

**From:** Bushong, Linda (MDE) **On Behalf Of** Leikert, Howard (MDE)  
**Sent:** Monday, February 25, 2013 3:27 PM  
**To:** MDE-SchoolNutrition  
**Subject:** Weekly News from MDE 022513

March is just around the corner and we will start getting a taste of warmer weather. Can't wait...my motorcycle is calling me!! In the meantime, here is some more news:

- 1) Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools – Otherwise known as the competitive food rule. In any event, I have recorded the USDA PowerPoint presented to state agencies recently and it is already posted on the web. Here is the link - <http://www.mistreamnet.com/vidflv.php?who=mde.20130220-schoolmeals>. It is 40 minutes long but a good summary of the proposed rule. This is an important part of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act. If you are inclined at all, be sure to comment at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Type in "Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools" for the search and submit a comment. If we have learned nothing else from the New Meal Pattern, we have learned it is important to make sure USDA hears your voice!! In addition, I have attached a flyer provided by USDA that does an excellent job of summarizing the rule.
- 2) Meat/Meat Alternate and Grain Extension – Attached is an email describing the extension of the elimination of the maximums for grains and meat/meat alternates for the new meal pattern. Note this is a one year extension and USDA will be looking for feedback to make it permanent. Anyhow, I think this is good news...simplifies at least part of the new meal pattern.
- 3) Paid Lunch Equity – I sent out the memo on Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) a few weeks ago but USDA has now provided us with the Excel spreadsheet tool in order to be able to complete it. Remember, this is a required annual calculation. Both the memo and spreadsheet are attached for your convenience. The instructions for filling out the PLE tool are on the first page of the Excel workbook.
- 4) Junior Chef - Fresh, local foods, creativity, and teamwork will give you an edge in this fun-filled recipe contest and cooking competition! First, student teams submit recipes that are fit for a healthy school lunch meal and feature local, seasonal foods. Recipe contest submissions due by March 26, 2013. Next, up to 8 teams will be selected to bring their recipes to life in a cook-off competition at Michigan State University on May 9, 2013. Open to all 7th-12th grade students enrolled in Michigan schools. Teams must consist of 3-4 students and at least one adult coach. Visit <https://sites.google.com/site/michiganjrchef/home> for rules and more information.

- 5) USDA Foods - The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Food Distribution Unit has recently revised their USDA Foods and Department of Defense (DoD) Produce complaint forms for your school to use when an issue with donated food arises. These forms are to replace any outdated forms and can be found on the Food Distribution Unit's website at [www.michigan.gov/mde-fdp](http://www.michigan.gov/mde-fdp). The purpose of these forms is to provide Michigan schools with a means to communicate concerns or complaints about USDA Foods or DoD Produce directly to MDE and the corresponding federal office(s). Although completing a complaint form does not always result in replacement or refund of entitlement, each complaint is pursued with each vendor/processing manufacturer and MDE requires a response from any processor involved in a complaint. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the USDA Foods or DoD Produce programs, please contact Jaime Malnar at [malnarj1@michigan.gov](mailto:malnarj1@michigan.gov) or by phone at 517-335-3792.
- 6) 25 Years of Service - Don't Forget! March 1 is the deadline for nominating yourself or someone you know for the 25-Year Service Award! To nominate, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/P9YGZ5C>.
- 7) Michigan Good Food Newsletter - This month's stories include: "Grand Rapids Sets the Stage for a New Downtown Market," "Food Access Group Identifies Priorities," "New MDCH Campaign," and "USDA Proposes New Rules for School Snacks." This and previous editions of the Michigan Good Food newsletter can be found on the MI Good Food website at [www.michiganfood.org](http://www.michiganfood.org) under "current activity" or at this link - <http://www.michiganfood.org/index.php?id=152>. As always, contributions related to good food in Michigan are welcome! Submissions are requested by the 25th of the month for publication the following month.
- 8) Hold the Dates - While we are nailing down final details, MDE is planning on having a 3 day statewide conference June 26-28 in Grand Rapids. The dates and location are a result of the survey I sent out. Lansing was actually first choice but there just weren't the facilities available so we are moving to the second choice Grand Rapids.
- 9) Food Purchasing Survey - The MSU Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS, formerly the CS Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems) is currently conducting a food purchasing survey of all school food service directors in Michigan. Please check your email for your unique survey link and take about 20-30 minutes (shorter than last year) to complete the survey by Friday, March 1. Please note that most of the survey questions are skippable. If you have trouble responding or don't have enough time or information to provide an accurate response, you can skip the question in most cases. The information you provide through this survey will help MSU CRFS work with farmers and food suppliers to provide local foods of interest to you. It will also help them provide appropriate support,

