Summary of School Lunch Tray Topics for 2026

This document summarizes the School Lunch Tray topics for 2026. The School Lunch Tray is the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) weekly e-newsletter for Connecticut sponsors of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

Click the link in the "Link" column to access a PDF of the School Lunch Tray and, if applicable, the corresponding Table Talk webinar. For previous versions of the School Lunch Tray, visit the CSDE's School Lunch Tray and Table Talk webpage.

Date and Link	Topics
SLT Newsletter 11-04-2026	• 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 • November is Native American Heritage Month
SLT Newsletter 10-28-2026	• Final Reminder: Last Day to Respond to Mandatory CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program Annual Survey (Due October 28, 2026) • Districts Not Signed Up for CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program • Reminder: Verification Must be Completed by November 15, 2026 • FNS 742 Verification Summary Report Due December 1, 2026 • School Officials Applying for Eligible Households That Have Not Submitted a Meal Application • Submissions for CT Fresh Ed: Great Plates Contest Due November 30, 2026 • USDA Foods Update: USDA DoD Fresh Transfers to Offset Direct Delivery Cancellations • Fall into Farm to School Live! Webinar: November 9, 2026

Summary of School Lunch Tray Topics for 2026

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SLT Newsletter 10-21-2026	• USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grants Request for Proposals (RFP): Due November 13, 2026 • Schedule for Fall 2026 CSDE Office Hours • CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program Part 1: Action Required to Complete the Buy Local Program Annual Survey by October 28, 2026 • CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program Part 2: Districts Not Signed Up for CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program • Reminder: Register for 2026 School to Farm Field Trips • Connecticut Farm to School Collaborative Meeting: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 • Food Research & Action (FRAC) Webinar: Healthy School Meals for All: A Proven Strategy for Better Nutrition and Student Well-Being, October 29, 2026
SLT Newsletter 10-14-2026	• Reminder: Procurement 101 Day 1 Mandatory Training is Thursday, October 15, 2026 • Check SAM.gov Registration Expiration Date • October is National Farm to School Month • 2025 Turnip the Beet Award Winners • Happy National School Lunch Week (NSLW) 2026: October 12-16 • Revised CSDE Resource Lists

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SLT Newsletter 10-07-2026	• Reminder: USDA Foods Update: Action Required by Today, October 7, 2026 • Reminder: Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance due October 15, 2026 • Reminder Buy Local Program Submission due October 15, 2026 • Date Change to November 9, 2026: Fall into Farm to School Live! Webinar • CT Grown for CT Kids Week Celebrations Happening All Across the State • Take Pictures During CT Grown for CT Kids Week to Enter CT Fresh Ed: Great Plates Contest • Announcing 2026 School to Farm Field Trips • Operational Memorandum No. 01-27: Schedule for Submitting Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) Monthly Claims for Reimbursement in Fiscal Year 2027 • New CSDE Form: School Food Authority Form for Sites Discontinuing Participation in the Child Nutrition Programs • USDA Foods Reminder: Ordering USDA Foods in Pepper, Hartford Provision Company's (HPC) Online Ordering System

Summary of School Lunch Tray Topics for 2026

Date and Link	Topics
SLT Newsletter 09-30-2026	• Reminder: Verification Starts Tomorrow, October 1 and Must be Completed by November 15, 2026 • Menu Planning and Utilizing the USDA Menu Worksheets for the Administrative Review (Part 4 of CSDE's Virtual Training – Getting Ready for Success: Preparing for the School Nutrition Program Administrative and Procurement Reviews), October 1, 2026 • CSDE Virtual Office Hour on October 6, 2026: How to Complete and Submit the Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance on October 6, 2026 • USDA Foods Update: Action Required by October 7, 2026 • Reminder: Plan to Reduce Excess Operating Balance due October 15, 2026 • 68 sites registered activities for CT Grown for CT Kids Week (October 5-9, 2026) • Five Days until CT Grown for CT Kids Week Starts • Advanced Placement (AP) Coordinators Accessing Students' Free and Reduced-priced Eligibility Information • New Team Nutrition Resources for Promoting Real Food in Child Nutrition Programs • Save the Date: Annual Common Ground Farm and Garden Conference, November 7, 2026 • Revised USDA Professional Standards Resources
SLT Newsletter 09-23-2026	• CSDE Virtual Trainings – Getting Ready for Success: Preparing for the School Nutrition Program Administrative and Procurement Reviews • Reminder: CSDE Virtual Procurement 101 Training 4 Part Series (October 15, 22, and November 5, 12 2026): Register by Friday, October 9, 2026 • Final Reminder: Food Safety Inspection Report for School Year 2025-26 Due September 30, 2026 • Updated CSDE Resource: Addendum C: Information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) • 3 C's Leadership Collective – An Opportunity for District Farm to School Coordinators, Due October 2, 2026 • Webinar on Increasing Food Recovery in CT: Partnering with Unlikely Partners, September 28, 2026

