



the
School Day
just got
Healthier
United States Department of Agriculture

Toolkit For School Administrators and School Foodservice Staff



The School Day Just Got Healthier Toolkit

is a collection of resources including brochures, fact sheets, FAQs, fliers, school lessons, templates and much more, to help prepare school administrators and school foodservice staff for the changes to school meals this school year.

This toolkit provides you with the resources you need to help your students eat healthy and learn healthy habits that last forever.



Why Participate?

Participating schools can:

- Get recognized nationally and earn monetary awards!

Gold Award of Distinction	\$2,000
Gold Award	\$1,500
Silver Award	\$1,000
Bronze Award	\$500

- Build school spirit, cooperation, and proudly display the HealthierUS banner and plaque as a symbol of their school's achievement.
- Be a leader in efforts to end childhood obesity. The HealthierUS School Challenge helps you form a school team and learn from what's worked at other schools.



How Can I Apply?

For more information, the application, success stories, and other resources, visit the Team Nutrition Web site: <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov> and click on HealthierUS School Challenge.

For additional information, you may also contact your State Child Nutrition Agency.

State Agency Contact Information:

“As a food service director who has seen firsthand how the HealthierUS School Challenge can have positive effects on our school and school improvement, I would wholeheartedly encourage anyone in a similar position to begin the journey and enjoy similar success.”

David Roberts, Food Service Director
Maine School Administrative District #52
Turner, ME



HealthierUS School Challenge



Recognizing Excellence in Nutrition and Physical Activity



U. S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
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Take the HealthierUS School Challenge!



Schools play an important role in helping to reduce childhood obesity. Kids who have healthy eating patterns and get regular physical activity are also more likely to perform better academically.

That's why the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers the HealthierUS School Challenge to support the over 101,000 schools that participate in school meals programs in their efforts to promote nutritious food choices and physical activity.



What Is the HealthierUS School Challenge?

- The HealthierUS School Challenge is a voluntary certification initiative that has recognized thousands of schools for their efforts in improving food and beverage offerings, teaching kids about nutritious food choices and being physically active, providing opportunities for physical activity, and having supportive school wellness policies.
- Participation in the HealthierUS School Challenge is voluntary and certifies schools that meet specific criteria at four award levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Gold Award of Distinction.

Who Can Apply?

Schools are eligible to apply if they:

- Participate in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- Are a USDA Team Nutrition school. Registering as a Team Nutrition school is easy, free, and connects you with free nutrition education and food service training materials for your school. Learn more at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>.

- Meet or exceed all HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for the desired award level relating to the following:
 - School Breakfast and Lunch Offerings
 - Foods Sold Outside of the School Meal Programs (such as in vending machines and à la carte)
 - Average Daily Participation for the SBP and NSLP (for Silver awards and higher)
 - Nutrition Education
 - Physical Education
 - Opportunities for Physical Activity
 - School Wellness Policies and Practices
 - A Menu of Other Criteria of Excellence From Which Schools Select

Healthier Middle Schools Every principal can help.

Lead the way, but don't go it alone.

In schools where healthy changes have been made successfully, a school-wide, coordinated effort worked best. That's why USDA is reaching out not only to middle school principals but to teachers, food service managers, students, and parents, as well. Working together builds school spirit, cooperation, and a stronger sense of community that can help you achieve your healthier school goals and other initiatives.

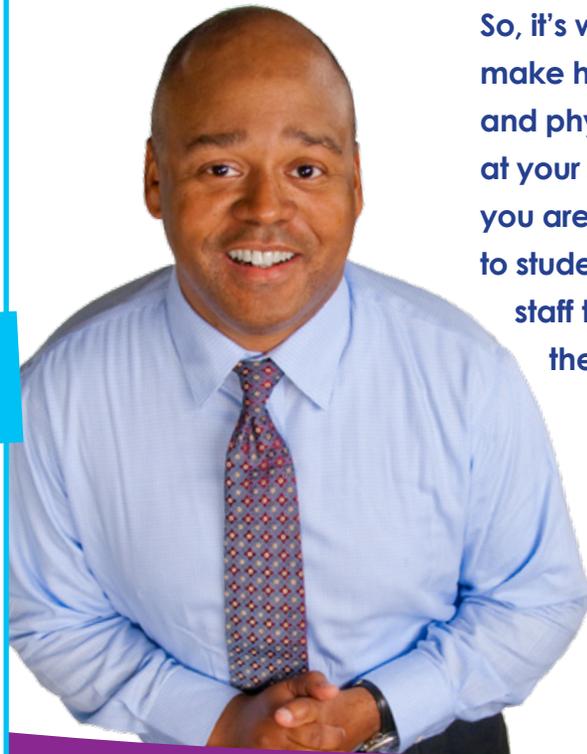
You don't have to start from scratch.

On the back of this flyer, you'll find ideas other middle schools have used with good results. Start small with one or two focused efforts and build from there. Even small changes can make a healthy difference.

Drive your school's performance with healthier foods and more physical activity.

Research shows that kids who have healthy eating patterns and get regular physical activity are more likely to perform better academically.^{1,2,3,4,5} These healthy habits may also play a role in helping kids to have:

- ✓ Greater concentration
- ✓ Lower obesity rates
- ✓ Better attendance
- ✓ Better self-esteem
- ✓ Better classroom behavior



So, it's worth your time to make healthy food choices and physical activity priorities at your school. When you do, you are also sending a signal to students, teachers, and staff that you care about their well-being.

1. Florence MD, Asbridge M, Veugelers PJ. Diet quality and academic performance. *J Sch Health*. 2008; 78:209-215.

2. Fu ML, Cheng L, Tu SH, Pan WH. Association between unhealthful eating patterns and unfavorable overall school performance in children. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2007; 107:1935-1943.

3. Sigfúsdóttir ID, Kristjánsson AL, Allegrante JP. Health behaviour and academic achievement in Icelandic school children. *Health Educ Res*. 2007; 22:70-80.

4. Kim HY, Frongillo EA, Han SS, Oh SY, Kim WK, Jang YA, Won HS, Lee HS, Kim SH. Academic performance of Korean children is associated with dietary behaviours and physical status. *Asia Pac J Clin Nutr*. 2003; 12:186-192.

5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The association between school based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2010.

Middle schools get healthier when **principals** lead the way.



Keep on walking the talk.

Let students and staff see you making healthy food choices and being active every day. Invite them to join you for lunch, to shoot some hoops, or take a walk...whatever works for you.



Sign up your school for the HealthierUS School Challenge

Visit TeamNutrition.usda.gov for program templates and ideas. Participating schools can get recognized nationally and may earn awards. What school couldn't use that?



Give students a voice in decision-making.

Let them name new healthy menu items, vote for healthier vending machine and school store snacks and beverages, or take a survey of the most popular physical activity choices.



Get everyone to participate.

Let everyone know that healthier food choices and physical activity are important to you and the whole school. Talk it up at staff meetings, Back to School Night, or the next parent's association meeting. Encourage teachers, staff, students, and parents to participate in the school wellness council and share best practices.



Start a friendly competition between grades.

Award nonfood prizes or privileges to the class or grade that is doing the most physical activity or eating the most vegetables at lunch. Have students invent a cool name and posters to get everyone excited, like the "Fruit and Veggie Victory Challenge" or the "School-Wide Walk Around the World." Go for it!



Keep the ball rolling at TeamNutrition.usda.gov.

Find more ideas that other schools have used successfully, as well as ready-to-use talking points and other materials.

Thanks for your help.



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Healthier Middle Schools

Every food service manager can help.

It takes a community.

Healthy change takes a school-wide effort. That's why USDA is reaching out not only to middle school food service managers but to teachers, principals, parents and students, as well. Your knowledge can help them understand barriers to healthy change and identify realistic solutions. Working with people across the community also builds support for your meal program.

It's worth the effort.

As any teacher will tell you, well-nourished kids perform better in class and are ready to learn!^{1,2,3,4,5} When we give kids plenty of healthy food choices and regular physical activity at school, they learn healthier habits for life. That helps to reduce childhood obesity, too.

Now's the time to share what you know.

Nobody knows more than you, or has done more, to make school menus healthier. Now it's time to take your knowledge beyond the cafeteria and join with others to make middle schools healthier.



Recipes for success.

On the back of this flyer, you'll find ideas other food service managers are using to get more healthy food choices into every kid's school day. You may already be doing some, and others may offer new things to try.

1. Florence MD, Asbridge M, Veugelers PJ. Diet quality and academic performance. *J Sch Health*. 2008; 78:209-215.

2. Fu ML, Cheng L, Tu SH, Pan WH. Association between unhealthful eating patterns and unfavorable overall school performance in children. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2007; 107:1935-1943.

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5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The association between school based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2010.

Middle schools get healthier when **food service managers** share their knowledge.



If kids help create it, they're more likely to eat it.

- Let them have a say in selecting new, healthy menu items featuring dark green, red, and orange veggies; beans and peas, or whole grains.
- Host a tasting event where students and teachers can vote on their favorites. Announce the winners and include them on your menus.



Dress up fruits and veggies.

- Try roasting veggies or adding fresh herbs.
- Cut up fruits and veggies into bite-size pieces served with low-fat dipping sauce.
- Explore preplated or packaged salads. Kids choose them to get through the line faster.



Before they'll eat it, first they need to see it.

In the cafeteria, school store, and vending machines, put healthier foods where kids are most likely to choose them.

- Vegetables at the beginning of the lunch line
- Unflavored milk in front of the chocolate



Visit TeamNutrition.usda.gov and keep up the good work.

More ideas and tips are waiting for you, as well as ready-to-use materials, like talking points to use at school meetings and events.

Thanks for your help.



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HealthierUS School Challenge: Recognizing Excellence in Nutrition and Physical Activity

New Criteria Effective July 1, 2012



General Criteria

Team Nutrition School	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School is enrolled as a Team Nutrition School.
School Meals Programs	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School participates in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) <i>and</i> National School Lunch Program (NSLP). • Reimbursable meals meet USDA nutrition standards. • All corrective actions from school's most recent State review of school meals program must be completed.
6 Cent Certification	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Food Authority must be certified for 6 Cents.
Average Daily Participation (ADP; calculated based on attendance)	<p><i>Breakfast</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary/Middle School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bronze: No ADP requirement ○ Silver: 20% ○ Gold: 35% ○ Gold Award of Distinction: 35% • High School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bronze: No ADP requirement ○ Silver: 15% ○ Gold: 25% ○ Gold Award of Distinction: 25%

General Criteria (cont.)

Average Daily Participation
(ADP;
calculated
based on
attendance)

Lunch

- Elementary/Middle School
 - Bronze: No ADP requirement
 - Silver: 60%
 - Gold: 75%
 - Gold Award of Distinction: 75%
- High School
 - Bronze: No ADP requirement
 - Silver: 45%
 - Gold: 65%
 - Gold Award of Distinction: 65%

Breakfast Criteria

Fruits*	<p><i>Bronze/Silver</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least three different fruits* must be offered each week. • Dried fruit must have no added sweetener; canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup. • 100% juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week. • At least <u>one</u> fruit per week must be served fresh. <p><i>Gold/Gold Award of Distinction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one different fruit* must be offered every day. • Dried fruit must have no added sweetener; canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup. • 100% juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week. • At least <u>two</u> fruits per week must be served fresh. <p>*Vegetables from the dark-green, red/orange, beans and peas (legumes) and “other vegetable” sub-groups may be substituted for fruits to meet the HUSSC fruit variety criteria for breakfast. The substitution must be consistent with meal pattern requirements as defined in §210.10(c)(2)(iii).</p>
Grains	<p><i>Bronze/Silver</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of grains offered weekly are whole grain-rich.* <p><i>Gold</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of grains offered weekly are whole grain-rich.* <p><i>Gold Award of Distinction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of grains offered weekly are whole grain-rich.* <p>* The definition of whole grain-rich is consistent with USDA policy guidance on new meal pattern requirements 7 CFR 210.10(c)(2)(iv).</p>

Lunch Criteria

Vegetables	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark-green, red and orange, and dry beans and peas must be offered in amounts equivalent to the meal pattern. <p><i>Bronze/Silver</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer <u>one</u> additional serving weekly from any of three vegetable sub-groups (dark-green, red and orange, dry beans and peas). <p><i>Gold/Gold Award of Distinction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer <u>two</u> additional servings weekly from any of three vegetable sub-groups (dark-green, red and orange, dry beans and peas).
Fruits	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least five different fruits must be offered each week. • Dried fruit must have no added sweetener; canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup. • 100% juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week. <p><i>Bronze</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One fruit per week must be served fresh. <p><i>Silver</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two fruits per week must be served fresh. <p><i>Gold</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three fruits per week must be served fresh. <p><i>Gold Award of Distinction:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four fruits per week must be served fresh.

Lunch Criteria (cont.)

Grains

Bronze/Silver

- Two-thirds of the grains offered over a week must be whole grain-rich.*

Gold/Gold Award of Distinction

- All grains offered must be whole grain-rich*.

Whole Grain-Rich Variety:

Bronze/Silver/Gold

- At least three different types of whole grain-rich* foods offered during the week.

Gold Award of Distinction

- Same as Gold plus only one whole grain-rich* offering per week may be a grain-based dessert.

* The definition of whole grain-rich is consistent with USDA policy guidance on new meal pattern requirements 7 CFR 210.10(c)(2)(iv).

Additional Criteria

Nutrition Education	<p><i>Elementary School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all award levels, nutrition education is provided to all students in all grades. <p><i>Middle School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronze/Silver <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offered in at least one grade during the school year. • Gold/Gold Award of Distinction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offered in at least two grades. <p><i>High School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all award levels, nutrition education offered in two courses required for graduation.
Physical Education (PE)	<p><i>Elementary School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured PE must be provided. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bronze/Silver: Minimum average of 45* minutes per week, throughout the school year. ○ Gold: Minimum average of 90* minutes per week, throughout the school year. ○ Gold Award of Distinction: Minimum average 150* minutes per week, throughout the school year. <p>*Up to 20 minutes (Bronze/Silver) and 45 minutes (Gold/Gold Award of Distinction) of the PE requirement may be met by providing <u>structured</u> physical activity planned by a certified PE teacher and implemented by a classroom teacher or school administrator. All students must participate in the physical activities, which must be at least moderate-intensity and in increments of at least 10 minutes.</p> <p><i>Middle School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all award levels, structured physical education offered to at least two grades. <p><i>High School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all award levels, structured physical education offered in at least two courses.

Additional Criteria (cont.)

<p>Physical Activity (PA)</p>	<p><i>Elementary School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all award levels, physical activity opportunities are provided each day for all full day students (e.g., scheduled recess, walking clubs, bike clubs, intramural sports, a walk-to-school program). Such opportunities for physical activity are not the same as physical education (see the Physical Education section of this chart for a definition of physical education). • For all award levels, school reinforces physical activity/physical education messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment. <p><i>Middle and High School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all award levels, school provides students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activity (e.g., intramural/interscholastic sports or activity clubs) throughout the school year. In addition, the school actively promotes participation in physical activity (in and out of school) to all students. • For all award levels, school reinforces physical activity/physical education messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.
<p>Local School Wellness Policy</p>	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a copy of the school’s local wellness policy with the HUSSC Application, <u>and</u> provide documentation for the following local school wellness policy criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ List three ways your school is working to meet local wellness policy goals (e.g., creating specifications for vending machine foods to ensure they meet nutritional criteria, including local wellness policy goals in your school improvement plan, meetings of school wellness committee every other month). ○ Describe how parents, students, school administration and staff, and the community are involved in the implementation of the local wellness policy at your school.
<p>Fundraising</p>	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily non-food items should be sold through school fundraising activities. However, if food items are sold during the school day, they must meet the HUSSC criteria for competitive foods.

Additional Criteria (cont.)

Other Criteria for Excellence

Bronze: Must select at least two of the 20 options.

Silver: Must select at least four of the 20 options.

Gold: Must select at least six of the 20 options.

Gold Award of Distinction: Must select at least eight of the 20 options.

Options:

Program Outreach Excellence

- School implements innovative practices to increase SBP participation, such as Breakfast in the Classroom.
- School operates an afterschool program that participates in the Afterschool Snack Program or at-risk afterschool meals component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- If percentage of free or reduced students is 50% or more, Summer Food Service Program is available.

Physical Activity Excellence

- School sponsors a non-competitive afterschool physical activity program.
- School actively supports and promotes walking or bicycling to and from school.
- School offers at least 20 minutes of recess daily before lunch.

Nutrition Education Excellence

- School uses grade appropriate Team Nutrition curricula and lessons to teach nutrition education.
- School has partnered with a chef in the *Chefs Move to Schools* Program.

Excellence in School and Community Involvement in Wellness Efforts

- Provides annual training to before and after school program staff on physical activity and nutrition.
- All school staff receives annual training on wellness policies and ways to promote nutrition and physical activity.
- School partners with one or more community groups to promote wellness.
- Students have the opportunity to provide input on school food and physical activity options.
- School informs public on amount of time allotted for lunch. Solicits input from students and community members on the amount of time that is adequate for lunch.

<p>Other Criteria for Excellence</p>	<p><i>School Food Service Excellence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Food Service Manager is a certified food handler (local or national certification) • School has a Farm to School initiative. • <u>Smarter Lunchroom techniques are used to encourage fruit consumption:</u> Fruit is displayed in 2 locations, one of which is near the cash register, on all lunch lines. Attractive displays, signage, and staff encouragement are used to draw attention to the fruit and encourage children to select them. • <u>Smarter Lunchroom techniques are used to encourage vegetable consumption:</u> Students are given the opportunity to provide input into vegetable offerings and to identify creative/descriptive names for the offerings. Creative/descriptive names are displayed with vegetables on the lunch line as well as on a poster or menu board outside the school cafeteria. • When offered, dark-green, red and orange vegetables and dry beans and peas are displayed first or most prominently among vegetable side dishes on the lunch line. • <u>Smarter Lunchroom techniques are used to encourage consumption of dry beans and peas:</u> Entrees that include dry beans or peas are displayed first or most prominently on the lunch line amongst other entrée items on at least 2 days. Dry bean and pea entrée items are given creative/descriptive names with student input. • Grab-and-go reimbursable meal options include dark-green, red and orange vegetables, and/or dry beans and peas at least one day per week.
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Criteria for Competitive Foods/A La Carte/Second Servings (No Change)	
<p>General Criteria for All Competitive Foods (including a la carte, seconds, in vending machines, school stores)</p>	<p><i>Bronze/Silver</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When competitive foods are served: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the foodservice area ○ Only during meal periods <p><i>Gold/Gold Award of Distinction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When competitive foods are served: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anywhere in the school ○ At any time during the school day (including meal periods)
Total Fat	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calories from total fat must be at or below 35% (excluding nuts, seeds, nut butters and reduced-fat cheese).
Trans Fat	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “ <i>Trans</i> fat-free” less than 0.5g <i>trans</i> fat per serving.
Saturated Fat	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calories from saturated fat must be below 10%. Reduced- fat cheese is exempt.
Sugar	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Total</u> sugar must be at or below 35% by weight (includes naturally occurring and added sugars). • Fruits and vegetables are exempt.

Criteria for Competitive Foods/A La Carte/Second Servings (cont.)	
Sodium	<p><i>Bronze/Silver/Gold</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be at or below 480mg per side dish/non-entrée. • Must be at or below 600mg per main dish/entrée. <p><i>Gold Award of Distinction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be at or below 200mg per side dish/non-entrée. • Must be at or below 480mg per main dish/entrée.
Portion Sizes	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the National School Lunch/School Breakfast Programs; for other sales, the item package or container is not to exceed 200 calories.
Fruits and Non-Fried Vegetables	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruits and vegetables may be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, and they must be found in Chapter 2 of the Food Buying Guide. • Dried fruit must have no added sweetener; canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup.
Milk	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only low-fat (1% or less) or fat-free milk meeting State and local standards for pasteurized milk and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages may be offered daily.
Milk Serving Sizes	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk serving size is limited to 8-fluid ounces.

Criteria for Competitive Foods/A La Carte/Second Servings (cont.)	
Other Approved Beverages	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit and vegetable juices: 100% full strength with no sweeteners or non-nutritive sweeteners. • Water (non-flavored, non-sweetened, non-carbonated, non-caffeinated, without non-nutritive sweeteners).
Juice Serving Size	<p><i>All Award Levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juice serving size is limited to 6-fluid ounces for elementary and middle schools and 8-fluid ounces for high schools.



USDA Foods: Healthy Choices for Our Schools

Nutritious food is essential to a healthy life. The USDA Foods program provides our Nation's school children with nutritious, safe, appealing, and 100-percent American-grown food.

USDA leads the way in fostering healthy kids by:

- » Ensuring the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs meet strong nutrition standards,
- » Using the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* to direct food offerings and programs,
- » Participating in the *Let's Move!* initiative,
- » Developing and implementing the *HealthierUS School Challenge* (HUSC), and
- » Offering nutritious USDA Foods, which help provide healthy school meals.

Our youth rely on USDA. More than half of all school children (nearly 32 million) participate in USDA's National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

For many of these children, the food they receive in school is their primary source of nutrition. Today's students need wholesome food more than ever – over 17 million American children live in food-insecure households and one in three children is considered overweight or obese. USDA's efforts help create the healthy school environment needed to ensure our children are engaged and productive learners.

Serving Up Nutritious Options

The USDA Foods program helps improve the nutritional value of school meals by offering more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains than ever before. Not only do these healthy foods taste good, but they are also lower in sugar, salt, and fat.

- » **Fruits and Vegetables:** Over \$326 million in canned, fresh, frozen, and dried fruits and vegetables was purchased for schools through the USDA Foods program and the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in Fiscal Year 2010.
- » **Whole Grains:** USDA offers many whole-grain options including quick-cooking brown rice, rolled oats, whole-grain dry kernel corn, whole-wheat flour, and whole-grain pancakes, pastas, and tortillas.
- » **Sugar:** USDA canned fruits are packed in extra light sucrose syrup or slightly sweetened fruit juice; and all applesauce is unsweetened.
- » **Sodium:** USDA has reduced sodium in all canned beans and vegetables to 140 mg per serving. This greatly exceeds the Food and Drug Administration's "healthy" labeling standard for sodium



The Right Choice for Our Schools

To help ensure that America's children receive the healthy food they deserve, the USDA Foods program:

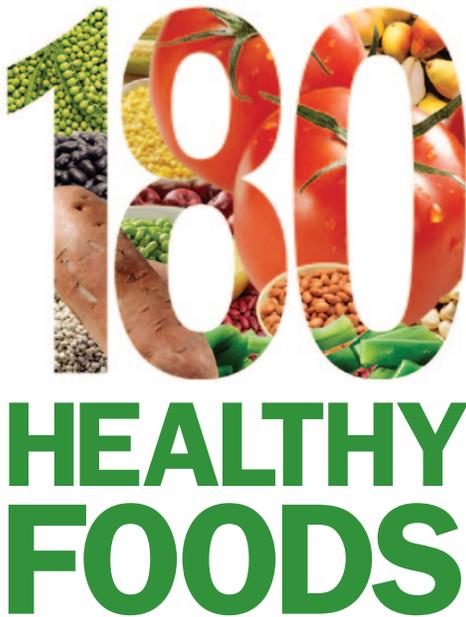
- » Makes up approximately 15 to 20 percent of the food served in each school lunch.
- » Provides a variety of healthy food choices, including fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, dairy, and grains.
- » Includes a selection of more than 180 nutritious food items—fresh, frozen, packaged, canned, dried, and bulk.
- » Meets rigorous food safety standards set by Federal regulatory agencies and USDA's two purchasing agencies – the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Farm Service Agency.



(480 mg per serving) and is in line with the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommendation to reduce salt intake. Frozen vegetables with no added salt are also available.

» *Fat:* Low-fat meats and lean poultry products, as well as fat-free potato wedges, are available to schools. Shortening and butter were eliminated long ago from school purchasing options.

The improved nutritional value of USDA Foods will help support USDA's strengthened school meal standards and continue to reflect current nutrition science and the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.



“Over the years, [USDA Foods] have become increasingly more nutritious. Improved quality and appeal has led to greater use of these products by schools.”

–Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Schools Get Creative With USDA Foods

Schools are choosing to use USDA Foods in more healthful ways. Many schools have eliminated fried foods and have opted to convert USDA Foods into lower fat, lower sodium menu items that children still find tasty. For example, schools can process USDA bulk chicken into unbreaded, roasted pieces rather than the traditionally fried version.

More and more, USDA's whole-grain products are featured on school menus. Stir-frys using USDA quick-cooking brown rice, sandwich wraps with USDA whole-grain tortillas, and USDA whole-grain pasta and vegetables are popular menu offerings. Schools can top USDA's whole-grain rotini with USDA's low-sodium spaghetti sauce and use whole-wheat flour for breadsticks.

These innovative changes are taking place across the country. More and more, the 101,000 schools and institutions that participate in the National School Lunch Program are thinking creatively about how to serve healthful options that kids will enjoy.

What Can You Do?

Spread the word about the nutritional benefits of school meals and the healthy food available through the USDA Foods program by:

- » Planning events such as taste tests at assemblies or health fairs;
- » Including messages in school newsletters and Web sites, or on the back of lunch menus;
- » Teaching your students about the importance of nutrition using USDA Foods; and
- » Partnering with teachers in your school to develop nutrition education lesson plans.



