

MICRO-TRAINING



**PLANNING REIMBURSABLE SCHOOL
MEALS FOR MENU PLANNERS:
TRANSITIONAL STANDARDS FOR MILK,
WHOLE GRAINS, AND SODIUM**

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Key Area: Nutrition (1000)

USDA Professional Standard: Menu Planning (1100)

Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills (CKS): Functional Area 7:

Menu and Nutrition Management

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PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Key Area: Nutrition (1000)

USDA Professional Standard: Menu Planning (1100)

Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills (CKS): Functional Area 7: Menu and Nutrition Management

INTRODUCTION

Planning Reimbursable School Meals for Menu Planners: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium is designed for directors/menu planners to use in training their staff in 30 minutes or less. This resource is one of four micro-trainings designed to give directors/menu planners an easy-to-use lesson plan for training staff with menu planning responsibilities in various topics related to the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – [Final Rule](#).

This lesson plan contains the following:

- Learning objectives
- Statement explaining the importance of the topic
- List of materials
- Instructions on how to present the information
- Questions to ask staff
- Additional resources to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the menu planners and other program staff

LESSON: TRANSITIONAL STANDARDS FOR MILK, WHOLE GRAIN AND SODIUM

Objectives:

- Recall the meal components that make up the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal patterns.
- Describe the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – [Final Rule](#).
- Analyze a one-day menu to determine if it meets all the meal pattern requirements for the NSLP and SBP.

Outcome:

Provide menu planners an overview of the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – Final Rule requirement for the NSLP and SBP.

Why It Is Important:

It is critical that program operators/menu planners understand and can implement the menu requirements for the NSLP and SBP.

Materials:

- Meal Pattern Components Lesson Overview
- Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium: The Basics for School Years 2022–2023 infographic
- USDA NSLP Meal Pattern chart
- USDA SBP Meal Pattern chart
- Menu Review – What’s Missing? worksheet
- Speed Action Planning worksheet
- Pens/pencils
- Planner or cell phone calendar app

Instructions:

Follow these steps to complete this training:

- Discuss the lesson overview with the participants.
- Review the infographic and how it relates to the training topic.
- Complete the discussion questions.
- Complete the activity as instructed.
- Answer any questions participants may have about the lesson.
- Encourage participants to complete the Speed Action Planning activity.

LESSON OVERVIEW

The NSLP and SBP are federally assisted meal programs operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. Both programs provide nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free meals to children each school day. Participating school districts and independent schools receive cash subsidies and USDA Foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. In order to receive reimbursement from USDA, schools must serve breakfast and lunches that meet Federal meal pattern requirements and offer the lunches at a free or reduced price to eligible children. The school meals program meal pattern requirements reflect the key food groups recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. School meal requirements focus on meal components, not nutrients.

The meal components required for offering in the NSLP meal pattern are meats/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, grains, and milk. See the NSLP Meal Pattern Chart (located on pages 7–8) for more details on specific requirements.

The meal components required within the SBP meal pattern are fruits, grains, and milk. See the SBP Meal Pattern chart (located on page 6) for more details on specific requirements.

Transitional Standards

Beginning with SY 2022–2023, the implementation of the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – [Final Rule](#) establishes transitional standards to support the continued effort to provide nutritious school meals as schools respond to and recover from the pandemic. These transitional standards establish meal pattern requirements for milk, whole grains, and sodium for SY 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 to give schools time to transition in the short term.

Milk

- ▶ Provides an option to serve flavored, low-fat milk in the NSLP and SBP
- ▶ Milk may be unflavored or flavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service.
- ▶ Extends flavored low-fat milk option to:
 - Smart Snacks in Schools (SSIS)
 - Special Milk Program (SMP) ages 6 and up
 - Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) ages 6 and up
- ▶ Provides consistency with school meal program regulations; lactose-free and reduced-lactose milk meet requirements for fluid milk in SMP and CACFP. No written or medical statement is required.

