

The School Lunch Tray: November 24, 2021

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.

- Now Available: CSDE's Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12: School Year 2021-22
- Additional Updates to CSDE's Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP
- Updated Lunch Menu Planning Checklists for Grades K-12
- Reminder: USDA Foods Shelf Life on Mozzarella String Cheese
- Resource Roundup: Updated Offer versus Serve (OVS) Resources for the NSLP and SBP

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

Happy Thanksgiving!



National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grant: Due XX 2021

The CSDE is now accepting applications for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grant. This grant was developed to provide funding for school districts (school food authorities) participating in the NSLP to purchase food service equipment needed to meet nutritional standards for schools, ensure food safety, improve operation and efficiency, and/or expand participation in Child Nutrition Programs. Please take time to review the materials and consider applying for this grant opportunity.

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Now Available: CSDE's Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12: School Year 2021-22

The CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12* (MPG) for school year 2021-22 is now available on the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#) webpage. Please discard the 2020-21 version and replace with the updated version; and bookmark the webpage for easy access.

The MPG contains comprehensive information and guidance on planning menus to meet the USDA meal patterns for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, based on current USDA regulations and policy and Connecticut statutes and regulations. The sections include: Meal Patterns; Menu Records; Meal Components; Weekly Requirements; Meal Service; Dietary Specifications; Resources; and Glossary. An overview of each section is contained in the document, [Overview of Contents for the Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).

Additional Updates to CSDE's Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP

The CSDE recently made some additional updates to the guide, [Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), which was posted in October 2021. The updates include additional clarification and guidance, and the new content below:

- new and revised definitions in the Glossary section;
- new crediting charts for the meat/meat alternates contribution of cooked legumes and 100 percent legume flour pasta products;
- guidance on meeting the required servings for each component;
- crediting considerations for bread; and
- additional resources.

Please discard the October 2021 version and replace with the updated version dated November 2021. For additional resources on the preschool meal patterns and crediting foods, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Updated Lunch Menu Planning Checklists for Grades K-12

The CSDE has updated the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) menu planning checklists for grades K-12 for school year 2021-22. 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 the K-8 option. 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 November 2021.

Reminder: USDA Foods Shelf Life on Mozzarella String Cheese

USDA Foods Material Code 110396, Mozzarella String Cheese, is a perishable refrigerated item. As a reminder, this product has a 90-day shelf life from the pack date. If you have string cheese at HPC, please note that the current pack dates are 9/25 and 9/27, so the best use by date is December 25 and 27, 2021. Please plan on taking delivery of all inventory before then to either use or freeze for future use.

Resource Roundup: Updated Offer versus Serve (OVS) Resources for the NSLP and SBP

The CSDE has updated the following OVS resources for school year 2021-22: [Overview of OVS in the National School Lunch Program](#) and [Overview of OVS in the School Breakfast Program](#). These resources are available on the CSDE's [Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Please discard any previous versions and replace with the updated versions dated November 2021.

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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_11_24_2021.pdf.

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