

# USDA's New Meal Pattern in Schools

*U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food and Nutrition Service  
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# School Meal Pattern Implementation

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- ▶ Overview of meal pattern
  - ▶ Food components
  - ▶ Weekly maximum flexibilities
  - ▶ Breakfast implementation
- ▶ Dietary specifications/nutrient analysis
- ▶ Offer versus Serve
- ▶ Additional updates
  - ▶ RCCIs
  - ▶ Food allergies
  - ▶ Certification/reviews
- ▶ Implementation Resources
  - ▶ Smarter Lunchrooms
  - ▶ Farm to School
  - ▶ Best Practices Sharing Center



# Lunch Meal Pattern Overview

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- ▶ Five food components
  - ▶ Fluid Milk
  - ▶ Fruit
  - ▶ Vegetables
  - ▶ Grains
  - ▶ Meats/Meat Alternates



# Fluid Milk Component

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- ▶ 1 cup (8 fluid ounces) for all age/grade groups
- ▶ Must offer daily variety (at least 2) of the following:
  - ▶ Fat-free unflavored
  - ▶ Fat-free flavored
  - ▶ Low-fat (1% or less) unflavored
  - ▶ Low-fat or fat-free lactose-reduced/lactose-free
- ▶ Whole, 2%, and low-fat flavored milk not allowable
- ▶ No fat/flavor restriction on milk substitutes
- ▶ Can be declined under Offer vs. Serve



# Fruits Component

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- ▶ Frozen/canned/dried fruit and 100% juice are allowed in addition to fresh fruit
- ▶ Temporary waiver for frozen fruit restriction in the NSLP
  - ▶ Recently extended to SY 2014-15 (memo SP 49-2013)
- ▶ Limit on fruit juice applies to the total fruit offering per week
  - ▶ No more than half of the weekly fruit offering may be in the form of 100% juice



# Vegetables Component

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- ▶ Fruits and vegetables separate components
- ▶ Daily minimum quantity requirement
- ▶ Weekly variety requirement (5 subgroups):
  - ▶ Red/orange (carrots, tomatoes, sweet potatoes)
  - ▶ Dark green (romaine, spinach, broccoli)
  - ▶ Legumes/beans/peas (kidney beans, chickpeas)
  - ▶ Starchy (white potatoes, corn, green peas)
  - ▶ Other (cucumbers, celery, mushrooms)

# Fruits and Vegetables

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- ▶ Schools may offer both in pureed form (smoothies, soups)
- ▶ Fruit smoothie guidance provided in memo SP 36-2012
  - ▶ Milk and fruit are credited in smoothies prepared by local operators
  - ▶ Fruit is credited in smoothies prepared commercially
- ▶ Pureed forms credit based on the actual volume served



# Salad Bars

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- ▶ Salad bars continue to be a great option for meeting the meal pattern requirements, especially vegetable subgroups
- ▶ No maximum limits for fruits and vegetables components
- ▶ Daily variety of options is not required
- ▶ Ensure students are offered the required portions
  - ▶ If salad bar is after POS, assign a monitor
  - ▶ See Memo SP-31-2013 (issued 3/27/13), and Team Nutrition resources



# Grains Component

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- ▶ Only half of the grains must be whole grain–rich in SY 2013-14
- ▶ Beginning SY 2014-2015, all grains must be whole grain-rich (not 100% whole grain)
  - ▶ Whole grain-rich = At least 50% whole grain and rest of product/blend must be enriched refined flour
- ▶ Beginning in SY 2013-14, all grains are credited in ounce equivalents and based on 16 grams of grain
  - ▶ Grain/bread servings no longer used
  - ▶ 14.75 gram standard no longer allowable
- ▶ Corn masa dough treated with lime is allowable as a whole grain ingredient (SP 02 -2013)



