

School Meals Menu Review Self-Check

The Nutrition Standards Team with the Division of Food, Nutrition and Wellness (FNW) developed this tool to help sponsors evaluate compliance with “Meal Pattern and Nutritional Quality” requirements (Performance Standard II) and identify areas for improvement ahead of their next School Meals Administrative Review.

Additional checklists are available for the following General Areas of review related to Nutrition Standards but not included in this checklist:

- Local School Wellness Policies – Refer to [Local School Wellness Policy \(LSWP\) Compliance Checklist](#)
- Smart Snacks – Refer to [Competitive Food Monitoring Tool](#)

School Breakfast Program (SBP)	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Breakfast Meal Pattern: Refer to Menu Planner , page 6. Planned menus meet the daily and weekly requirements for each grade group served at all meal service lines. (FNW recommends planning 2-4 weeks of completed breakfast menus served repeatedly over the school year. “Cycle menus” facilitate compliance, save time, control costs, and reduce food waste.)				
Planned menus are age-appropriate and incorporate a variety of tastes, textures, and colors.				
Consideration is given to limiting sodium, refined sugars, and saturated fat.				
If changes or substitutions to the menu are made, do they meet the minimum meal pattern requirements?				
Signage is posted so students understand how to select a reimbursable breakfast meal, avoid unintended purchase of a la carte items, and make healthy food choices.				
Free plain potable water is available and accessible to students in the meal service area during meal service when served in the cafeteria.				
Milk Component:				
Breakfast menus include 1 cup of milk daily.				
At least <u>two</u> choices of milk are offered throughout the serving period on all meal service lines, including at least one choice of unflavored milk (flavored milk is optional).				
All choices (unflavored or flavored) are 1% or fat-free.				
Flavored milk contains no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.				
If offered, non-dairy milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cows’ milk – Check with FNW Nutrition Standards for acceptable milk substitutions.				
Water available in the cafeteria does not interfere with the selection of milk as part of the reimbursable meal.				
Fruits Component:				
Breakfast menus include at least 1 cup of fruit daily.				
Fruit juice is 100% (full-strength) and makes up no more than half (50%) of the total cups of fruit offered weekly.				

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Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served (for example, ¼ cup raisins credits as ½ cup.)				
- If vegetables are substituted for fruits, they meet current guidelines: - If offered one day per school week, any vegetable is allowed including starchy vegetables. - If offered two or more days per school week, at least two different vegetable subgroups must be offered.				
Grains and/or Meats/Meat Alternates Component: <i>Refer to USDA's Whole Grain Resource & Exhibit A: Grains Chart.</i>				
Breakfast menus include at least 1 oz equivalent (oz eq) of grains and/or meats/meat alternates daily.				
Over the week, breakfast menus include at least the minimum required oz eq of grains and/or meats/meat alternates for each grade group: 7 oz eq (K-5), 8 oz eq (6-8 or K-8), or 9 oz eq (9-12 or K-12)				
At least 80% of the grains offered weekly are whole grain-rich (WGR) and all remaining grains are enriched.				
Breakfast cereals have no more than 12 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.				
Yogurt has no more than 8 grams of added sugars per 4 ounces (1/2 cup), or no more than 12 grams added sugar per 6 ounces (3/4 cup).				
Offer versus Serve (OVS) for Breakfast: <i>Indicate "NA" if the school does not implement OVS at breakfast.</i>				
Breakfast menus include at least 4 food items from the 3 required meal components daily: milk, grains and/or meats/meat alternates, and fruits (or vegetables).				
At least 2 oz eq of grains and/or meats/meat alternates are offered on some days during the week as needed to meet the minimum required oz eq for each grade group (<i>above</i>) and count toward the 4 food items required daily for breakfast under OVS.				
Two ½ cups of fruit are offered on the daily menu if just two other components are offered (1 grain or meat/meat alternate and 1 milk). (FNW recommends offering two ½ cups of fruit daily at breakfast.)				
During meal service, students select at least 3 food items, including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable) for a reimbursable breakfast.				
In addition to at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable, students select the full portion of at least two other components for a reimbursable meal.				
Signage is posted explaining OVS breakfast requirements to students.				
Students understand how to select a reimbursable breakfast.				
Cashiers understand how to recognize and count a reimbursable breakfast at the point of service.				