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Date and Link	Topics
SLT Newsletter 09-16-2026	• Reminder: Food Safety Inspection Report for School Year 2025-26 Due September 30, 2026 • Prepare for the CT Fresh Ed: Great Plates Contest for Fall 2026 • Verification Starts October 1 and Must be Completed by November 15, 2026 • CSDE Virtual Office Hour on September 23, 2026: Verification • CSDE Virtual Trainings – Getting Ready for Success: Preparing for the School Nutrition Program Administrative and Procurement Reviews • USDA Final Rule with Comment Period: Simplified Geographic Preference Procurement in Child Nutrition Programs (91 FR 57245) • USDA Memo TA 01-2026 Harvest to Hallways - Resources for Procuring Local Foods in School Year 2026-2027 • Save the Date: Back to School with Farm to School Live! Webinar, October 19, 2026 • Dairy Grant Opportunity for School Meals: Deadline November 6, 2026
SLT Newsletter 09-09-2026	• CSDE Virtual Office Hour: How to Complete and Submit the Annual Financial Report on September 14, 2026 • CSDE Virtual Trainings – Getting Ready for Success: Preparing for the School Nutrition Program Administrative and Procurement Reviews • CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program Guidance on Breakfast Items • Need to Know • CT Grown for CT Kids Week, October 5-9, 2026, Celebrating “Breakfast and Beyond – CT Fresh all Day Long” • USDA Virtual Training – Local Procurement 101: A Refresher for the 2026-27 School Year • Reminder: Completion of the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) Online Agreement • Good to Know • Reminder: Register for the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut (SNACT) Annual Conference: October 29 and 30, 2026

Summary of School Lunch Tray Topics for 2026

Date and Link	Topics
SLT Newsletter 09-02-2026	• 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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SLT Newsletter 08-26-2026	• CSDE Virtual Office Hour on August 31, 2026: Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) for School Year 2026-27 • CSDE Virtual Office Hour on September 2, 2026: Application Processing and Direct Certification • Food Safety Inspection Report for School Year 2025-26 Due September 30, 2026 • Completion of Site Pricing on the Annual Application for the School Nutrition Programs in the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System) • Last Chance to Receive a Free CT Grown for CT Kids Week Promotional Kit • USDA Foods Bonus Purchase Option: Order Due Date Monday August 31, 2026, at Noon • School Food Authority (SFA) Request for Proposal (RFP) Process Training for Districts Outsourcing their Child Nutrition Programs • Summer EBT (S-EBT) Eligibility Period reminders • Important Reminder: Disaster Preparedness for School Food Authorities (SFAs) • School Nutrition Association of Connecticut (SNACT) Annual Conference: October 29 and 30, 2026 • Guidance for Notifying Parents of a Child's Eligibility for Free or Reduced-price Meals • Reminder for School Lunch About Requirements for Nondairy Beverages (Fluid Milk Substitutes) • Updated USDA Resources: The Real Food Guides to School Breakfast and School Lunch for Families • Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Webinar: Afterschool Meals Matter: Strategies and Practical Takeaways, August 27, 2026 • Action Items