# Whole Grain-Rich Criteria

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- ▶ Element 1: Food item must meet the oz eq (size) requirements
- ▶ Element 2: The food must meet at least one of the following:
  - ▶ Whole-grain content per oz eq must be at least 8.0 grams
  - ▶ Product includes the FDA whole-grain health claim
  - ▶ A whole grain is the first ingredient in the product
- ▶ Refer to SP 30-2012 for additional information on whole grain-rich



# Meats/Meat Alternates Component

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- ▶ Few changes from old meal pattern
- ▶ Operators can continue to offer wide variety of products
  - ▶ Lean meats and poultry, eggs, fish
  - ▶ Low-fat cheeses, yogurt, beans, nuts and seeds
- ▶ Tofu and soy yogurt now creditable



# School Meal Pattern Implementation

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- ▶ FNS has been listening to parents, schools, State agencies and others
- ▶ Many operators implementing changes successfully
  - ▶ **72%** submitted and **54%** certified!
- ▶ Biggest challenge with weekly maximums for the grains and meat/meat alternates at lunch



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# Weekly Maximum Flexibilities



# Weekly Maximums Flexibility: Implications

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- ▶ Meal pattern remains in place
- ▶ Flexibility in measuring compliance with weekly grains and meat/meat alternates for SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-14
  - ▶ State agencies to consider an SFA compliant if daily and weekly *minimums* for m/ma and grains are met
- ▶ Refer to SP 11-2013 and SP 26-2013 for full details (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2013>)

# Weekly Maximums Flexibility: Benefits

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- ▶ **This flexibility allows:**
  - ▶ More time for the development of food products that fit the NSLP meal pattern
  - ▶ More menu options for meal planners and students
  - ▶ More time for students to adjust to meal pattern changes

# What Stays the Same...

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- ▶ Daily and weekly *minimums* for grains and meat/meat alternates
- ▶ Requirements for the fruit, vegetable and milk components
- ▶ Weekly calorie ranges and other dietary specifications



# Maximums Beyond SY 2013-2014

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- ▶ FNS will continue to monitor implementation data and feedback from States and SFAs
- ▶ Need for continued flexibility is being assessed
- ▶ Working to implement long term solutions

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# Dietary Specifications



# Dietary Specifications

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- ▶ Saturated fat (unchanged)
  - ▶ Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- ▶ Trans fat
  - ▶ Zero grams per offered portion (check labels)
- ▶ Calories
  - ▶ Minimum *and* maximum
- ▶ Sodium
  - ▶ First target begins in SY 2014-15
  - ▶ Phased in gradually

# Calories

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- ▶ Calorie ranges are based on science and data on children's food intake
- ▶ Calorie ranges apply on a weekly basis
  - ▶ The meals offered on average over the week must be within the calorie range (min/max)
  - ▶ Individual meals offered may be below or above the calorie range
- ▶ Calories do not apply to meal selected by individual student
  - ▶ Student selections may also be above or below the ranges

# Weighted Nutrient Analysis

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- ▶ Adjusts for student take rates and reflects what is recorded on the production record
- ▶ Weighted nutrient analysis must be based on *offered* menu
  - ▶ Can be conducted for the entire cafeteria serving area as a whole
  - ▶ Unlike meal components, does not have to be done on a per-line basis

# Dietary Specifications: Definitions

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- ▶ Continued confusion regarding what numbers are used for nutrient analysis
- ▶ Planned Meals
  - ▶ What menu planner *intends to offer* to students.
  - ▶ Represents SFA's calculation of the items that will need to be prepared (based on usual average daily participation)
- ▶ Offered Meals
  - ▶ Foods actually *prepared* and set out on the lines for students
- ▶ Served Meals
  - ▶ Foods actually *served to/selected* by the student

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# Offer versus Serve



# Offer versus Serve at Lunch

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- ▶ Required at senior high school level only
- ▶ Must offer all 5 food components in at least the minimum required amounts
  - ▶ Student must select at least 3 food components
  - ▶ Beginning in SY 2012-13, student must select a fruit or a vegetable (at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup for all age/grade groups)
- ▶ For other components, student must take daily minimum required amount to count as a component





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# Additional Meal Pattern Information