including through MDE, for local food purchasing programs at schools across the state. Information you provided through a similar survey last year (and some information from previous surveys) has been compiled in the attached survey summary, which provides a snapshot of local food purchasing at Michigan's schools. MSU CRFS plans to conduct this survey annually to help track local/Michigan food purchasing efforts by schools for the Michigan Good Food Charter goal that Michigan institutions, like K-12 schools, purchase 20% of their food locally (from Michigan) by 2020.

Have a great week!!

Howard Leikert, MBA, SNS  
Supervisor, School Nutrition Programs  
Michigan Department of Education  
517-373-3892

Start the new year right by renewing your Michigan educator license today! MDE's online system is accessible for renewing licenses expiring June 30, 2013. It's quick and convenient.  
Go to: [www.michigan.gov/moecs](http://www.michigan.gov/moecs)

# All Foods Sold in Schools

## USDA's "Smart Snacks in Schools" Proposal

USDA recently proposed practical, science-based nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages sold to children at school during the school day. The proposed standards, required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, will allow schools to offer healthier snack foods for children, while limiting junk food.

The proposed standards will support the work already taking place across the country. Whether by school food service, school administrators or parents, the school community works hard to instill healthy habits in students. The snacks sold at school should reinforce that hard work. The proposed standards, coupled with the improvements to school lunches implemented last fall, will ensure that kids are offered only tasty and nutritious food options at school.

## Nutrition Standards for Foods

Under the proposal, any food sold in schools must:

- Be either a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, a protein food, a "whole-grain rich" grain product, or a combination food that contains at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of fruit or vegetable; or
- Contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) of a nutrient cited as a public health concern in the 2012 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA). (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber)

Additionally, foods sold must meet a range of nutrient requirements:

- Calorie limits include:
  - Snack items:  $\leq 200$  calories
  - Entrée items:  $\leq 350$  calories
- Sodium limits include:
  - Snack items:  $\leq 200$  mg per portion as packaged
  - Entrée items:  $\leq 480$  mg per portion as packaged
- Fat limits include:
  - Total fat:  $\leq 35\%$  of calories
  - Saturated fat:  $< 10\%$  of calories
  - Trans fat: zero grams
- Sugar limits include either:
  - $\leq 35\%$  of calories from total sugars in foods
  - or
  - $\leq 35\%$  of weight from total sugars in foods



## Other Proposed Requirements

### Fundraisers

- The sale of food items that meet proposed nutrition requirements at fundraisers would not be limited in any way under the proposed rule.
- In addition, the law permits USDA to allow for a limited number of fundraisers to sell food and beverage items that do not meet the proposed nutrition standards.
- The proposal includes two alternative approaches that provide discretion to State agencies in determining the frequency with which fundraising activities take place and requests other suggestions.
- The proposed standards would not apply to non-school hours, weekends and off-campus fundraising events.

### Accompaniments

- Items commonly served with foods, such as cream cheese, salad dressing, and butter, can add significant amounts of calories, fat, sugar, and sodium to a diet.
- To reduce the added calories, fat, sugar and sodium in food served to students during the school day, it is proposed that the use of accompaniments be limited when food is sold to students in school.
- It is proposed that accompaniments be pre-portioned and included in the nutrient profile as a part of the item served.

