

## The School Lunch Tray: February 3, 2021

Dear School Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs:

The School Lunch Tray contains the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) weekly e-mail notifications for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. This week's topics are listed below.

- Connecticut Department of Public Health Guidance for School Nutrition Programs
- Free Cloth Mask Order Form
- Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare Officially Unite
- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) Webinars: Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness
- Application for Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs during School Year 2020-21
- Updated NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 for School Year 2020-21
- Updated Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12
- Reminder: Meeting the Dietary Specifications for the NSLP and SBP
- Updated CSDE Resource List: Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
- Resource Roundup: NSLP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

Please review and share with appropriate staff members. Thank you.



### Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) Guidance for School Nutrition Programs

Two DPH resources are available in the “[Food Safety for School Nutrition Programs during COVID-19](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Operation of Child Nutrition Programs during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreaks](#) webpage.

1. [EHS Circular Letter 2020-62](#): The Food Protection Program (FPP) developed this guidance to assist local health departments (LHDs) who may receive inquiries from local school boards as they developed and implemented their meal plan for the school year.
2. Infographic: [Reopening Guidance for School Food Service Programs: Providing Safe Food in a Safe Manner](#): The DPH developed this resource to provide school food service directors and staff with guidance for providing safe food in a safe manner for the reopening process for fall 2020

Sponsors are encourage to contact their [local health department](#) for assistance.

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### Free Cloth Mask Order Form

Connecticut is receiving over 1.5 million free cloth masks. The masks are adult size, but not large. If your LEA or non-public school would like to receive cloth masks, please [complete and submit your request](#) by **Friday, February 12, 2021**. Please work with your school administration before placing an order to ensure that masks for food service staff are not already included in the school/district’s order.

The masks will be delivered by members of the National Guard to the location provided. For questions, please contact Roger Persson at [roger.persson@ct.gov](mailto:roger.persson@ct.gov) or Mark Noon at [mark.noon@ct.gov](mailto:mark.noon@ct.gov).

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### **Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare Officially Unite**

Foodshare and Connecticut Food Bank, the state's two largest nonprofit anti-hunger organizations, merged to become one organization effective January 30, 2021. The new organization will address hunger with a united voice, a fully coordinated distribution model, and an integrated set of programs made available across the entire state. By merging their operations and service areas, these food banks will be able to more effectively serve people across Connecticut and make a stronger impact on hunger statewide. The food banks will continue to operate out of their Wallingford, Bloomfield, and Bridgeport facilities and will continue to use their existing trade names until a new name is chosen in the coming weeks.

Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare are Connecticut's two regional food banks. Both are members of the national Feeding America network. Last year, Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare distributed enough food to provide nearly 40 million meals through a network of more than 700 community-based hunger-relief programs, including food pantries, community kitchens, and emergency shelters, while also working on long-term solutions to food insecurity. More than 8,000 volunteers help power the work of the food banks. Last year, they gave 62,000 hours of service.

For more information, visit <https://www.ctfoodbank.org/> or <http://site.foodshare.org>.

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### National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) Webinars: Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) is offering live webinars on issues directly related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

- *Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services: February 11, 2021, 2:00-3:00 p.m.*  
Reviews the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless children and youth, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Presenters will cover: McKinney-Vento Act basics and context; understanding the dynamics of family and youth homelessness; the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless; McKinney-Vento provisions on dispute resolution, including disputes related to eligibility. Attendees will have the opportunity to interact with presenters and fellow attendees through polls and Q&A/discussion periods. Register at [https://uncg.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_TkW443jXTnmsTEvpahUxtg](https://uncg.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TkW443jXTnmsTEvpahUxtg)
- *Understanding Doubled Up: February 23, 2021, 2:00-3:00 p.m.*  
Explores the issue of doubling-up. Doubled-up is the informal wording used to describe a concept included in the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless. It refers to shared living arrangements, some of which may be considered homeless, while others may not be, depending on various factors. In this session, attendees will explore some of these factors in greater detail. Attendees also will have the opportunity to interact with presenters and fellow attendees through polls and Q&A/discussion periods. Register at [https://uncg.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_n2pyXOp8R22HWVSVZViQp3w](https://uncg.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_n2pyXOp8R22HWVSVZViQp3w)
- *McKinney-Vento 101: Basic Requirements of the McKinney-Act: March 23, 2021, 2:00-3:00 p.m.*  
Provides a high-level overview of the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness under Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Presenters will cover: understanding the relationship between housing and school performance; McKinney-Vento basics and context; eligibility for McKinney-Vento rights and services; immediate school enrollment, school selection, and transportation rights under McKinney-Vento; and The McKinney-Vento dispute resolution process. Attendees will have the opportunity to interact with presenters and fellow attendees through polls and Q&A/discussion periods. Register at [https://uncg.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_GqjmAeX-R8SR1LaB3zwEIQ](https://uncg.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GqjmAeX-R8SR1LaB3zwEIQ)