For more information on USDA Foods resources to help plan healthy and tasty meals, visit www.fns.usda.gov/USDAFoods.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive

Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

DATE: April 26, 2012

MEMO CODE: SP 30-2012

SUBJECT: Grain Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

SOURCE CITATION: 42 USC 1753(b)(3) and 1758(a)(4) and 7 CFR Parts 210 and 220

This memorandum explains the grains requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and specifically addresses implementation of the ounce equivalencies and definition of whole grain-rich products.

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) published, "Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs" on January 26, 2012. This final rule amended NSLP and SBP regulations at 7 CFR 210.10 and 220.8, updating the meal patterns and nutrition standards to align them with the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGAs) as required by Sections 4(b) and 9(a)(4) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act as amended by Section 201 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The meal patterns for the NSLP and the SBP include quantities of grains based on ounce equivalencies (oz eq) in a manner that is consistent with the DGAs and the USDA food guidance system known as MyPlate. The amounts of foods included in the meal pattern, including the amount of oz eq of grains, were carefully determined through an extensive review and assessment to meet 24 nutrient targets. NSLP and SBP nutrition standards also require all grains to be whole grain-rich by school year (SY) 2014-2015.

This memorandum sets forth the criteria to be used by school food authorities (SFAs) and program operators to determine grains which meet the regulatory standards and to determine equivalent minimum serving sizes (oz eq). In addition, this memorandum includes examples of foods that qualify as grains based on the nutrition standards in the NSLP and SBP hereafter referred to as "school meal programs."

I CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING ACCEPTABLE GRAINS FOR SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

The requirements to offer whole grain-rich products will be phased in for the school meal programs over the next two SYs:

For **lunch**, beginning July 1, 2012 (SY 2012-2013), through June 30, 2014 (SY 2013-2014), half of the grains offered during the school week must meet the whole grain-rich criteria. Beginning July 1, 2014, (SY 2014-2015), **all** grains must meet the whole grain-rich criteria.

For **breakfast**, beginning July 1, 2013 (SY 2013-2014), half of the grains offered during the school week must meet the whole grain-rich criteria. Beginning July 1, 2014, (SY 2014-2015), **all** grains must meet the whole grain-rich criteria.

Through SY 2013-2014, SFAs and program operators should continue to refer to *Section 3 Grains/Breads* of the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* and *FCS Instruction 783 - REV 2, The Grains/Breads Requirements for Food-based Menu Planning Alternatives in the Child Nutrition Programs* for guidance on products which meet the grains requirements, but not the whole grain-rich requirements. After SY 2013-2014, all grain must be whole grain-rich in order to meet NSLP and SBP nutrition standards. The USDA is in the process of updating several resources to assist SFAs and program operators with identifying whole grain-rich foods for availability by summer 2012.

Whole Grain-Rich Criteria

In accordance with NSLP and SBP regulations at 7 CFR Parts 210 and 220, the following criteria are to be used as the basis for crediting items to meet the whole grain-rich requirement:

Foods that qualify as whole grain-rich for the school meal programs are foods that contain 100-percent whole grain or contain a blend of whole-grain meal and/or flour and enriched meal and/or flour of which at least 50-percent is whole grain. Whole grain-rich products must contain at least 50-percent whole-grains and the remaining **grain**, if any, must be enriched.

Schools can use the following elements as a simple checklist to evaluate if a grain product meets the whole grain-rich criteria:

Element 1: The food item must meet the oz eq requirements for the grains component as defined by this guidance.

Element 2: The food must meet at least one of the following:

a. The whole-grain content per oz eq based on the attached Exhibit A weights must be at least 8.0 grams or more for Groups A – G. For Groups H and I, the volumes or weights listed must be offered to credit as one oz eq. This information may be determined from information provided on the product packaging or by the manufacturer, if available.

b. The product includes the following Food and Drug Administration-approved whole-grain health claim on its packaging: “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.”

c. The product ingredient declaration lists whole grains first, specifically:

- I. Non-mixed dishes (e.g., breads, cereals): whole grains must be the primary ingredient by weight (a whole grain is the first ingredient in the list with an exception for water). When the whole grain content comes from multiple ingredients, the combined whole grain ingredients may be the primary ingredient by weight even though a whole grain is not listed as the first ingredient. These products could meet the whole grain-rich criteria with proper manufacturer documentation. For example, a bread item may be made with three grain ingredients: enriched wheat flour (40% of grain), whole wheat (30% of grain), and whole oats (30% of grain). The program operator, with the assistance of manufacturers, could determine that whole grains were the primary ingredient by weight since the combined 60% whole grain ingredients are greater than the enriched wheat flour at 40% although the enriched flour may be listed first in the ingredient declaration.
- II. Mixed dishes (e.g., pizza, corn dogs): whole grains must be the primary grain ingredient by weight (a whole grain is the first grain ingredient in the list of grains). For foods prepared by the school food service, the recipe is used as the basis for a calculation to determine whether the total weight of whole-grain ingredients exceed the total weight of non whole-grain ingredients.

When flour blends are listed in the ingredient declaration and grouped together with parentheses, for example, ingredients: flour blend (whole wheat flour, enriched flour), sugar, cinnamon, etc., program operators will need to know either that the whole grain content is at least 8.0 grams per oz eq or that the weight of the whole grain is greater than the first ingredient listed after the flour blend such as sugar in the example.

A ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal must list a whole grain as the primary ingredient and the RTE cereal must be fortified. If the grain product includes enriched ingredients, or the

product itself is enriched; the ingredients or the grain product must meet the Food and Drug Administration's standards of identity for enrichment (21 CFR Section 137). Bran and germ are not creditable in school meal programs. Non-creditable grain ingredients in products at very low levels used as processing aids are allowable at levels less than 2-percent.

Manufacturers may apply for a Child Nutrition (CN) Label for qualifying products to indicate the number of oz eq grains that meet the whole grain-rich criteria. The term, "oz eq grains" on the CN Label indicates the product meets the whole grain-rich criteria, while the terms "bread" or "bread alternate" on the CN Label indicates the product meets previous program requirements for grains/breads. Please refer to the CN Labeling Program website for details regarding qualifying products at: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/cnlabeling/.

II CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING EQUIVALENT MINIMUM SERVING SIZES

Pursuant to the new NSLP and SBP regulations, the updated meal patterns, which include requirements for whole-grain rich grain products based on oz eq, will become effective on July 1, 2012, the beginning of SY 2012-2013. Recognizing that operators and manufacturers which provide products for the school meal programs may require time to change specifications and revise products, we will allow SFAs and program operators to credit grain products based on the current 14.75 grams of grains per serving through SY 2012-2013. All grain products must be credited based on per oz eq standards beginning on July 1, 2013, the beginning of SY 2013-2014.

As provided for in NSLP and SBP regulations, grain products must be credited using the oz eq method. This criterion is applied to various products as follows:

- Baked goods, such as breads, biscuits, bagels, etc., require 16 grams of creditable grain ingredients in order to provide 1 oz eq credit.
- For cereal grains such as oatmeal, pasta, and brown rice, a 1-ounce equivalent is 28 grams (approximately 1.0 ounce by weight) of dry product. Since these grains are served cooked and water is added in preparation, the cooked volume equivalent is ½ cup cooked cereal, pasta, or rice.
- For ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereal, 28 grams *or* 1.0 ounce of product is considered an ounce equivalent. The ounce equivalent volumes are 1 cup flakes or rounds, 1.25 cups puffed cereal, and ¼ cup granola. As with baked goods, we recognize that program operators and manufacturers may need additional time to adjust products and orders with respect to volume requirements for RTE cereal.

The new meal patterns provide a minimum and maximum number of oz eq to meet a weekly grains requirement by age group. All grains offered should be counted toward meeting these minimum and maximum requirements using the ounce equivalent or "bread" or "bread alternate" criteria in the interim. Of the weekly total for lunch, up to two (2.0) oz eq grains per week may be in the form of a grain-based dessert.

During SY 2012-2013, battered and/or breaded products offered will not need to be counted toward the maximum weekly grain requirements in the meal pattern. Beginning July 1, 2013 (SY 2013-2014), all grains which are part of battered and/or breaded products offered must be counted towards the weekly grain requirement.

The contribution of grains in a recipe or product formulation for items listed in Exhibit A, Groups A-G, may be calculated to determine the number of oz eq grains the recipe provides based on 16 grams of grain ingredients per ounce equivalent. The crediting of a food item as oz eq grains is determined by the total amount in grams of whole-grain meal and/or flour or whole-grain and enriched meal and/or flour in the product formulation or recipe divided by the number of servings the formulation or recipe yields divided by the 16 grams per oz eq standard. For the types of food items listed in Groups H and I of the attached Exhibit A to count as one full serving, the weights or volumes listed therein must be used.

One quarter (1/4) of an oz eq is the smallest amount allowable to be credited toward the quantities of grains. If the minimum daily requirement for grains is 1 oz eq, this minimum can be met by offering multiple food items, for example, 0.5 oz eq of one grain item and 0.5 oz eq of another grain item. The oz eq for grains may be determined by using either the weights or volumes listed in the attached Exhibit A, or the SFA may require documentation from a manufacturer certifying the grams of creditable grains per portion for determining the oz eq from a given product.

The attached *Exhibit A: School Lunch and Breakfast* contains the equivalent minimum weights for a wide variety of purchased food items to meet the oz eq criteria. Program operators may use Exhibit A instead of calculating the actual amount of grains in a product since it provides the equivalent minimum weights to provide one oz eq of grains. We note that the listing of food items included in Exhibit A is not exhaustive.

Exhibit A provides oz equivalent information for products commonly offered in schools. SFAs have flexibility to use a wide range of products in planning meals which meet NSLP and SBP meal pattern and nutrition specifications. However, program operators are strongly encouraged to offer food items that are low in added sugars, sodium, and saturated fat in order to meet these requirements and provide foods which are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION DATES:

Ounce equivalent requirements: All grain products must be credited based on oz eq standards beginning July 1, 2013, the beginning of SY-2013-2014. The grain component weights in the attached *Exhibit A: School Lunch and Breakfast* have been updated to reflect the change from 14.75 grams of creditable grain to 16.0 grams of creditable grain per oz eq

Regional Directors
State Directors
Page 6

for Groups A-G. The original Exhibit A weights and volumes for all Child Nutrition Programs may continue to be used through June 30, 2013 for lunch and breakfast.

Whole grain-rich requirements: for lunch, beginning July 1, 2012 (SY 2012-2013), half of the grains offered during the school week must meet the whole grain-rich criteria. For breakfast, beginning July 1, 2013 (SY 2013-2014), half of the grains offered during the school week must meet the whole grain-rich criteria. Beginning July 1, 2014, (SY 2014-2015), all grains must meet the whole grain-rich criteria for lunch and breakfast.

For NSLP and SBP (sections 210.10, 210.10a, 220.8, and 220.8a), this policy memorandum supersedes FCS Instruction 783 - REV 2, The Grains/Breads Requirements for Food-based Menu Planning Alternatives in the Child Nutrition Programs and the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* guidance on Grains/Breads. However, the FCS Instruction 783 - REV 2, will be revised to remove the sections mentioned above and will pertain to all other Child Nutrition Programs. State Agencies should contact their Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office with any questions.

Original Signed

Cynthia Long
Director
Child Nutrition Division

Attachment

EXHIBIT A: SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST
WHOLE GRAIN-RICH OUNCE EQUIVALENCY (OZ EQ) REQUIREMENTS FOR
SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS^{1,2}

GROUP A	OZ EQ FOR GROUP A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread type coating • Bread sticks (hard) • Chow mein noodles • Savory Crackers (saltines and snack crackers) • Croutons • Pretzels (hard) • Stuffing (dry) Note: weights apply to bread in stuffing. 	1 oz eq = 22 gm or 0.8 oz 3/4 oz eq = 17 gm or 0.6 oz 1/2 oz eq = 11 gm or 0.4 oz 1/4 oz eq = 6 gm or 0.2 oz
GROUP B	OZ EQ FOR GROUP B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bagels • Batter type coating • Biscuits • Breads (sliced whole wheat, French, Italian) • Buns (hamburger and hot dog) • Sweet Crackers⁴ (graham crackers - all shapes, animal crackers) • Egg roll skins • English muffins • Pita bread (whole wheat or whole grain-rich) • Pizza crust • Pretzels (soft) • Rolls (whole wheat or whole grain-rich) • Tortillas (whole wheat or whole corn) • Tortilla chips (whole wheat or whole corn) • Taco shells (whole wheat or whole corn) 	1 oz eq = 28 gm or 1.0 oz 3/4 oz eq = 21 gm or 0.75 oz 1/2 oz eq = 14 gm or 0.5 oz 1/4 oz eq = 7 gm or 0.25 oz
GROUP C	OZ EQ FOR GROUP C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cookies³ (plain - includes vanilla wafers) • Cornbread • Corn muffins • Croissants • Pancakes • Pie crust (dessert pies³, cobbler³, fruit turnovers⁴, and meat/meat alternate pies) • Waffles 	1 oz eq = 34 gm or 1.2 oz 3/4 oz eq = 26 gm or 0.9 oz 1/2 oz eq = 17 gm or 0.6 oz 1/4 oz eq = 9 gm or 0.3 oz

¹ The following food quantities from Groups A-G, must contain at least 16 grams of whole-grain or can be made with 8 grams of whole-grain and 8 grams of enriched meal and/or enriched flour to be considered whole grain-rich.

² Some of the following grains may contain more sugar, salt, and/or fat than others. This should be a consideration when deciding how often to serve them.

³ Allowed only as dessert at lunch as specified in §210.10.

⁴ Allowed for desserts at lunch as specified in §210.10, and for breakfasts served under the SBP.

GROUP D	OZ EQ FOR GROUP D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doughnuts⁴ (cake and yeast raised, unfrosted) • Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars⁴ (plain) • Muffins (all, except corn) • Sweet roll⁴ (unfrosted) • Toaster pastry⁴ (unfrosted) 	1 oz eq = 55 gm or 2.0 oz 3/4 oz eq = 42 gm or 1.5 oz 1/2 oz eq = 28 gm or 1.0 oz 1/4 oz eq = 14 gm or 0.5 oz
GROUP E	OZ EQ FOR GROUP E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars⁴ (with nuts, dried fruit, and/or chocolate pieces) • Cookies³ (with nuts, raisins, chocolate pieces and/or fruit purees) • Doughnuts⁴ (cake and yeast raised, frosted or glazed) • French toast • Sweet rolls⁴ (frosted) • Toaster pastry⁴ (frosted) 	1 oz eq = 69 gm or 2.4 oz 3/4 oz eq = 52 gm or 1.8 oz 1/2 oz eq = 35 gm or 1.2 oz 1/4 oz eq = 18 gm or 0.6 oz
GROUP F	OZ EQ FOR GROUP F
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cake³ (plain, unfrosted) • Coffee cake⁴ 	1 oz eq = 82 gm or 2.9 oz 3/4 oz eq = 62 gm or 2.2 oz 1/2 oz eq = 41 gm or 1.5 oz 1/4 oz eq = 21 gm or 0.7 oz
GROUP G	OZ EQ FOR GROUP G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownies³ (plain) • Cake³ (all varieties, frosted) 	1 oz eq = 125 gm or 4.4 oz 3/4 oz eq = 94 gm or 3.3 oz 1/2 oz eq = 63 gm or 2.2 oz 1/4 oz eq = 32 gm or 1.1 oz
GROUP H	OZ EQ FOR GROUP H
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereal Grains (barley, quinoa, etc) • Breakfast cereals (cooked)^{5,6} • Bulgur or cracked wheat • Macaroni (all shapes) • Noodles (all varieties) • Pasta (all shapes) • Ravioli (noodle only) • Rice (enriched white or brown) 	1 oz eq = 1/2 cup cooked or 1 ounce (28 g) dry
GROUP I	OZ EQ FOR GROUP I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to eat breakfast cereal (cold, dry)^{5,6} 	1 oz eq = 1 cup or 1 ounce for flakes and rounds 1 oz eq = 1.25 cups or 1 ounce for puffed cereal 1 oz eq = 1/4 cup or 1 ounce for granola

⁵ Refer to program regulations for the appropriate serving size for supplements served to children aged 1 through 5 in the NSLP; and meals served to children ages 1 through 5 and adult participants in the CACFP. Breakfast cereals are traditionally served as a breakfast menu item but may be served in meals other than breakfast.

⁶ Cereals must be whole-grain, or whole grain and enriched or fortified cereal.

Best Practices Sharing Center

Share your resources, or learn from others!



In the Best Practices Sharing Center, School Food Authorities and State Agencies can share resources and tools they use to serve healthy menus that meet the new school meal regulations.

Search by topic area, format, or audience to find resources!



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Final Rule to Update School Lunches and Breakfasts



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
February 2012

Overview

- Background
 - Proposed Rule
 - Major Changes
- New Meal Pattern
- Implementation Timeline
- General Provisions
- Meal Components
- Dietary Specifications
- Timeline Review
- Current Standards vs. Final Rule
- Implementation and Monitoring
- Questions/Comments

BACKGROUND

Proposed Rule (Jan 2011)

- Title: *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs (76 FR 2494)*
- Published: Jan. 13, 2011
- Based on 2009 IOM report, *School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children*
- 133,268 total comments received
 - <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=FNS-2007-0038-64675>

Final Rule (Jan 2012)

- Title: *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs (77 FR 4088)*
 - Significant improvements to school meals, while modifying several key proposed requirements to address public comments regarding cost, timing, food waste, and administrative burden
 - Published: January 26, 2012
 - Effective date: July 1, 2012
- <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf>

Changes from Proposed Rule

- USDA responsive to stakeholder concerns
 - Changes to breakfast phased-in gradually over 3 years
 - No meat/meat alternate required at breakfast
 - Additional year to implement sodium target #2
 - Students may take smaller portions of fruits and vegetables under Offer versus Serve
 - Compliance based on one-week reviews of menus

Congressional Action

- Several changes from proposed rule required as result of Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55)
 - No maximum weekly limit on starchy vegetables (or other vegetable subgroups)
 - USDA to evaluate studies on sodium intake/ health prior to 2nd and final sodium targets
 - Crediting of tomato paste unchanged
 - “Whole grain” definition provided in rule

NEW MEAL PATTERN

Final Rule Meal Pattern

	Breakfast Meal Pattern			Lunch Meal Pattern		
	GradesK-5 ^a	Grades6-8 ^a	Grades9-12 ^a	GradesK-5	Grades6-8	Grades9-12
Meal Pattern	Amount of Food^b Per Week (Minimum Per Day)					
Fruits (cups)^{c,d}	5 (1) ^e	5 (1) ^e	5 (1) ^e	2.5 (0.5)	2.5 (0.5)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups)^{c,d}	0	0	0	3.75 (0.75)	3.75 (0.75)	5 (1)
Dark green^f	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Red/Orange^f	0	0	0	0.75	0.75	1.25
Beans/Peas (Legumes)^f	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Starchy^f	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Other^{f,g}	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.75
Additional Veg to Reach Total^h	0	0	0	1	1	1.5
Grains (oz eq)ⁱ	7-10 (1) ^j	8-10 (1) ^j	9-10 (1) ^j	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	0 ^k	0 ^k	0 ^k	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid milk (cups)^l	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week						
Min-max calories (kcal)^{m,n,o}	350-500	400-550	450-600	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (% of total calories)^{n,o}	< 10	< 10	< 10	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium (mg)^{n,p}	≤ 430	≤ 470	≤ 500	≤ 640	≤ 710	≤ 740
Trans fat^{n,o}	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <u>trans</u> fat per serving.					

Reading the Meal Pattern Chart

	Breakfast Meal Pattern			Lunch Meal Pattern		
	Grades K-5 ^a	Grades 6-8 ^a	Grades 9-12 ^a	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Pattern	Amount of Food ^b Per Week (Minimum Per Day)					
Fruits (cups) ^{c,d}	5 (1) ^e	5 (1) ^e	5 (1) ^e	2.5 (0.5)	2.5 (0.5)	5 (1)

- First column
 - required food components & dietary specifications
- Next three columns
 - weekly SBP requirements based on age-grade
- Last three columns
 - amounts required for Lunch based on age-grade

Reading the Meal Pattern Chart

- Weekly requirements in cells; daily requirements in parentheses
- Fruits, Vegetables, Fluid Milk: daily/weekly minimums
- Grains, Meat/Meat Alternates: daily/weekly minimums and weekly maximums
- Calories: weekly minimums; weekly maximums
- Saturated Fat, Sodium: daily average in a week
- Trans Fat: daily/weekly maximum
- Chart available for download
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/dietaryspecs.pdf>

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Implementation Timeline

NEW REQUIREMENTS	Implementation (School Year) for NSLP (L) and SBP (B)						
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2022/23
FRUITS COMPONENT							
Offer fruit daily	L						
Fruit quantity increase to 5 cups/week (minimum 1 cup/day)			B				
VEGETABLES COMPONENT							
Offer vegetables subgroups weekly	L						
GRAINS COMPONENT							
Half of grains must be whole grain-rich	L	B					
All grains must be whole-grain rich			L, B				
Offer weekly grains ranges	L	B					
MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES COMPONENT							
Offer weekly meats/meat alternates ranges (daily min.)	L						
MILK COMPONENT							
Offer only fat-free (unflavored or flavored) and low-fat (unflavored) milk	L, B						
DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (to be met on average over a week)							
Calorie ranges	L	B					
Saturated fat limit (no change)	L, B						
Sodium Targets ¹ -Target 1Target 2Final target			L, B			L, B	L, B
Zero grams of trans fat per portion	L	B					
MENU PLANNING							
A single FBMP approach	L	B					
AGE-GRADE GROUPS							
Establish age/grade groups: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12	L	B					
OFFER VS. SERVE							
Reimbursable meals must contain a fruit or vegetable (1/2 cup minimum)	L		B				
MONITORING							
3-year adm. review cycle		L, B					
Conduct weighted nutrient analysis on 1 week of menus	L	B					

Implementation Timeline

- Depicts when each requirement will be phased in for both breakfast and lunch over next 10 years
- Letter “L” denotes lunch and letter “B” denotes breakfast
- Available for download

http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/implementation_timeline.pdf

GENERAL PROVISIONS

General Provisions

- New age/grade groups for Breakfast/Lunch
 - Grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12
 - Effective SY 2013-2014 for breakfast and SY 2012-2013 for lunch
 - Narrower to provide age-appropriate meals
 - Able to use same menu for grades K-8 due to overlap in requirements
- Food-Based Menu Planning required
- Offer versus Serve
 - A student has to select fruit or vegetable component
 - Schools required to offer full required amount, but student may select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving

MEAL COMPONENTS

Fruits

	Breakfast Meal Pattern			Lunch Meal Pattern		
	GradesK-5 ^a	Grades 6-8 ^a	Grades 9-12 ^a	GradesK-5	Grades6-8	Grades9-12
Meal Pattern	Amount of Food ^b Per Week (Minimum Per Day)					
Fruits (cups)^{c,d}	5 (1) ^e	5 (1) ^e	5 (1) ^e	2.5 (0.5)	2.5 (0.5)	5 (1)

- Fruit is now *required* in the breakfast and lunch programs- lunch requirement is a change from current practices
 - Effective SY 2012-13 for lunch
 - Effective SY 2014-15 for breakfast due to significant increase in quantity

Fruits

- Fruits/vegetables separate; 2 components
- Daily serving at breakfast and lunch
- May select fresh, frozen without added sugar, canned in juice/light syrup, or dried
 - No more than half fruit offerings may be juice
 - 100% juice only
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit
- Food Buying Guide for whole fruit crediting
- At breakfast, vegetables may be offered instead of fruits

Vegetables

	Breakfast Meal Pattern			Lunch Meal Pattern		
	GradesK-5 ^a	Grades 6-8 ^a	Grades 9-12 ^a	GradesK-5	Grades6-8	Grades9-12
Meal Pattern	Amount of Food ^b Per Week (Minimum Per Day)					
Vegetables (cups)	0	0	0	3.75 (0.75)	3.75 (0.75)	5 (1)
Dark green	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Red/Orange	0	0	0	0.75	0.75	1.25
Beans/Peas (Legumes)	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Starchy	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Other	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.75
Additional Veg to Reach Total	0	0	0	1	1	1.5

- Weekly minimums of all vegetable subgroups are required
- Final rule expands proposed orange subgroup to include red and orange vegetables

Vegetables

- Daily lunch serving reflects weekly variety
 - No SBP requirement; optional fruit substitute
- Vegetable subgroup weekly minimum requirements for
 - Dark Green (e.g., broccoli, collard greens, spinach)
 - Red/Orange (e.g., carrots, sweet potatoes)
 - Beans/Peas (Legumes) (e.g., kidney beans, lentils)
 - Starchy (e.g., corn, green peas, white potatoes)
 - Other (e.g., onions, green beans, cucumbers)
 - Additional vegetables to meet 5 cup weekly total

Vegetables (cont'd)

- Variety of preparation methods available
 - Fresh, frozen, and canned products
 - USDA Foods offers variety of no salt added or lower sodium products
- Raw, leafy greens credited as $\frac{1}{2}$ volume as served (i.e., 1 cup lettuce = $\frac{1}{2}$ vegetable serving)
- Beans/peas (legumes) may be credited as vegetable OR meat alternate
 - Count as one component per meal only

Grains

	Breakfast Meal Pattern			Lunch Meal Pattern		
	GradesK-5 ^a	Grades6-8 ^a	Grades9-12 ^a	GradesK-5	Grades6-8	Grades9-12
Meal Pattern	Amount of Food ^b Per Week (Minimum Per Day)					
Grains (oz eq)	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)

- Biggest change is a new requirement for whole grain-rich items
- Weekly grain quantities required at lunch have been reduced
 - In response to operator concerns about increased food quantities

Grains: Breakfast

- Offer daily minimums and weekly serving ranges of grains at breakfast
 - Weekly minimum and maximum quantities
 - Phased-in implementation of whole grain-rich
 - By SY 2013-14, at least half of offerings whole grain-rich
 - By SY 2014-15, all offerings are whole grain-rich
- Schools may substitute meat/meat alternate for grains once daily grains minimum met

Grains: Lunch

- Schools must offer the daily minimums and weekly serving ranges at lunch
 - Weekly minimum and maximum quantities
- By SY 2012-13, at least half of grains offered during the week must be whole grain-rich
- Beginning in SY 2014-15, all grains offered must be whole grain-rich

Criteria: Whole Grain-Rich Foods

- Currently no FDA standard label for whole grain content of foods
- USDA requires meeting temporary criteria:
 - Meet serving size requirements in the Grains/Breads Instruction, and
 - Meet at least one of the following:
 - Whole grains per serving must be ≥ 8 grams
 - Product includes FDA's whole grain health claim on its packaging
 - Product ingredient listing lists whole grain first (HUSSC criteria)

Other Grain Component Issues

- **Creditable Grain-Based Desserts**
 - Only two allowed at lunch per school week
 - A major source of solid fats and added sugars per DGA 2010
- **Formulated Grain-Fruit Products**
 - No longer able to meet grain or fruit components
 - Does not apply to granola bars, fortified cereals, etc.
- **Cost and Availability Concerns**
 - Many whole grain options available in USDA
 - Foods: brown rice, whole grain pasta, oatmeal, etc.