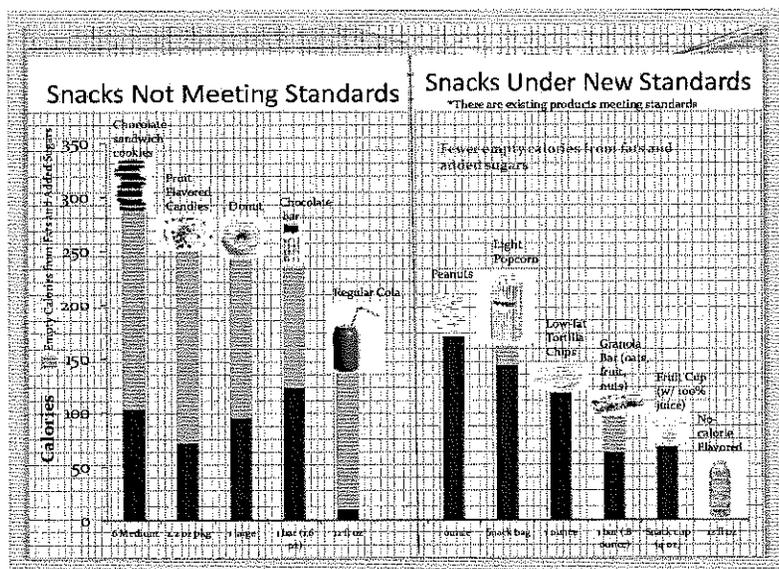
# All Foods Sold in School

## Nutrition Standards for Beverages

- Under the proposal, all schools may sell:
  - Plain water
  - Plain low fat milk
  - Plain or flavored fat-free milk and milk alternatives permitted by NSLP/SBP and
  - 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- Elementary schools may sell up to 8-ounce portions, while middle schools and high schools may sell up to 12-ounce portions of these beverages.
- Beyond this, the proposal offers additional beverage options outside of the meal service period for high school students. These are no more than 20-ounce servings of
  - Calorie-free, flavored and/or unflavored carbonated water and
  - Other "calorie-free" beverages that comply with the FDA standard of less than 5 calories per serving.
- Also for high schools, the rule proposes that no more than 12-ounce servings of other lower calorie beverages may be served outside of the meal service. Two alternatives for these beverages are proposed:
  - $\leq 40$  calories per 8-ounce serving ( $\leq 60$  calories/12-ounce serving) or
  - $\leq 50$  calories per 8-ounce serving ( $\leq 75$  calories/12-ounce serving)

## Commenting

- Rather than offer a single approach, the proposal offers alternatives in several areas. USDA is seeking comments on how best to preserve flexibility for schools in an updated healthy environment. Before the rule goes into effect, the public has an opportunity to comment on the proposed standards.
- Public comment from students, parents, school food staff, school administrators, State agencies and other interested parties is a very important step in the regulatory process. It helps USDA further refine the proposal into the final requirements that will become effective no earlier than one full school year after an implementing rule is published.



Food and beverages pictured may or may not meet the standards. Each product must be evaluated individually as specific food profiles vary greatly.

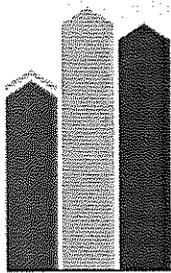
## WHERE TO COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED RULE:

<http://www.regulations.gov>

or by mail to:

Julie Brewer  
Chief, Policy and Program  
Development Branch

Child Nutrition Division, Food and  
Nutrition Service  
P.O. Box 66874



# FARM TO SCHOOL IN MICHIGAN: 2012 SURVEY SHOWS INTEREST IN PURCHASING LOCAL FOODS CONTINUES TO GROW

COLLEEN MATTS, MSU CENTER FOR REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS  
SUSAN B. SMALLEY, CONSULTANT  
FEBRUARY 2013

In February 2012, researchers from the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems surveyed Michigan school food service directors regarding their food purchasing and serving practices and, in particular, their perspectives about and use of local foods (defined as from the state of Michigan). This was the third such survey, following similar efforts in 2004 and 2009. A thirty-question electronic survey was emailed to 933 school food service directors from a Michigan Department of Education database. The response rate was 34%, with 317 fully or partially completed surveys.

