The School Lunch Tray: November 4, 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.
The School Lunch Tray: November 4, 2026

Action Items

- Reminder: Procurement 101 Day 3 Mandatory Training is Thursday, November 5, 2026
- Fall into Farm to School Live! Webinar: November 9, 2026
- Healthy Food Certification (HFC) for Public Schools Due November 30, 2026
- Updated Version of CSDE's Instructions for Completing the Verification Collection Report (FNS 742), Report Due December 1, 2026

Need to Know

- None

Good to Know

- November is Native American Heritage Month

The School Lunch Tray: November 4, 2026

Action Items

Reminder: Procurement 101 Day 3 Mandatory Training is Thursday, November 5, 2026

The third session of the CSDE's four-part **Procurement 101 training series** will be held on Thursday, Thursday November 5, 2026, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Training topics include discussions regarding group purchasing (i.e., CO-OP, group buying, group purchasing, etc.) and USDA Foods. Attendance is required for school nutrition program directors, management, and staff tasked with National School Lunch Program (NSLP) procurement responsibilities.

Please use the link below to join the training.

Microsoft Teams meeting
Join: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/229657858330888?p=lpirJOQenlhqS0LM8u
Meeting ID: 229 657 858 330 888
Passcode: 6Ja6eQ3V
Need help? | System reference

Dial in by phone
+1 860-840-2075,,513782933# United States, Hartford
Find a local number
Phone conference ID: 513 782 933#

Fall into Farm to School Live! Webinar: November 9, 2026

Join the CSDE, UConn Extension, and Regional Farm to School Coordinators for the Fall into Farm to School Live! webinar on November 9, 2026, from 2:30-4:00 p.m. This webinar will review farm to school initiatives, resources, and support for school year 2026-27. It will include the latest information on the CT Fresh Ed Buy Local Program and CT Fresh Ed Compass & Snapshot, and will provide an opportunity to connect with each district's Regional Farm to School Coordinator.

Microsoft Teams meeting
Join: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/214145455779977?p=9DqigeSezVgfwhzp19
Meeting ID: 214 145 455 779 977
Passcode: e2mL6Bt9

Need help? | System reference
Dial in by phone
+1 860-840-2075,,785499598# United States, Hartford
Find a local number
Phone conference ID: 785 499 598#

Healthy Food Certification (HFC) for Public Schools Due November 30, 2026

The annual HFC documentation for school year 2026-27 is due by November 30, 2026. **All HFC districts must submit the online HFC Compliance Survey.** In addition, the districts listed in the document below must also submit lists of foods and beverages available for sale to students from all sources.

- Districts Required to Submit Food and Beverage Lists for School Year 2026-27

For detailed guidance on the HFC documentation requirements, refer to the CSDE's email from November 2, 2026, which was sent to the district's HFC contact person, food service director, and business manager. For more information, visit the "Annual HFC Documentation" section of the CSDE's HFC webpage and refer to the guidance below.

- Guidance for Completing the HFC Compliance Survey
- Guidance for Submitting Lists of Foods and Beverages for HFC Documentation
- CSDE training module: Completing the Documentation Requirements for HFC: This training is 9 minutes for districts that are not required to submit lists of foods and beverages and 24 minutes for districts that are required to submit lists of foods and beverages.

For questions, please contact susan.fiore@ct.gov.

Note: These annual HFC **documentation** requirements are different from the annual HFC **application** (HFC Statement ED099 Addendum), which was due to the CSDE by July 1, 2026, and has already been completed by all HFC districts.

Updated Version of CSDE's Instructions for Completing the Verification Collection Report (FNS 742), Report Due December 1, 2026

The CSDE recently updated the instructions, Completing the Verification Collection Report (FNS 742), to include guidance for schools that implement the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This updated version is dated October 2026. As a reminder, all sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must complete the FNS 742 Verification Collection Report (VCR) in the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System) by December 1, 2026. For more information, refer to The School Lunch Tray: October 28, 2026.

The School Lunch Tray: November 4, 2026

Good to Know

November is Native American Heritage Month

Celebrate Native American Heritage Month by learning about Native American FoodWays. UConn Extension's Farm to School website offers a variety of engaging resources, including fun facts, recipes, and links to additional educational materials that can help inspire menu items, classroom activities, or school-wide events.

The site also features resources designed specifically for educators, making it easy to share with teachers across the school community, including culinary arts and family and consumer sciences programs. Partnering with educators can create meaningful cross-curricular learning opportunities and foster greater building-wide collaboration while honoring Native American cultures and traditions.

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_11_04_2026.pdf.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov.

CONNECTICUT
Education

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default//files/documents/ad-3027.pdf from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.