Meat/Meat Alternates

	Breakfast Meal Pattern			Lunch Meal Pattern		
	Grades K-5 ^a	Grades 6-8 ^a	Grades 9-12 ^a	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Pattern	Amount of Food ^b Per Week (Minimum Per Day)					
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	0 ^k	0 ^k	0 ^k	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)

- For breakfast, no daily or weekly meat/meat alternate requirement
- For lunch, the requirements go into effect in SY 2012-2013

Meat/Meat Alternates

- Daily and weekly requirements for lunch
 - 2 oz eq. daily for students in grades 9-12
 - 1 oz eq. daily for younger students
- Variety of meat/meat alternate encouraged
 - No protein subgroup requirement
- Both tofu and soy yogurt will be allowable as meat alternates
 - Additional vegetarian protein sources
 - Crediting instruction memo to follow

Fluid Milk

	Breakfast Meal Pattern			Lunch Meal Pattern		
	Grades K-5 ^a	Grades 6-8 ^a	Grades 9-12 ^a	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Pattern	Amount of Food ^b Per Week (Minimum Per Day)					
Fluid milk (cups) ¹	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)

- Milk requirements go into effect for both breakfast and lunch in SY 2012-13

Fluid Milk

- Allowable milk options include
 - fat-free (unflavored or flavored)
 - low-fat (unflavored only)
 - fat-free or low-fat (lactose-reduced or lactose-free)
- Must offer at least two choices
- Does not alter nutrition standards for milk substitutes (soy, rice beverages)

DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS

Dietary Specifications

- Calories
 - Minimum and maximum calorie levels
 - Current regulations only establish minimums
 - Required by SY 2012-13 for lunch, and SY 2013-14 for breakfast
 - Grades K-5: 550-650 lunch, 350-500 breakfast
 - Grades 6-8: 600-700 lunch, 400-550 breakfast;
 - Grades 9-12: 750-850 lunch, 450-600 breakfast
- Saturated Fat
 - Limit to less than ten percent of total calories (same as current regulations)

Dietary Specifications

- New trans fat restriction
 - Nutrition label or manufacturer's specifications specify zero grams per serving
- No total fat requirement
- Maximum limits on sodium
 - Gradual implementation
 - Target 1: SY 2014-2015
 - Target 2: SY 2017-2018
 - Final Target: SY 2022-2023
- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/sodium.pdf>

Sodium Reduction Timeline

Sodium Reduction in Final Rule for Breakfast: Timeline & Amount

Age/ Grade Group	<u>Baseline</u> Current Average Sodium Levels As Offered (mg)	Target 1: Meet by July 1, 2014 (SY 2014-15) (mg)	Target 2: SY 2017-18 (mg)	<u>Final</u> Target: SY 2022-23 (mg)	% Change (Current Levels vs. Final Targets)
K-5	573 (elementary)	≤ 540	≤ 485	≤ 430	-25%
6-8	629 (middle)	≤ 600	≤ 535	≤ 470	-25%
9-12	686 (high)	≤ 640	≤ 570	≤ 500	-27%

Sodium Reduction Timeline

Sodium Reduction in Final Rule for Lunch: Timeline & Amount

Age/ Grade Group	<u>Baseline:</u> Current Average Sodium Levels As Offered (mg)	Target 1: Meet by July 1, 2014 (SY 2014- 15) (mg)	Target 2: SY 2017-18 (mg)	<u>Final Target:</u> SY 2022-23 (mg)	% Change (Current Levels vs. Final Targets)
K-5	1,377 (elementary)	≤ 1,230	≤ 935	≤ 640	-54%
6-8	1,520 (middle)	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,035	≤ 710	-53%
9-12	1,588 (high)	≤ 1,420	≤ 1,080	≤ 740	-53%

Sodium Reduction Efforts

- Procurement specs and recipes will have to be modified
 - Technical assistance/training resources
 - USDA Foods reducing sodium in school foods
 - Already reduced for products (e.g., most cheeses)
- Prior to implementation of Target 2 and Final Target, USDA will evaluate relevant data on sodium intake and human health
 - Required by Section 743 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2012

A Review

TIMELINE OF CHANGES

Breakfast Changes Effective SY 2012-2013

- Offer *only* fat-free (flavored or unflavored) and lowfat (unflavored) milk
- Saturated fat limit <10% calories

Lunch Changes

Effective SY 2012-2013

- Offer fruit daily
- Offer vegetable subgroups weekly
- Half of grains must be whole grain-rich
- Offer weekly grain ranges
- Offer weekly meat/meat alternate ranges
- Offer *only* fat-free (flavored or unflavored) and low-fat (unflavored) milk
- Calorie ranges

Lunch Changes

Effective SY 2012-2013

- Saturated fat limit <10% calories
- Zero grams of *trans* fat per portion
- Single Food-Based Menu Planning approach
- Establish age/grade: K-5, 6-8 and 9-12
- Reimbursable meals must contain fruit or vegetable
- State agencies conduct weighted nutrient analysis on one week of menus

Breakfast Changes

Effective SY 2013-2014

- Half of grains must be whole grain-rich
- Offer weekly grain ranges
- Calorie ranges
- Zero grams of *trans* fat per portion
- Single Food-Based Menu Planning approach
- Establish age/grade: K-5, 6-8 and 9-12
- 3-year administrative review cycle
- Conduct weighted nutrient analysis on one week of menus

Lunch Changes

Effective SY 2013-2014

- 3-year administrative review cycle

Breakfast Changes

Effective SY 2014-2015

- Fruit quantity to increase to 5 cups/week (minimum 1 cup/day)
- All grains must be whole grain-rich
- Target 1 for average weekly sodium limit
- Reimbursable meals must contain a fruit or vegetable

Lunch Changes

Effective SY 2014-2015

- All grains must be whole grain-rich
- Target 1 for average weekly sodium limit

Additional Lunch and Breakfast Changes

- SY 2017-2018
 - Target 2 sodium restriction
- SY 2022-2023
 - Final Target sodium restriction

* Prior to implementation of Target 2 and the Final sodium targets, USDA will evaluate relevant data on sodium intake and human health

Current Standards vs. Final Rule

Chart available at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/comparison.pdf>

Current Breakfast vs. Final Rule

School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern

Food Group	Current Requirements K-12	Final Rule Requirements
Fruit	½ cup per day (vegetable substitution allowed)	Beginning SY 2014-15, 1 cup per day (vegetable substitution allowed) <i>Note: Students are allowed to select ½ cup of fruit under OVS.</i>
Grains and Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA)	2 grains, or 2 meat/meat alternates, or 1 of each per day	Beginning SY 2013-14, daily and weekly grain ranges: Grades K-5: 1 oz eq. min. daily (7-10 oz weekly) Grades 6-8 : 1 oz eq. min. daily (8-10 oz weekly) Grades 9-12 : 1 oz eq. min. daily (9-10 oz weekly) *No meat/meat alternate requirement

Current Breakfast vs. Final Rule

School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern

Food Group	Current Requirements K-12	Final Rule Requirements
Whole Grains	Encouraged	At least half of the grains must be whole grain-rich beginning July 1, 2013. Beginning July 1, 2014, all grains must be whole grain rich.
Milk	1 cup daily (variety of fat contents allowed; flavor not restricted)	1 cup, must be fat-free (unflavored/flavored) or 1% low fat (unflavored) daily

Current Lunch vs. Final Rule

Food Group	Current Requirement	Final Rule Requirement
Fruit and Vegetables	<p>½ - ¾ cup of fruit and vegetables combined per day</p>	<p>¾ - 1 cup of vegetables <u>plus</u> ½ -1 cup of fruit per day <i>Students allowed to select ½ cup fruit or vegetable under OVS.</i></p>
Vegetables	<p>No specifications as to type of vegetable subgroup</p>	<p>Weekly requirement for: dark green; red/orange; beans/peas (legumes); starchy; other (as defined in 2010 DGA)</p>

Current Lunch vs. Final Rule

Food Group	Current Requirement	Final Rule Requirement
<p>Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA)</p>	<p>1.5 – 2 oz eq. (daily minimum)</p>	<p>Daily minimum and weekly ranges: Grades K-5: 1 oz eq. min. daily (8-10 oz weekly) Grades 6-8 : 1 oz eq. min. daily (9-10 oz weekly) Grades 9-12 : 2 oz eq. min. daily (10-12 oz weekly)</p>
<p>Grains</p>	<p>8 servings per week (minimum of 1 serving per day)</p>	<p>Daily minimum & weekly ranges: Grades K-5: 1 oz eq. min. daily (8-9 oz weekly) Grades 6-8 : 1 oz eq. min. daily (8-10 oz weekly) Grades 9-12 : 2 oz eq. min. daily (10-12 oz weekly)</p>

Current Lunch vs. Final Rule

Food Group	Current Requirement	Final Rule Requirement
Whole Grains	Encouraged	At least half of the grains must be whole grain-rich beginning July 1, 2012. Beginning July 1, 2014, all grains must be whole grain rich.
Milk	1 cup daily (variety of fat contents allowed; flavor not restricted)	1 cup, fat-free (unflavored/flavored) or 1% low fat (unflavored) daily

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Implementation and Monitoring

- USDA/FNS Technical Assistance
 - Training and support through Team Nutrition, Regional Offices
 - Collaboration with National Food Service Management Institute, National Agricultural Library
 - Updating Food Buying Guide, menu planning resources

Implementation and Monitoring

- Financial Resources
 - Six cent reimbursement for eligible schools
 - Interim rule in Spring 2012, describing how States are expected to determine which schools are eligible for additional funding and administrative review requirements
 - \$47 million for each of two years
- Administrative reviews
 - Three-year cycle beginning in SY 2013-14 for lunch and breakfast
 - Use records for 1-week meal period (vs. 2 weeks in proposed rule)

CONCLUSION OF PRESENTATION



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
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Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

DATE: April 27, 2012

MEMO CODE: SP 10-2012 - REVISED

SUBJECT: Questions & Answers on the Final Rule, "Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs"

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

Attached are Questions & Answers on the final rule to update the school meals offered under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This guidance addresses the final rule overall, and includes questions on general and specific aspects of the new meal requirements. We will revise this document periodically to issue additional Questions & Answers as they arise during the implementation of the new meal requirements. These Questions & Answers and other materials related to the new meal requirements are available on a special webpage on the FNS website:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>.

We appreciate all you do for the School Meal Programs and look forward to working with you to improve the nutrition of America's children. States should contact their FNS regional office with additional questions.

Original Signed

Cynthia Long
Director
Child Nutrition Division

Attachment

Final Rule “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs”

Questions & Answers for Program Operators – Revised 4/26/12

(New or Revised Q/As are italicized)

General:

1. Why is USDA setting new meal patterns and dietary specifications for school meals?

On December 13, 2010, President Obama signed into law Public Law 111-296, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). This historic legislation marked the most comprehensive changes to the school nutrition environment in more than a generation. The last update to school meals standards was over 15 years ago. Since that time, tremendous advancements in our understanding of human nutrition have occurred. In response to that reality, the HHFKA required USDA to update school meal nutrition standards to reflect the most current dietary science.

The timing of this legislation and USDA’s standards are critically needed to help combat the epidemic of childhood obesity as well as the urgent problem of childhood hunger. Nearly 1 in 3 children are at risk for preventable diseases like diabetes and heart disease due to overweight and obesity. If left unaddressed, health experts tell us that our current generation of children may well have a shorter lifespan than their parents. Additionally, during 2010 over 17 million households in the United States, representing over 32 million adults and over 16 million children, struggled to put enough food on the table. For many of these children, a school meal is the only nutritious source of food they can count on.

2. What are the main differences between the proposed and final rules?

The final rule makes significant improvements to school meals, while modifying several key proposed requirements to address public comments regarding cost, timing/implementation, food waste, and administrative burden. The final rule, in comparison to the proposed rule:

- Phases-in changes to the breakfast program gradually over a three-year period
- Does not require a meat/meat alternate at breakfast daily
- Does not restrict starchy vegetables, and establishes weekly minimums for all vegetable subgroups
- Reduces the required weekly grains amounts at lunch
- Allows students to take smaller portions of the fruits and vegetables components (at least ½ cup of either) under Offer versus Serve
- Provides an additional year for the implementation of the second sodium target
- Requires State agencies to assess compliance with the new meal requirements based on the review of one week of menus (instead of two weeks as proposed)

- Allows schools to continue the current tomato paste crediting practice of crediting by whole food equivalency

3. How are the new meal patterns and dietary specifications different from current requirements?

The key changes to the meals for children in grades K and above are:

NSLP

- A daily serving of fruits
- A daily serving of vegetables plus a weekly requirement for dark green, red/orange, beans/pea (legumes), starchy, and “other” vegetables Increased quantity of combined fruits and vegetables
- Weekly meat/meat alternate ranges plus a daily requirement
- In the first year of implementation, at least half of the grains offered during the school week must be whole grain-rich

SBP

- Meat/meat alternate may be offered after minimum grains requirement is met
- In the second year of rule implementation, at least half of the grains offered during the school week must be whole grain-rich
- In the third year of implementation, fruit quantity increase at breakfast
- Breakfast is included in administrative reviews

NSLP and SBP

- One food-based menu planning approach and same age/grade groups
- Fruits and vegetables are two separate food components
- Daily fruits requirement
- Under Offer versus Serve, student must select at least ½ cup of the fruits or the vegetables component as part of the reimbursable meal
- Weekly grains ranges plus daily minimum requirement
- On the third year of rule implementation, all grains offered during the school week must be whole grain-rich
- Fat-free (unflavored or flavored) and unflavored low-fat milk only
- Calorie minimum and maximum levels
- Intermediate (Target 1 and Target 2) and final sodium reductions
- Trans fat limit
- Limit on saturated fat only (not on total fat)
- 3-year administrative review cycle

4. When will the changes take place?

The new lunch meal pattern is effective July 1, 2012, the beginning of SY 2012-2013. With the exception of the new milk requirement, changes to the breakfast program will be phased-in beginning July 1, 2013 (SY 2013-2014). See the implementation chart in the FNS website, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>.

5. Does this rule impact the meals for children with disabilities?

The meals for children with recognized medical disabilities that restrict their diet are not affected by the new meal patterns and dietary specifications and continue to be based on a medical statement from a licensed physician.

Optional accommodations for children with special dietary needs (without recognized medical disabilities) must be consistent with the new meal patterns and dietary specifications.

Fruits and Vegetables:

1. What forms of fruits are required?

Schools may offer fruits that are fresh; frozen without sugar; canned in light syrup, water or fruit juice; or dried. Pasteurized, full-strength fruit juice may also be offered (it is credited to meet no more than one-half of the fruits component *offered over the week*). Required quantities are established in the meal patterns for lunch and breakfast. *Note: Frozen fruit with added sugar allowed temporarily in SY 2012-2013 only. See memorandum SP 20-2012.*

2. What types of vegetables are required?

Over the course of the week, schools must offer all vegetable subgroups established in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans: dark green, red/orange, dry beans/peas (legumes), starchy, and “other” vegetables (as defined in the Dietary Guidelines). Required minimum weekly quantities for each subgroup are established in the lunch meal pattern. Pasteurized, full-strength vegetable juice is also allowable (it is credited to meet no more than one-half of the vegetables component). We plan to release additional guidance to assist school food authorities in classifying vegetables in the appropriate subgroup. Vegetables are an option for breakfast.

3. Where are kinds of vegetables in each of the required vegetable subgroups identified?

Section 210.10(c)(2)(iii) of the regulations identifies the required vegetable subgroups. It is important to note that the term “other vegetables” refers to a specific vegetable subgroup that is listed in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans as well as online under www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.

4. How can schools minimize food waste while requiring students to take a fruit or a vegetable as part of the meal?

Under Offer versus Serve, schools must offer enough for each child to take the full required amount of each component, but a student may take smaller portions of the fruits and vegetables components, if desired. Students must select at least ½ cup daily of the fruits or the vegetables components for a meal to be considered reimbursable under Offer versus Serve in the NSLP and SBP.

5. Are schools required to offer the vegetable subgroups at lunch in any specific sequence during the week?

No. The menu planner decides when and how to offer the required vegetable subgroups at lunch.

6. Is a school that offers vegetables in place of fruits at breakfast required to offer the vegetable subgroups in any particular sequence to ensure that the first two cups of any such substitution are from the vegetable subgroups that are under-consumed?

The SBP does not have a total vegetable or a weekly vegetable subgroups requirement. If a school chooses to offer vegetables in place of fruits, it must plan how and when to offer them. As long as at least two cups of the red/orange, dark green, legumes, or “other” vegetable subgroups are offered over the course of the week, it does not matter what day of the week the starchy vegetables are included in the menu.

7. At breakfast, must the student select only one fruit or may the student select a combination of fruit choices to meet the required fruit component for the reimbursable meal?

Students may select a single fruit type or a combination of fruits to meet the required fruit component. Under Offer versus Serve, however, the student must select at least ½ cup of any fruit or combination of fruits to have a reimbursable meal.

8. What is the minimum amount of a fruit or vegetable that can be credited toward the meal pattern?

The minimum creditable serving size for a fruit or a vegetable is 1/8 cup. However, 1/2 of a cup is the minimum amount of fruits or vegetables that a student must select for a reimbursable meal under Offer versus Serve. There is no daily or weekly maximum limit for fruits or vegetables provided the specific calorie limitations are not exceeded.

9. Can vegetable juice blends contribute toward a vegetable subgroup?

Full strength vegetable juice blends that contain vegetables from the same subgroup may contribute toward that vegetable subgroup. Vegetable juice blends containing vegetables from more than one subgroup may contribute to the “additional” vegetable subgroup. For example, a full-strength carrot/tomato vegetable juice blend may credit toward the “orange/red” vegetable subgroup. However, a full-strength vegetable juice blend containing carrots, spinach, tomato and watercress, may only credit toward the “additional” vegetable subgroup.

10. How do leafy salad greens credit toward meal pattern requirements?

Raw and cooked greens credit differently. Raw, leafy salad greens credit at half the volume served, which is consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For example, a 1/2 cup of Romaine Lettuce contributes 1/4 cup toward the “dark green” vegetable subgroup. Cooked leafy greens such as sautéed spinach are credited by volume as served; for example, 1/2 cup of cooked spinach credits as 1/2 cup of dark green vegetables.

11. How does dried fruit credit toward the meal pattern requirements?

Whole dried fruit and whole dried fruit pieces credit at twice the volume served. For example, a 1/4 cup of raisins contributes 1/2 cup fruit toward the fruit requirement, as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

12. Do 100% fruit strips, fruit drops or other snack-type fruit or vegetable products contribute toward meal pattern requirements?

No. Only whole dried fruit, whole dried fruit pieces, fresh, frozen or canned fruits; vegetables; or full-strength juice may contribute toward fruits and vegetables components. Effective July 1, 2012 (SY 2012-2013), reimbursable meals must not credit snack-type fruit products that may have been previously credited.

13. Will CN-Labeled Products that include vegetables provide crediting information for vegetable subgroups?

Yes. CN Labels will be revised to document the creditable amounts of the vegetable subgroups required by the final rule: dark green; red/orange, beans/peas (legumes), starchy, and “other.”

New Questions:

14. Is the limit on juice a daily or a weekly limit?

The juice limit will apply weekly to support menu planning flexibility. No more than half of the weekly offering for the fruit component or the vegetable component may be in the form of full-strength juice.

15. May a school serve 1/2 cup fruit pieces and 1/2 cup fruit juice?

Yes. The juice requirement that allows juice to be offered for 1/2 of the fruits offered is a weekly requirement. Therefore, schools could serve 1/2 cup fruit pieces and 1/2 cup fruit juice on one or more days as long as the total weekly juice offering does not exceed 1/2 of the total fruit offerings for the entire week.

16. Can 100-percent fruit and vegetable juice blends contribute to the reimbursable meal?

Yes. If the first ingredient in the 100-percent juice blend is fruit juice, then the 100-percent juice blend can contribute to the fruit requirement. If the first ingredient is a vegetable juice, then the 100-percent juice blend can contribute to the “other” or the “additional” vegetable requirement, depending on the needs of the menu planner.

17. The rule states that juice may be used for only 1/2 of the fruit component. Since the fruit component for grades K-5 and 6-8 is 1/2 cup daily, does that mean that only 1/4 cup juice can be served?

No. The provision that limits juice to no more than 1/2 of the fruits offered applies over the week. Therefore, schools could serve larger quantities of fruit juice one or two days a week, as long as the total weekly juice offering does not exceed 1/2 of the total fruit offerings for the entire week.

18. Does the limit on juice to half of the fruit component mean that if I serve 4 ounces of juice to my elementary students I can only credit two ounces toward the fruit component?

No, juice may be credited as the volume served, so 4 ounces will credit as 1/2 cup. However, no more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings over the week may be in the form of juice. Also, all juice must be 100% full-strength juice; diluted juice is no longer allowed.

19. Is frozen 100% fruit juice without added sugar allowed under the new guidelines?

Yes. Frozen 100% fruit juice without added sugar can be used. 100% juice (served liquid or frozen) may be used to meet up to half of the fruit component of the meal pattern requirements for school lunch or school breakfast.

20. Is frozen fruit with added sugar allowed?

If schools have an existing inventory, they may continue to offer frozen fruit with added sugar in the NSLP in SY 2012-13 only. This temporary exemption applies to products acquired through USDA Foods as well as those purchased commercially. Beginning July 1, 2013, all frozen fruit served in the NSLP must contain no added sugars. Please see memorandum SP 20-2012 issued February 24, 2012, for additional guidance.

The fruit requirements in the SBP take effect in SY 2014-15. Until then, frozen fruit with added sugar may be offered in the SBP.

21. Is dried fruit with sugar coating allowed?

Yes. Dried fruit is sometimes processed with sugar to keep the fruit pieces separated. Although these types of products are allowed, schools must be aware of the maximum calorie limits when offering any food with added sugar.

22. If a school meets the fruit requirement for breakfast, can they add a serving of hash browns as an “extra?”

There is no vegetable requirement in the SBP. In order to serve starchy vegetables in place of fruits at breakfast, a school has to first offer 2 cups of non-starchy vegetables per week from the dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes) or “Other vegetables” subgroups as defined in § 210.10(c)(2)(iii). Therefore, to offer hash browns or other starchy vegetables, the weekly planned menu must include 2 cups of non-starchy vegetables.

23. If the fruit requirement at breakfast is 1 cup, may ½ cup each of fruits and vegetables be served at breakfast? For example: ½ cup juice and ½ cup beans?

Yes, as long as the first 2 cups per week of vegetables substituted for fruit are from the dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes) or “Other vegetables” subgroups as defined in section 210.10(c)(2)(iii).

24. May a salad bar with fruits and vegetables that is offered as part of the reimbursable meal be located after the point of service (POS)?

The memo on salad bars (SP 02-2010 – Revised) states “To ensure that each student’s selections from the salad bar meet the required portions for an entrée or food/menu item, the POS must be stationed after the salad bar. If a school is not able to position the salad bar in a location prior to the POS, SAs may authorize alternatives to the POS lunch counts.” If the fruits and vegetables are located in an approved location beyond the POS, there must be a system in place to ensure that each reimbursable meal selected by the student includes a fruit or a vegetable, and that the total of any fruit or vegetable item selected under OVS equals at least 1/2 cup.

25. Are schools that offer salad bars required use to specific size serving utensils to meet quantity requirements?

Schools are not required to use specific serving size utensils but may do so to encourage children to take appropriate food amounts. However, regardless of the serving utensils used, food service staff must ensure that the portions on the student's tray meet the meal pattern requirements. This may be done by training the cashiers to visually identify the correct portions, or by pre-portioning the food items.