Survey respondents represented 53 counties and 129 zip codes. The majority represented public school districts (58%) and schools (e.g., charter, private) (32%), while a small percentage of respondents (4%) represented other institutions (e.g., detention facilities, emergency shelters) that provide meals to school-aged children. The mean reported free and reduced price meal eligibility rate was 57%, compared to the statewide rate of 48% as of fall 2011. Most respondents reported at least some use of each of three modes of food preparation, with heat-and-serve most frequently used, followed by semi-prepared, and then scratch cooking. The majority of respondents' food service operations (75%) were self-operated; 24% indicated contract management, and just 2% indicated that they use only outside vendors, similar to a food court. Chartwells (or their parent company, Compass Group) was indicated as the management company by 30 of the 68 respondents to this question.

Nearly 89% of respondents were interested in purchasing local foods for their school food service program in the future. Although the rate of respondents purchasing food from a local farmer or producer nearly tripled from 11% in 2004 to 41% in 2009, only 34% reported doing so in 2012, which may have been impacted by question wording. Taking into account all possible sources listed in the 2012 survey (local farmer/producer, farmer cooperative/collaborative, broadline distributor and specialty distributor), 54% reported purchasing local food through one or more channels.

## SUMMARY OF SURVEYS OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE DIRECTORS

Selected Survey Item	2004	2009	2012
Number of responses	383	270	317
Response rate	58%	28%	34%
School/district free and reduced price meal eligibility*	36%	46%	57%
Interest in purchasing local foods	83%	70%	89%
Purchased food from a local farmer/producer	11%	41%	34%

\*In each survey, respondents were asked to report rates of the schools/districts they represented for the previous school year. Statewide free and reduced-price meal eligibility was 39% for the 2002-2003 school year, 41% for 2008-2009 and 46% for 2010-2011, as derived from state totals reported by the Center for Educational Performance and Information at [www.michigan.gov/cepi](http://www.michigan.gov/cepi).

School food service directors' motivations to purchase local foods have been fairly consistent across the three surveys. Helping Michigan farms and businesses was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> by respondents in 2004 but was first in 2009 and second in 2012, representing the biggest difference in how a particular motivator was rated. Access to fresher and higher quality food remained fairly strong motivators throughout the three surveys. In 2012, the most frequently selected logistical challenge to serving local food was lack of a distribution method to obtain local food (69%), followed by lack of labor/staffing to prepare fresh foods (55%) and lack of facilities to handle fresh produce, uncooked meat, etc. (46%).



## INFLUENCES ON LOCAL FOOD PURCHASING

	2004	2009	2012
<b>Top Factors Motivating Local Food Purchasing</b>			
1	Supporting local economy	Helping Michigan farms/businesses	Supporting local economy
2	Access to fresher food	Supporting local economy	Helping Michigan farms/businesses
3	Higher quality food	Higher quality food	Access to fresher food
<b>Top Barriers to Local Food Purchasing</b>			
1	Procurement regulations	Procurement regulations	Limited seasonal availability
2	Limited seasonal availability	Budget constraints	Food safety concerns
3	Internal purchasing policies	Food safety concerns	Budget constraints

Respondents were also asked about specific local food purchases during the previous (2010-2011) school year. Fruits were most frequently purchased (35%), followed by vegetables and dairy (each 26%), grains (20%), meats (7%) and beans/legumes (4%). The ten most frequently purchased local food items were apples, milk, cucumbers, cherry/grape tomatoes, carrots, broccoli, slicing tomatoes, bread, potatoes and lettuce. When asked about specific forms (fresh, processed or frozen), directors reported greater interest in fresh and whole produce, similar to 2009 responses. However, interest in local meats was greater for ground beef and formed (e.g., patties, nuggets) chicken, beef and turkey than whole muscle meat of any type. Interest in purchasing local beans and legumes was higher for canned beans than any dried beans, with red kidney, chickpea/garbanzo and black beans as the top three beans of interest.

