate Meal Service: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.:**
Guidance for sponsors planning to operate a rural non-congregate meal service in summer 2025.

Registration is not required. Join the Teams trainings using the link below:

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 257 292 443 91

Passcode: Yizq7A

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 860-840-2075,,834102498#](#) United States, Hartford

Phone Conference ID: 834 102 498#

Phone Conference ID: 920 756 855#

For questions about Summer Meal training, please contact caroline.cooke@ct.gov.

Updated Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for School Year 2025-26

The CNS for school year 2025-26 (July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026) are now available on the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) webpage. The state nutrition standards committee made three updates for consistency with the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). These changes reflect the new USDA added sugars limits for breakfast cereals and yogurt that take effect on July 1, 2025.

1. **CNS limit for added sugars in breakfast cereals (cold and cooked):** Effective July 1, 2025, the current CNS requirement for breakfast cereals changes from total sugars (no more than 35 percent of total sugars by weight and 15 grams of total sugars) to added sugars (no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce). The prohibition on nonnutritive sweeteners and sugar alcohols remains the same.
2. **CNS limit for added sugars in yogurt and pudding:** Effective July 1, 2025, the current CNS requirement for yogurt and pudding changes from total sugars (no more than 4 grams of total sugars per ounce) to added sugars (no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces, i.e., no more than 2 grams per ounce) for consistency with the USDA final rule. The prohibition on nonnutritive sweeteners and sugar alcohols remains the same. Note: The CNS sugars limit is the same for pudding and yogurt. The state nutrition standards committee adopted the same sugar limit for pudding to maintain the consistency of one standard for this CNS category and be consistent with the USDA final rule to reduce added sugars. The prohibition on nonnutritive sweeteners and sugar alcohols remains the same.
3. **CNS limit for added sugars in smoothies (made with low-fat yogurt and fruits/vegetables/100 percent juice):** Effective July 1, 2025, the current CNS sugars limits for smoothies changes from total sugars (no more than 4 grams of total sugars per ounce) to added sugars (no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces, i.e., no more than 2 grams per ounce) for consistency with the USDA final rule. The portion size limits (no more than 8 fluid ounces for elementary schools and 12 fluid ounces for middle and high schools) and prohibition on nonnutritive sweeteners and sugar alcohols remain the same.

The updated documents are posted on the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) webpage.

Updated CSDE Webpage: Competitive Foods in Schools

The CSDE's [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage has been updated for easier access to relevant information. In addition to the Overview, Contact, and Laws/Regulations, the left navigation bar topics now include separate sections for HFC Public Schools, Non-HFC Public Schools, and Private Schools and RCCIs. The Overview page contains links to resources that provide an overview of the requirements. The specific requirements and resources for each type of school are now available on their separate webpage.

Posting of USDA Webinar on Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) seeks public comments on [Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs](#), published December 26, 2024. The request for information was issued to obtain input to help inform future policymaking, guidance, and technical assistance related to grain-based desserts and high-protein yogurt crediting in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP). The public is invited to submit comments to www.regulations.gov through March 26, 2025.

FNS hosted an informational **Webinar for State Agencies, Local Operators, and the Public** on January 28, 2025. The [webinar recording](#) and [PDF of slides](#) are now available.

Additional Resources

- More information about the request for information can be found on the FNS website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-122624>
- Comments can be submitted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to [Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs](#) and follow the online instructions for submitting comments. For more information on submitting comments, refer to [Tips for Submitting Effective Comments](#).

Resource Roundup: Foundation for Fresh Produce Have a Plant Influence Toolkit: Seasonality

Seasonality of fresh fruits and vegetables is consistently one of the top searched topics online and top performing topics on social media. The Foundation for Fresh Produce's toolkit, [Have a Plant Influence Toolkit: Seasonality](#), identifies what is in season by region and includes sample social media posts with photos and turnkey ideas for activations in retail, foodservice, online and more.

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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/2025/slt_02_19_2025.pdf.

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
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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