For more information, visit <https://nche.ed.gov/group-training>.

### Application for Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs during School Year 2020-21

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the USDA is allowing sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to request specific changes to the meal patterns for school year (SY) 2020-21, through June 30, 2021. Sponsors **must** use the [Application for Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs during School Year 2020-21](#) to apply to the CSDE to implement any meal pattern changes.

There are two options for requesting a meal pattern waiver. Option 1 may be used by sponsors of the NSLP, SBP, SSO, and CACFP; but does not apply to the SFSP. Option 2 may be used by sponsors of the NSLP, SBP, SSO, SFSP, and CACFP.

- 1. OPTION 1 – Request for meal pattern changes due to the USDA’s meal pattern flexibility (NSLP, SBP, SSO, and CACFP):** NSLP, SBP, SSO, and CACFP sponsors may request changes to the meal patterns if they cannot meet the specific meal pattern requirements authorized by the USDA’s memo, *COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #36, Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs – Extension #4*.
  - **NSLP, SBP, and SSO sponsors** may use this meal pattern flexibility if they cannot meet the following 2012 NSLP and SBP meal pattern requirements: 1) flavored milk must be fat-free; 2) all grains must be whole grain-rich (WGR); and 3) meals must meet sodium target 2.
  - **CACFP sponsors** may use this meal pattern flexibility if they cannot meet the previous CACFP meal pattern requirement that flavored milk for ages 6 and older and adult participants must be fat-free.
- 2. OPTION 2 – Request for meal pattern changes due to COVID-19:** NSLP, SBP, SSO, SFSP, and CACFP sponsors may request specific changes to the meal patterns when the request is targeted and necessary to support safe access to nutritious meals during SY 2020-21 resulting from the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19.

For additional guidance, please review the CSDE’s [Application for Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs during School Year 2020-21](#) or contact the applicable staff for [school nutrition programs](#) or [summer meals](#).

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### **Updated NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 for School Year 2020-21**

The CSDE has updated the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 to include the updated USDA nondiscrimination statement. The NSLP meal patterns also include an update to menu planning note 13, to include the following statement, which was inadvertently omitted from the previous NSLP meal patterns: “Nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component.” The meal patterns for grades K-12 are available in the [“Documents/Forms”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Please discard any previous versions and replace with the updated version dated January 2021.

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### **Updated Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12**

The CSDE has updated the NSLP menu planning checklists for grades K-12 to include the updated USDA nondiscrimination statement and revised resource links for school year 2020-21. These forms assist school food authorities (SFAs) with planning meals to meet the NSLP meal patterns, including five-day and seven-day menus for grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12, and K-8. The checklists are available in the [“Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Please discard any previous versions and replace with the updated versions dated February 2021.

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### **Reminder: Meeting the Dietary Specifications for the NSLP and SBP**

School lunch and breakfast menus for grades K-12 must continue to meet the weekly dietary specifications for calories (minimum and maximum levels), saturated fats, and sodium. In addition, all food products and ingredients used to prepare school meals for grades K-12 must contain zero grams of trans fats per serving, as indicated by the Nutrition Facts label or manufacturer's specifications. A summary of important information is below.