## ITEMS AND INTEREST IN PURCHASING LOCALLY

Category	Fresh and whole	%	Processed	%	Frozen	%
<b>Vegetables</b> (n=145)	Cucumbers	79	Carrots	41	Corn	45
	Cherry tomatoes	73	Lettuce	40	Green Beans	43
	Slicing tomatoes	59	Salad greens	30	Peas	41
	Peppers	57	Broccoli	27	Broccoli	31
	Carrots	57	Potatoes	25	Carrots	26
<b>Fruits</b> (n=137)	Apples	82	Apples	39	Strawberries	30
	Strawberries	80	Cherries	23	Blueberries	27
	Grapes	70	Peaches	18	Raspberries	20
	Watermelon	70	Strawberries	16	Cherries	19
	Peaches	67	Watermelon	13	Peaches	19

Many Michigan school food service directors have explored options for purchasing and serving local foods to their students, as reflected in their responses to 2004, 2009 and 2012 surveys. As they have tried new food sources and processes, their perceptions about motivations, barriers and logistical challenges have shifted. Administering these surveys annually will allow better understanding of the factors that support and inhibit local foods in school meals, how they change over time, and how they interact with changes in the school food environment, such as the new federal nutrition standards enacted in the 2012-2013 school year. Maintaining and increasing responses from school food service directors, however, will be a challenge as they continue to report increasing demands on their time.

For more information, visit [www.foodsystems.msu.edu](http://www.foodsystems.msu.edu) or contact Colleen Matts, Farm to Institution Specialist, at [matts@msu.edu](mailto:matts@msu.edu) or 517-432-0310.

This project was funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

3101 Park  
Center Drive  
Alexandria, VA  
22302-1500

**DATE:** February 21, 2013

**MEMO CODE:** SP 25-2013

**SUBJECT:** Paid Lunch Equity: School Year 2013-2014 Calculations and Tool

**TO:** Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

The interim rule entitled, "National School Lunch Program: School Food Service Account Revenue Amendments Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010" requires school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program to ensure sufficient funds are provided to the nonprofit school food service account for lunches served to students not eligible for free or reduced price meals. There are two ways to meet this requirement: either through the prices charged for "paid" lunches or through other non-Federal sources provided to the nonprofit school food service account. This memorandum provides guidance on the calculations SFAs must make in order to ensure they are in compliance with these requirements for School Year (SY) 2013-14. In addition, the SY 2013-14 Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) tool to assist SFAs as they make these required calculations is attached to this memorandum.

### **SY 2013-2014 Paid Lunch Equity Calculations**

On January 2, 2013, FNS issued memo SP 19-2013 to remind SFAs that for SY 2012-2013, SFAs which, on a weighted average, charged less than **\$2.59** for paid lunches in SY 2011-2012 are required to adjust their weighted average lunch price or add non-Federal funds to the non-profit school food service account. The amount of the per meal increase will be calculated using 2 percent plus 2.93 percent, or **4.93** percent.

SFAs are reminded that they must use their unrounded adjusted average paid lunch price requirement from SY 2012-2013 when calculating the weighted average paid lunch price increase for SY 2013-2014. For example if the unrounded SY 2012-2013 requirement was \$2.08 but the SFA opted to round down to \$2.05, the calculation of the SY 2013-2014 is based on the \$2.08 unrounded SY 2012-2013 requirement.

If an SFA raised its weighted average paid lunch price above the required amount in SY 2012-2013, that excess paid lunch price increase may be subtracted from the total SY 2013-2014 paid lunch price increase requirement. SFAs must keep sufficient records to document and carry forward the average price calculations.

Additionally, if an SFA did not raise its weighted average adjusted paid lunch price sufficiently to meet the required amount in SY 2012-2013, the shortfall must be added to the total SY 2013-2014 paid lunch price adjustment requirement.

### **Use of Non-Federal Sources Calculation**

SFAs that choose to contribute non-Federal sources to the nonprofit school food service account in lieu of raising paid lunch prices must calculate the appropriate amount to contribute. To determine the amount of required revenue in lieu of a paid lunch price increase, the SFA determines the total number of paid reimbursable lunches claimed for the previous school year and multiplies by the difference between the SY 2013-2014 weighted average paid lunch price requirement and the SY 2012-2013 weighted average paid lunch price.

### **Credit for Excess Non-Federal Funds**

If an SFA's SY 2012-2013 estimate of the required contribution exceeded the actual level, that excess contribution may be subtracted from the total SY 2013-2014 contribution requirement. Further, if the SY 2012-2013 estimate was less than required, additional funds from non-Federal sources must be added. The PLE tool for determining the amount of non-Federal source contributions will allow for making these calculations using the same rationale as used for paid lunch prices—credit forward any extra funds contributed and account for any shortfalls when determining the amount of non-Federal funds requirement for the next school year.