# New Breakfast Meal Pattern

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- ▶ Option to offer vegetables in place of fruit (begins SY 14/15)
- ▶ Option to offer meat/meat alternate in place of grains (begins SY 13/14)
- ▶ Offering vegetables or meat/meat alternates as extras
- ▶ Option to pre-plate/bundle foods
- ▶ Discussed in detail at other ANC sessions

# RCCIs

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- ▶ SP 38-2012
  - ▶ Offer a menu for a single age grade group (highest)
  - ▶ Must meet all 3 criteria:
    - ▶ 1) a juvenile detention or correctional facility
    - ▶ 2) serve children in different age/grade groups; and
    - ▶ 3) have legitimate safety concerns, or State juvenile justice laws or regulations related to offering meals with varying amounts of food at the same meal



# RCCIs (cont'd)

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- ▶ SP 48-2013
  - ▶ Extended flexibility to other RCCIs (not juvenile justice centers)
  - ▶ RCCI must be able to demonstrate:
    - ▶ **operational limitations to separating age/grade groups**  
*and*
    - ▶ **show legitimate safety concerns**
  
- ▶ RCCI must submit request to State agency

# Food Allergies under ADAAA

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- ▶ **SP 36-2013**
  - ▶ Overview of ADA amendments, program impact
- ▶ **Clarifications**
  - ▶ Still need doctor's note
  - ▶ Students not required to be provided with OVS options
  - ▶ Special meals and foods used for medical substitution not part of menu for six cents certification purposes

# Six Cents Certification Updates

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- ▶ **14,739 (or 72%)** of SFAs have submitted certification documentation
- ▶ **54% (10,971)** of SFAs are certified for performance based reimbursement (as of March 2013)
  - ▶ 6 States have more than 75% of their SFAs certified
  - ▶ **Colorado** has since reported **100%** of SFAs are certified!

# Certification and Reviews in SY 2013-14

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- ▶ Certification process continues past SY 2012-13
  - ▶ Must follow meal pattern requirements in effect at time of submission
- ▶ Becomes part of the administrative reviews
- ▶ SFAs not yet certified will receive review closer to beginning of the 3-year cycle
- ▶ More information on certification in SY 2013-14 coming soon

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# Meal Pattern Implementation Resources





# Cornell BEN Center

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- ▶ Use behavioral economics principles
  - ▶ Six Principles based on research on various environmental cues (physical and social) that influence eating behaviors
  - ▶ Most of our food decisions are mindless and mainly influenced by our environment
- ▶ Center works to identify and develop practical, evidence-based strategies to shape school environments
  - ▶ Lunchrooms can be rearranged to nudge students to make healthier choices
  - ▶ Supports and encourage healthful food choices and behaviors; minimizes food waste



# Smarter Lunchrooms Movement

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- ▶ Range from simple, low-cost/no-cost to major cafeteria redesigns
- ▶ Suggestions:
  - ▶ Give creative and appealing names
  - ▶ Display whole fruit in an attractive bowl/basket
  - ▶ Use signs, verbal cues to encourage students to select a fruit or vegetable
  - ▶ Create a healthy “grab and go” line
- ▶ <http://www.ben.cornell.edu/>
- ▶ <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/>



# Smarter Lunchrooms Movement: Goals

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- ▶ Equip school lunchrooms with evidence-based tools that improve child eating behaviors
- ▶ Goal: have 30,000 schools trained by 2015
  - ▶ Included in the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) lunch criteria to help schools receive HUSSC recognition
- ▶ Over 20 published papers and abstracts on their research on smarter lunchrooms



# Farm to School

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- » The new meal patterns offer ample opportunity to serve local products
- » Think seasonally – menu cycle
- » Already sourcing local
  - » Milk
  - » Regional Products

**Local products at lunch**



# Visit the Farm to School Booth

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in USDA Lane!