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National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Lunch Meal Pattern: Refer to Menu Planner , page 6. Planned menus meet the daily and weekly requirements for each grade group served at all meal service lines. (FNW recommends planning 4-6 weeks of completed lunch menus served repeatedly over the school year. "Cycle menus" facilitate compliance, save time, control costs, and reduce food waste.)				
Planned menus are age-appropriate and incorporate a variety of tastes, textures, and colors.				
Consideration is given to limiting sodium, refined sugars, and saturated fat.				
If changes or substitutions to the menu are made, do they meet the minimum meal pattern requirements?				
Signage is posted so students understand how to select a reimbursable lunch meal, avoid unintended purchase of a la carte items, and make healthy food choices.				
Free plain potable water is available and accessible to students in the meal service area during meal service when served in the cafeteria.				
The Offer versus Serve provision of the NSLP is implemented at the senior high level (grades 9-12).				
Milk Component: Lunch menus include 1 cup of milk daily.				
At least <u>two</u> choices of milk are offered throughout the serving period on all meal service lines, including at least one choice of unflavored milk (flavored milk is optional). <i>*Milk choices may include whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, fat-free, or lactose-free milk, and nutritionally equivalent nondairy beverages.</i>				
Flavored milk contains no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.				
If offered, non-dairy milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cows' milk – Check with FNW Nutrition Standards for acceptable milk substitutions.				
Water available in the cafeteria does not interfere with the selection of milk as part of the reimbursable meal.				
Fruits Component: Lunch menus include at least the minimum required cups of fruit daily for each grade group: ½ cup daily (K-8) or 1 cup daily (9-12).				
Fruit juice is 100% (full-strength) and makes up no more than half (50%) of the total cups of fruit offered weekly.				
Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served (for example, ¼ cup raisins credits as ½ cup.)				
Vegetables Component: Lunch menus include at least the minimum required cups of vegetables daily for each grade group: ¾ cup daily (K-8) or 1 cup daily (9-12).				

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Over the week, lunch menus include at least the minimum required cups of each of the vegetable subgroups plus additional vegetables as needed to meet the total weekly requirements for each grade group: 3 ¾ cups weekly (K-8) or 5 cups weekly (9-12).				
Raw leafy vegetables credit as half of the volume served (for example, 1 cup lettuce credits as ½ cup).				
Weekly Vegetable Subgroup Requirements: Dark Green: ½ cup (all grades)				
Red/Orange: ¾ cup (K-8) or 1 ¾ cups (9-12)				
Beans/Peas/Lentils: ½ cup (all grades)				
Starchy: ½ cup (all grades)				
Other: ½ cup (K-8) or ¾ cup (9-12) <i>*May be from additional amounts of vegetables from the dark green, red/orange, or beans/peas/lentils subgroups.</i>				
Grains Component: Refer to USDA's Whole Grain Resource & Exhibit A: Grains Chart .				
Lunch menus include at least the minimum required oz eq of grains daily for each grade group: 1 oz eq daily (K-8) or 2 oz eq daily (9-12).				
Over the week, lunch menus include at least the minimum required oz eq of grains for each grade group: 8 oz eq weekly (K-8) or 10 oz eq weekly (9-12).				
At least 80% of the grains offered weekly are whole grain-rich (WGR) and all remaining grains are enriched.				
Grain-based desserts at lunch do not exceed 2 oz eq per week (all grades).				
Breakfast cereals have no more than 12 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.				
Meat/Meat Alternates (M/MA) Component:				
Lunch menus include at least the minimum required oz eq of M/MA daily for each grade group: 1 oz eq daily (K-8) or 2 oz eq daily (9-12).				
Over the week, lunch menus include at least the minimum required oz eq of M/MA for each grade group: 8 oz eq weekly (K-5), 9 oz eq weekly (6-8 or K-8), 10 oz eq weekly (9-12).				
The M/MA is served in a main dish, or main dish and one other item.				
If no daily choices are offered, the same M/MA or form of M/MA (for example ground, diced, pieces) is not served more than three times in the same week.				
Yogurt has no more than 8 grams of added sugars per 4 ounces (1/2 cup), or no more than 12 grams added sugar per 6 ounces (3/4 cup).				
Offer versus Serve (OVS) for Lunch: <i>Indicate "NA" if the school does not implement OVS.</i>				
Lunch menus include all 5 required food items.				
Students select at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable.				
In addition to at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable, students select the full portion of at least two other components.				
Signage is posted explaining OVS lunch requirements to students.				

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Students understand how to select a reimbursable lunch.				
Cashiers understand how to recognize and count a reimbursable lunch at the point of service.				
Pre-K (if applicable): If implementing a single menu approach for Pre-K students, the “Comingled Preschool Meals Sites List” is on file at FNW (in FANS download forms). Otherwise, refer to the Pre-K Menu Review Checklist.				

Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Snack menus include two different components from the following: Milk, Meat/Meat Alternate, Vegetables, Fruits, and Grains. <i>Refer to Menu Planner, page 7.</i>				
Planned menus are age-appropriate and incorporate a variety of tastes, textures, and colors.				
Menus are planned so that juice is not served when milk is the only other component.				
Portion sizes are sufficient to credit as two full components. At a minimum portion sizes are as follows:				
¾ cup vegetables or full strength (100%) juice				
¾ cup fruits or full strength (100%) juice				
1 cup milk (1% or fat-free, flavored or unflavored)				
1 oz eq meat/meat alternates				
1 oz eq grains				
At least 80% of the grains offered weekly are whole grain-rich (WGR) and all remaining grains are enriched. Grains are credited in oz eq based on the Exhibit A: Grains Chart .				
Grain-based desserts are not used to meet the grains requirement.				
Breakfast cereals have no more than 12 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.				
Yogurt has no more than 8 grams of added sugars per 4 ounces (1/2 cup), or no more than 12 grams added sugar per 6 ounces (3/4 cup).				
Fruit juice is 100% (full-strength) and makes up no more than half (50%) of the total cups of fruit offered weekly.				
Dried fruit credits at the volume served (for example, ¼ cup raisins credits as ¼ cup.)				
Raw leafy vegetables credit at the volume served (for example, 1 cup lettuce credits as 1 cup).				
Ice cream, frozen yogurt, pudding, ice cream, vegetable chips such as potato chips, fruit chips such as banana chips, and fruit snacks are offered as “extras” and not credited as snack components.				

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Supporting Documentation	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Production Records:				
The most current, unaltered FNW prototype production records (in FANS download forms) or approved alternative production records are utilized daily and kept on file for each meal service.				
General information is documented, including the site name, date of meal service, grade group(s), meal period, manager's signature, and any unusual events.				
Documentation includes the total number of meals served (from meal counts or register tapes). Reimbursable student meals are recorded separately from non-reimbursable adult, staff, and a la carte meals.				
All foods served are listed, including condiments, extras, carryover items, and each type of milk.				
Documentation includes the number of portions planned and prepared for each item.				
Production records align with standardized recipes and food product labels.				
Food items and portion sizes listed match what is being served. (For example, if the production record lists "brown rice," then brown rice should be served, not white rice.)				
Portion sizes of M/MA's and baked goods are credited and recorded by weight (ounces or grams) except when stated otherwise on a standardized recipe or food product label.				
Fruits, vegetables, and cooked grains (such as oatmeal, rice, and pasta) are credited and recorded in cups.				
Both the serving size and crediting information are included on the production record for meat/meat alternates and combination items. *Best Practice*				
- Documentation includes sufficient detail to clearly demonstrate that all meal component requirements are met, including all vegetable subgroups. - Documentation also shows that the quantity of food prepared (i.e., "purchase units" such as pounds of broccoli) was enough to serve the number of meals claimed. Reference: Food Buying Guide				
Any meal modifications outside of the meal pattern for students with disabilities are documented and supported by a medical statement signed by a licensed healthcare professional.				
Documenting Offer versus Serve (OVS):				
Refer to USDA's OVS Guidance				
If OVS is implemented do the number of portions planned, prepared, and served reflect student preferences and an opportunity to decline some items?				
If OVS is implemented do the numbers demonstrate that all students received at a minimum ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full portion of at least two other meal components (or food items at breakfast)?				

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OVS Self-Check: <i>Divide the total number of servings of meal components (or food items as credited for breakfast) by the total number of meals served. The result should be greater than or equal to 3.</i>				
Signage has been posted explaining Offer versus Serve to students.				

Standardized Recipes: <i>Refer to Recipes and Culinary Techniques webpage for links to standardized recipes and steps to develop your own. Contact FNW Nutrition Standards for assistance.</i>				
Recipes or documented assembly instructions (e.g. for a simple sandwich or salad) are available for all foods made with two or more ingredients.				
Recipes have been standardized to provide a consistent quality product, portion size, and yield each time they are prepared. Reference: Food Buying Guide				
Precise ingredients, amounts, preparation instructions, portion size and yield are listed on the recipe.				
Standardized recipes are followed in food preparation (e.g., ingredients are added in amounts specified in the recipe, measurements are being taken appropriately).				
Changes made to a recipe due to updated ingredients, different portioning, etc., are incorporated into the recipe and the recipe is re-standardized if necessary.				

Product labels: <i>Refer CN Label/PFS webpage for information on acceptable processed product documentation.</i>				
A Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) is available for all purchased combination foods such as meat/grain entrees to demonstrate how they contribute toward meeting the meal pattern requirements.				
Nutrition facts labels with ingredients are available for all purchased grain items to confirm the portion size and demonstrate compliance with the whole grain-rich requirement				