26. Is a mixed salad required to consist of all dark green vegetables or can iceberg lettuce be part of the mix?

Iceberg lettuce is not considered a dark green vegetable, but a salad that consists of a variety of dark leafy greens (such as spinach or romaine lettuce) counts toward the dark green subgroup. If the mixed salad contains different vegetable subgroups and the quantities of each subgroup are known, they can be credited toward each subgroup. If the quantities are not known, a mixed salad counts toward the additional vegetables requirement. (Remember that uncooked, leafy greens count as half of the offering and 1/8 cup is the minimum creditable quantity that may be offered).

27. May a school offer a daily salad bar line that offers multiple vegetable subgroups every day as a way to meet the weekly vegetable subgroup requirement?

Yes, this is acceptable if the salad bar is available to all children each day and offers all of the required weekly subgroups over the course of the week.

28. Do the vegetable subgroups offered on a daily salad bar need to be itemized on the production records? Do all of these items need to be listed on the menu?

Yes. Section 210.10(a)(3) of the regulations requires that production records and menu records for the meals show how the meals offered contribute to the required food components and food quantities. These records must be examined by the State agency during the administrative review to ensure the meals offered are reimbursable.

29. If a school has multiple serving lines with different menu items, must each serving line offer all of the vegetable subgroups weekly?

Yes, this ensures that all students have access to all of the vegetable subgroups throughout the week regardless of the serving line selected. For example, a child who picks the pizza line consistently would have access to all vegetable subgroups throughout the week. (See Question #3 under the topic Multiple Offerings.) Another solution could be to offer a centrally located garden bar or salad bar that all students can access after they pass through the serving lines.

30. Can the vegetable subgroups be offered a couple of different times over the week in small amounts that add up to the required amount for the full week?

Yes, schools can break up the subgroup requirement across the week as long as the week's menu as a whole meets the full subgroup requirements, AND each day the school offers the full daily vegetable minimum. Keep in mind that the minimum creditable amount is 1/8 cup. Example: one day a school offers a ½ cup of bean/corn salsa that includes ¼ cup of beans per serving, and another day that week the school offers a bean burrito that supplies another ¼ cup of beans. This example assumes that school is providing additional vegetable with each of these meals to meet the minimum daily requirement for vegetables (1 cup for grades 9-12 and ¾ cup for lower grades).

31. Are there maximum limits on the amount of vegetable subgroups offered at lunch?

No; schools must offer at least the minimum quantities of all the vegetable subgroups required in the NSLP meal pattern. There is only a maximum limit on the amount of juice that may be offered under the fruits and the vegetable components. No more than half of the fruits or vegetables offered over the week may be in the form of juice.

32. How may beans/peas (legumes) be used in school meals?

Dry/mature beans and peas may be offered as a meat alternate or as a vegetable, at the discretion of the menu planner. However, one serving may not count toward both food components in the same meal. For example, one serving of refried beans can be offered as a vegetable in one meal and as a meat/meat alternate on another occasion. The refried beans offered as a vegetable count toward the weekly beans/peas requirement, but not toward the meat/meat alternate weekly range. Menu planners must determine in advance how to count beans/peas in a meal. For additional guidance on beans and peas, see: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables-beans-peas.html>

33. May a school use a food product that contains a non-creditable amount of vegetables (less than 1/8 cup)?

Yes, but the school must offer vegetables in the required amounts over the course of the week from other sources to meet the daily and weekly vegetable requirements.

34. How should schools credit a vegetable mixture toward the vegetable subgroup requirements?

Vegetable combinations from the same subgroup (e.g., carrots and sweet potatoes are red/orange vegetables) may count toward that single vegetable subgroup. Vegetable combinations that contain at least 1/8 cup each of different vegetable subgroups (e.g., carrots and corn) may credit each one toward the appropriate subgroups. If the quantities of the different vegetables are not known, the vegetable mixture counts as "additional vegetables."

35. Where may I find information to help me categorize unusual vegetables?

See the following resources:

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables.html>

<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/USDAFoodPatterns/ItemClustersAndRepFoods.pdf>

Meat/Meat Alternate:

1. Is a daily meat/meat alternate required at breakfast?

No; schools have discretion to offer a meat/meat alternate after the minimum daily grains requirement (1 oz. eq.) is met.

2. Are schools required to offer tofu as part of the lunch menu?

No; the final rule allows schools the option to offer commercially-prepared tofu as a meat alternate.

3. Is regular yogurt still creditable as a meat/meat alternate?

Yes. There have been no crediting changes to meat/meat alternate options other than the ones specifically identified in the final rule.

4. Is soy yogurt or tofu yogurt creditable as a meat/meat alternate?

Tofu yogurt is not creditable; however, ½ cup of soy yogurt (4.0 fluid ounces) may credit as 1.0 ounce equivalent meat alternate.

New Questions:

5. Is tofu creditable as a meat/meat alternate in the CACFP and SFSP?

No. Tofu will credit in the NSLP and SBP only, beginning July 1, 2012.

In the school meal programs, 2.2 ounces (1/4 cup) of commercially prepared tofu, containing at least 5 grams of protein, is creditable as 1.0 ounce equivalent meat alternate.

6. How does tofu credit in a combination dish?

Firm tofu that meets FNS requirements for tofu can be diced into miso soup and credited toward the meat alternate component – it is recognizable as the meat substitute. The miso ingredient, dissolved into the broth of the miso soup, is a fermented soy product which does not credit – it is not tofu.

Similarly, a soft tofu, pureed into a soup, does not credit because it is not recognizable and does not represent a meat substitute. Therefore, the blended tofu is not creditable. Finally, noodles made from tofu do not represent a meat substitute and are not composed of grains. This explains why the noodles are not credited for either component.

7. Can an SFA rely on the nutrition facts panel alone to evaluate a meat analog, such as a soy burger or tofu sausage?

When considering processed tofu products such as links and sausages made from tofu as meat alternates for the reimbursable meal, the tofu ingredient must contain the required 5 grams of protein per 2.2 ounces by weight. However, the additional ingredients beyond the tofu in a meat substitute such as tofu sausage are also included on the nutrition label. Therefore, the protein amount listed on the label for the meat substitute does not necessarily indicate the protein of the tofu for verification of FNS tofu requirements. This information would need to be obtained from the tofu manufacturer.

Grains:

1. How will schools identify whole grain-rich products?

Until the whole grain content of food products is required on a product label by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), schools must evaluate a grain product using the two-element criterion developed by the Institute of Medicine and set forth in the final rule:

Element #1. A serving of the food item must meet portion size requirements for the Grains/Breads component as defined in FNS guidance.

AND

Element #2. The food must meet at least one of the following:

a. The whole grains per serving (based on minimum serving sizes specified for grains/breads in FNS guidance) must be ≥ 8 grams. This may be determined from information provided on the product packaging or by the manufacturer, if available. Also, manufacturers currently may apply for a Child Nutrition Label for qualifying products to indicate the number of grains/breads servings that are whole grain-rich.

b. The product includes the following Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved whole grain health claim on its packaging. “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.”

c. Product ingredient listing lists whole grain first, specifically:

I. Non-mixed dishes (e.g., breads, cereals): Whole grains must be the primary ingredient by weight (a whole grain is the first ingredient in the list)

II. Mixed dishes (e.g., pizza, corn dogs): Whole grains must be the primary grain ingredient by weight (a whole grain is the first grain ingredient in the list)

The product ingredient listing (Element #2c of the above criterion) is a practical way for schools to identify whole grain-rich products because manufacturers are not required to provide information about the grams of whole grains in their products, and the FDA whole grain health claim is not mandatory. Detailed instructions for this method appear in the *HealthierUS School Challenge Whole Grains Resource* guide, which is available online at http://teamnnutrition.usda.gov/healthierUS/HUSSCkit_pp25-35.pdf. FNS will provide additional guidance as necessary.

Revised Question:

2. Does the 50 percent guideline for whole grain-rich apply to the grain content of the product or to the weight of the product?

The 50 percent guideline for whole grain-rich requires that if the food item is a grain-based product (bread, cereal, etc), it must contain 50 percent or more whole grains by weight *or* have a whole grain listed as the first ingredient on the ingredient label. If the food item is a mixed dish product (lasagna, stir fry, etc), a whole grain must be the primary *grain* ingredient by weight.

3. Will the Child Nutrition Labeling program specify if whole grains are in a product?

Yes; the Child Nutrition Labeling program is being updated to report the whole grain-rich contributions to the grains component.

4. Can schools exceed the upper range of the grains component?

No. The grain ranges are the minimum and maximum schools may offer. They are intended to help schools offer age-appropriate meals within the required calorie ranges.

5. Does a school have to offer a whole grain rich item every day?

Schools must offer at least a minimum amount of grains daily to meet the required weekly range. In SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014 for lunch, and in SY 2013-2014 for breakfasts, half of the grains offered weekly must be whole grain-rich. During this period, the menu planner has discretion to decide when and how to offer whole grain-rich items, as long as the applicable whole grains-rich requirement is met. We encourage menu planners to offer whole grain-rich items often to facilitate student acceptability and transition to all whole grain-rich products in SY 2014-2015 for lunches and breakfasts. At that time, schools must offer only whole-grain rich products daily and weekly.

Revised Question:

6. Are CN-labeled products that contribute to the Grains component now required to be whole grain-rich?

Temporary approvals (expiring June 30, 2014) will be issued for CN Label applications containing crediting for non-WGR grains. Those claims will continue to report, “provides X.X servings of bread or bread alternate” so that program operators may distinguish between WGR claims and non-WGR claims. This effort seeks to provide adequate time for manufacturers to reformulate products to meet the WGR requirements by June 30, 2014.

Products containing items with both WGR and non-WGR claims (i.e. non-WGR breaded patties on WGR sandwich bun) will report this by using both the terms Grains (for WGR items) and bread or bread alternate (for non-WGR items). These products will also receive temporary approvals (expiring June 30, 2014).

7. Does the removal of formulated grain-fruit products include energy/granola bars?

No. Formulated grain-fruit products were specifically defined in the school breakfast regulations (appendix A to 7 CFR 220). The final rule removes from the regulations the portion of appendix A that deals with formulated grain-fruit products. These products are highly fortified and have a specific nutrient profile. To credit them in the school breakfast program, they required approval from FNS and a statement on the label saying they met a grain and fruit serving. The removal of formulated grain-fruit products does not prohibit the use of energy bars, granola bars, cereal bars, breakfast bars, fortified cereals, or cereals with fruit to be credited toward the meal pattern.

New Questions:

8. Do I have to serve a minimum of 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of grains with every breakfast offered, or can I serve some meals that have only meat/meat alternates?

The minimum daily requirement for grains in the School Breakfast Program is 1 oz eq daily for all grade groups. Every reimbursable breakfast offered must contain at least 1 oz eq grains. Further, in order to offer a meat/meat alternate at any given breakfast meal, a school must first meet the daily grains minimum (1 oz eq).

9. If a school offers a choice of grains in combination food items daily (e.g., crust for pizza, sandwich roll, etc), must all of these bread items provide the minimum daily grains requirement OR must at least one grain offered daily provide the minimum?

Every reimbursable meal offered must meet the daily minimum requirements for all components. Therefore, if a pizza contains adequate grains to meet the minimum daily requirement, but a sandwich roll does not, the sandwich meal must contain another grain in order to meet to minimum daily grains requirement.

10. Can I serve more than two ounce equivalents (oz eq) of grains on any given day? For example, could I serve a 3 oz eq item such as a pizza?

Yes, there is a daily grains minimum but not a daily maximum. However, the weekly grains maximum and the average daily calorie maximums cannot be exceeded. For more specific information on multiple offerings, refer to Question # 1 under the topic Multiple Offerings.

11. May a school offer a formulated grain-fruit product to meet the grains component?

The final rule disallows the use of formulated grain-fruit products to meet the grain and fruit components at breakfast beginning July 1, 2012. However, if a school wishes to use these products to count toward the grains component, this is acceptable, provided that inclusion of these products does not cause the menu to exceed the average weekly calorie and saturated fat limits. Formulated grain-fruit products do not credit toward the fruits component.

Be aware that at lunch, however, these products may be considered a dessert and there is a limit of up to two grain-based desserts per week (total of 2 ounce equivalents). SFAs should refer to the Grains Guidance to determine which grain products are considered dessert items and included in the weekly dessert limit.

12. Are fully cooked grain and pasta items whose nutrition label has water as the first ingredient, followed by a whole grain, considered whole grain-rich?

Yes. In accordance with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines, a grain-based product is also considered whole grain-rich if water is listed as the first ingredient on the ingredient label and a whole grain is listed as the second ingredient on the ingredient label.

13. Will all grains served on the serving line have to be whole-grain rich or only those which are counted toward the reimbursable meal?

All grains offered in amounts of 0.25 oz eq or greater (the minimum creditable amount) must be included in the calculation of daily and weekly grain offerings, as well as the dietary specifications (calories, saturated fat, and sodium). Due to the phase-in of the whole grain-rich requirement at breakfast and lunch, for the first two years of implementation, non-whole grain-rich grains may be offered on the serving line. Beginning July 1, 2014, all grains offered in creditable amounts on the serving line must be whole grain-rich. Non-creditable grain ingredients in products at very low levels used as processing aids are allowable at levels less than 2-percent.

Milk:

1. What types of milk are allowed?

Only fat-free (unflavored and flavored) and low-fat (1%) milk (unflavored) may be offered as part of the reimbursable meal.

2. Does the final rule impact the current provision on non-dairy milk substitutes for children with special dietary needs?

No. Required (disability accommodations) and optional (parent requested) milk substitutes are considered meal exceptions and are not subject to this final rule. Milk substitutes must meet the regulatory standards outlined in 7 CFR 210.10(d)(3), which do not address fat or flavor/sugar restrictions.

However, milk substitutes offered as part of the reimbursable meal must be included in weighted nutrient analysis and, therefore, are subject to the overall weekly average fat limit and calorie ranges. We do not expect that they are offered frequently enough to have a significant impact on the overall nutrient analysis.

New Question:

3. Does the requirement to offer unflavored/flavored fat-free milk or unflavored low-fat milk apply to the Special Milk Program (SMP)? Is a variety of fluid milk required in SMP?

Only the milk fat restriction (fat-free and low-fat milk only) applies to the SMP. This policy is consistent with memorandum FNS-29-2011, which implemented the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act milk provision regarding milk in the meal programs authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act in an effort to reduce childhood obesity. The other milk requirements, such as the limit on flavored milk and the requirement to offer a variety of fluid milk, do not apply to the SMP. However, if an SMP operator chooses to offer flavored milk, we recommend consistency with the final rule on school meals. Additionally, SMP operators may offer only one of the allowable milk types (e.g., plain fat-free milk only). FNS will codify the nutritional requirements for milk in the SMP in a separate regulatory action.

Sodium:

1. What is the sodium requirement and when will schools have to meet it?

See the following chart for deadlines and corresponding maximum limits. Implementation of the second and final targets is subject to USDA’s review of data on the relationship between sodium intake and human health, as required by the FY 2012 Agriculture Appropriations Act.

Sodium Limits and Timeline		
Target I: SY 2014-15 Lunch ≤1230mg (K-5) ≤1360mg (6-8) ≤1420mg (9-12) Breakfast ≤540mg (K-5) ≤600mg (6-8) ≤640mg (9-12)	Target 2: SY 2017-18 Lunch ≤935mg (K-5) ≤1035mg (6-8) ≤1080mg (9-12) Breakfast ≤485mg (K-5) ≤535mg (6-8) ≤570mg (9-12)	Final target: 2022-23 Lunch ≤640mg (K-5) ≤710mg (6-8) ≤740mg (9-12) Breakfast ≤430mg (K-5) ≤470mg (6-8) ≤500mg (9-12)

2. How is USDA facilitating implementation of the sodium requirement?

The final rule extends the timeline to meet the second intermediate sodium target (Target 2). With this change, program operators have five years instead of four (until the School Year beginning July 1, 2017) to reach the second intermediate sodium target. Extending the timeline to meet Target 2 also gives the food industry more time to reformulate products, and gives school children more time to grow accustomed to foods with less salty flavor.

USDA is also facilitating implementation of the sodium requirement by offering low-sodium products through USDA Foods. For example, the USDA Foods program offers reduced sodium canned beans and vegetables at no more than 140 mg per half-cup serving, which is in line with the requirement to reduce sodium in school meals. The sodium content in most cheese products has been reduced, and there is wide availability of frozen vegetables and meats without added salt.

Trans Fat:

1. Does the trans fat ban apply to naturally occurring trans fat in beef?

No. Naturally occurring trans fat found in products such as beef, lamb, and dairy products made with whole milk is excluded from this ban.

New Questions:

- 2. How can a menu planner ensure meeting the trans fat requirement with a mixed dish (e.g., beef burrito) that may have both added and naturally occurring trans fat?***

For commercially prepared products, schools must refer to the nutrition facts panel or manufacturer's specifications to determine that there are zero grams of trans fat per serving. For mixed dishes that may contain both naturally occurring trans fat (e.g., beef) and added/synthetic trans fat (partially hydrogenated oil), the only certain way to determine if the product is in compliance is for schools to request information from suppliers on how much of the trans fat is naturally occurring versus if any of the ingredients contain added (synthetic) trans fat.

- 3. Can I use software to determine the amounts of trans fat in our menus?***

No. Trans fat is not required in the State Agency nutrient analysis of the one-week menu in an approved software program. Software may be used for trans fat analyses for informational purposes; however, currently, nutrient databases do not have complete data for trans fat. As more trans fat information becomes available, it will be included in the Child Nutrition Database, required by all USDA-approved software. Therefore, SFAs must rely on nutrition facts labels and manufacturer specifications.

Calories:

- 1. May RCCIs obtain a waiver on the calorie maximums if the residents are engaged in high energy, physical work?***

No. The National School Lunch Act (NSLA) does not allow FNS to waive the nutrition standards (meal patterns and dietary specifications). To meet the calorie needs of the RCCI participants, the operator may increase the calories provided through other meal services such as snacks and dinner.

Meal patterns:

- 1. How do I serve meals in RCCIs and small K-12 schools?***

If it is not possible to use the established age/grade groups, program operators have some flexibility. The breakfast meal requirements for all grades (K-12) overlap, so a menu planner may offer the same food quantities to all children. However, the calorie range that fits all grade groups is quite narrow (450-500 calories) and the planner must meet the sodium limit for the youngest grade group when the sodium limits begin to go into effect.

At lunch, there is overlap for grades K-5 and 6-8; therefore, a single menu can be used to meet the needs of children in grades K-8. The daily minimum requirements for food components are identical. However, in order to accommodate the average daily nutrient limits and weekly minimums/maximums for both grains and meat/meat alternates, menu planners must work within the following parameters: 8-9 oz eq grains/week, 9-10 oz eq meats/meat alternates/week, average daily calorie range 600-650, and average daily sodium limit ≤ 640 mg (the final target for SY 2022-23).

However, menu planners must adapt in order to offer menus that meet requirements for grades 6-8 and 9-12 in a single school, since one single menu with the same amounts of food will not work. Additionally, the new meal pattern does not allow for schools with a grade configuration with one grade above or below the grade grouping to follow the predominant grade group requirements (as was previously allowable). However, modest adaptations can be made to menus to accommodate both grade groups in a single school.

One way to ease menu planning for these 2 grade groups within one school is to start with a menu that is appropriate for grades 6-8, then add in a few additional foods to serve to the older grade group. For the older children (grades 9-12), the fruit and vegetable minimums must be met. Therefore, on top of the requirements for the 6-8 group, schools must make available to the older children: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup more fruit daily, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup more vegetables daily and across the week: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup more red/orange, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup other, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup additional (any subgroup) vegetables.

An alternate suggestion is to make the full 1 cup fruit and vegetables required for grades 9-12 available to both grade-groups (same menu plan for these 2 food components), if such offerings do not exceed the calorie limit for the 6-8 grade group. One potential method of doing so would be offering a salad bar to all students. Or, to meet the additional calorie needs of the 9-12 grade group, consider an additional ounce equivalent of grain or meat/meat alternate served to the older children (e.g., additional bread option, larger entrée serving size).

2. How will schools with a shorter or longer school week implement the new meal pattern requirements?

Schools that regularly serve lunch 6 or 7 days per week must increase the weekly grains quantity by approximately 20 percent ($\frac{1}{5}$) for each additional day. When schools regularly operate less than 5 days per week, they must decrease the weekly quantity by approximately 20 percent ($\frac{1}{5}$) for each day less than five.

For schools with occasional decreases in the school week length due to holidays, etc., the menus do not have to be adjusted, but menu planners must plan their menus in a way that is consistent with the intent of the meal patterns. Planners should make sure they do not consistently fail to offer certain vegetable subgroups, or offer meat/meat alternates and/grains in portions that would exceed the weekly requirements.

Please see attached charts for appropriate quantities for varying school week length.

- 3. When menu planners adjust the vegetable subgroup requirement in the NSLP meal pattern for a 4, 6 or 7 –day school week, will they be able to round the resulting figures/numbers (i.e. 0.5 and 0.75 cups)?**

Please see attached charts for appropriate quantities for varying school week length.

- 4. In a school serving Pre-K to grade 5 students, must the manager plan a separate menu for the Pre-K students?**

Menu planners must meet the meal requirements for students in grades K-5 using the new meal pattern in the final rule. For Pre-K students, menu planners must follow existing meal pattern requirements (the meal pattern for the Pre-K group remains unchanged). A menu planner may choose to use a single menu to meet the meal requirements for both Pre-K and grades K-5 if able to ensure both the Pre-K and K-5 meal requirements are met. SFAs should consult with their State Agencies if they have questions on whether their menu meets requirements for both groups.

- 5. When are year-round schools including RCCIs required to comply with the new meal pattern?**

All SFAs, including RCCIs, must follow the new meal pattern effective July 1, 2012.

- 6. The new meal patterns refer to “age/grade groups.” Should we determine which ages apply to each grade group?**

No. The term “age/grade groups” refers to grade groupings only. The classification of grade groups K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 was based on nutritional needs of children and the ages that typically correspond with these grade levels (ages 5-10 for grades K-5, ages 11-13 for grades 6-8, and ages 14-18 for grades 9-12). Schools should therefore plan menus based on the grade levels of students. For specific guidance, SFAs are encouraged to consult with their State Agency to determine appropriate grade groups for such a school.

Multiple Offerings:

- 1. For menu planning purposes, when multiple choice menus are served, how are minimums and maximums calculated?**

The daily minimum requirement applies to fruits, vegetables, grains, meat/meat alternates, and milk (all 5 components) at lunch, and fruits, grains, and milk (all 3 components) at breakfast. For menu planning purposes, all offerings must meet the minimum requirement (be equal to or above that amount).

Example 1: In grades 9-12 the minimum daily grain requirement is 2 ounce equivalents. So if a student is offered a choice between a pizza with 2 ounce equivalents of grain OR a stir fry with a 1 ounce equivalent of grains, only 1 of those offerings meets the 2 ounce minimum. The student would need to have another ounce equivalent offered with the stir fry, such as a side item, in order to meet the daily grains minimum.

*A weekly range requirement applies to both the grain and meat/meat alternate components. For menu planning purposes, SFAs must offer a weekly menu such that the sum of all daily minimum offerings meets at least the weekly minimum requirement. For grades K-5 and 6-8, the daily grains minimum is only 1 oz eq and the weekly grains minimum is 8 oz eq. Offering a minimum of only 1 oz eq daily would only total 5 oz eq across the week. So on some days, schools would have to offer **more** than 1 oz eq of grains as a **minimum** offering. The same applies to the weekly minimum amount of meat/meat alternate.*

Example 2a: If a grade K-5 school offers a 1 oz eq grain item (salad) and a 3 oz eq grain item (pizza) every day (and instructs the student to select one option only), the minimum weekly offering is 5 oz eq grain (1 oz eq x 5 days). This menu would not meet the required weekly minimum of 8 oz eq.

SFAs must also plan their menus so that the sum of the daily maximum offerings for grains and meat/meat alternates is equal to or less than the weekly maximum limit. Therefore, the sum of daily minimums must meet the weekly minimum requirement AND sum of daily maximums must meet the weekly maximum requirement.

Example 2b: If every day a grade 9-12 school offered an item with 3 oz eq of grain (even if other items with lower weights were also options), this would add to a total of a possible 15 oz eq offered over the week (child could select that 3oz grain item every day). This menu would not meet the required weekly maximum of 12 oz eq.

2. When serving multiple choice menus, is every grain choice required to be whole grain-rich?

No. The whole grain-rich requirement is determined on a weekly basis. Half of the ounce equivalents of grain offerings must be whole grain-rich for SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014 in NSLP and SY 2013-2014 in SBP. Therefore, not every grain item must be whole grain-rich if there are enough ounce equivalents of grain offered throughout the week that are whole grain-rich. Although SFAs are not required to serve a whole grain-rich item daily, they are encouraged to do so to prepare students for the shift to all whole grain-rich grains beginning SY 2014-2015.

3. When multiple serving lines are used in a school, must each line meet the weekly vegetable subgroup requirement?

In most cafeteria set-ups, yes. As required in section 210.10(k)(2), each independent line must meet the daily and weekly requirements (including subgroups), in order to ensure that a child is able to take a reimbursable meal every day in any line they may choose.