### **SY 2013-14 PLE Tool**

The first tab of the SY 2013-14 PLE tool includes detailed instructions on how to use the tool and what information is needed to complete the appropriate calculations. It is recommended that each user print and read the instructions before attempting to complete the calculations.

To assist SFAs making these required PLE calculations, the attached SY 2013-14 PLE tool makes the following calculations:

- Weighted average paid lunch price for SY 2012-13
- Required paid lunch price increase for SY 2013-14
- Required non-Federal source contribution required for SY 2013-14

The PLE tool also takes into account adjustments to paid lunch prices made by the SFA in SY 2012-13 to calculate any credit or shortfall the SFA may have accrued for SY 2013-14. For SFAs that opted to contribute non-Federal funds, the PLE tool also calculates credits and shortfalls for the SY 2013-14 required non-Federal source contribution.

The SY 2013-14 PLE tool includes a new feature that makes calculations for SFAs that wish to split the SY 2013-14 requirement by both raising prices and contributing funds from a non-Federal source. This option may be attractive to SFAs that do not want to raise paid lunch prices

the entire amount that they are required. To use the attached SY 2013-14 PLE tool SFAs need the following information:

ALL SFAs need the following data to calculate the Weighted Average Price for SY 2013-14:

- SY 2010-11 Weighted Average Price
- All paid lunch prices for October 2012
- Number of paid lunches served associated with each paid lunch price in October 2012

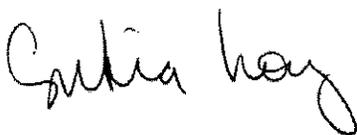
SFAs that have opted to contribute non-Federal sources also need:

- Total number of paid lunches served in SY 2011-12
- The total dollar amount of SY 2011-12 and SY 2012-13 non-Federal contribution

SFAs that wish to split the SY 2013-14 requirement by both raising paid lunch prices and contributing funds from non-Federal sources, will need all of the above information.

Additionally, the PLE tool includes a report that SFAs can use to track the information they will need to make their SY 2014-15 calculations. SFAs can print the report and keep it in their records.

State agencies are reminded to distribute this memo to program operators immediately. SFAs should contact their State agencies for additional information. State agencies may direct any questions concerning this guidance to the appropriate Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office.



Cynthia Long  
Director  
Child Nutrition Division

Attachment



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

3101 Park  
Center Drive  
Alexandria, VA  
22302-1500

DATE: February 25, 2013

MEMO CODE: SP 26-2013

SUBJECT: Extending Flexibility in the Meat/Meat Alternate and Grains  
Maximums for School Year 2013-14

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

On December 20, 2012, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) issued policy memorandum SP 11-2013 REVISED, which gave State and local operators flexibility in meeting the weekly maximums for grains and meat/meat alternates in the National School Lunch Program for compliance purposes in School Year (SY) 2012-2013. The memorandum stated that State agencies should consider any school food authority (SFA) compliant with the weekly ranges for these two components if the FNS-developed or FNS-approved Certification Tool and required supporting documentation indicate the menu is compliant with the daily and weekly *minimums*.

Since issuance of SP 11-2013, school food service operators, State agencies, industry members and other stakeholders have asked FNS to issue clear guidance to assist them with planning and procurement for SY 2013-14. Therefore, and as discussed below, this memorandum extends the flexibility in assessment of the weekly maximums for grains and meats/meat alternates through SY **2013-14 for both breakfast and lunch**.

In addition, we understand the need for longer term guidance on this issue, and are currently considering options for addressing this flexibility beyond next year. We continue to welcome input from a broad range of program stakeholders and interested parties regarding the impact of this flexibility.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCES DURING SCHOOL YEAR 2012-13**

Since FNS memo SP 11-2013 was issued, we have received significant feedback from State agencies and SFAs requesting an extension of this flexibility for future years. Our State agency and SFA partners continue to identify notable operational challenges in meeting the weekly maximums for the grains and meats/meat alternates components. The three primary challenges we continue to hear about are menu planning, product availability, and student acceptance.

