

The School Lunch Tray: January 14, 2026


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. 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

- CSDE Launches CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program 
- Reminder: Save the Date: Table Talk Will Resume on Thursday, January 22, 2026
- Onsite Monitoring for School Year 2025-26 Must be Completed by February 1, 2026

Need to Know

- None

Good to Know

- None

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Action Items

CSDE Launches CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program



The CSDE is pleased to announce the launch of the CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program. This program provides funding to eligible USDA Child Nutrition Program sponsors to support the purchase of locally and regionally sourced unprocessed and minimally processed foods, strengthening local agriculture while supporting nutritious meals statewide. For more information, refer to [Operational Memorandum No. 2-26: CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program](#) and the resources below.

- [CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program Questions and Answers](#)
- [CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program School Year 2025-26 Allocations for Eligible School Food Authorities](#)

These resources are available in the [CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program](#) section of the CSDE's CT Fresh Ed website.

Reminder: Save the Date: Table Talk Will Resume on Thursday, January 22, 2026

The first Table Talk of 2026 will be held on Thursday, January 22, 2026, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Use the Teams link below to join.

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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Or call in (audio only)

[+1 860-840-2075,,920756855#](#) United States, Hartford

Phone Conference ID: 920 756 855#

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Onsite Monitoring for School Year 2025-26 Must be Completed by February 1, 2026

The onsite monitoring requirements for school year 2025-26 the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), and Food Service Management Company (FSMC) operations must be completed by **February 1, 2026**. All monitoring forms are available under "[Monitoring Forms](#)" on the CSDE's Forms for School Nutrition Programs webpage, and the applicable sections of each webpage indicated below.

Onsite Monitoring of the NSLP and SBP

Section 7 CFR 210.8(a)(1) requires that each school food authority (SFA) with more than one school must perform no less than one on-site review of the NSLP's and SBP's counting and claiming system, including the general areas of review for each school under its jurisdiction. While all schools participating in the NSLP must be reviewed annually, a minimum of 50 percent of schools operating the SBP must be monitored annually, with every SBP school monitored at least once every two years.

All sites being claimed for federal reimbursement must be included in the onsite review process (i.e., schools that participate via an interschool agreement with another SFA). The annual on-site reviews must take place **prior to February 1** of each school year. If the review discloses problems with a school's meal counting and claiming procedures or general review areas, the SFA must ensure that the school implements corrective action, which includes conducting a follow-up on-site review within 45 days of the original review, to determine that the corrective action resolved the problems.

Onsite monitoring forms for the NSLP ([On-site School Review Checklist for the NSLP](#)) and SBP ([On-site School Review Checklist for the SBP](#)) are available in the "[Monitoring Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs website.

Onsite Monitoring of the ASP

Sponsors that participate in the ASP must review each ASP a minimum of two times each year. The reviews must assess each site's compliance with the appropriate USDA meal pattern (grades K-12 and preschoolers) and counting and claiming procedures.

- **First review:** The SFA must complete the first review within the first four weeks of ASP program operation each school year.
- **Second review:** The SFA must complete a second review sometime during the remainder of the time that the ASP is in operation.

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The SFA must keep signed and dated copies of the completed on-site monitoring forms on file, including detailed findings and corrective action. If problems are found during the reviews, the SFA must assign corrective action and conduct at least one follow-up review to ensure that corrective action has been implemented. The CSDE's [ASP Onsite Monitoring Form](#) is available under "[Monitoring](#)" in the "Forms" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage.

Onsite Monitoring of FSMC Operations

Section 7 CFR 210.16(a)(3) requires sponsors that contract with a FSMC to monitor the food service operation through periodic on-site visits. SFAs must monitor each site at least twice per school year. The monitoring process must include completing the CSDE's monitoring form, or a form approved by CSDE. This requirement is in addition to the SBP/NSLP on-site monitoring requirement (mentioned above). SFAs may choose to complete one FSMC monitoring visit at the same time as the NSLP visit. Both FSMC on-site monitoring visits must be completed prior to the end of the school year. Completing the monitoring visits and forms is the SFA's responsibility.

For audit purposes, the SFA must keep signed and dated copies of the completed on-site monitoring forms on file, including detailed findings and corrective action. This document will be requested by the CSDE during a FSMC Monitoring Review or full Procurement Review. The CSDE's [School Food Authority/Food Service Management Company Monitoring Form](#) is available under "[Monitoring](#)" in the "Contracts in School Nutrition Programs" section of the CSDE's FSMC webpage.

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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_01_14_2026.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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