

## The School Lunch Tray: April 21, 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.

- Summary of Healthy Food Certification Participation for School Year 2020-21
- Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for School Year 2021-22
- USDA Foods Delivery Schedules and Reminder on Procedure Change to Order Excess USDA Foods
- Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) Monthly STAR Webinar Series
- ICN's STAR Webinar for Thursday, April 29, 2021: Strategies for Motivating and Celebrating School Nutrition Professionals' Achievements
- Reminder: No Table Talk on April 22
- Resource Roundup: CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs Webpage

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



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### Summary of Healthy Food Certification Participation for School Year 2020-21

Healthy Food Certification (HFC) is in its fifteenth year of implementation this school year with the highest HFC participation since HFC began in school year 2007-07. HFC participation for school year 2020-21 includes:

- 180 school districts/schools (94.2% of all eligible public school districts and schools);
- 100% recertification rate;
- one new school added; and
- 1% increase in HFC participation from school year 2019-20.

The CSDE's document, [Healthy Food Certification Participation for School Year 2020-21](#), includes a list of participating districts and schools, comparison charts of HFC participation from last year to this year, and a year-to-date summary. Additional information is available on the CSDE's [Healthy Food Certification](#) webpage, including a [color-coded map](#) of the towns implementing HFC, and a [HFC Data PowerPoint](#) about current HFC participation data.

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### Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for School Year 2021-22

The CNS for school year 2021-22 will remain the same as the CNS for the current school year. Visit the CSDE's [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) webpage for the CNS summary, the full CNS document, and a presentation on the CNS.

Public school districts that choose to implement the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification under C.G.S. Section 10-215f must follow the CNS for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable school meals on school premises, at all times and from all sources, including a la carte sales in the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, culinary programs, and any other sources of food sales to students. For additional guidance, visit the CSDE's [Healthy Food Certification](#) webpage.

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### USDA Foods Delivery Schedules and Reminder on Procedure Change to Order Excess USDA Foods

The USDA Direct Delivery and USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program will continue to make deliveries through June. As a reminder, you may place an order for excess USDA Foods until **April 30, 2021**, but must **first** submit a *Request to Donate USDA Foods* form, or e-mail to [allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov](mailto:allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov), if you plan to use all current inventory at HPC. No orders for Excess USDA Foods will be processed without first receiving a request to donate, or an e-mail confirming that all USDA Foods inventory will be taken from the HPC warehouse by the end of June. Refer to the directions provided in the [School Lunch Tray for April 14, 2021](#). **Note:** You **must** complete steps 1-3 prior to submitting an order.

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### **Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) Monthly STAR Webinar Series**

The ICN's School Nutrition STAR monthly webinar series features school districts that have implemented creative strategies and best practices for common school nutrition topics, as well as allied organizations who develop and offer free resources to support school nutrition programs. "STAR" stands for strategies, training, action plans, and resources. You can access recording of past webinars and sign up to receive notifications of upcoming STAR webinars, training, and resources at <https://theicn.org/star>.

The STAR webinars are part of the ICN's STAR initiative, which helps schools develop goals and best practices to improve program administration and operations. STAR is an innovative and comprehensive approach to providing education, training, and ongoing professional development opportunities specific to school nutrition managers/site-level supervisors. For more information, visit [School Nutrition STAR FAQs](#) section of the ICN's STAR webpage.

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### **ICN's STAR Webinar for Thursday, April 29, 2021: Strategies for Motivating and Celebrating School Nutrition Professionals' Achievements**

The 2020-21 school year has shown what a difference school nutrition professionals make through their exceptional work to continue program operations amid the pandemic. This webinar features Keith Lewis, Senior Area Manager for Operations for the Houston Independent School District. Keith will present key strategies for motivating school nutrition staff and celebrating their dedication and hard work for feeding the nation's children.

- *Date and time:* Thursday, April 29, 2021, 3:00-4:00 p.m. ET.
  - *Registration:* [https://theicn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Lrwod0MfS8CB3ij-QNGRKA](https://theicn.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Lrwod0MfS8CB3ij-QNGRKA).
  - *Professional Standards Learning Objectives:*  
SNA Key Area: 4-Communications and Marketing  
USDA Professional Standards Code: 4000
  - *Learning objective:* Attendees will be able to identify key strategies to help motivate and celebrate staff as it relates to school nutrition program operations for the 2020–2021 school year.
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### **Reminder: No Table Talk on April 22**

Table Talk is on hiatus this week for spring break in Connecticut schools. Join us for Table Talk when we return on April 29, 2021, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Registration for the April Table Talk series is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7940814127249762576>. 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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### Resource Roundup: CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs Webpage

This week's Resource Roundup focuses on the CSDE's webpage, [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#). This webpage provide resources and links to guidance on planning, preparing, and promoting healthy meals that meet the USDA meal pattern requirements for schools and institutions participating in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. The blue box at the top of the page provides quick access to a variety of topics, such as meal patterns, meal pattern components, meal modifications for special diets, menu planning, promoting healthy food choices, and recipes.

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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\\_04\\_21\\_2021.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT_04_21_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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