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SLT Newsletter 08-19-2026	• Save the Date: Information Session on Readiness in School Everyday (RISE) Funds • Reminder: Annual Financial Report for School Nutrition Programs Due September 15, 2026 • Eat Real Food USDA Posters Order Form: Orders due August 24, 2026 • Schools Participating in CT Grown for CT Kids Week, October 5-9, are Eligible to Receive a Free Promotional Kit • Placement and Operation of Vending Machines in School Districts • Steps for Starting or Expanding the School Breakfast Program (SBP) • Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children at Mealtimes • Login Assistance for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) • Updated List of Acceptable Food and Beverages Dated August 10, 2026, and August 19, 2026 • Chef Ann Foundation 2027 Healthy School Food Pathway Fellowship Open for Application: Due September 2, 2026 • Build Dairy Farm to School Cafeteria-Classroom Connections: Deadline September 1, 2026 • Celebrate National School Lunch Week (NSLW) 2026: October 12-16
SLT Newsletter 08-12-2026	• Operational Memorandum No. 13-26 Connecticut School Meals: Readiness in School Everyday (RISE) for School Year (SY) 2026-27, Notice of Intent and Attestation Statement Due August 24, 2026 • School Year (SY) 2026-27 Free and Reduced-Price Application Materials • Buy Local Program Payment Requests due August 15, 2026 • CT Grown for CT Kids Week, October 5-9, 2026, Celebrating “Breakfast and Beyond – CT Fresh all Day Long” • Updated CSDE Training Program for School Year 2026-27: Determining Eligibility in the School Nutrition Programs, Summer Food Service Program, and S-EBT • Summer EBT Final Student Application Submission Date for Summer 2026: August 31, 2026
SLT Newsletter 08-05-2026	• Share Plans for Celebrating CT Grown for CT Kids Week and Receive a Free CTG4CTKW Kit • Need to Know • CSDE Virtual Procurement 101 Training 4 Part Series (October 15, 22, and November 5, 12 2026): Register by Friday, October 9, 2026 • New USDA Resource: Farm to School State Formula Grant Dashboard

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SLT Newsletter 07-29-2026	• USDA Foods Update: Change to Hartford Provision Company (HPC) Ordering Platform for USDA Foods • Order USDA Team Nutrition Materials
SLT Newsletter 07-22-2026	• Buy Local Program Payment Request Form is Open
SLT Newsletter 07-15-2026	• Updated Civil Rights Complaint Procedures for School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2026-27 • Updated CSDE Civil Rights PowerPoint Presentation for School Year 2026-27 • Updated CSDE Training Program for School Year 2026-27: Complying with Healthy Food Certification
SLT Newsletter 07-08-2026	• Updated County Assignments for School Nutrition Programs • Updated CSDE Staff Contact Information • 2026 Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grants Include Three Connecticut Awardees
SLT Newsletter 07-01-2026	• Registration Deadline Extended to July 7, 2026: Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Virtual Training, August 4, 11, and 18, 2026 • What's in a Meal Training Modules for School Year 2026-27 • New Summer EBT (S-EBT) Eligibility Checker on Department of Social Services (DSS) Website
SLT Newsletter 06-24-2026	• Final Reminder for CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 08-26: Paid Lunch Equity Guidance for School Year 2026-27: PLE Request Due June 30, 2026 • Final Reminder for Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 • Final Reminder for Interschool Agreements in HFC Schools for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 • Summer EBT (S-EBT) Benefit Issuances for 2026 • Institute of Child Nutrition Webinar: Procuring with Efficiency: Local Food Purchasing in Schools, June 25, 2026 • Gratitude and Transitions • School Nutrition Association's (SNA) Advocacy in Action Webinar, June 29, 2026

Summary of School Lunch Tray Topics for 2026

Date and Link	Topics
SLT Newsletter 06-17-2026	• Reminder for CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 08-26: Paid Lunch Equity Guidance for School Year 2026-27: PLE Request Due June 30, 2026 • Reminder for Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 • Reminder for Interschool Agreements in HFC Schools for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 • Reminder for Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Virtual Training, August 4, 11, and 18, 2026: Registration Deadline is June 26, 2026 • CT Fresh Ed Back-to-School Professional Development Trainings for available for August and September 2026 • Operational Memorandum No. 11-26: Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Payment for School Year 2025-26 • New CSDE Resource: How to Check the Payment Status for Healthy Food Certification • Vegetable Substitutions in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) for School Year 2026-27 • Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2026-27 • Offer versus Serve (OVS) Requirements for Grades K-12 for School Year 2026-27
SLT Newsletter 06-10-2026	• Reminder: CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 08-26: Paid Lunch Equity Guidance for School Year 2026-27: PLE Request Due June 30, 2026 • Procedure to Request Alternate Lunch Time Outside the Timeframe of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. • Reminder for Interschool Agreements in HFC Schools for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 • CT Fresh Ed Buy Local Program Payment Request Form: Deadline June 15, 2026 • CT Fresh Ed Compass Next Steps • USDA Memo SP 08-2026 and CACFP 04-2026: Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs • Name Change for USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) • New USDA Webpage: Child Nutrition Programs Food Industry Toolkit • New England Dairy Smart Swaps Survey: Due June 30, 2026 • Build Dairy Farm to School Cafeteria-Classroom Connections • Institute of Child Nutrition Webinar: Dig Safely into School Gardens