Sodium

- ▶ NSLP
 - Extends weekly sodium limit for NSLP and SBP at the current levels (also known as Target 1) for SY 2022–2023.

- For NSLP only, reduces the sodium limit marginally (10%, Sodium Interim Target 1A) for SY 2023-2024 to put schools on an achievable path toward long-term sodium reductions, which will be addressed in future rulemaking.
- Maintains Target 1 for SY 2022–2023 and SY 2023–2024.

Whole Grains

- ▶ Beginning with SY 2022–2023, at least 80% of the grains offered must be whole grain-rich.
 - Whole grain-rich means the product must contain at least 50% whole grains to be eligible as a whole grain-rich product.
- ▶ The remaining 20% of grains offered must be enriched.

Discussion Questions:

- ▶ Name the required components that must be included in meals served as part of NSLP.
 - Answer: meats/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, milk, grains
- ▶ Name the required components that must be included in meals served as part of SBP.
 - Answer: fruits, milk, grains
- ▶ What is the purpose of the Transitional Standards?
 - Answer: Supports the continued provision of nutritious school meals as schools respond to and recover from the pandemic and while USDA engages in notice-and-comment rulemaking to update the meal pattern standards to more comprehensively reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020–2025
- ▶ Which meal components are effected by the Transitional Standards?
 - Answer: milk, grains, and sodium targets

TRANSITIONAL STANDARDS FOR MILK, WHOLE GRAINS, AND SODIUM: THE BASICS FOR SCHOOL YEARS 2022–2023 AND 2023–2024

MILK



REQUIRED

Offer unflavored low-fat or nonfat milk

OPTION

Offer flavored, low-fat (1%) or flavored - nonfat

SODIUM



National School Lunch Program

NO CHANGE

for school year 2022–2023 (known as Target 1)

10% REDUCTION

for school year 2023–2024 (known as Target 1A)

School Breakfast Program

NO CHANGE

for school years 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 (known as Target 1)

WHOLE GRAINS



80%

of grains offered must be whole grain-rich (Containing at least 50% whole grains)

20%

of the other grains offered must be enriched

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12/19/2022



School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^{b c}	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^{b c}	0	0	0
Dark green	0	0	0
Red/Orange	0	0	0
Beans and peas (legumes)	0	0	0
Starchy	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Grains (oz eq) ^d	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq) ^e	0	0	0
Fluid milk ^f (cups)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^{g h}	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Target 1 (mg)	≤ 540	≤ 600	≤ 640
<i>Trans</i> fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

^a Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is 1/8 cup.

^b One-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as 1/2 cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as 1/2 cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

^c Schools must offer 1 cup of fruit daily and 5 cups of fruit weekly. Vegetables may be substituted for fruits, but the first two cups per week of any such substitution must be from the dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes), or “Other vegetables” subgroups, as defined in §210.10(c)(2)(iii) of this chapter.

^d At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched. Schools may substitute 1 oz. eq. of meat/meat alternate for 1 oz. eq. of grains after the minimum daily grains requirement is met.

^e There is no meat/meat alternate requirement.

^f All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be unflavored or flavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service.

^g The average daily calories for a 5-day school week must be within the range (at least the minimum and no more than the maximum values).

^h Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, *trans* fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent milk fat are not allowed.

National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^b	2½ (½)	2½ (½)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^b	3¾ (¾)	3¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark green ^c	½	½	½
Red/Orange ^c	¾	¾	1¼
Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	½	½	½
Starchy ^c	½	½	½
Other ^{c d}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables to Reach Total ^c	1	1	1½
Grains (oz eq) ^f	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid milk (cups) ^g	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^h	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Interim Target 1 (mg) ^h	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,420
Sodium Interim Target 1A (mg) ^{h i}	≤ 1,110	≤ 1,225	≤ 1,280
<i>Trans</i> fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

^a Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is ⅛ cup.

^b One-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as ½ cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as ½ cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

^c Larger amounts of these vegetables may be served.