If the school sets up serving stations, where a student is able to go to several different places to select different components of the meal (e.g., first goes to a salad bar, then goes into a pasta station, etc) before passing the point of service, then all of the stations as a whole must meet the daily component and weekly vegetable subgroup requirements.

Offer versus Serve (OVS):

1. How will OVS be implemented under the final rule?

OVS continues to be a requirement in the NSLP for senior high schools, and is an option for lower grade schools. It is also an option for the school food authority for all schools in the SBP. Under OVS, schools must offer all the required food components and quantities, and students are required to select at least 3 full components in the NSLP and SBP, with exceptions as noted below:

NSLP: In the NSLP, schools must offer 5 food components (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, meat/meat alternates). Students are allowed to decline 2 of the 5 required food components, but must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of either a fruit or vegetable. Students must select the other food components in the quantities planned.

SBP: In order to carry out the OVS option in the SBP, schools must offer 3 food components (milk, fruits and grains) that consist of a minimum of 4 food items. Students are allowed to decline 1 food item but must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit. Students must select the other food components in the quantities planned.

New Questions:

2. Can a student meet the OVS $\frac{1}{2}$ cup requirement for fruit or vegetable by selecting $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of a dish containing a mixture of fruits and vegetables?

Yes, a student may select a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup that consists of different fruits (e.g., fruit salad), or different vegetables (e.g., mixed vegetables) or a combination of only fruits and vegetables (e.g., carrot/raisin salad). Keep in mind that the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup allowance for fruit or vegetables may be used only once for either the fruits or the vegetables component in a meal, so the other food components selected by the student under OVS must be full components.

3. Can a student meet the OVS $\frac{1}{2}$ cup requirement for fruit or vegetable by selecting $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fruit and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable?

Yes. Although fruits and vegetables are separate components in the meal patterns, the OVS requirement to select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables daily for a reimbursable meal may be met if the student selects $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruits and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetables. This is another way to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables among children. The student would not be required

to select additional fruits or vegetables if the reimbursable meal under OVS includes two other components in full.

4. May students take a smaller portion of both fruits and vegetables under OVS?

Under OVS, students must select at least ½ cup of either the fruit or the vegetable component, or a ½ cup combination of both components (¼ cup fruits and ¼ cup vegetables), for a reimbursable meal. If a student selects only three components, and two of these three components are fruits and vegetables, the student may select ½ cup of either the fruit or vegetable, but then must select the full component of the other.

For example, if a student in grades 9-12 selects just milk, fruit and vegetables, the student may take ½ cup of the vegetable but must take the full 1 cup offering of the fruit. However, if the student selects another full component, such as a grain or meat/meat alternate, the student may take a smaller portion of the fruit because the fruit is no longer being counted as the 3rd component in the reimbursable meal.

5. Must the SFA prepare full servings of both fruits and vegetables for every student when OVS is in place?

SFAs must plan meals in the NSLP and SBP to meet all meal requirements and provide required amounts of food for all students. Menu planners should take into account participation and selection trends to determine what and how much food to offer students. Careful menu planning will ensure that students have access to all the required food components for the reimbursable meal and minimize food waste.

6. The regulations allow students to decline two components at lunch. Does this remove the SFA's option to choose the number of components that may be declined in elementary and junior high/middle school?

Yes. The number of components that may be declined at lunch under OVS is the same for all age/grade groups.

USDA Foods:

1. Will the products provided by USDA Foods enable schools to offer meals that meet the new requirements?

USDA Foods are better than ever. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy sources of protein are available to help schools create meals that are consistent with the new meal requirements. For example, the USDA Foods program offers reduced sodium canned beans and vegetables at no more than 140 mg per half-cup serving, which is in line with the requirement to reduce sodium in school meals. A variety of frozen fruits and vegetables without added sugar or salt are also available. The program also offers reduced sodium and

reduced-fat processed and blended cheeses (including cheddar and mozzarella), fajita strips, and beef products. Other healthy food choices available from USDA Foods are listed on their website: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd

Schools can convert their USDA Foods into ready-to-use end products. Establishing the nutrient standards for processed end products, and sharing their standards with processors, is the responsibility of the school/SFA that orders the end product.

2. How quickly will the USDA Foods catalog be updated to provide foods that support the new meal requirements?

FNS is working with the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to revise specifications as necessary, and update the fact sheets to reflect those changes. Over the past few years, FNS has improved product specifications to reduce sodium, fat and added sugars to help schools meet their nutrition goals as well as the Healthier US School Challenge criteria. For more information and resources, please visit FDD's webpage: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd.

3. Will State agencies have an opportunity to adjust USDA Foods orders already placed for School Year 2013?

Yes. State agencies will have an opportunity to adjust School Year 2013 orders placed prior to the final rule publication up until April 1, when the first solicitations occur.

4. How will USDA Foods help schools implement the changes to the NSLP and SBP meal pattern?

USDA Foods help stretch food budgets and meet the new meal pattern requirements. These food items currently account for 15 to 20 percent of the food served on the lunch line. Over the past few years, USDA has improved product specifications to reduce sodium, fat and added sugars in USDA food items, to help schools meet the new nutrition standards. FNS is working with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to revise product specifications as necessary, and update the USDA Foods fact sheets to reflect those changes. For example, AMS is revising its specifications to require frozen fruits without added sugars. USDA will continue to offer low sodium or no added salt canned and frozen vegetables, and many meat, poultry, and cheese items already contain less than 480 mg of sodium per serving. All necessary changes are expected to be in effect prior to the School Year 2013-14 purchases. For more information and resources, please visit FDD's webpage: www.fns.usda.gov/FDD.

5. With the new whole grain requirement, why is the USDA Foods program continuing to offer enriched flour, rice, and pasta products, instead of exclusively whole grain products?

Since the final rule allows time (two years) for schools/students to make the transition to an exclusive use of whole grain-rich products, USDA Foods is making both types of products

available in School Year 2012-13. Increasingly, USDA's whole-grain products are featured on school menus. Stir-fries using USDA quick-cooking brown rice, sandwich wraps with USDA whole-grain tortillas, and USDA whole-grain pasta with vegetables are popular menu offerings. Schools can top USDA's whole-grain rotini with USDA's low-sodium spaghetti sauce and use whole-wheat flour for breadsticks. USDA will continue to improve and expand whole grain offerings.

Age/Grade Groups:

1. The final rule established three age/grade groups for the NSLP and SBP. Does this mean that schools cannot offer the same meal to all grade levels?

Correct. In individual cases where a school district has an unusual grade configuration that prevents the use of the required age/grade groups, it may serve the same lunch and breakfast to children in grades K-5 and 6-8 as the requirements overlap. However, the school district would have to be very careful to meet the sodium and calorie requirements for each grade group. An example of this accommodation is provided in the rule preamble.

2. What age/grade groups must a K-8 school use for menu planning?

If a K-8 school is unable to effectively offer different meal patterns for the K-5 students and the grade 6-8 students, the menu planner may offer students in these grades the same quantities of the food components because the quantities required by the lunch meal patterns for the age/grade groups K-5 and 6-8 are the same or overlap. For example, the school would have to offer 8-9 oz eq of grains and 9-10 oz eq of meat/meat alternate to all students to meet the requirements established for groups K-5 and 6-8. In addition, the meals offered to these students must consist of 600-650 calories to meet the dietary specification for both groups. Furthermore, the sodium content of these meals, when in effect, must meet the sodium specification for the youngest group: K-5.

Implementation:

1. How will FNS assist with implementation of the new meal requirements?

FNS is committed to helping State and local operators implement these changes. We will provide training and technical assistance to program operators through a variety of methods, including webinars, special training sessions, and conference presentations. In the upcoming months, we will disseminate information at national events such as the School Nutrition Association (SNA) Legislative Action Conference, SNA's Annual National Conference, Food Research Action Center/Feeding America's Anti-Hunger Conference, the American Commodity Distribution Association annual conference, and School Board and Administrators' meetings. Interactive training on the new meal requirements, developed by FNS and the National Agriculture Library, will be available online shortly. The training presentations, webinars, fact sheets, Q&As, guidance and technical assistance materials

designed to assist program operators with implementation of the new meal requirements will be available on the FNS website for easy access. In addition, USDA will provide additional funds to State agencies to support implementation of the rule.

FNS is also updating the Food Buying Guide and other essential resources, and collaborating with the National Food Service Management Institute to develop new resources. The Child Nutrition Database is currently being updated and nutrient analysis software systems available from industry will be reevaluated to assist State agencies with monitoring calories, saturated fat, and sodium in the meals offered to students in grades K through 12 during the administrative review. The Child Nutrition Labeling Program is also being updated to report whole grain-rich contributions to the grains component and to provide standardized crediting claims.

All materials related to the new school meal patterns will be housed on a special webpage on the FNS website:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>

Revised Question:

2. Are schools allowed to implement the meal requirements in the SBP in SY 2012-2013?

Yes. Schools that have the ability to implement any or all of the phased-in SBP meal requirements in SY 2012-2013 may do so with the approval of the State agency. *The States need to identify their own process for determining if early adoption of breakfast requirements at an individual SFA is appropriate. This is to ensure that the nutritional integrity of the meal is not compromised. For example, an SFA would compromise the nutritional integrity of the meal if it adopts the new calorie requirements (with a lower minimum than existing requirements) without making other improvements to the meal, such as increased whole grains or additional fruit.*

Compliance:

1. Is the weighted nutrient analysis based on meals planned, offered or served?

The weighted nutrient analysis required to be conducted by the State agency is based on the meals offered by the schools selected for review.

2. Are schools/SFAs required to purchase nutrient analysis software to prove they are meeting the calories, saturated fat, and sodium specifications?

No. Schools/SFAs are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis under the final rule. They will receive technical assistance from the State agency to plan meals that are consistent with the dietary specifications. However, schools/SFAs may choose to conduct a nutrient analysis to assist in their efforts to ensure they are meeting the dietary specifications.

State agencies will monitor calories, saturated fat, and sodium in the meals offered to students in grades K through 12 during the administrative review. State agencies must use USDA-approved nutrient analysis software to assess compliance with these specifications, and include in the analysis all foods offered as part of the reimbursable meals during the one week review period.

3. Can a school/SFA purchase nutrient analysis software with funds from the non-profit school food service account?

Yes. However, only Nutrient Analysis Software Approved by USDA for Administrative Reviews is considered an allowable cost to the non-profit school food service account.

Monitoring:

1. How will State agencies monitor compliance with the new meal requirements?

State agencies will monitor compliance with the new meal requirements through administrative reviews. The final rule ends the School Meals Initiative reviews previously authorized under 7 CFR 201.19, and amends 7 CFR 210.18 to include monitoring of the new meal requirements (meal patterns and dietary specifications) as part of the administrative reviews. SFAs are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis because they are expected to follow the meal pattern to meet nutrient targets.

2. How many weeks of menus/production records must be reviewed?

State agencies will continue to assess compliance with the meal requirements based on a nutrient analysis of one week of menus, instead of two (as proposed).

3. When does the new 3-year review cycle begin?

The 3-year administrative review cycle begins SY 2013-2014. This allows State agencies to complete the current 5-year Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) cycle and prepare for the new review cycle. FNS will develop additional guidance on the implementation of the new administrative review cycle.

4. How will State agencies determine if school food authorities have planned menus that meet the new requirements in order to receive the additional 6 cents reimbursement rate increase?

Requirements for certification of school food authorities for the 6 cents reimbursement will be provided in a forthcoming interim rule, expected to be published in Spring 2012.

5. How does the rule address compliance with the new meal patterns and dietary specifications?

Technical assistance and corrective action continue to be the key tools used by the State agencies to seek compliance with the new meal requirements. However, as currently done, State agencies must apply immediate fiscal action if the meals offered are completely missing a required food component. State agencies must also take fiscal action for repeated violations of the vegetable subgroup and milk type requirements. State agencies have discretion to take fiscal action for repeated violations of the food quantity and whole grain requirements, and for repeated violations of the dietary specifications (calories, saturated fat, sodium, and trans fat).

New Question:

6. Will the current administrative review process continue to be used to monitor the new meal requirements?

The interim rule on the 6-cent reimbursement rate increase (published 4/27/12) addresses the administrative review process to be followed in the upcoming (2012-13) school year. Guidance pertaining to subsequent school years will be forthcoming.

Nutrient Analysis:

1. If there are multiple lines/choices of entree, are calories, fat, and sodium calculated based on an average of what is offered, each line individually, or a weighted average of what students are expected to take?

The calculation is a weighted average based on what is offered on each serving line.

2. Is there a difference between “planned meals” and “offered meals”?

Planned meals represent the SFA’s calculation of the items that will need to be prepared for a school’s usual average daily participation (ADP). Ideally, the planned and the offered meals are similar, except for substitutions due to product shortage, delivery failure, etc. Because the meals offered are an indicator of previous student selections, the State agency must review the nutrition program based on what is offered to correctly assess the calorie, saturated fat, and sodium levels in school meals.

Software requirements:

1. What nutrients must be included in the nutrient analysis report?

The nutrient analysis report must include calories, saturated fat (both in grams and percent of calories) and sodium because these are the nutrients that must be monitored by the State

Agencies through a nutrient analysis. These nutrients must be compared to the required dietary specifications for calories (minimum and maximum levels), sodium, and saturated fat. Trans fat does not need to be included in the nutrient analysis. If it is included, the trans fat value should not be used to determine if the menus meet the dietary specification for trans fat. State Agencies must examine nutrition labels and manufacturer specifications to monitor trans fat in the food products and food ingredients used to prepare school meals.

2. When software programs have missing nutrient values for trans fat, can the missing values be replaced with zeroes?

No. There is often confusion between missing nutrient data and zero values for nutrient data. If a value is missing, it cannot be assumed it is zero, even if it is likely that the item contains little or none of the nutrient. Missing nutrient data means that the value is unknown. Missing nutrient values or nutrient totals including missing nutrient values (for one or more items) must be marked as such in the approved software programs. These values are marked, so the user of nutrient analysis software can see that the total shown does not completely represent the amount of the nutrient in the food item, recipe, or menu. The user may then look at the items with missing values and decide if the total would likely be more or less based on which food items have missing values. It is inappropriate for a user to replace missing values with zeroes. A true zero value for a nutrient means that it does not contain any of the nutrient (or very little, as some zero values are based upon less than certain fractional amount for FDA labeling purposes).

3. When will the requirements for approval of nutrition analysis software be updated?

The updated specifications and requirements for the approved software should be available shortly on the Healthy Meals Resource System website under <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/software-support.html>. Other guidance documents will be updated, as well.

4. When are changes to the nutrient analysis software required?

The software developers of currently approved programs will have one year (by July 1, 2013) to make the required changes. Software developers of currently approved programs will be expected to show they have made the changes related to the Final Rule before being moved to the list of Nutrient Analysis Software Approved by USDA for Administrative Reviews. New developers or new programs by current developers will need to be evaluated and approved before being added to this list.

5. Will the Child Nutrition Database be modified to include both nutrients (i.e. calories, saturated fat, sodium, and trans fat) and meal component information (i.e. fluid milk, fruits, grains, meats, and vegetables)?

The Child Nutrition (CN) Database currently includes calories, saturated fat, sodium, and trans fat. There are no plans to include food pattern information in the CN Database.

6. Will the use of approved nutrient analysis software apply only to State agencies?

Only State Agencies are required to complete the one-week nutrient analysis in an approved software program. However, schools may choose to use approved software to do their own nutrient analyses.

7. Will USDA continue to review and approve nutrient analysis software for use in implementing Nutrient Standard Menu Planning in SY 2012-2013 breakfasts?

No. Software will no longer be evaluated and approved for Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP). However, software that is currently approved for NSMP will remain approved through SY 2012-2013 (June 30, 2013) for use by schools that continue to use NSMP for breakfast.

Starting with SY 2012-2013 nutrient analysis software will be approved by USDA for Administrative Reviews. Updated specifications will include any new or changed nutrient standards that are required to be included in the software.

8. Does USDA foresee approving software companies for Food-Based Menu Planning?

At this point, FNS does not have plans to require any food-based menu planning functionality.

Technical Assistance Resources:

1. When will the new Food Buying Guide be out?

We will be updating the Food Buying Guide in segments. The first task will be to separate the Fruits and Vegetables sections as well as add the vegetable subgroups. We recognize that SFA's will need this information as soon as possible; therefore, we will post updated sections as soon as they are available to the FNS PartnerWeb and public website.

Crediting:

1. How do food manufacturers provide standardized claims about the quantities of meal components in a unique product recipe?

Crediting is determined by rounding the food component down to the nearest quarter ounce equivalency for the meat/meat alternate and grain components, and down to the nearest eighth (1/8) cup for the fruit and vegetable components.

- 2. Currently, meats/meat alternates (M/MA) and grains are credited in quarter ounce equivalents (servings) and fruits and vegetables are credited in 1/8 cup increments. Will this change?**

No. The minimum creditable amounts for meal components are not changing. Menu items must contribute at least quarter ounce equivalents toward the M/MA and grain components and at least 1/8 cup toward the fruits and vegetables components.

Meal Identification:

- 1. Must all menu items on the serving line be identified as part of the reimbursable meal?**

Yes. The foods or food components (depending on the situation) that are part of a meal must be labeled, listed, or otherwise identified near/at the beginning of the serving line and prior to the Point-of-Service so the students can easily choose a reimbursable meal.

- 2. Must a school place all food components that are part of the reimbursable meal before the Point of Service (POS)?**

If a school is not able to position all food components (e.g. salad bar) prior to the POS, State agencies may authorize alternatives to the POS lunch counts. When food components/food items are located in an approved location beyond the POS, they must be labeled, listed on the menu, or otherwise identified so the students can easily identify all the components for a reimbursable meal and select the correct quantities. There must be a system in place to ensure that each reimbursable meal selected by the student under OVS includes a fruit or a vegetable (at least 1/2 cup).

Summer Meals:

- 1. Will schools operating Seamless Summer Option in the summer of 2012 be required to follow the new meal patterns as of July 1, 2012?**

Schools offering the SSO this summer have the option to follow new meal requirements or the requirements currently in place in SY 2011-2012.

New Questions:

- 2. Do the SFAs that have authority from the State agency to use the NSLP meal pattern for SFSP meals have to switch to the new meal pattern by July 1, 2012?**

No. They may implement the new meal pattern in the SFSP at the beginning of the 2013 summer in consultation with the State agency (as they will have been using the new meal pattern the entire previous school year).

3. When do SFAs need to implement the new meal pattern for meals offered under the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) in 2013?

The SSO and the SFSP will need to follow the meal pattern requirements that are effective July 1, 2012 at the start of their 2013 summer operations and continue with these requirements for the entirety of their summer operation. Therefore, each summer SSO and SFSP will be implementing the phased-in meal requirements subsequent to NSLP and SBP operations.

4. How will SFAs implement the weekly requirements for meals in the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), where meals are not always served 5 days a week and where sites serve children of various ages?

The new meal requirements will apply to the SSO meals beginning in the summer of 2013. We will issue guidance to help schools properly implement the meal pattern in summer settings prior to that time. Please refer to existing QAs on how to adapt the meal pattern requirements for short or long weeks, as well as how to handle K-12 grade configurations.

5. Will the 6 cents reimbursement rate increase apply to SSO meals and how will those meals be certified for the rate increase?

FNS will soon issue regulations of the certification process for the 6 cents reimbursement rate increase.

Miscellaneous:

1. Do the new meal requirements apply to other Child Nutrition Programs such as the afterschool snack service, Special Milk Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, or Summer Food Service Program?

No. The final rule meal patterns and dietary specifications are for the NSLP (Seamless Summer option included) and SBP. However, the milk fat requirement established by this rule was previously implemented in the Special Milk Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) though policy memoranda (SP 29-2011 and CACFP 21-2011) for consistency across the Child Nutrition Programs. The proposed rule to revise the CACFP meal patterns is under development. When that rule is implemented, the NSLP and SBP infant and Pre-K meal patterns will also be updated. In the meantime, schools must follow the requirements in section 210.10 and 220.8.

2. Do the new meal requirements apply to meals served to Pre-K children in schools?

No. The meal pattern for Pre-K students will be updated through a future rule updating the CACFP meal patterns to ensure that meal requirements for preschoolers are the same across the Child Nutrition Programs. Until then, schools serving Pre-K children should continue to use existing meal patterns for this age group in 7 CFR 210.10(p) and 7 CFR 220.8(o).

Procurement and Food Service Management Companies (FSMCs):

1. Is there guidance for SFAs that may need to update their contracts with their FSMCs?

Yes, please refer to memo SP 17-2012, entitled “Procurement Questions and Answers to Assist in the Implementation of the Final Rule titled Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs”. This memorandum was issued February 23, 2012.

Healthy Meals Resource System

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov>



Need resources?

Check out the Resource Library!
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/resource-library>

Find materials in these areas:

- Bulletin Board Resources
- Chef Resources
- Child Nutrition Programs
- Cooking with Kids
- Farm to School
- Food Safety
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Newsletters
- Nutrition Education
- School Gardens
- Whole Grains



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Sign up for the Team Nutrition eNewsletter!
The TN newsletter is sent semi-annually via email to highlight Child Nutrition news, new Team Nutrition publications, state resources, and more!
<http://1.usa.gov/KdulEk>



Best Practices Sharing Center

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In the *Best Practice Sharing Center*, search by topic, format, or audience to find menus, recipes, checklists, training materials, success stories, and other tools that will help implement the new school meal regulations.



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USDA Meal Pattern Requirement Certification Specifications *(updated 6/15/2012)*

Background:

The meal pattern requirement certification specifications developed by the Food and Nutrition service (FNS) will be used to certify school food authorities (SFAs) who demonstrate compliance with the updated meal pattern requirements to receive the additional 6 cent lunch reimbursement. Since it is a performance-based reimbursement, it is expected to encourage SFAs to implement the updated requirements as quickly as possible. FNS developed a Certification Tool to assist SFAs and State agencies in measuring compliance.

By assessing daily and weekly meal pattern requirements as well as nutrient requirements, these tools provide certification documentation for SFAs to submit to State agencies. State agencies must review the documentation and make certification determinations within 60 days. SFAs must submit the following documentation:

- **Menus and menu worksheets** – One week of each menu offered, by age grade group, and a detailed menu worksheet for each menu showing food components and quantities by reimbursable meal. For example, if the SFA serves an elementary, middle, and high school menu, the SFA must submit three menus and three menu worksheets. If an SFA has two distinct menus for its high schools, and one each for middle and elementary schools, it must submit four menus and four menu worksheets.
- **Nutrient analysis or a simplified nutrient assessment** – A nutrient analysis, using FNS-approved software, or a simplified nutrient assessment, following standards set by FNS, for each menu. The Simplified Nutrient Assessment is considered a proxy for a complete nutrient analysis.
- **Attestation** – SFAs must attest in writing that the documentation submitted for certification is representative of the ongoing meal service within the SFA, and that the minimum required food quantities for all meal components are available to students in every serving line.

The Certification tool consists of two modules; the Menu Worksheet and the Simplified Nutrient Assessment.

New Meal Pattern Requirements:

The final rule, “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs” was published by FNS on January 26th, 2012. This final rule updates the meal patterns and nutrition standards for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to align them with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The final rule can be found at the link below:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf>

Materials needed to complete the Certification Tool:

SFAs will need the following to complete the assessment:

- 1 week menu (5 days)
- Portion sizes for all reimbursable menu items
- Contribution information for each menu item (CN Label, USDA Food Fact Sheet)
- Standardized Recipes
- Production Records
- Food Buying Guide
- The unit of measurement is the reimbursable meal.
 - Each reimbursable meal consists of all required food components: any grain/meat/meat alternates in a main dish and/or side dish, total amount of fruit offered with each meal, total amount of vegetables in a main dish and/or side dish, and amount of milk. The vegetable subgroups and types of milk will be recorded on a different tab.

Menu Worksheet Specifications:

Daily Requirements:

Based on the quantity information entered for each reimbursable meal, the assessment checks to ensure the daily requirements are met for fruit, vegetables, grains, meat/meat alternate, and milk.

- The milk type is checked on a daily basis to ensure a variety of milk types are served and low-fat (1%) flavored, reduced fat (2%) or whole milk is not offered.

Weekly Requirements:

- The minimum quantity of fruit, vegetables, grains, meat/meat alternative, and milk offered for the reimbursable meals offered each day is used to sum across the week to ensure the weekly minimums for the above components are met.
- For grains and meat/meat alternate, the maximum quantity offered in a reimbursable meal for each day is summed to determine if the sum of maximum quantities is within the required weekly range.
- Vegetable subgroup information is entered each day to assess the weekly requirements. The largest amount of each vegetable subgroup available (in cups) to a single child is selected to indicate the greatest combination of vegetables available for a student to select.
 - For example: If two different entrees are offered, such as a spinach pizza and a broccoli casserole, the amounts of spinach and broccoli would NOT be added together as the student cannot take both of those food items. This would also apply if more than one

side dish with dark green vegetables is offered and students are instructed to take one choice.

- The sum of all offerings of fruit juice (in cups) is summed for all meals offered during the week to assess if the fruit juice limit is met (no more than 50% of total fruit can come in the form of fruit juice).
- The sum of all offerings of vegetable juice (in cups) is summed for all meals offered during the week to assess if the vegetable juice limit is met (no more than 50% of total weekly vegetables can come in the form of vegetable juice).
- The total amount (in ounce equivalents; however grain/bread servings may also be used as a unit of measure for SY 2012-2013 only) of grain offerings for each day is summed across the week as is the total amount of whole grain-rich offerings to ensure that at least 50% of total grain offerings are whole grain-rich.
- The number of grain-based desserts is tracked with the reimbursable meals to determine if no more than 2 ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts are offered during the course of the week.

