

Commissioner's Memo
3/15/2022

Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium effective July 1, 2022

Memo Information

Memo Number **CNU-22-018**

Memo Date 3/15/2022

Memo Type Regulatory

Unit Child Nutrition

Regulatory Authority USDA Memo SP 04-2022

Response Required NO

Attention Superintendents; Child Nutrition Directors/Managers

Primary Contact Information

Name Ronna SeGraves

Phone Number 501-324-9502

Email ronna.segraves@ade.arkansas.gov

Memo Text

ATTENTION: Co-op Directors; Superintendents; Child Nutrition Directors

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has finalized Transitional Standards for milk, whole grains, and sodium for child nutrition meal pattern requirements for school years (SY) 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. This rule will become effective July 1, 2022.

This final rule establishes transitional standards to support the continued provision of nutritious school meals to students as school districts respond to and recover from the pandemic. While USDA engages in notice-and-comment rulemaking to update the meal pattern standards to reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) 2020-2025, this final rule will provide immediate relief to schools during the return to traditional school meal service following extended use of COVID-19 meal pattern flexibilities.

USDA is working to develop long-term nutrition standards - based on the newest DGA and extensive input from a wide range of partners - that will work for schools, families, and industry alike. USDA expects to publish a proposed rule on the updated standards in Fall 2022.

MILK

School districts and childcare providers of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) may offer flavored, low-fat milk (1% fat) for students in addition to unflavored, low-fat milk and flavored or unflavored nonfat milk. Flavored milk may also be sold as a competitive beverage.

WHOLE GRAINS

USDA will require at least 80% of the grains served in the NSLP and SBP each week be whole grain rich. All remaining grains offered must be enriched.

SODIUM

Sodium Target 1 is established as the sodium limit for school lunch and breakfast in SY 2022-2023 as proposed, but a Sodium Interim Target 1A will be implemented and effective for school lunch only, beginning in SY 2023-2024 as shown on the following chart.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM TRANSITIONAL SODIUM TIMELINE & LIMITS

Age/grade group	Target 1: Effective July 1, 2022 (mg)	Interim Target 1A: Effective July 1, 2023 (mg)
K-5	<1,230	<1,110
6-8	<1,360	<1,225
9-12	<1,420	<1,280

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM TRANSITIONAL SODIUM TIMELINE & LIMITS

Age/grade group	Target 1: Effective July 1, 2022 (mg)
K-5	<540
6-8	<600
9-12	<640

Again, this final rule is effective July 1, 2022. Written comments on this final rule must be received on or before March 24, 2022, to receive consideration.

- Online at the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/FNS-2020-0038-2936>
- Mail: Send comments to Tina Namian, Chief, School Programs Branch, Policy and Program Development Division – 4th floor, Food and Nutrition Service, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314; telephone: 703-305-2590.

If you have any questions or need additional information related to school meal pattern requirements, please contact your Area Specialist at 501-324-9502.