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To: All Sponsors Participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, M.S. *Arleen Ramos-Szatmary*
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Date: April 11, 2025

Subject: Guidance on the Final Rule – Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

On April 25, 2024, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published the final rule titled, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These changes, which are effective for the 2025-2026 School Year unless noted otherwise, are based on a comprehensive review of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, stakeholder input on the meal patterns, and lessons learned from prior rulemakings. SFAs should note the following key changes to the School Meals Programs in the areas of Nutrient Requirements, Menu Flexibilities, and Program Operations:

Nutrient Requirements - Added Sugars:

Beginning in the 2025-2026 School Year, product-based limits will be placed on breakfast cereals, yogurt and flavored milk for all meal patterns (including preschool) as follows:

- **Breakfast Cereals** must not contain more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce
- **Yogurt** must not contain more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces
- **Flavored Milk** must not contain more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces. *Please note: Flavored Milk is not creditable under the Preschool Meal Pattern.*

Beginning in the 2027-2028 School Year, added sugars must be less than 10% of calories per week in the school lunch and breakfast programs. These weekly limits will be in addition to product-based limits.

The Institute of Child Nutrition provides a series of [Sugar Reduction for Schools Fact Sheets](#) that will be helpful for Child Nutrition Professionals. USDA's Team Nutrition also offers a [Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast](#) resource guide, as well as [Road to Successful Menu Planning for School Meals](#) training videos on identifying and reducing added sugars that can serve as additional resources.

Nutrient Requirements - Sodium Limits:

SFAs will maintain current sodium limits through SY2026-2027. Beginning July 1, 2027, schools must implement a 15% reduction for lunch and a 10% reduction for breakfast from current sodium limits as follows:

National School Lunch Program		School Breakfast Program	
Age/Grade Group	Sodium Limit by SY2027-2028	Age/Grade Group	Sodium Limit by SY2027-2028
Grades K-5	≤ 935 mg	Grades K-5	≤ 485 mg
Grades 6-8	≤ 1,035 mg	Grades 6-8	≤ 535 mg
Grades 9-12	≤ 1,080 mg	Grades 9-12	≤ 570 mg