Table 1: Menu Worksheet Component Requirement Measurement Specifications Summary

Updated on 6/15/2012

Component	Daily Requirement	Weekly Requirement
Fruit Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be \geq daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (column 4a) \geq daily requirement.	Minimum fruit for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be \geq weekly requirement (age grade group) Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab column 4a) = weekly minimum
Vegetable Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be \geq daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (column 5a) \geq daily requirement	Minimum vegetable for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be \geq weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab column 5a) = weekly minimum
Milk Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be \geq daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (column 6) \geq daily requirement	Minimum milk for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be \geq weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab column 6) = weekly minimum
Daily Milk Variety	More than one of the following must be checked: Skim/fat-free unflavored, Skim/fat-free flavored, Low-	N/A

	fat (less than 1%), unflavored. The following may NOT be checked: Low-fat (1% or less), flavored or Reduced fat (2% fat) or whole, unflavored and flavored	
Meat/Meat Alternate Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be \geq daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (column 2) \geq daily requirement	Minimum meat/meat alternate for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be \geq weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab column 2) = weekly minimum
Meat/Meat Alternate Maximum	N/A	Maximum meat/meat alternate for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be \leq weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Maximum (Daily tab column 2) = weekly maximum
Grains Minimum	Each reimbursable meal must be \geq daily requirement (age grade group). Daily tab (Column 3a) \geq daily requirement	Minimum Grains for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be \geq weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Minimum (Daily tab Column 3a) = weekly minimum
Grains Maximum	N/A	Maximum Grains for all reimbursable meals is summed and must be \leq weekly requirement (age grade group). Sum of (Maximum (Daily tab Column 3a) = weekly maximum
Fruit Juice Limit	N/A	Sum of Maximum(daily tab column 4b) /sum of maximum (daily tab column 4a) must be \leq 50%
Vegetable Juice Limit	N/A	Sum of Maximum(daily tab column 5b) /sum of maximum (daily tab column 5a) must be \leq 50%

Whole Grain-Rich	N/A	Sum of total grains offered each day and sum of whole grain rich offerings each day. Sum (Monday through Friday column3b)/Sum (Monday through Friday column 3a) must be $\geq 50\%$.
Grain-based desserts	N/A	Sum of maximum offering of grain based desserts each day. Sum (maximum daily tab column 3c) must be ≤ 2 .
Vegetable Subgroups		
Dark Green	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column E plus daily tab cell AD7 (largest amount of dark green to select)
Red/orange	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column K plus daily tab cell AJ7 (largest amount of red/orange to select)
Beans/peas	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column Q plus daily tab cell AP7 (largest amount of Beans/peas to select)
Starchy	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column W plus daily tab cell AV7 (largest amount of Starchy to select)
Other	N/A	OptionalVegBar tab (if selected) sum of column AC plus daily tab cell BB7 (largest amount of Other to select)

Simplified Nutrient Assessment Specifications:

This part of the Certification Tool is only required for those SFAs that do not submit a full nutrient analysis as part of their certification application. SFAs that have FNS approved nutrient analysis software, may submit a nutrient analysis showing the calories and saturated fat for the week. The Simplified Nutrient Assessment is meant to be a proxy for a full nutrient analysis. Similar to the Menu Worksheet, SFAs must submit a Simplified Nutrient Assessment for each menu type.

Fruit, Milk, and Vegetable Subgroup Assessment

SFAs will answer a series of questions pertaining to the frequency of adding fats and sugars in the preparation and offering of fruit, milk, and vegetable subgroups for the week of menus submitted for the certification process.

Fruit:

- The number of total weekly servings is based on sum of the minimum quantity offered through the reimbursable meals offered each day. This value is from the weekly report (cell G5).
- User indicates how frequently fruit is offered through the week with added fat as well as added sugar, based on total volume (cups):.
 - If fruit is offered less than 30% of the time with added fat/sugar.
 - If fruit is offered 30% to 70% of the time with added fat/sugar.
 - If fruit is offered more than 70% of the time with added fat/sugar.
- Each selection has a calorie and saturated fat value determined by averaging calories and fat from commonly used sugars and fats per serving and taking a percentage of the serving size based on frequency. Calorie and saturated fat values for common additives are based on food items in the USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference.
- The values increase as the frequency of using added sugar and/or fat increases.
- The average serving size offered in the menu is determined by taking the average of the fruit quantities offered through reimbursable meals over the course of the week.
- The average amount of calories and saturated fat offered per serving based on the preparation is determined by multiplying the value by the average serving size.
- The total calories and saturated fat for the weekly fruit is determined by multiplying the calories per serving by the sum of the daily fruit quantity minimums.
- Average weekly calories and saturated fat is determined by dividing the total calories and saturated fat calculated above by 5.

Milk

- The number of total weekly servings is based on sum of minimum quantity served each day.
- User indicates the two types of milk offered most during the week:
 - Nonfat unflavored & nonfat flavored
 - Nonfat unflavored & low-fat (1%) unflavored
 - Low-fat (1%) unflavored & nonfat flavored
- Each selection has a calorie and saturated fat value determined by averaging the milk types.
- There is a value associated with each type of milk, based on USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference and commercially available products.
- The average serving size offered in the menu is determined by taking the average of the milk quantities offered over the course of the week.

- The average amount of calories and saturated fat offered per serving based on the preparation is determined by multiplying the value by the average serving size.
- The total calories and saturated fat for the weekly milk is determined by multiplying the calories per serving by the sum of the daily milk quantity minimums.
- Average weekly calories and saturated fat is determined by dividing the total calories and saturated fat calculated above by 5.

Vegetable Subgroups (updated on 6/15/20102)

- Estimated share of each vegetable subgroup is determined by the amount of each subgroup over the week displayed in the weekly report divided by the total of all vegetable subgroups. This share is applied to the minimum amount of vegetable weekly total.
 - $(\text{Weekly subgroup} / \text{sum}(\text{all weekly subgroups})) * \text{weekly total for minimum vegetables.}$
- User indicates how vegetable subgroups are usually offered, based on total volume (cups):
 - If [vegetable subgroup] is offered less than 30% of the time with added fat.
 - If [vegetable subgroup] is offered 30% to 70% of the time with added fat.
 - If [vegetable subgroup] is offered more than 70% of the time with added fat.
- The frequency of added sugars must also be selected for the red/orange vegetable subgroups.
- Each selection has a calorie and saturated fat value determined by averaging calorie and fat values from commonly used fats per serving and taking a percentage of the serving size based on frequency.
- The values increase as the frequency of using added fat (and/or added sugar for red/orange vegetables) increases.
- The total calories and saturated fat for the weekly subgroups is determined by multiplying the calories per serving by weekly maximum quantities.
- Average weekly calories and saturated fat is determined by dividing the total calories and saturated fat calculated above by 5.

Table 2: Commonly added fats and sugar sources for fruits, vegetables, and milk

Common Sources for Added Fats	Common Sources for Added Sugars
Butter	Brown or white sugar
Margarine	Honey
Vegetable oil (soybean, canola, olive, nut based)	Maple and/or fruit syrup (juice concentrate)
Salad dressing	Pie filling
Mayonnaise	Crumb topping
Cream/whipped cream/sour cream	
Shortening	
Bacon crumbles	

Table 3: Values associated with added fats and sugars

Meal Pattern Component	Calories/cup	Sat Fat/cup
Fruit plus FAT		
Less than 30%	132.59	0.34
30% to 70%	154.99	1.06
Over 70%	177.39	1.78
Fruit (SUGAR only, not including fruit values)		
Less than 30%	3.68	0.00
30% to 70%	12.25	0.00
Over 70%	20.83	0.00
Milk		
Nonfat unflavored & nonfat flavored	114.65	0.36
Nonfat unflavored & low-fat (1%) unflavored	92.50	0.84
Low-fat (1%) unflavored & nonfat flavored	124.15	1.06
Dark Green Vegetables (FAT)		
Less than 30%	40.60	0.31
30% to 70%	63.00	1.03
Over 70%	85.40	1.74
Red/Orange Vegetables (FAT)		
Less than 30%	109.43	0.36
30% to 70%	131.83	1.07
Over 70%	154.23	1.79
Red/Orange Vegetables (SUGAR only, not including vegetable values)		
Less than 30%	3.68	0.00
30% to 70%	12.25	0.00
Over 70%	20.83	0.00
Beans/Peas Vegetables (FAT)		
Less than 30%	246.00	0.55
30% to 70%	268.40	1.27
Over 70%	290.80	1.98
Starchy Vegetables (FAT)		
Less than 30%	161.03	0.51
30% to 70%	183.43	1.22
Over 70%	205.83	1.94
Other Vegetables (FAT)		
Less than 30%	47.78	0.37
30% to 70%	70.18	1.09
Over 70%	92.58	1.81

Main Dish Simplified Nutrient Data Entry:

- This section is pre-populated with the meals entered in the “All Meals” tab in the Menu worksheet.
- SFAs must enter calories and saturated fat for each meal offered during the week.
- Only include the calories and saturated fat for the main dish and any components included as part of the main dish. The vegetables and fruit have already been accounted for in the Fruit, Milk, and Vegetable Subgroup Simplified Nutrient Selection section.
- The number of planned servings must include all servings across all sites serving the menu type (if more than one school served per menu type, aggregate data across schools).
- For each main dish the number of calories/serving and saturated fat/serving is multiplied by the number of planned servings for the week.
- The number of calories and saturated fat offered over the week are calculated by summing the number of calories and saturated fat offered for all main dishes calculated above.
- The number of planned servings for the week for all meals is calculated by summing the number of planned servings for each meal.
- The average daily calories and saturated fat are calculated by dividing the total calories and saturated fat for the week (for all meals) by the total weekly number of servings calculated in the step above.

Other items: Sides, Desserts, and condiments Nutrient Data Entry:

- The calories and saturated fat per serving must be entered for all sides (not vegetables and fruit), desserts, and condiments.
- The number of planned servings must include all servings across all sites serving the menu type.
- For each side, dessert, and condiment, the number of calories/serving and saturated fat/serving are multiplied by the number of planned servings for the week.
- The number of calories and saturated fat offered over the week are calculated by summing the number of calories and saturated fat offered for all sides, desserts, and condiments calculated above.
- The average daily calories and saturated fat are calculated by dividing the total calories and saturated fat for the week (for all meals) by the **total weekly number of planned servings for main dishes**.

Daily Amounts based on the average for a 5-day week (Simplified Nutrient Assessment results):

Calories:

- The estimated average daily calories for fruit, milk, and vegetable subgroups, the average daily calories for all main dishes, and the average daily calories for all sides, desserts, and condiments is summed to determine the average daily calories for the weekly menu.

- There is a 25 calorie window on each end of the range to allow for State agency follow up. The calories do not fall within the range but the SFA may follow up with the State to determine why the estimated average daily calorie limit is above or below the required range.
- Estimated average daily calories outside of the 25 calorie window are flagged for not meeting the requirement.

Saturated Fat:

- The estimated average daily calories for fruit, milk, and vegetable subgroups, the average daily calories for all main dishes, and the average daily calories for all sides, desserts, and condiments is summed and then multiplied by 9 to calculate the total calories of saturated fat.
- The total calories of saturated fat are divided by the average daily calories for the week to calculate the percent of daily calories that are saturated fat.
- There is a 0.5% window to allow for State agency follow up.
- Estimate percent of saturated fat calories outside of the 0.5 (10.5%) window are flagged for not meeting the requirement.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

DATE: May 31, 2012

MEMO CODE: SP 34-2012

SUBJECT: Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Certification of Compliance with New Meal Patterns - Certification Tools, Specifications, and Prototype Attestation Statement

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

Attached for your use and information are materials to support the certification process set forth in the interim rule, *Certification of Compliance with Meal Requirements for the National School Lunch Program under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*. These materials include:

- The FNS-developed Certification Tools, each of which includes a Menu Worksheet Module and a Simplified Nutrient Assessment Module:
 - Lunch Certification Worksheet, Grades K-5
 - Lunch Certification Worksheet, Grades 6-8
 - Lunch Certification Worksheet, Grades 9-12
 - Lunch Certification Worksheet, Grades K-8
 - Breakfast Certification Worksheet, Grades K-5
 - Breakfast Certification Worksheet, Grades 6-8
 - Breakfast Certification Worksheet, Grades 9-12
 - Breakfast Certification Worksheet, Grades K-12
- Certification Tool Specifications, including Meal Pattern Requirement Specifications, and Simplified Nutrient Assessment Specifications
- A prototype Attestation Statement for submission by school food authorities as part of the certification process.

Although the Certification Tool is a prototype that is not required to be used by State agencies for certification, any non-FNS tools used for certification must be pre-approved by FNS to ensure that all required elements are captured and compliance requirements are measured consistently with the FNS prototype. This includes State-developed tools as

Regional Directors
State Directors
Page 2

well as tools developed by private software companies. The attached Certification Tool Specifications will assist with the development of non-FNS tools, if desired.

Any questions concerning these materials should be addressed to the appropriate FNS Regional Office. Regional Offices with questions should contact the Child Nutrition Division.

Original Signed

for:
Cynthia Long
Director
Child Nutrition Division

Attachments



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

DATE: April 27, 2012

MEMO CODE: SP 31-2012

SUBJECT: Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Questions and Answers Related to the Certification of Compliance with Meal Requirements for the National School Lunch Program

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

Attached are Questions and Answers related to the interim rule entitled, *Certification of Compliance with Meal Requirements for the National School Lunch Program under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*. Under section 201 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, an additional reimbursement of 6 cents per lunch is available for school food authorities certified to be in compliance with the new school meal patterns. The interim rule establishes the requirements related to certification and this new performance-based reimbursement. The attached Questions and Answers provide additional information on these requirements.

Any questions concerning this guidance should be addressed to the appropriate Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office. Regional Offices with questions should contact the Child Nutrition Division.

Original Signed

Cynthia Long
Director
Child Nutrition Division

Attachment

Background

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) requires the additional 6 cents per lunch reimbursement be provided to school food authorities (SFAs) certified by a State agency to be in compliance with the new meal pattern requirements. The HHFKA explicitly states that SFAs found out of compliance will not receive the additional reimbursement.

The certification process for the 6 cents performance-based reimbursement works as follows:

- SFA submits certification documentation to State agency
- State agency makes a certification determination within 60 days
- State agencies conduct validation reviews of 25 percent of certified SFAs in SY 2012-2013
- Certified SFAs must annually attest to ongoing compliance with the meal patterns through SY 2014-2015
- Ongoing compliance with the meal pattern requirements is monitored during administrative reviews (currently known as coordinated review effort (CRE))

General

Q1. What is the purpose of the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement?

The additional 6 cents per lunch reimbursement provided to SFAs certified to be in compliance with the new meal patterns is intended to assist SFAs in meeting the new meal patterns. Since it is a performance-based reimbursement it is expected to encourage SFAs to implement the updated requirements as quickly as possible.

Q2. When will the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement be available?

Section 201 of the HHFKA makes the additional reimbursement available for lunches meeting the updated meal pattern requirements on October 1, 2012, and no earlier. In order to be eligible to receive this new performance-based reimbursement, the State agency must certify that the SFA is in compliance with the requirements of the final meal pattern rule published in the *Federal Register* on January 26, 2012.

Q3. Does the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement increase take into account annual inflation?

Yes, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will prescribe annual adjustments to the performance-based cash assistance rate (6 cents) at the same time adjustments are made to the national average payment rates. These adjustments, which reflect changes in the food away from home series of the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers, are annually announced by Notice in July of each year in the *Federal Register*. The first adjustment to the 6 cents will occur in July 2013.

Q4. What assistance will be provided to State agencies for certification activities?

The HHFKA provided \$47 million in each of Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013 to assist State agencies with State-level costs associated with training, technical assistance, certification and oversight activities associated with implementing the updated meal patterns, certifying SFAs, and providing the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement to certified SFAs. Given that the heaviest

workload for certification is expected to occur this coming summer and fall, State agencies may determine that contractor support is the most practical approach in the early implementation phases, which would be an allowable use of these funds or of State administrative expense funds. For example, State agencies may obtain a contractor to conduct certification or validation activities.

Q5. What materials will FNS provide to State agencies and SFAs to support certification?

In addition to Powerpoint presentations, Questions and Answers, and other ongoing guidance and technical assistance on the certification process, FNS will provide:

- a menu worksheet and a simplified nutrient assessment worksheet, in Excel format;
- a prototype contract solicitation package to assist State agencies that wish to procure contract support for meal pattern certification activities.

We are also exploring the possibility of providing cycle menus that meet the new requirements, and encourage State agencies and SFAs to use the School Meal Pattern Clearinghouse for sharing information. The clearinghouse is located at <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/bestpractices>.

Certification Process

Q6. What is the certification process?

On October 1, 2012, an additional 6 cents per lunch reimbursement becomes available to school food authorities certified by the State agency to be in compliance with the updated meal pattern requirements. State agencies are required to establish certification procedures which allow SFAs to submit documentation demonstrating compliance with the updated meal pattern requirements for State agency review and approval. While each State agency's certification procedures will be customized, generally the procedures will require SFAs to submit documentation demonstrating compliance with the updated meal patterns consistent with the final meal pattern regulation, the interim rule on certification of compliance with the 6 cents requirements, and subsequent guidance provided by FNS, including these questions and answers.

Q7. How frequently must State agencies conduct certification?

State agencies must only certify an SFA once. Once an SFA has been granted certification, ongoing compliance with meal pattern requirements will be monitored through administrative reviews.

Q8. When may a State agency begin approving applications from SFAs to receive the extra 6 cents per lunch reimbursement?

The earliest a State agency may certify SFAs for the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement is July 1, 2012, the beginning of School Year (SY) 2012-2013. This date reflects the compliance date for the updated meal pattern requirements. State agencies and SFAs are reminded that while certification may occur prior to October 1, 2012, certified SFA's will earn the additional 6 cents for only those meals served starting October 1, 2012, or later.

Q9. Must SFAs be in compliance with both breakfast and lunch requirements to be certified for the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement?

Yes, because the HHFKA provides the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement for compliance with the updated meal patterns, SFAs must be certified by the State agency to be in compliance with the updated lunch and breakfast meal patterns (if the SFA participates in the School Breakfast Program (SBP)) in effect at the time of certification.

Q10. The meal pattern requirements are phased-in over a period of several years. How does this affect the certification process?

SFAs must demonstrate compliance with those meal pattern requirements in effect at the time the SFA applies for certification. While most of the updated lunch requirements are effective in SY 2012-2013, some lunch requirements are phased in later as are most SBP requirements. Thus, an SFA applying in SY 2012-2013 would need to demonstrate compliance with all of the SY 2012-2013 requirements in order to be certified. An SFA applying for certification in SY 2013-2014 would need to demonstrate compliance with all of the SY 2012-2013 requirements and all requirements phased in for SY 2013-2014.

Q11. How many schools within the SFA must be in compliance to be certified to receive the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement?

All schools within the SFA must be in compliance with the meal pattern requirements for the SFA to be certified for the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement. If the SFA participates in the SBP, the schools must also be in compliance with the updated breakfast requirements in effect at the time of certification.

Q12. How long after documentation has been submitted by an SFA does the State agency have to make a certification determination?

Beginning October 1, 2012, State agencies must review certification materials and make certification determinations within 60 days of receipt of the certification request from the SFA. For example, if an SFA submits documentation on November 1, 2012, the State agency must make a certification determination by January 1, 2013.

Recognizing a large number of SFAs may request certification prior to October 1, 2012, an exception to the 60 day requirement is provided for any certification documentation request submitted prior to September 30, 2012. For certification requests submitted prior to October 1, 2012, the State agency has 60 days from October 1, 2012, to review certification materials and make certification determinations.

Q13. Once granted certification, how do State agencies reimburse certified SFAs?

Upon certification, the State agency must reimburse the certified SFA with the additional performance-based reimbursement for each lunch served beginning the start of the month in which the certified lunches are served, but not earlier than October 1, 2012. For example, if certification documentation is submitted for October 15-19 and the SFA is certified by the State agency in December, the State agency must provide the additional performance-based reimbursement for all lunches served in that SFA on or after October 1. State agencies will follow standard reimbursement procedures.

Certification Documentation

Q14. How does an SFA pursue certification?

There are three options for certification. These options were designed to use, to the maximum extent practicable, existing processes and information.

- Option 1 allows SFAs to submit one week of menus, detailed menu worksheets showing food components and quantities for reimbursable meals for these menus, and a nutrient analysis of calories and saturated fats. This option acknowledges that a large number of SFAs already use nutrient analysis software to monitor the nutrient levels in their meals.
- Option 2 allows SFAs to submit one week of menus, detailed menu worksheets showing food components and quantities for reimbursable meals for these menus, and a simplified nutrient assessment of calories and saturated fats. This option acknowledges that not all SFAs use nutrient analysis software. A simplified nutrient assessment is intended to be a proxy for the nutrient analysis.
- Option 3 allows State agencies to certify an SFA during a review. If the State agency offers this option, the SFA would need to have one week of menus, detailed menu worksheets for these menus, and all information needed for the State agency to conduct a nutrient analysis.

State agencies must allow SFAs the option to choose either Option 1 or 2 for certification. However, it is left to State discretion whether to make Option 3 available to SFAs.

See Q. 5 for information on prototype certification tools that will be provided by FNS.

Q15. What documentation is required in order to be certified?

As described in Q14, the following documentation is required:

- ***Menus and menu worksheets*** – One week of each menu offered, by age grade group, and a detailed menu worksheet for each menu showing food components and quantities by reimbursable meal. For example, if the SFA serves an elementary, middle, and high school menu, the SFA must submit three menus and three menu worksheets. If an SFA has two distinct menus for its high schools, and one each for middle and elementary schools, it must submit four menus and four menu worksheets.
- ***Nutrient analysis or a simplified nutrient assessment*** – A nutrient analysis, using FNS-approved software, or a simplified nutrient assessment, following standards set by FNS, for each menu. The simplified nutrient assessment is considered a proxy for a complete nutrient analysis.
- ***Attestation*** – SFAs must attest in writing that the documentation submitted for certification is representative of the ongoing meal service within the SFA, and that the minimum required food quantities for all meal components are available to students in every serving line.

FNS will be providing a prototype menu worksheet and nutrient assessment in May.

Q16. What menus must SFAs submit for certification?

At a minimum, SFAs must submit one week of each menu offered, by age grade group, within the SFA for both lunch and, if offered, breakfast. This means SFAs must submit a breakfast and lunch menu for grades K-5, a breakfast and lunch menu for grades 6-8 and a breakfast and lunch menu for grades 9-12.

As noted above, if the SFA serves multiple, *distinct* menus within one age grade group, the SFA must submit all menus served. For example, if the SFA has two high schools that offer lunch menus with different entrees in their reimbursable meals, both lunch menus (and accompanying menu worksheets) must be submitted. If the SFA has two high schools that offer lunch menus with the same entrees but one has a salad bar and the other serves similar vegetables on the line each day, the SFA would only need to submit one of these menus and the accompanying menu worksheet. In such situations, the SFA must ensure that any menu variations not submitted for certification are consistent with the meal pattern and nutrient requirements.

For the purposes of this rule, a week means a normal school week, not including holidays.

Q17. Must the documentation reflect any specific timeframes?

Yes, all documentation must reflect current SFA practices, i.e., meal service in the calendar month the certification materials are submitted, or in the month preceding the calendar month of submission. For example, in December an SFA can submit a request for certification with documentation of December or November meal service. Documentation for October meal service would not be considered current in this case.

As indicated in Q8, SFAs may submit planned menus prior to October 1, 2012; however menus submitted prior to October 1 must reflect meals planned for October or November 2012.

SFAs should be reminded that the materials provided are a snapshot of meal service activity and are considered representative of the on-going meal service.

Q18. SFAs currently using Nutrient Standard Menu Planning may continue with this menu planning option for breakfasts in SY 2012-2013. What must these SFAs submit for certification for breakfast?

Any SFA that uses Nutrient Standard Menu Planning for breakfasts in SY 2012-13 must submit each distinct breakfast menu along with a nutrient analysis using FNS approved software. No menu worksheet would be required in this case. This applies only to SFAs seeking certification in SY 2012-2013, as that is the last year that Nutrient Standard Menu Planning is allowed for breakfast.

Q19. Must an SFA submit certification documentation if the State agency is conducting an administrative review of the SFA after July 1, 2012?

As mentioned in Q14, at State agency discretion, the State agency may certify an SFA during the course of the administrative review. Affected SFAs should work with the State agency to determine if this option is available and to identify any documentation that would need to be available to the State agency in order to complete the certification process.

States that chose to certify an SFA during an administrative review should ask for the same documentation as required in Option 3 in Q14.

Q20. When will the menu worksheet and simplified nutrient assessment tools be available to State agencies?

FNS expects to provide these tools to State agencies in May 2012. The tools will also be available on the FNS website. Although these tools are prototypes and are not required to be used by State agencies for certification, any State-developed tools used for the certification process must be pre-approved by FNS to ensure that all required elements are captured and compliance requirements are measured consistently with the FNS prototype.

State agencies wishing to create their own tools should contact their regional offices.

Q21. How must certification documentation be submitted to the State agency?

State agencies may ask SFAs to submit certification documentation in various forms including electronically or paper-based.

