

The School Lunch Tray: May 7, 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

- Final Reminder: CSDE Summer Meal Program Interest Survey Due May 8, 2025
- CSDE Summer Meals Training on May 8, 2025
- Final Reminder: Next CSDE Office Hour for Triennial Assessment Using the WellSAT Website: Monday, May 12, 2025
- Reminder: Save the Date for CSDE Training Session: Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern Updates for School Year 2025-26 and ASP Operational Requirements, May 15, 2025

Need to Know

- Updated List of Acceptable Food and Beverages Dated May 7, 2025
- Recording Available for CSDE Webinar from May 1, 2025: Overview of the Final Rule Meal Pattern Changes for the School Nutrition Programs
- Recording Available for CSDE's Summer EBT Information Session on May 5, 2025
- Resource Roundup: Summary of Provisions in the Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Final Rule

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.

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Action Items

Final Reminder: CSDE Summer Meal Program Interest Survey Due May 8, 2025

The CSDE sent a link this week to program year 2024 sponsors of the Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the National School Lunch Program regarding the Summer Meal Program Interest Survey. The purpose of the survey is to identify school districts interested in operating a Summer Meal Program in summer 2025.

Please reach out to your [Summer Meal Program Technical Assistance County Contact](#) immediately if you did not receive the survey link and your district is considering operating a Summer Meal Program in summer 2025. The survey and a spreadsheet of proposed Summer Meal sites must be submitted to the CSDE by May 8, 2025.

CSDE Summer Meals Training on May 8, 2025: USDA Foods, Local Foods, Food Safety

The CSDE is conducting an annual training session on USDA Foods, Local Foods, and Food Safety for potential sponsors of the SSO and SFSP. This training will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2025, from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. All school districts considering operating SSO or SFSP in summer 2025 should attend.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 245 531 129 170

Passcode: 8fg325Tj

Dial in by phone

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Phone conference ID: 962 154 033#

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

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Final Reminder: Next CSDE Office Hour for Triennial Assessment Using the WellSAT Website: Monday, May 12, 2025

The next CSDE office hour on conducting the school wellness policy Triennial Assessment using the WellSAT website will be held on May 12, 2025, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 218 248 029 265 7

Passcode: WR9Mo3ca

Dial in by phone

[+1 860-840-2075,,295325641#](#) United States, Hartford

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Phone conference ID: 295 325 641#

As a reminder, the USDA's final rule, [Local School Wellness Policy \(LSWP\) Implementation Under the HHFKA of 2010](#), requires that each local educational agency (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.

Visit the "[Triennial Assessments](#)" section of the CSDE's School Wellness Policies webpage for many resources to assist Connecticut sponsors with navigating the Local School Wellness Policy and Triennial Assessment requirements. For questions, please contact Fionnula Brown at fionnuala.brown@ct.gov.

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Reminder: Save the Date for CSDE Training Session: Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern Updates for School Year 2025-26 and ASP Operational Requirements, May 15, 2025

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), makes significant changes to the current ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 by aligning it with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) snack meal pattern for children. The first part of this session will review the new ASP meal pattern requirements for grades K-12 and highlight resources to assist SFAs with implementation. The second part of this session will discuss the USDA's operational requirements for the ASP.

- **Date and time:** Thursday, May 15, 2025, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration is not required. Use the Teams link below to attend.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 225 336 668 44

Passcode: muTuBy

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Need to Know

Updated List of Acceptable Food and Beverages Dated May 7, 2025

Updated lists of foods that comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) and beverages that comply with the state beverage statute are now available on the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage.

- **New products** on the lists are indicated by pink highlighting on the manufacturer and product name.
- Items that have been **added or deleted** since the last update are listed on the CSDE's [Summary of Updates to Approved Food and Beverages](#). **Note:** This summary includes only the changes since the last update; it is not a complete listing of all allowable products. For the complete list, visit the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage.

Healthy Food Certification (HFC) schools must check that commercial foods and beverages are listed before they are sold to students. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [How to Evaluate Commercial Food Products for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#), and visit the "[Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance](#)" section of the CSDE's CNS webpage.

Note: Effective July 1, 2025, the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards for school year 2025-26](#) require new limits for added sugars for breakfast cereals, yogurt, pudding, and smoothies made with low-fat yogurt and fruits/vegetables/100 percent juice, based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). In addition, the USDA final rule requires limits for added sugars in flavored milk effective July 1, 2025. Products that exceed the added sugars limits are indicated in red with pink shading on the following lists:

- List 5 (breakfast cereals);
- List 7 (yogurt and pudding);
- List 9 (smoothies made with low-fat yogurt and fruits/vegetables/100 percent juice); and
- List 16 (milk).

These products will be removed as of June 30, 2025. Note that this information may change, as manufacturers reformulate their products. Future updates to the List of Acceptable Food and Beverages will reflect any changes submitted to the CSDE.

Recording Available for CSDE Webinar on May 1, 2025: Overview of the Final Rule Meal Pattern Changes for the School Nutrition Programs

The recording of the CSDE's May 1, 2025, webinar, Overview of the Final Rule Meal Pattern Changes for the School Nutrition Programs, is available in the "[Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage. Scroll down to "Training on the Meal Pattern Changes."

This webinar provides an overview of the current and upcoming meal pattern changes for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool, as required by the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). Resources to assist SFAs with implementation are also identified.

Recording Available for CSDE's Summer EBT Information Session on May 5, 2025

The recording of the CSDE's May 5, 2025, information session about the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) program is available in the "[Summer EBT](#)" section of the CSDE's Current School Year Operational Updates for School Nutrition Programs webpage. This session provides general information, shares resources, and walks through new developments that may impact students' eligibility for free or reduced-priced school meals.

Resource Roundup: Summary of Provisions in the Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Final Rule

The USDA's resource, [Summary of Provisions in the Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Final Rule](#), describes the changes required by the final rule. Some changes began with the current school year and others begin with school year 2025-26 (effective July 1, 2025). Changes to the weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for the NSLP and SBP meal pattern for grades K-12 begin with school year 2027-28.

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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_05_07_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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