

## The School Lunch Tray: March 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

- None

### Need to Know

- Operational Memorandum No. 04-25, State Transition Assistance for Reduced-price (STAR) Funds for School Year 2024-25 Attestation Addendum (Due April 4, 2025)
- New CSDE Resource: Considerations for Farm to School Forward Contracting
- USDA Resource: Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs
- Updates to What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2024-25: Module 12 Whole Grain-Rich Requirement
- Reminder: Comment Period Closes March 26, 2025, for USDA's Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs
- University of Connecticut Rudd Center Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Academy, May 21, 2025: Registration Deadline is April 30, 2025
- Resource Roundup: Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in School Lunch and Breakfast Menus for Grades K-12

### 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.

## Need to Know

### **Operational Memorandum No. 04-25, State Transition Assistance for Reduced-price (STAR) Funds for School Year 2024-25 Attestation Addendum (Due April 4, 2025)**

[Operational Memorandum No. 04-25](#), State Transition Assistance for Reduced-price (STAR) Funds for School Year 2024-25 Attestation Addendum (**Due April 4, 2025**) outlines additional information needed from school food authorities (SFA) that submitted a STAR Funds attestation statement and are eligible to receive STAR Funds in school year 2024-25.

As a condition of receipt of federal assistance from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) requirements, SFAs that submitted a STAR Funds Attestation to the CSDE in August 2024 are required to submit the STAR Funds SY 2024-25 Attestation Addendum. The Addendum contains the two parts below.

1. U.S. Department of the Treasury Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund Award Terms and Conditions
2. Assurance of Compliance with Civil Rights Requirements

The addendum must be completed by the SFA's authorized signer 1 or 2, as approved on the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (not the food service director or representative from the food service management company). **Email the scanned signed addendum by April 4, 2025, to Susan Alston at [susan.alston@ct.gov](mailto:susan.alston@ct.gov).**

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### **New CSDE Resource: Considerations for Farm to School Forward Contracting**

The CSDE has a new resource, [Considerations for Farm to School Forward Contracting](#), that provides guidance to SFAs on the considerations for implementing farm-to-school forward contracts in the USDA school nutrition programs. SFAs that have received Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Phase 1 and/ or Phase 2 funds, with a remaining balance, are encouraged to explore the feasibility of forward contracting to ensure funds are expended before the deadline of April 30, 2025. For a list of LFSIP SFAs, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Local Food for Schools Incentive Program Phase 1 and Phase 2: Remaining Balance for School Food Authorities](#). For assistance with Farm to School, SFAs may contact their [Regional Farm to School Coordinator](#).

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### **USDA Resource: Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs**

The USDA's guide, [Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs](#), provides an overview of federal procurement principles and covers a variety of topics related to sourcing and purchasing local foods for state agencies and child nutrition program operators. This guide highlights the variety of ways schools can purchase local products while complying with federal procurement regulations. It

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also features examples of how to target local foods when conducting formal and informal procurements to use the geographic preference option, and using the USDA Foods and DoD Fresh Programs to enhance local purchasing.

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### Updates to What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2024-25: Module 12 Whole Grain-Rich Requirement

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. Module 12: Whole Grain-rich (WGR) is now available on the CSDE's [Meal Pattern Training for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

This module reviews the weekly WGR requirement and the WGR criteria for the grains component. Topics include the WGR criteria for different types of grains (commercial grain products, commercial combination foods, ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, and grain foods made from scratch), the limit for noncreditable grains and when to ignore noncreditable grains, how to determine if commercial grain products and standardized recipes are WGR, the required WGR documentation for commercial grain products, and when a PFS is required for WGR foods. This module also includes a knowledge check on how to determine if commercial grain foods meet the WGR criteria and describes resources for guidance and training on the WGR criteria.

The What's in a Meal updates are occurring in stages. The CSDE will notify SFAs as additional modules are released. All updated modules indicate "Updated for School Year 2024-25" in the description.

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### Reminder: Comment Period Closes March 26, 2025, for USDA's Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs

The comment period for the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) [Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs](#) closes on March 26, 2025. The request for information was published December 26, 2024, 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](http://www.regulations.gov) through March 26, 2025. 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

### Additional Resources

- [USDA Webinar: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs](#), January 28, 2025

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- [PDF of slides](#)
  - [Request for Information: Grain-Based Desserts and High-Protein Yogurt Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs](#)
  - [Tips for Submitting Effective Comments](#)
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### **University of Connecticut Rudd Center Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Academy, May 21, 2025: Registration Deadline is April 30, 2025**

Are you part of a district wellness team in Connecticut? Join the Rudd Center for the third annual WSCC Academy, a day of free professional development to be held on May 21, 2025, at UConn Hartford. Select one of two professional learning tracks to meet your team's needs:

- Track A: Finalizing Triennial Wellness Assessments is designed for teams who have started their [LSWP triennial assessment](#) and want support generating their results.
- Track B: High-Quality Wellness Action Planning is designed for teams who have completed their LSWP triennial assessment and want support using their results to create high-quality action plans to strengthen the school health environment.

The WSCC Academy is hosted by the CT WSCC Partnership. Visit the [WSCC Academy website](#) for more information. [Registration](#) is open until April 30, 2025.

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### **Resource Roundup: Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in School Lunch and Breakfast Menus for Grades K-12**

As a reminder, at least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered to grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must be whole grain-rich (WGR). An updated version (dated March 2025) of the CSDE's Excel tool, *Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in School Lunch and Breakfast Menus for Grades K-12*, is now available. School food authorities (SFAs) may use this worksheet to calculate the percentage of WGR menu items in the weekly lunch or breakfast menu. This tool may be accessed through the CSDE's [Instructions and Guidance for the Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in School Lunch and Breakfast Menus for Grades K-12](#).

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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\\_03\\_19\\_2025.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2025/slt_03_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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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