##### *Menu Planning*

Since grains may be served in a variety of ways in school meals, SFA menu planners have had difficulty when considering different portion sizes for grains both within single meals and across the various meals offered on a single serving line each day. Schools with multiple serving lines during meal service are reporting similar challenges. FNS encourages creativity and discretion at the local level to offer a variety of foods to students. Therefore, continuing flexibility in assessing compliance with the weekly maximums for grains and meats/meat alternates offers SFA menu planners additional assistance in planning menus and serving lines to accommodate schools with multiple meal options, as well as those serving multiple age/grade groups.

#### *Product Availability*

SFAs have continued to report that some popular grain and meat/meat alternate products are not widely available from suppliers in a useful range of serving sizes needed to stay within the weekly maximum requirements. We know that product reformulation is continuing and will be needed to allow SFAs to meet all the requirements associated with the new meal patterns. However, we also recognize that modification of some grain and meat/meat alternate products has been more challenging. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues its own efforts to obtain some USDA Foods in appropriate serving sizes, notably poultry.

#### *Student Acceptability*

Finally, FNS recognizes that school meals must be selected and ultimately consumed by students in order to achieve the goal of providing adequate nutrition to our nation's schoolchildren. SFAs have reported that the additional flexibility has allowed them to continue to offer to their students some favorite food items, in moderate portion sizes, during the week. For instance, schools reported increased meal acceptance in grades K-5 when they were able to offer sandwiches with 2 ounces of bread every day to students. The ability of SFAs to make more gradual changes to existing menus has facilitated the transition to full implementation of the new meal pattern.

### **IMPACT ON MEAL PATTERN COMPLIANCE**

The weekly maximums included in the final rule for grains and meats/meat alternates were intended to help menu planners meet the weekly dietary specifications, including calories. However, as noted above, feedback from schools during this initial implementation period indicates that these component maximums have proven to be more difficult for menu planners than anticipated. The flexibility offered in SY 2012-13 through our December policy memorandum has allowed schools to develop nutritious and appealing menus without compromising the meal pattern or deviating from the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. In fact, SFAs have been reporting that they have been able to successfully modify their menus and are being certified by their State agencies. Using the additional flexibility on the weekly ranges, SFAs have been able to come into compliance with the new meal pattern, including calories, while continuing to maintain student acceptability.

We also have more information now regarding the content of school meals offered in recent years, due to the recent release of the School Nutrition Dietary Assessment study (SNDA IV). In SY 2009-10, before the weekly maximums for grains and meats/meat alternates were in place, the average lunch offered in high schools had 843 calories. This indicates that, with a calorie

Regional Directors  
State Directors  
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limit of 850 calories in the new meal pattern (on average over the course of the week), most high schools are able to offer the same amount of calories as have historically been offered, without component maximums.

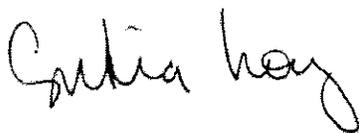
#### **NEXT STEPS**

To further facilitate the transition to more nutritious and appealing meals, FNS is extending the flexibility for both breakfast and lunch through SY 2013-14. State agencies should therefore consider as compliant for certification and administrative reviews those SFAs meeting only the weekly *minimums* for the grains and meat/meat alternates components. SFAs must also continue to meet all of the remaining food components and dietary specifications, including calories. The meal patterns remain unchanged and SFA menu planners are encouraged to consider the weekly maximums for grains and meats/meat alternates as a goal that can assist in offering balanced meals that meet the calorie, sodium, and saturated fat requirements.

As implementation of the new meal pattern continues, State agencies are encouraged to work with SFAs to assist them in meeting the new requirements. We anticipate that the flexibility in compliance assessment reflected in this memorandum will continue to facilitate implementation of the new meal pattern in SY 2013-14. As previously described, feedback from SFAs and State agencies continues to be welcomed.

State agencies are reminded to distribute this memorandum to program operators immediately. SFAs should contact their State agencies for additional information. State agencies may direct any questions concerning this guidance to the appropriate Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Long  
Director  
Child Nutrition Division