



State of New Jersey


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To: County Superintendents, District Superintendents
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Charter School Leads, Non-Public School Administrators
Food Service Directors, Food Service Management Companies

From: Janet Hawk, Coordinator
School Nutrition Programs 

Date: February 6, 2012

Subject: Final Rule on New School Meal Requirements

On January 25, 2012 an announcement was made from United States Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsak and First Lady Michele Obama regarding the new requirements for meals served to school children enrolled in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The final rule was published in the federal register on January 26th, 2012. Our role in the Division of Food and Nutrition at the New Jersey Department of Agriculture is to assist you as best as we can in the implementation of these changes.

Included in this memo is a brief overview of the new requirements, most of which go into effect as of July 2012, and therefore will be required for this next 2012-2013 school year. Other changes will be phased in over the next few years.

School Nutrition Programs' staff are working on a webinar that will provide more detailed information. In addition, regional trainings will be held throughout the state to provide hands-on training implementation, menu planning and recordkeeping requirements. So, keep your eyes open for future announcements on the SNEARS messages and memos page.

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

The only change for the School Breakfast Program that goes into effect in July 2012 is the revised milk requirement: schools must serve two varieties from the following:

- Low fat (1%) – unflavored only
- Fat-free - flavored or unflavored

NOTE: These new milk requirements also apply to schools that participate in the Special Milk Programs.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

All of the new requirements for the NSLP go into effect as of July 2012, except for the following phased in requirements:

- a. At least half of the grains offered must be whole grain-rich, as of 2012-2013
 - i. By July 2014 ALL grains offered must be whole grain-rich

- b. First of three sodium targets are not in effect until school year 2014-2015

Enclosed is a chart of the new LUNCH meal pattern that is effective as of July 2012. There is a column noting WEEKLY requirements, and a column noting DAILY requirements. Note that the portion sizes of each meal component reflect the **minimum** quantities that must be served, by age group. Everything on this chart goes into effect for the 2012-2013 school year. Also included is additional information on the required meal component offerings.

Highlights of the changes from the current school **LUNCH** pattern

- BOTH a fruit AND a vegetable component must be offered daily
- Increased quantities of both fruits and vegetables must be offered daily
- Various minimum portion sizes of **vegetable sub-group** offerings must be provided over the course of the week
- Total grain requirements have been decreased over the course of a week and a requirement for at least half of the grains to be whole grain-rich has been added
- Milk requirement changed to only allow:
 - Low fat (1%) – unflavored only
 - Fat-free - flavored or unflavored
- Only one menu planning method – food based menu planning
- Revised age groups for the meal pattern requirements
- Revised nutrient standard analysis; new requirements for only the following nutrients:
 - Calories – includes minimum AND maximum standards
 - Saturated Fat – same as current standards
 - Trans Fat – zero grams per portion
 - Sodium – various target levels phased in over the next 10 years
- Offer versus Serve requirement for child to take a fruit or vegetable – ½ cup minimum
- State agency administrative reviews will occur every 3 years instead of every 5 years and the above four nutrients will be analyzed on 1 week of menus

More details regarding these requirements, and also more information on the extra 6 cents in meal reimbursement for Local Education Agencies that meet the new standards, will be provided in the near future, as we get additional guidance from USDA.

While change always causes some anxiety, if we all work together we can make the process a smooth transition into providing even healthier school meals for the students in New Jersey. Many New Jersey schools are ahead of the game, and have begun to institute some of these changes already. The Healthier US Challenge Schools (HUSSC) are currently following these standards, and we have 21 schools in New Jersey that have received HUSSC awards, with more in the process. It CAN be done, with proper planning and training and our school nutrition programs staff will be available to assist schools with the implementation process. Feel free to contact a program specialist at any time by calling the office at 609-984-0692.

Thank you so much for all you have done, and will continue to do, to keep New Jersey's students healthy and able to achieve their maximum academic potential!

VEGETABLE SUB-GROUPS FOR NEW SCHOOL LUNCH REQUIREMENTS

Dark Green – includes:

Bok choy
Broccoli
Collard greens
Dark green leafy lettuce
Kale
Mesclun
Mustard greens
Romaine lettuce
Spinach
Turnip greens
Watercress

Red/Orange – includes:

Acorn squash
Butternut squash
Carrots
Pumpkin
Tomatoes
Tomato juice
Sweet Potatoes

Beans/Peas (legumes) – includes:

Black beans
Black-eyed peas (mature, dry)
Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
Kidney beans
Lentils
Navy beans
Pinto beans
Soy beans
Split peas
White beans

Starchy vegetables – includes:

Black eyed peas (not dry)
Corn
Cassava
Green bananas
Green peas
Green lima beans
Plantains
Taro
Water chestnuts
White potatoes

Other vegetables – includes:

Artichokes
Asparagus
Avocado
Bean sprouts
Beets
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Celery
Cucumbers
Egg plant
Green beans
Green peppers
Iceberg lettuce
Mushrooms
Okra
Onions
Parsnips
Turnips
Wax beans
Zucchini

Additional Meal Component Requirements:

Vegetables

- 1 cup of leafy greens counts as ½ cup of vegetable
- Tomato paste and puree are credited based on calculated volume of the whole food equivalency
- Pasteurized, full-strength vegetable juice may be used to meet no more than ½ of the vegetable component
- Cooked dry beans or peas (legumes) may be counted EITHER as a vegetable or as a meat alternate but not as both in the same meal

Fruits

- Varieties include fresh; frozen without added sugar; canned in light syrup, water or fruit juice; or dried
- ¼ cup of dried fruit counts as ½ cup of fruit

Pasteurized, full-strength fruit juice may be used, but may be credited to meet no more than ½ of the fruits component

Meat Alternates may include:

- Enriched macaroni with fortified protein as defined in Appendix A of 7 CFR 210.10 may be used as meat alternate OR as a grain, but may not meet both food components in the same lunch
- Nuts and seeds and their butters may be used to meet no more than ½ of the meat/meat alternate requirement
- Yogurt – plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened; 4 oz. or ½ cup equals one ounce of the meat/meat alternate requirement
- Commercial tofu and soy products
- Cooked dry beans and peas (legumes)
- Cheese
- Eggs

Grains

- Must be made with enriched and whole grain meal or flour; whole grain-rich products must contain at least 51% whole grains by weight OR have a whole grain listed as the first ingredient on the ingredient label. The remaining grains in the product must be enriched.
 - As of school year 2012-2013 half of the grains offered must be whole grain-rich
 - As of school year 2014-2015 all grains offered must be whole grain-rich
- Desserts – Up to two grain-based desserts per week may count towards meeting the grains requirement

Note: USDA will be updating the Food Buying Guide to include all the new meal requirements