- » Website: [www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool](http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool)
  - » Sign up for the USDA Farm to School E-letter
  - » Learn more about USDA Farm to School Grants
  - » Find farm to school related policies and policy guidance
  - » Find contact information for state farm to school coordinators and USDA staff

**USDA Farm to School Program**



# Technical Assistance Resources

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- ▶ FNS New Meal Pattern website  
(<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>)
  - ▶ Timeline
  - ▶ Powerpoint presentations for training
  - ▶ Recently released Q&As, other policy memos
  - ▶ Food Buying Guide
- ▶ Best Practices Sharing Center
  - ▶ SFAs and States can share resources and tools
  - ▶ Over **1200** uploads so far!!!





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# Best Practices Sharing Center



▶ Healthy Meals Resource System

USDA National Agricultural Library



# Best Practices Sharing Center

- ▶ SFAs and SAs can share resources and tools they use to serve healthy menus that meet the new school meal regulations

The screenshot shows the USDA Best Practices Sharing Center website. At the top, it features the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture". To the right, it says "Healthy Meals Resource System" and "TEAM NUTRITION". Below the header is a navigation bar with links for "Home", "About HMRS", "News", "Topics A-Z", "Get Connected", "Chefs Move to Schools", "Help", and "Contact Us".

The main content area is titled "Best Practices Sharing Center" and includes a search bar with a "Go" button. Below the search bar are two columns of search filters:

- Browse by Subject:** Recipes, Menu Planning, Best Practices, Resource Library, HealthierUS School Challenge Resources, Farm to School, Local Wellness Policy Resources, State Sharing Center, Professional & Career Resources.
- Topics:** Sodium reduction, Fruits, Vegetables, Whole grains, Meal pattern, Fluid milk, Meat / Meat alternatives, Dietary specifications (calories, sat. fat, trans fat), Planning tools, Monitoring tools. A note says "Hold the CTRL key to select multiple options."
- Formats:** Menu, Recipe, Checklist, Training material (video, webinar, etc.), Success story / Method of implementation. A note says "Hold the CTRL key to select multiple options."
- Audiences:** School Food Authority, State Agency. A note says "Hold the CTRL key to select multiple options."
- Developers:** School Food Authority, State Agency. A note says "Hold the CTRL key to select multiple options."

At the bottom of the filters are "Search" and "Clear form" buttons. On the right side of the page, there is a "Submit a best practice" section with instructions: "Materials may be submitted via email to [hmrs@nrs.usda.gov](mailto:hmrs@nrs.usda.gov). In the body of the email, please provide the developer name as well as the subject areas, audiences, and format that the resource covers."

- Currently contains almost 40 materials

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







# Best Practices Sharing Center

Users can search by **TOPIC:**

- Sodium reduction
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Meal pattern
- Fluid milk
- Meat / Meat alternates
- Dietary specifications (calories, sat. fat, *trans* fat)
- Planning tools
- Monitoring tools





# Best Practices Sharing Center

Users can search by **FORMAT**:

- Menu
- Recipe
- Checklist
- Handout / Brochure / Poster
- Method of implementation
- Training material (video, webinar, etc.)
- Success story / Feedback



# Best Practices Sharing Center

## Sample Materials

### *Meal Pattern Resources from Washington*

Menu planner spreadsheets, fruit and vegetable bar planner, sample production records, PowerPoint presentations and handouts for staff training, meal pattern charts, and posters.



# Best Practices Sharing Center

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## Sample Materials

### ***SMART School Meals Marketing Materials from Idaho***

Posters and brochures outlining the changes and benefits of the new meal pattern requirements, and encouraging students to eat more fruits and vegetables.



# Get Connected!

## Team Nutrition E-Newsletter

- ▶ Newsletter delivered via email 3-4 times per year
- ▶ Also receive period updates when new Team Nutrition materials are released

**Sign up TODAY!**

<http://bit.ly/TNnews>





# Best Practices Sharing Center

## Share your resources!

Materials may be submitted via email to  
[hmrs@ars.usda.gov](mailto:hmrs@ars.usda.gov)

In the body of the email, please provide the developer name as well as the subject areas, audiences, and format that the resource covers.



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Thank You