Summary of School Lunch Tray Topics for 2026

Date and Link	Topics
SLT Newsletter 06-03-2026	• Reminder for Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 • Reminder for Interschool Agreements in HFC Schools for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 • USDA Foods Reminder: All Foods Must Be Out of State Warehouse by End of June • USDA Foods Reminder: Receipting Orders in FFAVORS Before End of School Year • Revised CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program Questions and Answers • USDA Foods Cancelation: Applesauce Cans, Sales Order Number 5000972034-100 • Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program
SLT Newsletter 05-27-2026 Table Talk 05-28-2026	• CSDE Bureau of Special Education and CSDE Office of Student Support Services issued Operational Memorandum No. 26-01: Providing Meals to Students Outplaced Pursuant to Individualized Education Program • Operational Memorandum No. 10-26: Payment of Fiscal Year 2025-26 State Funds for the National School Lunch Program • Final Reminder: CT Fresh Ed: Compass Due June 1, 2026 • Last Table Talk for School Year 2025-26 on Thursday, May 28, 2026 • CSDE Virtual Training: School Year (SY) 2026-27 Online Application Process for the School Nutrition Programs, Monday, June 1, 2026 • Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Virtual Training, August 4, 11, and 18, 2026: Registration Deadline is June 26, 2026 • CSDE Crediting Resources for School Year 2026-27 • Updated Resources for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs • UConn Extension Virtual Training: Maintaining the Garden and Developing a Work Plan, June 1, 2026

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SLT Newsletter 05-20-2026	• Requests to Extend the NSLP and/or SBP into the Summer Months (July and August) due June 12, 2026 • CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program School Year 2025-26 Allocations for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) • School Year (SY) 2026-27 NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 and Menu Planning Resources • CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series for SY 2026-27 • SY 2026-27 Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern, Handbook, and Forms • SY 2026-27 NSLP, SBP, and ASP Preschool Meal Patterns, Menu Planning Guides, and Forms • Institute of Child Nutrition Webinar: Growing Connections: Safe Sourcing and Handling of Fresh Produce, May 27, 2026
SLT Newsletter 05-13-2026 Table Talk 05-14-2026	• Operational Memorandum No 09-26: Annual Application Process for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP): Deadline May 15, 2026 • USDA Final Rule: Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs: Effective June 8, 2026 • USDA Foods Update on Broccoli for School Year 2026-27 • Theme for Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Week, October 5-9, 2026: Breakfast and Beyond — CT Fresh All Day Long! • Resource from The Foundation for Fresh Produce: The Fruit & Veggie Handbook • Food Research & Action Center Webinar: Summer Meals: Outreach That Works, May 21, 2026 • GENYOUth Report: School Meals Are a Core Driver of Student Success
SLT Newsletter 05-06-2026	• CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 08-26: Paid Lunch Equity Guidance for School Year 2026-27: PLE Request Due June 30, 2026 • Reminder: Steps to Take Now for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2026-27, Due July 1, 2026 • Reminder: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 (Full Service) or August 30, 2026 (Vended) • Final Reminder: Register by May 8, 2026, for the 2026 WSCC Academy on May 20, 2026

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Date and Link	Topics
SLT Newsletter 04-29-2026	• Register by May 1, 2026, for the CT Farm to School Conference on May 13, 2026 • Reminder: School Lunch Hero Day is May 1, 2026 • No Table Talk on Thursday, April 30, 2026 • CSDE Recorded Training Modules Updated to Resolve Technical Difficulties with Sound Quality • 2025-26 Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) Worksheets Updated
SLT Newsletter 04-22-2026	• Registration for the 2026 CT Farm to School Conference on May 13, 2026 • Registration for the 2026 WSCC Academy on May 20, 2026 • Updated Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) On-site Monitoring Form • USDA Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Farm to School Grants Awarded • National Dairy Council Webinar: Practical Strategies to Lower Sugar in School Breakfasts, May 6, 2026 • New England Dairy's Bulk Milk Interest Survey: Due April 30, 2026 • Webinars for Summer EBT and Rural, Non-Congregate Programs • Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Webinar: Unlocking the Power of CEP: How Strategic Grouping Can Transform Your School Meal Program • Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Report: Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: The Reach of Summer Meals • Recorded FRAC Webinar: The Summer Nutrition Landscape: Setting the Scene for Summer 2026
SLT Newsletter 04-15-2026	• Reminder: Steps to Take Now for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2026-27, Due July 1, 2026 • Reminder: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 (Full Service) or August 30, 2026 (Vended) • USDA Foods Orders for School Year 2026-27 • USDA Foods Direct Delivery Inventory at HPC • Payment Requests for Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Funds Due May 8, 2026 • CSDE Summer Meal Program Interest Survey Due April 29, 2026 • CT Fresh Ed Compass Office Hours, April 20, 2026 • Save the Date: 2026 CT Farm to School Conference, May 13, 2026 • The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT) Program • No Table Talk on April 16, 2026 • Reminder: Serving Up Local Foods In School Meals webinar is Today, April 15, 2026, at 3:30 pm

