

## The School Lunch Tray: June 25, 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: 2025-26 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement: Due July 1, 2025
- Final Reminder: 2025-26 Full-service Interschool Agreements Due July 1, 2025
- Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of April, May, and June 2025 Purchases Due July 1, 2025

### Need to Know

- Table Talk on Break Until New School Year Begins
- Updated Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Handbook for School Year 2025-26
- Updated ASP Forms for School Year 2025-26
- Updated ASP Sample Menus for School Year 2025-26
- Updated Menu Planning Guidance Series for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2025-26
- Farm to School Trainings Offered by Regional Farm to School Coordinators for Food Service Staff Back to School Training Days
- Resource Roundup: CSDE's Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs Webpage

### 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

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#### Final Reminder: 2025-26 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement: Due July 1, 2025

All public school sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must submit the 2025-26 HFC Statement and upload their final board-approved minutes by July 1, 2025, in the CSDE's [Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CNP System). Please review the important information below.

- **Only authorized signers 1 or 2 can submit the HFC Statement:** The HFC Statement must be completed, certified, and submitted by the district's authorized signer 1 or 2. These are the only two individuals who can submit the HFC Statement.
  - **Enroll district in the 2025-26 application process before beginning HFC Statement:** The district must enroll in the 2025-26 application process for the school nutrition programs before the 2025-26 HFC Statement can be accessed. For guidance on how to enroll the district, refer to the CSDE's [Instructions for Enrolling in the Annual Application Process for the School Nutrition Programs](#). If the authorized signer cannot access the HFC Statement in the CNP System, this means the district has not yet enrolled.
  - **Instructions for submitting the HFC Statement:** Authorized signer 1 or 2 completes the HFC Statement in the CSDE's Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Please read the CSDE's [Instructions for Submitting Connecticut's Healthy Food Certification Statement for School Year 2025-26](#) before entering the CNP System.
  - **Complete the HFC module only:** Do not begin the application process to participate in the school nutrition programs for school year 2025-26. The CSDE will notify sponsors when it is time to start the online application process for school nutrition programs.
  - **Guidance on HFC application requirements:** The HFC application requirements are summarized in the "[Annual HFC Application](#)" section of the HFC webpage and CSDE [Operational Memorandum No. 03-25](#). For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's 21-minute training module, [Completing the Application Process for Healthy Food Certification](#).
  - **Questions:** Contact Susan Fiore at [susan.fiore@ct.gov](mailto:susan.fiore@ct.gov).
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### Final Reminder: 2025-26 Full-service Interschool Agreements Due July 1, 2025

Sponsors that vend or satellite meals to another district are required to submit and receive approval of an annual interschool agreement to the CSDE. Full-service Interschool Agreements for schools that choose the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification (HFC) must be submitted to the CSDE by **July 1, 2025**, to be eligible for HFC for school year 2025-26. For guidance on submitting the interschool agreements, refer to [Operational Memorandum No. 07:25 Interschool Agreements for School Year 2025-26](#).

The interschool agreement forms are available under “I” on the CSDE’s [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. This form must be signed by the authorized representative for the providing sponsor and the recipient site.

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### Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Reporting Requirements: Report of April, May, and June 2025 Purchases Due July 1, 2025

Districts that would like to receive reimbursement from their LFSIP funds allocation for purchases of locally grown or produced foods for the months of **April, May, and June 2025** must submit the [Federal Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program \(LFSIP\) Reimbursement Request Form \(Phase 1&2\)](#). Purchases made in **April, May, and June 2025** must be reported on the form by **Tuesday, July 1, 2025**. As a reminder, the following items are not allowed for reimbursement: fluid milk; baked goods including bread and rolls; or items that cannot be attributed to a specific farm or producer. For more information, visit the “[Local Foods for Schools](#)” section of the CSDE’s Farm to School webpage.

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## Need to Know

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### Table Talk on Break Until New School Year Begins

The CSDE's Table Talk webinars are on break until the new school year. Table Talk will likely resume in late fall or early winter (December or January), depending on the CSDE's fall training schedule for the school nutrition programs. The time slot for future CSDE training and Table Talk webinars will continue to be Thursday afternoons from 2:00-3:00 p.m.

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### Updated Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Handbook for School Year 2025-26

The updated [Afterschool Snack Program Handbook](#) for school year 2025-26 (dated June 2025) is now available. This handbook reflects the changes implemented by the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) effective July 1, 2025, and includes updated content, resources, and links.

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### Updated ASP Forms for School Year 2025-26

Updated ASP forms for school year 2025-26 (dated June 2025) are available in the "[Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage. These forms include the ASP menu forms, the ASP On-site Monitoring Form, production records, snack count forms for site/area eligible schools, and snack count forms for schools that are not site/area eligible.

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### Updated ASP Sample Menus for School Year 2025-26

Updated sample snack menus grades K-12 and preschool for school year 2025-26 (dated June 2025) are available in the "[Menu Planning](#)" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage or the direct links below.

- [Sample ASP Preschool Menu for Ages 3-5](#)
  - [Sample ASP Menu for Grades K-12](#)
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### Updated Menu Planning Guidance Series for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2025-26

Updated versions (dated June 2025) of four of the guides in the CSDE's menu planning guidance series for grades K-12 are available for school year 2025-25 on the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guidance for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) webpage. The updates reflect the meal pattern changes implemented by the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) effective July 1, 2025, and include updated content, resources, and links.

The updated guides below are available. **Note:** The new Crediting Guide for the School Nutrition Programs is still under revision and will be coming soon.

- Guide to the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in 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
  - Guide to Menu Documentation for the School Nutrition Programs (*applies to the meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*)
  - Guide to Meal Service Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
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### **Farm to School Trainings Offered by Regional Farm to School Coordinators for Food Service Staff Back to School Training Days**

Regional Farm to School Coordinators, sponsored by the CSDE and UConn Extension, are offering 60-minute in person training tailored for school food service staff in August 2025. Each training course is interactive in nature and participants will gain new skills in featuring more local food in their cafeterias. This training is offered at no cost to districts and will count toward meeting professional standard requirements. There are two training options:

- **Option 1 –Easy Local Food Preparation:** Food service staff will learn how to utilize and prepare local food easily and effectively.
- **Option 2 –Showcasing Local Food on the Line:** Food service staff will come away with engaging strategies to present and market local food to students in the cafeteria.

Interested SFAs should contact [abigail.dubois@uconn.edu](mailto:abigail.dubois@uconn.edu) as soon as possible to arrange for scheduling. Given anticipated high demand, this training is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. This training will be available during the rest of the school year based on interest and availability.

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### **Resource Roundup: CSDE's Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs Webpage**

The CSDE's [Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage provides links to guides on a variety of topics, including food safety, menu planning and meal patterns, program administration, school wellness, and special diets.

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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\\_06\\_25\\_2025.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2025/slt_06_25_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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