SY 2012-2013 Validation Reviews

Q22. What is the requirement for State agency conducted validation reviews? Does it apply beyond SY 2012-2013?

For SY 2012-2013, State agencies must conduct on-site validation reviews of 25 percent of certified SFAs. There is no validation review requirement beyond SY 2012-2013 because the new three-year administrative review cycle begins on July 1, 2013.

Q23. What is the purpose of the SY 2012-2013 validation reviews?

The purpose of the validation review is to affirm that a certified SFA has been and continues to meet the updated meal patterns from the beginning of the certification and to ensure that the meal service at the time of the validation review is consistent with the certification documentation submitted by the SFA.

Q24. What is required of a State agency during a validation review?

State agencies must observe a meal service for each type of certified menu (i.e., each distinct menu by age grade grouping) and review the production records for observed meals to ensure the meal service meets the updated meal pattern requirements and is consistent with the menus/documentation on which certification was based. In addition, State agencies must review documentation submitted for certification to ensure that ongoing meal service operations are consistent with certification documentation.

State agencies are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis during a validation review.

Q25. What action(s) must the State agency take if it is unable to validate the certification documentation?

If the State agency is unable to validate the certification documentation, the State agency must assess:

- Whether corrective action can occur immediately; and

- The longevity and severity of the problems.

If corrective action occurs immediately, the SFA may continue to earn the 6 cents. However, the State agency must recover any improperly paid 6 cents funds. The period of recovery depends on the longevity and severity of the problems discovered.

SFAs whose 6 cents is turned off as a result of the validation review must re-apply for certification and if they are not re-certified, will be subject to an administrative review early in the SY 2013-2014 administrative review cycle.

All the same certification process requirements apply when an SFA re-applies for certification.

Q26. When must the State agency conduct a validation review?

State agencies have discretion in scheduling validation reviews for the sample of certified SFAs. However, since an erroneous certification could lead to the recovery of improperly paid funds, State agencies are strongly encouraged to conduct validation reviews prior to the SFA's submission of first Claim for Reimbursement including the 6 cents, if possible. State agencies could conduct the validation review prior to notifying the SFA of certification, as long as it is completed within the 60-day timeframe for certification. This approach assures proper stewardship of Federal funds.

Q27. Are SFAs that are certified through a State agency-conducted on-site review subject to a validation review?

No, SFAs that are certified by the State agency during an on-site review are exempt from a validation review in SY 2012-2013. Since the State agency-conducted review provides an independent validation of the menus and includes a nutrient analysis, there is no further need for a validation review.

Q28. How many SFAs must a State agency select for a validation review?

State agencies must randomly select at least 25 percent of all SFAs certified in SY 2012-2013 for validation reviews, except that all large SFAs must be included in the selected sample. Note, since State agency conducted on-site reviews are not subject to validation reviews, they may not be included as part of the validation review sample.

Q29. State agencies must include all certified large SFAs in their SY 2012-2013 validation reviews. What is considered a large SFA?

A large SFA, as currently defined in §210.18 for purposes of the administrative review, includes:

- All SFAs with 40,000 or more children
- If there are less than two SFAs with 40,000 or more children, the two largest SFAs with at least 2,000 children.

Q30. At what point in the school year should State agencies select the random 25 percent of total certified SFAs that they will visit for a validation review?

State agencies should select certified SFAs for validation reviews throughout the school year because certification is a rolling process. We strongly encourage State agencies to select certified SFAs during the periods October-December, January-March, and April-June. The tota

number of certified SFAs selected for a validation review in SY 2012-2013 must be at least 25 percent. All validation reviews must be completed by June 30, 2013.

Any SFA not selected for a validation review during one period is automatically in the “pool” for possible selection during the next time period. Validation reviews must occur during periods when meal service is in operation so State agencies can confirm the documentation submitted reflects actual program operation.

Q31. How many individual schools within an SFA must be visited during a validation review?

One school representing each type of certified menu submitted by the SFA should be randomly selected for a validation review by the State agency. Therefore, if an SFA has three menus—one for each age grade group—the State agency would randomly select three schools to visit during the validation review, one from each age grade group. If the SFA serves breakfast, this must be observed as well.

Administrative Reviews

Q32. Are State agencies required to conduct administrative reviews in SY 2012-2013?

Generally no, State agency administrative reviews scheduled for SY 2012-2013 may be postponed until SY 2013-2014, the first year of the new three-year administrative review cycle. Postponing administrative reviews is expected to allow State agencies to focus on the implementation of the updated meal patterns and certification activities. However, State agencies must continue to conduct Additional Administrative Reviews (AARs) in SY 2012-2013 since these SFAs are high risk. In addition, State agencies must conduct administrative reviews for other SFAs that are considered at-risk for improper payments.

Q33. Which SFAs must the State agency review in SY 2013-2014, the first year of the new three-year administrative review cycle?

The first year of the new review cycle (SY 2013-2014) must include any SFA scheduled for review in SY 2012-2013 whose review was postponed. In addition, State agencies are required to conduct an administrative review of non-compliant SFAs early in the review cycle, i.e., any SFA whose certification request was denied during the certification process or upon a validation review for significant meal pattern violations or any SFA that has not applied for certification.

Q34. How should State agencies handle SFAs that fail to apply for certification?

SFAs that do not apply for certification will not be eligible to receive the 6 cents and must be reviewed early in the new three-year administrative review process. If the SFA is not in compliance with the updated meal patterns for breakfasts and lunches at that time, all standard corrective action, follow-up review and fiscal action requirements apply. In addition, these SFAs remain ineligible for the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement.

Q35. How should State agencies handle SFAs who apply for certification but repeatedly fail to meet the new meal pattern requirements?

The State agency should assess the reasons for non-compliance on a case by case basis. State agencies have a number of tools to deal with non-compliance ranging from technical assistance,

corrective action, follow up reviews, and fiscal action resulting from administrative review activity, to withholding reimbursement and ultimately termination.

Q36. If during an *administrative review* a certified SFA is found to be out of compliance with either lunch or breakfast requirements, will the 6 cents per lunch be “turned off”?

If the SFA does not meet the lunch requirements, the 6 cents per lunch will be terminated and the State agency would pursue corrective action, follow up review activity, and fiscal action as required under 7 CFR 210.18.

If an SFA is found out of compliance with only the breakfast requirements during an administrative review, the State agency would pursue corrective action, follow-up review activity, and fiscal action as required under 7 CFR 210.18; however, in this case the SFA remains eligible for the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement.

Q37. When is the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement for lunch turned off?

If the State agency finds during an administrative review that the certified SFA has violated any requirement of Performance Standard 2 for lunch, the State agency must assess:

- Whether corrective action can occur immediately; and
- The longevity and severity of the problems.

If corrective action occurs immediately, the SFA may continue to earn the 6 cents. However, the State agency must recover any improperly paid funds. The period of recovery depends on the longevity and severity of the problems discovered.

Q38. If during an administrative review the State agency finds a problem that is able to be corrected immediately, must the 6 cents be turned off?

No, if the SFA is able to correct the identified problem by the end of the week in which the review is conducted, the State agency need not turn off the 6 cents reimbursement. For example, if the school is missing a vegetable subgroup during the review week and is able to change its food order to include the missing vegetable subgroup so the component is included on menus for that week or the next week, then the SFA would not lose the 6 cents reimbursement in the following month.

Q39. When is the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement “turned back on”?

The State agency may re-start the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement beginning with the first full month the SFA demonstrates to the satisfaction of the State agency that it has corrected the violation identified during the administrative review.

Q40. Will the “turn on” of 6 cents after non-compliance has been corrected require a State agency on-site review?

No, an onsite review is not required, as long as the State agency has sufficient documentation that the SFA is compliant with the new meal pattern requirements. As always, State agencies have discretion to do onsite reviews if they wish.

Reporting

Q41. What are the reporting requirements associated with the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement?

State agencies must include the meal counts earning performance-based reimbursement on the FNS-10 and the funds on the FNS-777 quarterly report.

State agencies must also submit an additional quarterly report detailing the disbursement of 6 cents per lunch reimbursement, including:

- Total number of SFAs in the State;
- Names and locations of certified SFAs; and
- For each SFA, the total number of lunches earning the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement for each month.

FNS is currently updating the FNS-10 and creating a prototype quarterly report for State agencies. State agencies should keep in mind that because funds are not available until October 1, 2012, the first reporting on the FNS-10 will occur in November 2012. The first required quarterly report would not be due until January 2013.

Q42. Are there any other reporting requirements?

SFAs certified to receive the 6 cents per lunch reimbursement are required to annually attest to compliance with the meal pattern requirements, as new requirements are phased in each year after their certification. Subsequent to the initial attestation at the time of certification, an annual attestation is required for subsequent years ending after SY 2014-2015, to acknowledge compliance with new phased in meal pattern requirements. The attestation must be provided to the State agency as an addendum to the written agreement.

Appeals

Q43. Can an SFA appeal a State agency denial of certification?

No, an SFA cannot appeal a State agency denial of certification since the SFA has not been deemed eligible to receive the additional reimbursement. While the SFA does not have appeal rights in this situation, the State agency should provide technical assistance to the SFA to assist them getting certified.

Q44. Can an SFA appeal a State agency turn off of the 6 cents reimbursement as a result of an administrative review?

Yes, an SFA can appeal the State agency turn off of the 6 cents reimbursement. In this scenario the State agency has made payments to the SFA and therefore the SFA can appeal the decision. Standard appeal procedures must be followed.

DATE:

FROM: [School Food Authority Official and Title]

TO: [State Agency Official and Title]

SUBJECT: Attestation of Compliance with Meal Pattern Requirements

Instruction: The following statement must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the school food authority operating the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Programs, and returned to the appropriate State agency upon submission of the certification documentation for the performance-based cash assistance.

I, _____, as the duly authorized representative of _____ [SFA Name], do hereby attest that the aforementioned SFA and all schools under its jurisdiction operating the National School Lunch Program authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq), and/or the School Breakfast Program authorized under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1773), are in compliance with the meal pattern requirements in effect for School Year 2012-2013, as set forth in 7 CFR Part 210.10 and 220.23, as applicable. In addition, for School Year 2012-2013, _____ [SFA Name] attests that:

- Documentation submitted for certification is representative of the ongoing meal service within the SFA;
- The minimum required food quantities for all meal components are available to students in every serving line;
- All labels and/or manufacturer specifications for food products and ingredients used to prepare school meals indicate zero grams of *trans* fat per serving;

- The minimum calories required for breakfasts served under the Food Based Menu Planning option are offered and available to every student, as applicable; and
- All Pre – K meals are compliant with the current meal patterns for the age/grade group being served, as applicable.

I certify that this attestation is true and correct, and therefore, I believe _____ [SFA Name] is eligible for the performance-based reimbursement.

I understand that if the State agency determines the SFA to be noncompliant with one or more of the requirements set forth in this attestation statement, fiscal action will include, deactivating the performance-based reimbursement, disallowance of meals, and/or withholding of payment. In addition, I understand that an attestation of compliance must be submitted annually to the State agency prior to July 1 of each year through the School Year beginning July 1, 2014, to attest full compliance with the subsequent year meal pattern requirements.

School Food Authority

State Agency

Submitted By *(Signature)*

Received By *(Signature)*

TITLE

TITLE

DATE

DATE

Directions for Menu Worksheet

Welcome to the FNS Menu Worksheet, a tool designed to assist School Food Authorities (SFAs) in demonstrating that each of the menus meets the new meal pattern for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

General Information:

- Six cents certification is district- based, and all menu types within the district must be submitted for certification. Individual schools may *not* apply for six cents reimbursement.
- Every unique breakfast and lunch menu type offered must be entered into the worksheet, using a new worksheet for each menu.
- Menu type examples: Grade K-5 breakfast, K-5 lunch, Grade 6-8 breakfast, etc. USDA is providing a total of 8 different menu worksheets (4 for lunch, 4 for breakfast).
- Refer to FNS memorandum SP-31-2012 for detailed information on *distinct menus*.
- *This worksheet does NOT assess compliance on a per-serving line basis- all reimbursable meals must be entered in one worksheet (one menu type). Separate from the menu worksheet, SFAs must sign an attestation stating each serving line is in compliance with the meal pattern.*
- Worksheet is programmed based on a 5-day school week. SFAs should contact their State agency for an alternate worksheet if operating on a shorter or longer week on a regular basis (SFAs should NOT submit a menu worksheet for a holiday week as this does not represent the typical week of meals).
- Certification is based on *offered* menus- do not consider Offer versus Serve options. Report the full offering of fruits and vegetables on the menu, NOT what a child typically selects. The worksheet is not weighted.

****For Breakfast, follow instructions that follow below for Lunch.*

- However, there are no new requirements for breakfast in SY 2012-13 (except milk content/variety). Therefore, existing requirements for four components (Grains, Meat/Meat Alternates, Fruits/Vegetables, and Milk) are assessed.
- DISREGARD instructions related to whole grain-rich grains, grain-based desserts, fruit and vegetable juice, and vegetable subgroups.

Special Considerations

-Some vegetables and fruits do not credit on a volume as served basis (i.e. 1 cup credits as 1 cup).

-Dried fruit- twice the volume as served

-Raw leafy greens- half the volume as served

-Tomato paste- refer to manufacturer information (typically twice volume served)

-Conversion *must be made first*, and CREDITABLE amounts entered into the certification worksheet. A yellow warning box appears when leafy greens or tomato paste is selected from the vegetable subgroups list, reminding users to enter creditable amounts.

Example:

Menu: Salad with 2 cups of romaine lettuce

Report: Select "1" cup of vegetable (dark green) from drop-down box

-To ensure data entered is not lost, remember to save the information periodically.

Getting Started:

Materials needed:

-1 week menu (5 days)

-Portion sizes for all reimbursable menu items

-Contribution information for each menu item (CN Labels, [USDA Foods Fact Sheets](#))

-Standardized Recipes

-Production Records

- [Food Buying Guide](#)

- [Food Buying Guide Calculator](#)

- [CNPP Vegetable Subgroups List](#) (page 5)

-At a minimum, complete a separate Certification worksheet for each of the three grade groups (K-5, 6-8 and 9-12). A separate Certification worksheet has been developed for breakfast and lunch. There is also a K-8 worksheet available if a single menu is used.

-If breakfast and lunch are offered, an SFA submits menu worksheets for each distinct menu for both breakfast and lunch.

-If there is more than one menu type per grade group, SFAs must submit a different worksheet for each menu type. For example, if there are two different elementary school menus, two K-5 worksheets are required.

-If multiple schools within the same grade group are served by a single menu, only *one* worksheet is required.

-Menu worksheets should be sent to the State Agency for review and final approval.

Menu Worksheet Orientation

-Open the Excel file corresponding to the appropriate grade group and menu. Example instructions here are based on Grade 9-12 Lunch.

-Each Excel file has twelve tabs located at the bottom of the spreadsheet, including the Simplified Nutrient Assessment (optional).

-Each tab is labeled with the following titles:

-*Menu Worksheet Instructions*: quick review of the worksheet instructions. On the other tabs (All Meals, Monday, etc) there are hyperlinks labeled “Go to Instructions” that will take the user back to this tab

-*SFA Notes*: blank text box for SFA to enter comments for State Agency reviewers

-*All Meals*: first tab requiring data entry

-*Optional VegBar*: to report daily offerings from a vegetable/salad/garden bar

-*Monday*: to report meals and vegetable subgroups offered this day

-*Tuesday*: as above

-*Wednesday*: as above

-*Thursday*: as above

-*Friday*: as above

-*Weekly Report*: results of weekly meal pattern requirement check

-*Nutrient Instructions (optional)*: for Simplified Nutrient Assessment; see separate instructions document

-*Nutrient Assessment (optional)*: for Simplified Nutrient Assessment

- Click on the tab at the bottom of the spreadsheet to transfer to a different tab.

-Directions below begin with the “All Meals” spreadsheet, which requires the bulk of information input.

***Follow these steps in order for accurate results. Accuracy of menu certification results are based on accuracy of information entered.

“SFA Notes” tab

-Clicking on the text box inside this tab allows SFAs opportunity to submit comments to the State agency during certification reviews.

“All Meals” Tab

-Title of this worksheet indicates meal period (Breakfast or Lunch) and grade group. *Ensure the correct version of the Certification worksheet is used for the menu.*

-Enter the SFA name and menu number (for SFAs with multiple menus within a single grade group). If only one menu per grade group, type “1.”

-Column 1 lists Meal Names (all meals offered across the week).

-Other columns list various food components within the meal pattern- Meat/Meat Alternate (column 2), Grains (3), Whole grain-rich Grains (3a), Grain-based Desserts (3b), Fruit (4), Fruit Juice (4a), Vegetables (5), Vegetable Juice (5a), and Fluid Milk (6).

-Food component columns also list appropriate units of measure (ounce equivalents, cups, etc).

-Components are color-coded (e.g. Fruit and Fruit juice = purple) throughout worksheet.

-Just above columns 1 and 3 is a hyperlink to the Food Buying Guide Calculator, above columns 3a and 3b is a hyperlink to the Menu Worksheet Instructions tab, and above columns 4a and 5 is a hyperlink to the Weekly Report tab.

-At the far right of the screen the section “Optional Tools to Assist in Fraction and Decimal Calculations” can assist SFAs in adding fractions and converting between decimals and fractions.

Column 1: Meal Name

***IMPORTANT: For this *menu worksheet only*, SFAs must list *reimbursable meals offered* on the menu. Each reimbursable meal consists of all required food components: any grain/meat/meat alternates in a main and/or side dish, total amount of fruit offered with this meal, total amount of vegetables in a main and/or side dish, and amount of milk.

-All *unique* reimbursable meals offered over the course of the entire week must be entered- one meal per row of the worksheet. If the same main dish is offered with the same quantity of vegetables, fruit and milk is available every day, enter it only once (if *types* of fruits, vegetables, or milk change, still enter on only one row).

Meal Name Example 1:

Meal offered Monday: Tuna sandwich, ½ cup corn, ½ cup carrots, 1 cup peaches, fat-free milk

Meal offered Wednesday: Tuna sandwich, 1 cup green salad, 1 cup apples, fat-free flavored milk

Result: Enter “Tuna sandwich” **once** in Column 1, with 1 cup vegetables, 1 cup fruit, 1 cup milk

-However, if the same main dish is offered with *different* quantities of fruits or vegetables, it must be entered as two separate entries in Column 1 (two rows).

Meal Name Example 2:

Meal offered Monday: Tuna sandwich, ½ cup corn, ½ cup carrots, 1 cup peaches, fat-free milk

Meal offered Wednesday: Tuna sandwich, ½ cup green salad, 1 cup apples, fat-free flavored milk

Result: Enter “Tuna sandwich with 1 cup veggies,” with 1 cup vegetables, 1 cup fruit, 1 cup milk AND enter “Tuna sandwich with ½ cup veggies,” with ½ cup vegetables, 1 cup fruit, 1 cup milk

-Vegetable subgroups and *types* of milk will be recorded on a different tab.

- Type name of complete reimbursable meal. To assist the State reviewer, enter the name of the main dish to match the menu submitted for certification. (e.g. if vegetable pizza is called “Garden Power Flatbread,” type “Garden Power Flatbread” into worksheet).

Meal Name Example 3:

Meal #1:

Chicken Nuggets (5 pieces) – 3oz meat, no creditable breading

WW Roll – 2oz grain (WGR)

Honey Sauce – 2 TBSP

Mixed Fruit Cup – ½ cup

100% Orange Juice – 4 oz

Steamed Broccoli – ½ cup

Baby Carrots – ½ cup

Milk – 8 oz

Result: Enter “Chicken nuggets w/honey sauce and roll” in column 1 (NOT all components)

- Note: worksheet example meal, “Chicken Nuggets,” DOES NOT add to daily or weekly totals.

-For items incorrectly entered in the Meal Name column, click the box and select backspace to clear all text from the box.

Entering Meal Components into the “All Meals” Spreadsheet

-Once the meal name for Meal #1 has been entered, the meal components and corresponding serving sizes must be entered.

-NOTE: For all drop-down menus in the following sections, to “clear out” an erroneous selection, click on the box with the incorrect data, scroll UP to the empty space option (just above 1/8) and select. This will clear out any information from the drop-down box.

Column 2: Meat/Meat Alternate (ounce equivalents)

- Enter amount of meat/meat alternates offered in the entrée and/or side dishes in ounce equivalents (to the nearest quarter ounce).

- Do NOT enter text (such as “4 oz”)- this will result in an error message.

Column 3: Total Grains (ounce equivalents or grain/bread servings)

-Enter amount of grains in the reimbursable meal. Include ALL whole-grain rich grains, non-whole grain-rich grains, AND grain-based desserts here.

-Because there is wide variation in serving sizes, type in the correct serving sizes.

-All grains are measured in either ounce equivalents or grain/bread servings and must be *rounded down to the nearest quarter*. Make this calculation prior to entering in worksheet. The worksheet also makes this adjustment automatically.

-In SY 2012-13, SFAs may use ounce equivalents (based on 16 gram creditable grain) OR grain/bread serving (based on 14.75 grams) OR a combination. For SY 2012-13, consider 1 grain/bread serving = 1 ounce equivalent and add together (conversions to oz eq not required).

Grains Example 1:

Entered: Total grains = “1.7”

Result: Worksheet rounds to “1.5”

Grains Example 2:

Meal offers 1 slice bread (1 grain/bread serving) and 0.5 oz eq whole grain-rich cookie

Result: 1 grain/bread + 0.5 oz eq = 1.5 (enter into column 3)

-Do NOT enter text (such as “4 oz”)- this will result in an error message.

-Consider grains in the main dish (bun, breading, pasta), side dishes (i.e. rice, breadstick), and any other additional grains available to the student such as sliced bread and/or desserts.

-Breading *may* be credited in SY 2012-13, but is not required (refer to [SP 30-2012](#)).

- All grains in the meal MUST be included in this column; non-credited extras not allowable.

Column 3a: Whole Grain-Rich Grains (ounce equivalents or grain/bread servings)

-Enter quantity of whole grain-rich grains contained in meal (Meal #1). Report in *ounce equivalents* (e.g. 1.25 oz eq roll) OR grain/bread servings (e.g. roll with 1.25 grain/bread equivalents).

-If no whole grain-rich grains in this meal, either leave cell blank or type in zero (“0”)

Grains Example 3:

Meal offers 1 slice enriched bread (1 grain/bread serving) and 0.5 oz eq whole grain-rich cookie
Result: 0.5 oz eq whole grain-rich grains (enter “0.5” into column 3a)

Column 3b: Grain-Based Desserts (ounce equivalents or grain/bread servings)

- Enter quantity of grain-based desserts offered in meal (Meal #1). Report in *ounce equivalents* (e.g. 0.5 oz eq cookie) OR grain/bread servings (e.g. cookie with 0.75 grain/bread).

-If no grain-based desserts in this meal, either leave cell blank or type in zero (“0”).

Grains Example 4:

Meal offers 1 slice enriched bread (1 grain/bread serving) and 0.5 oz eq whole grain-rich cookie
Result: 0.5 oz eq grain-based dessert (enter “0.5” into column 3b)

Column 4: Total Fruit (cups)

-Use drop down menu to enter total quantity of fruit offered with this meal. Options range from 1/8 cup (smallest creditable amount) to 2 cups.

-Total fruit includes *both* fruit pieces and fruit juice.

-Crediting calculation for dried fruit must be done PRIOR to entering fruit quantities in worksheet- enter only CREDITABLE amounts.

Fruit Example 1:

Meal offers ½ cup mixed fruit and 4 oz (1/2 cup) 100% orange juice
Result: ½ cup fruit + ½ cup juice = 1 cup fruit (select “1” in column 4)

Fruit Example 2:

Meal offers ¼ cup of boxed raisins
Result: ¼ cup raisins = ½ cup fruit (select “½” in column 4)

Column 4a: Fruit Juice (cups)

- Use drop down menu to enter quantity of full-strength, 100% fruit juice offered with this meal. Options range from 1/8 cup (smallest creditable amount) to 2 cups.
- Juice is also included in Column 4, but NOT added with Column 4a (no double-counting).
- If no fruit juice offered in this meal, leave drop-down box blank.

Column 5: Vegetables (cups)

- Use drop down menu to enter total quantity of vegetables offered with this meal. Options range from 1/8 cup (smallest creditable amount) to 2 cups. If more than 2 cups of vegetables are offered in this meal, report 2 cups.
- Total vegetables include *both* vegetable pieces and vegetable juice.
- Do not consider vegetable subgroups; report total amounts of vegetables offered with meal.
- If several vegetable choices are offered, report what the child is able to take.

Vegetable Example 1:

Meal offers 4 vegetable choices (each 1/2 cup), students instructed to “Choose two”

Result: Report amount of vegetables when child takes two choices (enter “1” in column 5)

Vegetable Example 2:

Meal offers spinach pizza (1/4 cup spinach) and side of carrots (1/2 cup).

Result: Add vegetable offerings together (1/4 cup plus 1/2 cup = 3/4 cup, select “3/4” in column 5).

-REMINDER: Conversion *must be made first*, and CREDITABLE amounts entered into the certification worksheet. A yellow warning box appears when leafy greens or tomato paste is selected from the vegetable subgroups list, reminding users to enter creditable amounts.