- The weekly dietary specifications for each grade group are indicated at the **bottom** of the meal patterns (see example below).
- The dietary specifications apply to grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP. They do not apply to preschoolers in the NSLP or SBP, or to the SFSP or CACFP.
- If finalized, the USDA's proposed rule, [\*Simplifying Meal Service and Monitoring Requirements in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs\*](#) (85 FR 4094), would remove trans fat as a dietary specification, effective July 1, 2021. The USDA indicates that this dietary specification is no longer needed because the FDA is regulating trans fat out of U.S. food supply.
- SFAs may request to waive the sodium requirement for grades K-12 by submitting the *Application for Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs during School Year 2020-21* to the CSDE (see "[Application for Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs during School Year 2020-21](#)" above).
- Resources to assist SFAs with meeting the dietary specifications are available in the "[Dietary Specifications \(Nutrition Standards for School Meals\)](#)" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

For detailed guidance on the dietary specifications, review [section 6](#) of the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for Schools Meals for Grades K-12](#).

# The School Lunch Tray: February 3, 2021

## National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Five-day Lunch Meal Patterns for Grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12

School Year 2020-21 (July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2020)						
Food Components <sup>1</sup>	Grades K-5		Grades 6-8		Grades 9-12	
	Daily	Weekly <sup>2</sup>	Daily	Weekly <sup>2</sup>	Daily	Weekly <sup>2</sup>
<b>Milk, fluid (cups) <sup>3</sup></b> Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk or unflavored or flavored fat-free milk	1	5	1	5	1	5
<b>Fruits (cups) <sup>4</sup></b> Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits	½	2½	½	2½	1	5
<b>Vegetables (cups) <sup>5</sup></b> Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetables	¾	3¾	¾	3¾	1	5
Dark green <sup>5,6</sup>	0	½	0	½	0	½
Red/orange <sup>5,7</sup>	0	¾	0	¾	0	1¼
Beans/peas (legumes) <sup>5,8</sup>	0	½	0	½	0	½
Starchy <sup>5,9</sup>	0	½	0	½	0	½
Other <sup>5,10</sup>	0	½	0	½	0	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total <sup>5,11</sup>	0	1	0	1	0	1½
<b>Grains (ounce equivalents) <sup>12</sup></b> All grains must be whole grain-rich (WGR)	1	8-9	1	8-10	2	10-12
<b>Meats and meat alternates (ounce equivalents) <sup>13</sup></b>	1	8-10	1	9-10	2	10-12
<b>Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards)</b> <i>Daily amount based on the average for a five-day week</i>						
<b>Calories <sup>14,15</sup></b>	550-650		600-700		750-850	
<b>Saturated fat (percentage of total calories) <sup>15</sup></b>	< 10		< 10		< 10	
<b>Sodium (milligrams) <sup>15,16</sup></b>	≤ 935		≤ 1,035		≤ 1,080	
<b>Trans fat (grams) <sup>15</sup></b>	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving					
◀ See page 2 for important menu planning notes ▶						



### **Updated CSDE Resource List: Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12**

An updated version of the CSDE's [Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) is now available. This list includes resources and websites to assist school food authorities (SFAs) with meeting the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal pattern and crediting requirements for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, SSO, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP). Links to this document are also available on the CSDE's [Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage (under "Menu Planning") and the "[Related Resources](#)" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage (under "Resources for Menu Planning").

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### **Resource Roundup: NSLP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12**

This week's School Lunch Tray kicks off the first Resource Roundup. Each week, School Lunch Tray will highlight a specific CSDE resource to help sponsors meet the federal and state requirements for school nutrition programs. Today's resource focuses on back to basics with the NSLP meal pattern for grades K-12.

Join us for tomorrow's Table Talk (February 4, 2021, from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.) as we help you navigate the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage to the appropriate meal pattern and related resources for your school nutrition program. Registration for Table Talk is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1181137584459494413>. To submit questions in advance, visit [https://sdect.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_ezIN3YJJqjkPGND](https://sdect.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ezIN3YJJqjkPGND).

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [School Lunch Tray Table Talk](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT\\_02\\_03\\_2021.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT_02_03_2021.pdf).

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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