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SLT Newsletter 04-08-2026	• 2026-27 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Application Information Session: Friday, April 10, 2026 • Reminder: CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program – Updated List of Approved Sponsors (as of March 30, 2026) and Payment Request Form due April 15, 2026. • Reminder: Federal Local Foods for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Redistributed Funds Must be Spent by April 30, 2026 • CT Fresh Ed: Compass Due June 1, 2026 • Final Reminder: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Reporting Due April 10, 2026 • School Lunch Hero Day – May 1, 2026 • Serving Up Local Foods In School Meals: How Scratch Cooking is Being Implemented and Supported in Districts Across the Country • Made with School Lunch Celebration Calendar
SLT Newsletter 04-01-2026 Table Talk 04-02-2026: CT Fresh Ed: COMPASS Assessment Tool Trainingl	• Join the CSDE for Table Talk Tomorrow, Thursday, April 2, 2026 • 2026-27 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Grant Announcement: Applications due May 1, 2026. • Spring 2026 CT Fresh Ed: Great Plates Contest Starts April 1, 2026 • CT Fresh Ed: COMPASS Reminder and New Snapshot Available • New CSDE Resource: CT Fresh Ed: Local and Regional Food Tracker • Recording Available for Triennial Assessment Webinar March 30, 2026 • Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Takes Steps to Improve Gluten Ingredient Disclosure in Foods
SLT Newsletter 03-25-2026	• Direct Certification and the Annual Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Notification Requirement for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) • Save the Date: Second Annual Connecticut Farm to School Conference, May 13, 2026 • UCONN Rudd Center Webinar: Connecticut's 2025 Triennial Assessments: Where We Are and Where to Go Next, March 30, 2026 • Spring 2026 CT Fresh Ed: Great Plates Contest – April 1 through April 30 • Upcoming 2025-26 USDA SFA Survey Participation

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Date and Link	Topics
SLT Newsletter 03-18-2026	• Join the CSDE for Table Talk Tomorrow Thursday, March 19, 2026 • Register for Mandatory Summer Meal Program Annual Training by Monday March 23, 2026 • Operational Memorandum No. 07-26 Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Annual Notification Requirement for all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) Participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) Due April 10, 2026 • Important Information about the Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System): Applications and Claims • CNP System Now Open to Submit 2026-27 Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement: Due July 1, 2026 • CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program • Operational Memorandum No. 06-26: State Severe Need School Breakfast Program Grant for School Year 2025-26 • School Nutrition Association Webinar: Sugar & Sodium Standards: What You Need to Know
SLT Newsletter 03-11-2026	• Final Reminder: Deadline to Place USDA Foods Order for School Year 2026-27 is Today, March 11, 2026 • Reminder: Apply for CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program (New List of Approved Sponsors) • Reminder: Steps to Take Now for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2026-27, Due July 1, 2026 • Reminder: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 (Full Service) or August 30, 2026 (Vended) • Mark the Calendar for Next Week: CT Farm to School Collaborative Monthly Meeting: Hydroponics as an Educational Tool, March 18, 2026 • Now Available: CSDE's List of Area Eligible Schools and List of Site Eligible Schools for School Year 2025-26 • Updated List of Acceptable Food and Beverages Dated March 10, 2026 • Updated CSDE Training Program: Complying with Healthy Food Certification • Data on HFC Participation for School Year 2025-26 • New Resource: CT Fresh Ed: Social Media Toolkit • Dairy Grant Opportunity for School Meals Deadline Extension to March 31, 2026

