

# The School Lunch Tray: September 2, 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

- Reminder: CSDE Virtual Procurement 101 Training 4 Part Series (October 15, 22, and November 5, 12 2026): Register by Friday, October 9, 2026

## Need to Know

- Reminder: Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) Experiencing Milk Supply Shortages or Other Milk Emergencies
- CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program School Year 2026-27 Allocations for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) 
- New CT Grown for CT Kids Week Logo 

## Good to Know

- Reminder: Regional Farm to School Coordinators Available to Support Schools for CT Grown for CT Kids Week 
- September is National Fruits and Veggies Month
- School Nutrition Association's Cafeteria Circus National School Lunch Week Toolkit

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## Action Items

### Reminder: CSDE Virtual Procurement 101 Training 4 Part Series (October 15, 22, and November 5, 12 2026): Register by Friday, October 9, 2026

The CSDE's virtual four-day Procurement 101 Training provides a comprehensive overview of the procurement requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). Section 7 CFR 210.21(h) of the NSLP regulations requires that all school personnel (this may also include municipal procurement staff) with procurement responsibilities associated with the Child Nutrition Programs must attend annual procurement training. Attendance at all four sessions is required to complete the training. Registration is required.

- **Required attendance:** All school personnel with procurement responsibilities associated with the Child Nutrition Programs (may include municipal procurement staff)
- **Dates and times:** October 15 and 22; November 5 and 12, 2026, from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. each day
- **Registration:** Register by Friday, October 9, 2026, at [CSDE Procurement 101 Training Registration Link](#) or use the QR code below.



- **Questions:** Contact Andy Paul at [andrew.paul@ct.gov](mailto:andrew.paul@ct.gov) or Monica Pacheco at [monica.pacheco@ct.gov](mailto:monica.pacheco@ct.gov)

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## Need to Know

### **Reminder: Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) Experiencing Milk Supply Shortages or Other Milk Emergencies**

If there is an emergency with providing milk during the meal service for any Child Nutrition Programs, LEAs must notify and receive approval from the CSDE's Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs before providing reimbursable meals that do not offer milk. Under the current regulations for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) ([7 CFR 210.10\(d\)\(2\)](#)), School Breakfast Program (SBP) ([220.8\(d\)](#)), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) ([225.16\(f\)\(6\)](#)), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) ([226.20\(e\)\(1\)](#)), state agencies may allow LEAs experiencing emergencies involving milk to serve meals during an emergency period with an alternate form of fluid milk or without fluid milk.

While LEAs are expected to meet the fluid milk requirements to the greatest extent possible, there may be circumstances that prevent LEAs from offering milk as part of the reimbursable meal. Some examples include supply chain disruptions (such as disruptions that limit milk variety or affect serving size), milk delivery problems, or milk quality issues.

LEAs that are experiencing issues with offering milk should email their [school nutrition team member](#) and copy Shannon Yearwood, Bureau Chief, Child Nutrition Programs. The email should include the information below.

1. The reason milk cannot be served.
2. The schools impacted.
3. The meal service impacted (i.e., breakfast, lunch, or both).
4. The estimated timeframe that milk will not be served.

For questions, LEAs may contact their [school nutrition team member](#).

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## CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program School Year 2026-27 Allocations for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP)



The [CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program School Year 2026-27 Allocations: National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\) and School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#) are now available. Please review the information below regarding the sponsor's SY 2026-27 allocation and important program reminders and updates.

### SY 2026-27 Allocations

- All sponsors approved for SY 2025-26 are automatically approved for SY 2026-27, provided they continue to meet all program requirements.
- SY 2026-27 allocation funds are in addition to the sponsor's SY 2025-26 allocation and do not replace or reduce the prior-year allocation. All purchases using SY 2026-27 allocation funds must be made on or after July 1, 2026.
- SY 2025-26 allocation funds expire on September 30, 2026. Please plan accordingly to ensure any remaining funds are used before the expiration date and submit the [CT Fresh Ed Buy Local Program - Payment Request Form \(v.2\)](#).
- Currently, 20 sponsors have not yet signed up for the CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program. Sponsors that were not previously approved for the program must complete and submit the [CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program Application](#). Before submitting an application, please review the approved sponsor list ([List of CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program Sponsors](#)) to confirm if the sponsor is already approved.

### Upcoming Program Updates

The CSDE will be updating the [CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program Questions and Answers](#) to address frequently asked questions and provide additional clarification for sponsors. The CSDE will also be sharing an updated schedule for submitting Buy Local Program payment requests. Please look for these updates and refer to the revised schedule when planning and submitting the sponsor's payment requests.

The CSDE thanks sponsors for their continued participation and support of the CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program. Through this partnership, sponsors help increase students' access to Connecticut and regionally grown unprocessed and minimally processed foods while increasing demand for local products, strengthening Connecticut's farm economy, and helping expand the supply of local foods available for use in meals. For additional information or questions about the program, please reach out to the sponsor's [Regional Farm to School Coordinator](#).

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## New CT Grown for CT Kids Week Logo



The new look of the **CT Grown for CT Kids Week logo** brings together the colors, fonts, and icons of [CT Fresh Ed](#) and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's CT Grown logo, celebrating the collaboration that makes Farm to School possible across the state. The new logo was designed by Miranda Creatives, the team behind the CT Fresh Ed brand. The design captures the spirit of CT Grown for CT Kids Week, reflecting its focus on fresh, local, collaboration, and opportunities.

Schools, farmers, and community partners are encouraged to use the logo on newsletters, flyers, menus, social media, displays, websites, and more. The logo is available on the CSDE's [CT Grown for CT Kids Week](#) webpage download, share, and use on all communications.

The CSDE encourages schools to add their CT Grown for CT Kids Week activities to the [CT Grown for CT Kids Week Registration](#). These submissions provide valuable insight into the reach and impact of Farm to School initiatives across the state. Collectively, they demonstrate the continued growth and expanding impact of Farm to School in Connecticut.

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# The School Lunch Tray: September 2, 2026

## Good to Know

### Reminder: Regional Farm to School Coordinators Available to Support Schools for CT Grown for CT Kids Week



Welcome back to school! Each school food authority's (SFA's) [Regional Farm to School Coordinator](#) is ready to support Farm to School plans this busy season and throughout the school year. The team has been busy connecting with SFAs and kitchen staff across the state by leading professional development trainings, attending schoolwide events, and meeting with individual SFAs to identify their local foods procurement needs. SFAs can reach out to their Regional Farm to School Coordinator for any farm to school needs

including:

- consultation on CT Grown for CT Kids Week (October 5-9, 2026) events and activities;
- supporting taste test demos and schoolwide events;
- spending CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program funding; and
- assistance with funding opportunities like the CT Grown for CT Kids Grants.

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### September is National Fruits and Veggies Month

The Foundation for Fresh Produce's has a toolkit, [Every Time You Eat, Have A Plant® Toolkit](#), with ready-to-use social media content, promotional ideas, and resources to promote National Fruits and Veggies Month this September.

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### School Nutrition Association's Cafeteria Circus National School Lunch Week Toolkit

As a reminder, National School Lunch Week (NSLW) is October 12-16, 2026. The School Nutrition Association recently released their [Cafeteria Circus National School Lunch Week Toolkit](#) to help SFAs plan for NSLW. For more NSLW information and resources, visit the School Nutrition Association's [National School Lunch Week](#) 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/2026/slt\\_09\\_02\\_2026.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/slt/2026/slt_09_02_2026.pdf).

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## The School Lunch Tray: September 2, 2026

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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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