Column 5a: Vegetable Juice (cups)

- Use drop down menu to enter quantity of full-strength, 100% vegetable juice offered with this meal. Options range from 1/8 cup (smallest creditable amount) to 2 cups.
- Juice is also included in Column 5, but NOT added with Column 5a (no double-counting).
- If no vegetable juice offered in this meal, leave drop-down box blank.

Column 6: Milk (cups)

- Enter amount of milk offered. Report in *cups*- not ounces. If ounces are entered (e.g. “8”), a warning prompt pops up to check if value is accurate.

-Information entry for Meal #1 is now complete. Repeat Step 5 for all reimbursable meals available within the 5-day week.

-There is space for up to 50 meals offered in a week-contact the State for an alternate (expanded) form if needed.

Optional Vegetable Bar Tab

-Use this tab **ONLY** if there is a vegetable bar offered for the week with the **SAME** vegetable subgroup offerings multiple times over the week.

-Vegetable bar must be accessible to **ALL** students for the days in which it is offered.

-Select the name and quantity of each vegetable offered on the vegetable bar in the appropriate subgroup. *The quantity is the planned offering amount for each student.*

-Menu planners must predetermine what the offered amount is- options for implementing this include pre-portioning, signage encouraging students to “select 3,” etc. Offered amounts may also be based on historical daily disappearance data.

-“Unlimited” portions cannot be assessed for component and nutrient requirements

-For full instructions on reporting of vegetables by subgroup, refer to Vegetable Subgroup Reporting section within the **MONDAY** Tab instructions.

-At the far right of the screen the section “Optional Tools to Assist in Fraction and Decimal Calculations” can assist SFAs in adding fractions and converting between decimals and fractions.

-If a vegetable bar is offered as an entire reimbursable meal (contains grains, meat/meat alternates, and fruit), enter this meal in the “All Meals” tab, naming it something similar to “Salad Bar Meal” and listing the food component contributions.

MONDAY Tab

-Using the drop-down boxes in the “Meal Name” column, click on meals offered on MONDAY (one meal per row). If 10 meals are offered, there should be 10 rows of information filled in.

-The new school meal pattern requires that for schools with multiple serving lines, all lines meet the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements. However, this worksheet does NOT assess compliance on a per-serving line basis- all reimbursable meals must be entered in one worksheet (one menu type). Separate from the menu worksheet, SFAs must sign an attestation stating each serving line is in compliance with the meal pattern.

-Therefore, list all meals available to a child, on any line on any given day.

-To remove a meal selected in error: click on the box, scroll up to the very top, and select the empty space option. This will clear out all information for that specific row.

- Enter up to 20 meals offered per day- if more than 20 meals are offered per day, contact the State Agency for an expanded version of this worksheet.

-Once the meal is selected, other columns within that row automatically fill in from data previously entered in the “All Meals” tab.

Meat/Meat Alternate, Grain, Fruit, and Vegetable Component Check

-Columns are color-coded, matching columns in the “All Meals” tab. The first column shown (in blue) is “Meat/Meat Alternate.” There are two columns for this component.

-The first column shows the quantity of the component, previously typed in.

-The second column for meat/meat alternate, colored yellow, calculates if the meal selected meets the daily requirement this component.

Component Check Example:

Offered meal is for lunch in grades 9-12 and daily meat/meat alternate requirement = 2 oz eq.

In “All Meals” tab, user typed in Chicken Nuggets w/ honey sauce (3 oz eq meat)

Result: “Daily M/MA Requirement Check 2 oz eq” column turns green and reads “Yes”

-If the entered quantity does not meet the daily minimum, the Requirement Check column turns red and reads “No.”

-The same applies to all other components- Grains, Fruit, Vegetables, and Milk. There is NOT a daily check for whole grain-rich grains, grain-based desserts, or juices.

-Once all meals offered on Monday have been added, the worksheet will report if each meal meets all DAILY requirements. Weekly requirement assessment is carried out in a future step.

Milk Component Check

- Scroll to the right side of the screen to the “Milk Type” table (colored brown).
- Click the small checkbox next to each type of milk offered on Mondays. Check one or more boxes. When finished, the yellow column in this section turns green (Yes) or red (No).

Vegetable Subgroup Reporting

- The final step for MONDAY is reporting vegetable subgroups offered. Scroll to the right until the “Creditable Amount of Each Vegetable Subgroup Offered on Monday” table is viewable.
- Beginning with “Dark Green” (first green column), click the *first* drop-down box to select the LARGEST amount of dark green vegetables offered to any one student.
- Leave this column blank if dark green vegetables are not offered.

Vegetable Subgroup Example 1:

Monday menu offers a spinach pizza (1/4 cup spinach) and a side of broccoli (1/2 cup broccoli)
Child has opportunity to select pizza and broccoli

Result: Add amount of spinach and broccoli (3/4 cup dark green) = select 3/4 in first drop down box

(Largest amount of dark green vegetables a student can select.)

-If two items are offered and child can NOT select both, do NOT add amounts of spinach and broccoli together. The student cannot take both of those food items. This also applies if more than one side dish with dark green vegetables is offered and students are instructed to take one choice.

Vegetable Subgroup Example 2:

Menu offers a spinach pizza (1/4 cup spinach) and a broccoli soufflé (1/2 cup broccoli)
Child has opportunity to select pizza or soufflé

Result: Do NOT add amount of spinach and broccoli. Largest amount offered = 1/2 cup

***Accuracy in the “largest amount” box is critical- it determines the weekly subgroup offerings and if requirements are met.

-Below this section, use drop-down boxes to select both *names* of dark green vegetables and the *quantity* (in cups, ranging from 1/8 to 2).

- Once dark green vegetables have been entered, the same process must be repeated for each of the other four subgroups (Red/Orange, Beans/Peas, Starchy and Other).

- Many vegetables have been entered into subgroup lists, but these lists are *not* comprehensive.
- If an offered vegetable is unlisted, scroll to the bottom of the list and select “unspecified.”
- Next, enter the name of the vegetable in the text box at the bottom of the screen.
- Use resources such as MyPlate and Food Buying Guide (links below), as well as State Agencies, for classifications.

Vegetable Subgroup Example 3:

Menu offers yellow peppers

Yellow peppers = Other vegetable, not listed in drop down menu

Result: Under Other vegetables list, click “Other unspecified.” Within the “Unspecified Other Vegetables” box, type in “yellow peppers.”

- Once all vegetable subgroups are entered for MONDAY, select the “TUESDAY” tab.

TUESDAY- FRIDAY Tabs

- Repeat steps taken in MONDAY tab for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday tabs.

Weekly Report

- This tab compiles all daily and weekly information to check if all requirements have been met.
- There are columns for Monday-Friday, Weekly Total, Weekly Requirement (cups or oz eq), and Weekly Requirement Check
- On the left side of the sheet, in rows, are the food components. The Monday-Friday columns show the amount of each component entered each day of the week.
- The Weekly Total, a light gray color, lists the amount of the component offered over the entire 5-day week. To the right is the Weekly Requirement, a beige-yellow color.
- The Weekly Requirement Check becomes green (Yes) if the requirement was met, and red (No) if not met.
- This tab also assesses the weekly requirement for fruit juice and vegetable juice (no more than half of the weekly offering in the form of juice), grain-based dessert (2 or fewer ounce equivalents/bread servings), and whole grain-rich grains (at least half of the grain offerings are whole grain-rich).
- For Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates, the daily minimum and maximum offerings each day are shown. These are added together to report total weekly minimum and maximum grains offered.

Nutrient Instructions/Simplified Nutrient Assessment (OPTIONAL)

-For SFAs choosing to use the Simplified Nutrient Assessment, refer to separate document entitled “Nutrient Assessment Directions.”

Frequently Asked Questions

How often will SFAs be required to submit menus for certification?

This is a one-time process. The only time an SFA will resubmit (with revisions) is if an SFA is denied certification after initial submission.

How long is the certification?

Permanent; no expiration date. SFAs will be assessed for ongoing compliance with the meal pattern through administrative reviews.

Is there a minimum amount of days required?

A 5-day week’s worth of menus must be entered. If an SFA regularly operates on a shorter or longer week, contact the State Agency for assistance.

How is the week selected for review?

The SFA has the discretion to select any week for certification.

On average, what is the estimated time this process will take per site entered?

It is highly variable, depending on how complex the menu is, but testing estimates ranged from as little as 1 hour per menu to over three hours. The majority of the time investment occurs with obtaining information on crediting and portion sizes for all items offered on the menu. The data input takes far less time.

How do I show an optional grain offering on this worksheet?

All grains must be counted toward daily and weekly requirements, therefore even optional grains must be included with the meal. However, if a menu is designed so that a child has the option to take an additional grain offering, such as a dinner roll, SFAs must enter TWO rows in the All Meals tab, and list both meals on the day this option is offered.

Example: Spaghetti w/sauce and roll (3 oz eq grains)

Spaghetti w/sauce, no roll (2 oz eq grains)

Simplified Nutrient Assessment- OPTIONAL

-SFAs have the option of choosing to use the FNS Simplified Nutrient Assessment (SNA) for 6 cents certification (instead of a full nutrient analysis).

-The instructions for the SNA and the actual assessment are located in the final 2 tabs, after the Weekly Report for the menu worksheet.

-Nutrient Instructions provide a snapshot of the complete directions listed here.

Key Information:

-Only **average daily calories** and **% of calories from saturated fat** must be assessed.

-Estimates for calorie or saturated fat information for milk, fruits, or vegetables are pre-programmed.

-SFAs must provide calorie and saturated fat information for all main dish items, side items with grains and/or meat/meat alternates, desserts and condiments. Information can be collected from nutrition labels and product specifications.

-Scratch recipes should be standardized. Sources such as nutrient analysis software products or web-based tools (e.g. CNPP SuperTracker) can be used to determine calories and saturated fat for standardized recipes. SFAs are encouraged to contact their State Agencies for other potential sources for recipe analysis.

-SFAs that have nutrient analysis software may still choose the FNS simplified assessment option if desired, but are encouraged to use their existing software.

-Hyperlinks to instructions and tools available throughout the SNA. Locations listed below.

Calories/Sugars and Fat sources typically added to Vegetables or Fruits:

Common Sources of Added Sugars:

BBQ sauce
Brown or white sugar
Honey or honey mustard
Marshmallows
Maple, chocolate and/or fruit syrup
Icing

Common Sources of Added Fats:

Butter
Margarine
Vegetable oils
Salad dressing
Mayonnaise
Cream/whipped cream/sour cream

Fruit, Milk, and Vegetable Subgroup Simplified Nutrient Selection

-At top of this section, a hyperlink labeled “Go to Instructions” takes users to key instructions.

Fruit

-Average serving size and total weekly servings already calculated from earlier data entered.

-Select the two buttons that best apply to fruit offerings within the 5-day menu entered for the menu worksheet- the percentage of offerings containing added fat and/or added sugar. Include fats and sugars used during preparation of the food as well as any additional fats and/or sugars accompanying the component.

-Default option is “Fruit not offered.”

-Only ONE selection can be made for added sugar, and ONE selection for added fat. Refer to the above list of commonly added ingredients to fruits for assistance. Select the *best choice*.

-Estimates are based on average/typical use of fat and sugar in fruit offerings. Fruits served as part of a grain-based dessert, or with significant (more than 2 teaspoons/cup) added fat and/or sugar may be listed in column O1 (“Dessert, Side or Condiment”) to report, along with total planned servings within the week, exact calorie and saturated fat values.

Fruit Example 1:

5 cups of fruit offered over the week

(2 cups canned in light syrup, 3 cups fresh/plain fruit)

Result: Fruit offered with added sugar 40% of the time (2 divided by 5; select “30% to 70% of the total fruit offerings)

Result: Fruit offered with added fat 0% of the time (0 divided by 5; select “less than 30% of the total fruit offerings”)

Fruit Example 2:

5 cups of fruit offered over the week

(1 cup canned in light syrup, 1 cup w/sweetened nuts, ½ cup w/crumb topping, 2 ½ cups plain)

Result: Fruit offered with added sugar 50% of the time (2 ½ cups divided by 5 cups; select “30% to 70% of the total fruit offerings)

Result: Fruit offered with added fat 30% of the time (1 ½ cups divided by 5 cups; select “30% to 70% of the total fruit offerings)

Milk

-Average serving size and total weekly servings already calculated from earlier data entered.

-Select the button describing which **two** milk offerings are *most frequently served* this week. Only ONE selection can be made- refer to historical usage, inventory records, etc. and select the *best choice*. Default option is “Milk not offered.”

-Estimates based on average usage of standard commercial products. Milk offerings with a unique nutrient profile (e.g. reduced sugar flavored milk) may be listed in column O1 (“Dessert, Side or Condiment”) to report, along with total planned servings within the week, exact calorie and saturated fat values.

Milk Example:

5 cups of milk offered over the week

Nonfat unflavored and lowfat unflavored milk daily, chocolate nonfat milk offered Fridays only.

Using inventory, offered 450 nonfat unflavored, 450 lowfat unflavored, 100 chocolate nonfat

Result: SFA would select the “nonfat unflavored & low-fat (1%) unflavored” option.

Vegetable Subgroups (colored by subgroup)

-Each of the vegetable subgroups also has a selection chart. The first is Dark Green Vegetables.

-This box has already calculated the share of dark green vegetables a child is offered based on the total volume of vegetables offered over the 5-day week menu from earlier data entered.

-Select the button that *best* describes added fat in offered dark green vegetables. The default option is “Dark green vegetables not offered.” Only ONE selection can be made- refer to the above list of common added ingredients to vegetables and select the *best choice*.

-Proceed with all remaining subgroups, following the same steps described above.

- For Red/Orange only, select both an added fat option and an added sugar option.

Vegetable Example 1:

2 creditable cups of dark green vegetables offered

(1 cup raw spinach for a salad and 1 cup as broccoli with cheese sauce)

Result: Dark green vegetables offered with added fat 50% of the time (1 cup divided by 2 cups; select “30% to 70% of the total dark green offerings”).

Vegetable Example 2:

1 ½ cups of red/orange vegetables offered

(½ cup carrots w/brown sugar/butter, ½ cup tomatoes, ½ cup sweet potato w/marshmallows)

Result: Red/orange vegetables offered with added sugar 67% of the time (1 cup divided by 1 ½ cups; select “30% to 70% of the total red/orange offerings” for sugar)

Result: Red/orange vegetables offered with added fat 33% of the time (½ cup divided by 1 ½ cups; select “30% to 70% of the total red/orange offerings” for fat)

Simplified Nutrient Data Entry

- Next, scroll to the top and begin the "Main Dish Simplified Nutrient Data Entry" section and the "Other items" data entry section.

-All meals offered over the week have been pre-populated. These appear in column M1.

Main Dish Reporting

-In column M2, enter the Main Dish, the part of the meal associated with the information entered in columns M3-M5 (calories, saturated fat, number of planned weekly servings).

-If main dish served more than one day per week, add number of servings for all days offered.

-Do NOT include calorie or saturated fat information for meal components outside of the main dish (fruits, vegetables, milk, or anything reported in the Desserts/Sides/Condiments section).

-Some double counting may occur with main dishes containing large amounts of fruits or vegetables (e.g. chef salad). *If possible to report calorie and saturated fat information for main dish and exclude vegetables/fruits it contains, this is acceptable. Otherwise, report calorie and saturated fat information in entire entrée.*

-Include calorie and saturated fat information for condiments in Main Dish section (columns M3-M5), OR in the Desserts, Sides, and Condiments section (columns O2-O4).

-In last column, enter number of servings of each main dish offered over the course of the week. Rely on production records and historical data if this is a new menu.

-At the top of this section is a link to Optional Serving Size and Fraction Calculators, tools intended to help users with serving size calculations by volume or weight, adding fractions, and converting decimals to fractions.

Main Dish Example 1:

Meal Name is "Chicken nuggets w/roll and honey sauce."

Only chicken nugget nutrient information being entered → type "Chicken nuggets" (column M2)

Chicken nugget and honey sauce nutrient information → type "Chicken nuggets w/honey sauce"

Main Dish Example 2:

Hamburger on bun offered Monday (200 servings) and Thursday (300 servings)

Result: Report 500 servings (column M5)

Main Dish Example 3:

Submarine sandwich served w/Italian dressing

Reported in Main Dish: 300 sandwiches, each including 1 tablespoon dressing in analysis

Reported in Desserts/Sides/Condiments: 300 servings of 1 packet (tablespoon) of dressing

Desserts, Sides or Condiments Nutrient Reporting

- A link at the top jumps to a chart listing calories and saturated fat for commonly used condiments, such as margarine and salad dressings.
- Enter the name of the food item (O1), calories per serving (O2), and saturated fat grams per serving (O3). Use standard rounding procedures to two decimal points.
- These items have NOT been pre-populated. User must enter names of any desserts or sides containing grains or meat/meat alternates (rice pilaf, yogurt cup, whole grain cookie, “snack” items such as cheese sticks, etc). Information can be collected from nutrition labels, product specifications, or other sources.
- Enter the number of servings of each item offered over the course of the week (O4).
- For condiments, amounts may be entered based on a per serving basis or in bulk quantities based on weekly usage data. Total calories and saturated fat over the week is equivalent in either method of reporting. (The denominator for determining averages is the total number of MEALS served over the week [total of all numbers recorded in column O4]).

Condiments Example:

Item offered: salad dressing

Per Serving Reporting: 256 planned servings of 1 Tablespoon amounts (73 calories, 1.2 grams saturated fat per serving)

Bulk Quantity Reporting: 1 planned serving of 1 gallon offered over the week (18,688 calories, 307.2 grams saturated fat)

Nutrient Assessment

- Scroll to the bottom/middle of the screen (past the bottom of the Main Dish and Dessert/Side/Condiment chart).
- This section, “Daily Amounts Based on the Average for a 5-day week,” calculates daily average calories and percentage of calories from saturated fat. The values based on the entered menu are in grey boxes. The required range for the menu type is shown in the yellow boxes.
- If the menu meets requirements, the Assessment box turns Green. If the menu is within 25 calories of the required calorie range, or within half a percentage point of the saturated fat limit, the Assessment box turns Yellow. This provides SFAs an opportunity to work with their State as to why the menu is not within the range without an immediate rejection.
- If calories or saturated fat are beyond the cautionary range, the Assessment box turns Red.
- Simplified Nutrient Assessment is now complete- save this file and email or print for State Agency review.

Instructions for Transferring Data from USDA Certification Tools

The majority of the data entered into the Certification Tool may be transferred into other age grade groups that may be offering the same items or into another version of the tool through the copy and paste functions built into Excel. The steps below instruct on how to use these functions to transfer data for the applicable tabs.

All Meals Tab:

SFAs may copy and paste the meal name, meat/meat alternate, grains information (columns 1-3) from one version of the tool to another version to facilitate data entry. Milk data may also be copied and pasted from the All Meals tab.

To copy and paste data from the All Meals tab:

Step 1: Highlight columns 1-3b

1	2	3	3a	3b
Meal Name <i>Enter the name of each reimbursable meal as found on the weekly menu. Select the first blank if the component was not offered with the meal. ** DO NOT DELETE ROWS**</i>	Meat/Meat Alternate (oz equivalents) Enter the total meat/meat alternate ounces offered with this meal	Grains (oz equivalents) **NOTE: Grains may be offered as ounce equivalents or bread servings		
		Enter the total grains ounces/bread servings including whole grain rich and desserts offered with this meal	Of the grains offered with this meal, enter the number of ounces/bread servings that are whole grain rich	Of the grains offered with this meal enter number of ounces/bread servings that are grain based desserts
<i>Example: Chicken nuggets w/ roll and honey sauce</i>	2.00	2.50	2.00	0.50
1 Pork and rice	2.00	2.00	2.00	
2 Ground beef mac	2.50	3.00	1.00	1.00
3 Chicken salad	2.00	2.00	2.00	
	2.00	2.00	2.00	

Step 2: Right click and select copy, use the copy button from the top tool bar in Excel, or click the CTRL key and "c" key together to copy. There will be a moving dotted line around the 5 columns. This mean the cell contents are activated to be copied.

Step 3: Open the new or other version of the Certification tool. Put your cursor in the first open row in the Meal Name column:

1	2	3	3a	3b
Meal Name <i>Enter the name of each reimbursable meal as found on the weekly menu. Select the first blank if the component was not offered with the meal. ** DO NOT DELETE ROWS**</i>	Meat/Meat Alternate (oz equivalents) Enter the total meat/meat alternate ounces offered with this meal	Grains (oz equivalents) **NOTE: Grains may be offered as ounce equivalents or bread servings		
		Enter the total grains ounces/bread servings including whole grain rich and desserts offered with this meal	Of the grains offered with this meal, enter the number of ounces/bread servings that are whole grain rich	Of the grains offered with this meal enter number of ounces/bread servings that are grain based desserts
<i>Example: Chicken nuggets w/ roll and honey sauce</i>	2.00	2.50	2.00	0.50
1				



Step 4: Right click and select paste, use the tool bar at the top of Excel or click the CTRL key and letter “v” keys together to paste the copied data into the new or other Tool. Columns 1-3b should now be populated with the data from the previous version of the Certification Tool.

1	2	3	3a	3b
Meal Name <i>Enter the name of each reimbursable meal as found on the weekly menu. Select the first blank if the component was not offered with the meal. ** DO NOT DELETE ROWS**</i>	Meat/Meat Alternate (oz equivalents)	Grains (oz equivalents) **NOTE: Grains may be offered as ounce equivalents or bread servings		
	Enter the total meat/meat alternate ounces offered with this meal	Enter the total grains ounces/bread servings including whole grain rich and desserts offered with this meal	Of the grains offered with this meal, enter the number of ounces/bread servings that are whole grain rich	Of the grains offered with this meal enter number of ounces/bread servings that are grain based desserts
<i>Example: Chicken nuggets w/ roll and honey sauce</i>	2.00	2.50	2.00	0.50
1 Pork and rice	2.00	2.00	2.00	
2 Ground beef mac	2.50	3.00	1.00	1.00
3 Chicken salad	2.00	2.00	2.00	
4 Baked Cajun Fish	2.00	2.00	2.00	
5 Cheese pizza	2.00	2.00	2.00	

The same steps may be followed above for copying the data in the Milk column(6) to the new or other Certification tool

All fruit, fruit juice, vegetable, vegetable juice information must be reselected. Information selected in drop down arrows may not be copied and pasted to the new or other version.

Information in the SFA notes may also be copied and pasted to the new or other version by following the copying and pasting steps above. The entire box can be highlighted or selected and then copied and pasted to the revised tab.

Daily Tabs:

Data cannot be transferred from the previous version of the tool. Information on these tabs must be must be reselected.

The above steps may be used for the Breakfast Certification Tool Worksheets as well to facilitate the data entry process.

Simplified Nutrient Assessment Tab:

Main Dish information in columns M2-M5 and Other item information in columns O1-O4 may be copied and pasted to the new or other version.

Step 1: Select/Highlight the information in columns M2-M5 in the Main Dish Section. Note that information in column M1 is already populated from the All Meals tab. Only columns M2-M5 should be selected.

Main Dish Simplified Nutrient Data Entry

Enter the calories and saturated fat for one serving of the main dish and the number of servings planned during the week. Only include the calories and saturated fat for the main dish and any components included as part of the main dish. The number of planned serving should include all sites serving the menu type.

M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Meal Name <small>This column is pre-populated with the meal names entered on the "All Meals" tab</small>	Main Dish <small>The part of the meal associated with the information entered in columns M3-M5</small>	Calories/serving (kcal)	Saturated Fat/serving (g)	Number of planned servings for the week
Example: Chicken nuggets w/ roll and honey sauce	Chicken Nuggets	250	4	100

Step 2: Step 2: Right click and select copy, use the copy button from the top tool bar in Excel, or click the CTRL key and "c" key together to copy. There will be a moving dotted line around the 3 columns. This mean the cell contents are activated to be copied.

Step 3: Open the new or other version of the Certification tool. Put your cursor in the first open row in column M2.

Main Dish Simplified Nutrient Data Entry

Enter the calories and saturated fat for one serving of the main dish and the number of servings planned during the week. Only include the calories and saturated fat for the main dish and any components included as part of the main dish. The number of planned serving should include all sites serving the menu type.

M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Meal Name <small>This column is pre-populated with the meal names entered on the "All Meals" tab</small>	Main Dish <small>The part of the meal associated with the information entered in columns M3-M5</small>	Calories/serving (kcal)	Saturated Fat/serving (g)	Number of planned servings for the week
Example: Chicken nuggets w/ roll and honey sauce	Chicken Nuggets	250	4	100
Pork and rice				
Ground beef mac				



Step 4: Right click and select paste, use the tool bar at the top of Excel or click the CTRL key and letter "v" keys together to paste the copied data into the revised tool. Columns M2-M5 in the revised version should now be populated with the data from the previous version of the Certification Tool.

Main Dish Simplified Nutrient Data Entry

of the main dish and the number of servings planned during the week. Only include the calories and its included as part of the main dish. The number of planned serving should include all sites serving the menu type.

	M2	M3	M4	M5
entered	Main Dish The part of the meal associated with the information entered in columns M3-M5	Calories/serving (kcal)	Saturated Fat/serving (g)	Number of planned servings for the week
	Chicken Nuggets	250	4	100
	Roast Pork	142	3	500
	Ground beef mac	377	5.8	500

The same steps may be followed to copy and paste data from the previous version to the new or other version for columns O1-O4 in the Other Items information section.

Other items: Sides, Desserts, Condiments Nutrient Data Entry

Options for the fruit, vegetable, and milk assessment must be reselected.