Summary of School Lunch Tray Topics for 2026

Date and Link	Topics
SLT Newsletter 03-04-2026	• Join the CSDE for Table Talk Tomorrow Thursday, March 5, 2026 • Limited Amount of Additional USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Funding Available for School Year 2025-26: Respond by March 6, 2026 • Reminder: Deadline to Place USDA Foods Order for School Year 2026-27 is March 11, 2026 • Save-the-Date: Summer Meals Annual Training March 31, 2026
SLT Newsletter 02-25-2026	• Reminder: Deadline to Place USDA Foods Order for School Year 2026-27 is March 11, 2026 • USDA Foods Office Hours Rescheduled to Monday March 2, 2026 • Reminder Farm to School – Live! and Compass Office Hours • CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program and Federal LFSIP Redistribution
SLT Newsletter 02-18-2026	• Updated Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12 for SY 2025-26 • New Food Yields Added to the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs • USDA Memo SP 02-2026, CACFP 01-2026, SFSP 01-2026: Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030 – Eat Real Food • Reminder: State and Federal Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools ions • Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) Recorded Webinar: Practical Menu Solutions for Reducing Added Sugars in School Meals • ICN Webinar: Practical Menu Solutions for Reducing Sodium in School Meals, February 26, 2026 • Subscribe to ICN for Updates and Webinar Information • Free Team Nutrition Resources for Schools
SLT Newsletter 02-11-2026	• CT Fresh Ed: Compass due June 1, 2026 • Spring 2026 CT Fresh Ed: Great Plates Contest – Start Taking Pictures Today • Reminder for Cafeterias in Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Districts: Non-entree Items in Second Student Meals and Sold A La Carte Must Meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards • Good to Know • March is National Nutrition Month • Dairy Grant Opportunity for School Meals Due March 6, 2026

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SLT Newsletter 02-04-2026 Table Talk 02-05--2026 Mandatory CT Fresh Ed: Compass Training	• CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 03-26: Requirements for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for School Year 2026-27 • CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 04-26: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2026-27: Due July 1, 2026 (Full Service) or August 30, 2026 (Vended) • Final Reminder: Mandatory CT Fresh Ed: Compass Training on Thursday, February 5, 2026 • Need to Know • CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 05-26: CT Fresh Ed: Compass • Updated Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 • Updated Preschool Meal Patterns • USDA Foods Entitlement and Meal Counts Update for School Year (SY) 2026-27 • Good to Know • National School Breakfast Week March 2-6, 2026: The Quest for School Breakfast
SLT Newsletter 01-28-2026	• Final Reminder: Redistribution Application for Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Funds: Due February 2, 2026 • Reminder: Mandatory CT Fresh Ed: Compass Training on Thursday, February 5, 2026 • Reminder CT Fresh Ed: Buy Local Program application is open • USDA Memo SP 01-2026: Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 – Implementation Requirements for the National School Lunch Program • Updated School Year 2025-26 NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 • Revised USDA Product Formulation Statement (PFS) Templates and Samples • Updated CSDE Resources for Meal Pattern Crediting Documentation • Updated CSDE Menu Planning Guidance Series for School Year 2025-26 • Updated CSDE Crediting Resources for School Year 2025-26 • Chill Out with Cold Milk Cooler Giveaway Deadline: February 28, 2026

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SLT Newsletter 01-21-2026 Table Talk 01-22-2026	• Join the CSDE for Table Talk Tomorrow Thursday, January 22, 2026 • Redistribution Application for Federal Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP) Funds: Due February 2, 2026 • Mandatory CT Fresh Ed: Compass Training on Thursday, February 5, 2026 • Need to Know • Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for School Year 2026-27 • Local is Year Round
SLT Newsletter 01-14-2026	• 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
SLT Newsletter 01-07-2026	• Save the Date: Table Talk Will Resume on Thursday, January 22, 2026 • Updated for School Year 2025-26: CSDE's Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals • Reminder About Offer versus Serve Resources and Training Materials • Reminder About Required Signage for School Meals in the NSLP and SBP • New CSDE Resource: Guidance for Using Meal Clickers to Count Reimbursable Meals for the School Nutrition Programs • The Health, Environmental, and Cost Implications of Providing Healthy and Sustainable School Meals for Every Child by 2030: A Global Modelling Study

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For more information, visit the CSDE'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/summary_slt_topics_2026.pdf.

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Education

Summary of School Lunch Tray Topics for 2026

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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.