^d This category consists of “Other vegetables” as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii)(E) of this section. For the purposes of the NSLP, the “Other vegetables” requirement may be met with any

additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas (legumes) vegetable subgroups as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii) of this section.

^e Any vegetable subgroup may be offered to meet the total weekly vegetable requirement.

^f At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched.

^g All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be flavored or unflavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service.

^h Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, *trans* fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent are not allowed.

ⁱ Sodium Interim Target 1A must be met no later than July 1, 2023 (SY 2023-2024).

ACTIVITY: Menu Review – What’s Missing? For Facilitator/Instructor ONLY

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: Menu Review – What’s Missing? worksheet, pens/pencils

Instructions: Participants will determine if all the meal components are included in the sample menus. Distribute the Menu Review – What’s Missing? worksheet. Read the instructions to the participants: Determine if all the required meal components are included for each day. For each of the days, identify the component that is missing and suggest food items to meet the meal pattern requirements.

Note: for the sake of this activity, participants are only looking at the meal components, not the serving sizes. For additional resources on serving sizes and daily minimum servings refer to [ICN’s Manager Corner series on the meal components](#).

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
Whole Grain (WG) Bagel Low-Fat Cream Cheese Diced Peaches 100% Apple Juice 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk	French Toast Sticks Hash Brown Patty Orange Wedges 100% Grape Juice 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk	WG English Muffin w/ Egg 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Hamburger on WG Bun Baby Carrots Oven Fries Applesauce 100% Grape Juice 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk	Chicken Fajita Strips Tossed Salad Refried Beans Diced Pears Apple 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk	Cheese Pizza Banana Watermelon 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk

Answers:

- Day 1 includes all components.
- Day 2 Lunch is missing a grain – possibly add tortilla.
- Day 3 Breakfast is missing fruits – possibly add blueberries and pineapple juice. Lunch is missing vegetables – possibly add celery, jicama sticks, and green beans.

Participant Worksheet: Menu Review – What’s Missing?

Instructions: Determine if all the meal components are included for each day’s menu. For the day’s missing components, identify the component that is missing and suggest food items to satisfy the meal pattern requirements.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
Whole Grain (WG) Bagel Low-Fat Cream Cheese Diced Peaches 100% Apple Juice 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk	French Toast Sticks Hash Brown Patty Orange Wedges 100% Grape Juice 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk	WG English Muffin w/ Egg 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Hamburger on WG Bun Baby Carrots Oven Fries Applesauce 100% Grape Juice 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk	Chicken Fajita Strips Tossed Salad Refried Beans Diced Pears Apple 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk	Cheese Pizza Banana Watermelon 1% Unflavored Milk Fat-Free Chocolate Milk

ACTIVITY: Speed Action Planning

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is for program operators/menu planners to establish an action plan for applying the information learned in this session in their workplaces.

Materials Needed: Speed Action Planning worksheet, planner or cell phone calendar app, and pens/pencils

Instructions: Distribute the Speed Action Planning worksheet. Inform participants that it is important to develop a plan for using the information from the training. Ask them to take 1–2 minutes to answer the following three questions to establish an action plan. Once the participants have finished, encourage them to save this goal to a planner, calendar app, or other sources to ensure they follow through with their plan.

- What did you learn in this training?
- How will you apply this information in your current or future roles?
- When will you apply this information?

Speed Action Planning

Instructions: Today’s training featured key information on the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – Final Rule that affect the meal pattern/nutrition requirements for the NSLP and SBP for SY 2022–2023 and 2023–2024. Answer the following three questions to establish a plan for using the information.

1. What did you learn in this training?

2. How will you apply this information in your current or future roles?

3. When will you apply this information (for example, one week, one month, six months, etc.)?

REFERENCES

- Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Final Rule, 7 C.F.R. § 210, 215, 220, and 226. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/02/07/2022-02327/child-nutrition-programs-transitional-standards-for-milk-whole-grains-and-sodium>
- Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, 7 C.F.R. § 210, 220. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/01/26/2012-1010/nutrition-standards-in-the-national-school-lunch-and-school-breakfast-programs>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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