Setting the Record Straight

School Meal Patterns and Smart Snacks
Myths, Facts & Flexibilities
School Meal Requirements
**MYTH:** Weekly maximums for grains and meats/meat alternates are too restrictive.

Half of a sandwich?
• Grains and meats/meat alternates can be offered in different serving sizes

• Exceeding maximums = compliant

• Weekly ranges: guide for planning age-appropriate meals
MYTH: School meals do not offer what kids want.
• Menu planners can offer items popular with students

• Smoothies and vegan/vegetarian options are encouraged

• Grain-based desserts allowed (up to 2 oz. eq./week)
MYTH: It’s difficult to incorporate required vegetable subgroups into menus.
• Small servings of each vegetable subgroup can be offered over the week

• Vegetable combinations may be offered
MYTH: All grains offered must be 100% whole grain.
**Fact 4**

**Whole Grain Rich is defined as:**

- Whole grain as the first ingredient
- 8 grams of whole grain per serving
- FDA-approved whole grain health claim on package
Whole Grain-Rich Flexibility

- **Flexibility for pasta**
  - SP47-2014: Flexibility to offer whole grain-rich pasta in school years 14/15 and 15/16

- **Flexibility for corn products treated with lime**
  - SP 02-2013
MYTH: Students must select milk with every reimbursable meal.
Fact 5

• Students may decline milk under OVS.
MYTH: There is no protein at breakfast.
• Meats/meat alternates can be incorporated
  – if 1 oz. eq. of grain is also offered
  – As an extra food
MYTH: Calorie limits apply to every meal offered daily.
• Calorie limits apply to the average meal offered over the entire week
• No calorie limits per meal or per student
MYTH: The new meal patterns require fresh fruit.
• Many types of fruit are allowed:
  – Fresh
  – Frozen
  – Dried
  – Canned in water, fruit juice, or light syrup
MYTH: RCCIs must offer different meals to each age/grade group.
• Juvenile detention facilities and alternative schools with security concerns may offer one meal pattern (for oldest age group) to all students

• Memoranda: SP 38-2012 and SP 48-2013
MYTH: Schools can no longer serve seconds and leftovers.
• Leftovers may be offered on the same day (as seconds)
  – Counts toward weekly dietary specs limits

• Leftovers may be stored and offered another day
MYTH: There is a daily fruit juice limit.
• Juice limit applies weekly
• May credit for up to half of fruit
• Must be 100% full-strength
**MYTH:** Pre-plating and bundling food is no longer allowed.
• Menu planners may pre-plate meals or bundle foods, even under OVS
MYTH: Schools are required to conduct a nutrient analysis.
• Only the State agency is required to conduct a nutrient analysis when a school is at high risk of violating the dietary specifications requirements.
**MYTH:** One cup of fruit at breakfast must be offered as one serving.
• Menu planners decide how to offer 1 cup of fruit at breakfast:
  – Single 1 cup serving (1 item)
  – Two ½ cup servings (2 items)
Smart Snacks Requirements
MYTH: Schools are no longer allowed to have fundraisers. Important funding for clubs, sports teams and other activities will no longer be available.
• No limits on fundraisers that meet Smart Snacks standards
• Infrequent “exempt” fundraisers allowed
• Standards do not apply during non-school hours, on weekends, and at off-campus fundraising events
**MYTH:** Food items sold throughout the school must meet Smart Snacks standards.
• Foods and beverages for sale to students on the school campus during school day must comply

• Foods and beverages that students can’t access (e.g., teacher lounge, office) do not have to comply
MYTH: Students may no longer have treats for birthdays and other special events.
• Foods given to students to celebrate special occasions do not have to comply

• Only foods and beverages sold to students are required to meet standards
**MYTH:** Students are prohibited from bringing non-compliant foods to school.
• Foods and beverages brought from home are not required to meet Smart Snacks standards
MYTH: States and school districts with strict standards will be required to loosen their standards because of the Smart Snacks regulation.
• Federal Smart Snacks standards are minimum standards
• States and/or schools that have more strict standards may continue to require those standards
The Road to Success
Identify Role Models in Your State

• Showcase schools recognized by the HealthierUS School Challenge:
  – 4,484 Bronze schools
  – 1,224 Silver schools
  – 591 Gold schools
  – 431 Gold Award of Distinction schools

• List of schools at http://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/award-winning-schools
Share Good Ideas

• Best Practices Sharing Center

• State Sharing Center
  – http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/state-sharing-center-0
Utilize Key Resources

- School meals webpage
  http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program
  - School meal requirements and resources
    - QAs, policy memoranda, Whole Grain Resource, etc.
  - Smart Snacks guidance and resources
    - Smart Snacks calculator and infographic
    - Letter from Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Duncan

- Team Nutrition
- National Food Service Management Institute
- SAE funds
More to Come!

• Webinar for State agencies to showcase exemplary school foodservice operations and best practices

• More information will be provided by your FNS Regional Office in the upcoming days

• We look forward to your suggestions and participation
Questions, Comments?