

The School Lunch Tray: October 22, 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: Food Safety Inspection Report for School Year 2024-25 Due October 31, 2025

Need to Know

- CT Grown for CT Kids Week Showcased Farm to School Around the State 
- Resource Roundup: School Nutrition Programs User IDs and Passwords for Accessing Connecticut's Online Application and Claiming System

Good to Know

- Announcing FoodCorps' New Fellowship for School Food Leaders: Applications Open November 10, 2025

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

Reminder: Food Safety Inspection Report for School Year 2024-25 Due October 31, 2025

The Food Safety Inspection Report for school year (SY) 2024-25 must be completed in the [Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CNP System) by October 31, 2025

As required in section 9(h) of the NSLA, 42 U.S.C. 1758(h), at least twice each year, schools must obtain a food safety inspection conducted by a state or local agency responsible for such inspections. As part of that requirement, the CSDE must annually collect the total number of inspections conducted at each school food authority (SFA) and report the number to the Food and Nutrition Services by November 15, 2025. The food safety inspections requirement applies to all food preparation-service sites and service-only sites.

The Food Safety Inspection Report for SY 2024-25 must be completed in the CNP System at the same time the sponsor completes and submits the annual sponsor application, but no later than October 31, 2025. Guidance begins on page 31 of the Updating the Sponsor Application for School Nutrition Programs guide. The Food Safety Inspection Report can be completed by anyone who has access to the CNP System.

Food safety inspections for facilities not under the jurisdiction of the local or state health department: Some schools or facilities (such as schools or group homes operated by the Department of Children and Families) do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Health (DPH) and therefore, will not be inspected by DPH or the local health department. **However, food safety inspections conducted by the state agency that licenses the facility qualify toward meeting the requirement of two food safety inspections annually.**

While the CSDE recognizes that there may be difficulty in obtaining the two food safety inspections, SFAs are responsible for requesting such inspections and documenting such efforts. When two health inspections are not conducted, each sponsor is responsible for requesting the inspections and documenting these efforts (refer to the CSDE's [Sample Letter for Food Safety Health Inspection for the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#)).

Need to Know

CT Grown for CT Kids Week Showcased Farm to School Around the State



The CSDE would like to thank everyone who participated in CT Grown for CT Kids Week. More than 70 events were registered across the state, with many additional unregistered activities. Schools hosted taste tests, farmers markets, farm days, farmer presentations, cooking classes, school garden events, and more. Many schools highlighted Connecticut-grown foods on their menus. State officials, legislators, local press, administrators, and members of boards of education attended these events, while districts and Farm to School partners shared their celebrations on social media. Connecticut schools demonstrated in force how vital Farm to School is for Connecticut's students, programs, and economy.

Hosting these events requires significant effort, and the CSDE deeply appreciates the dedication and commitment of SFAs who work every day to serve students healthy, nutritious, delicious, and local meals.

- Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz, CSDE Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, and Board of Education members Karen Brodeur and Eileen Baker at **Old Saybrook Public Schools' Farm Day**



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- Farmers from Pebble Brook Maple Farm and Sub Edge Farm present to students at **Cromwell Public Schools**



- Hartford Public Schools** show off their locally grown sofrito



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- **New Haven Public Schools** taste tests Seacoast Farm mushrooms



Updated CSDE Comparison Charts for the School Nutrition Programs for SY 2025-26

The CSDE's updated comparison charts below for SY 2025-26 (dated October 2025) reflect the changes implemented by the USDA final rule, effective July 1, 2025. These charts compare the meal pattern requirements for the preschool meal patterns (ages 1-5) and the meal patterns for grades K-12.

- [Comparison of Lunch and Breakfast Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool in the School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Comparison of Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\) Meal Pattern Requirements for Grades K-12 and Preschool](#)

They are available on the CSDE's [Meal Patterns Preschoolers School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Resource Roundup: School Nutrition Programs User IDs and Passwords for Accessing Connecticut's Online Application and Claiming System

The CSDE's document, [School Nutrition Programs User IDs and Passwords for Accessing Connecticut's Online Application and Claiming System](#), outlines the procedures for sponsors of the school nutrition programs regarding access rights to the CSDE's Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Sponsors are reminded of important security measures that must be in place. These include not sharing login ID and passwords and the separation of duties.

Good to Know

Announcing FoodCorps' New Fellowship for School Food Leaders: Applications Open November 10, 2025

FoodCorps announces the launch of the FoodCorps Kindred Fellowship, a seven-month program designed to empower school food leaders to drive meaningful change in their school communities. The Kindred Fellowship is a cohort-based program that equips 20-30 school food leaders with the skills and knowledge to initiate tangible improvement in school food systems. Through a curriculum rooted in the School Food Leadership (SFL) Framework, fellows will engage in hands-on projects, policy advocacy, and community partnerships to create nourishing, student-driven, and sustainable school meal programs.

- **Deadline:** Applications open November 10, 2025, and are due December 8, 2025.
 - **Sign up to be notified when applications open and learn more:** <https://foodcorps.org/kindred-fellowship/>
 - **Webinar for more information:** [Find Your Path: A Webinar to Explore FoodCorps Leadership Development Programs](#), November 13, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.
 - **Meet with FoodCorps Team:** Questions? [Sign up for a meeting](#) with the FoodCorps recruitment team or email apply@foodcorps.org
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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_10_22_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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