

# Important Changes to the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs



## USDA FINAL RULE

### The Rules for Reimbursable School Meals Are Changing

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, championed by the First Lady and signed by President Obama, authorizes funding and sets policy for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) core child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

Through this Act, **the USDA is making the first major changes in school meals in 15 years to help ensure a healthier generation of children.** These changes are intended to significantly benefit the long-term well-being and success of today's students and, in turn, will support your District's core educational mission. **However, complying with the new standards will be a complex and potentially costly undertaking for many school districts.**

### ARAMARK Education is Helping Your District Prepare.

We will help your District implement the new **USDA Final Rule** standards that — beginning in the school year (SY) 2012 -2013 — are bringing changes to school meals with cost, nutritional and menu planning implications for all schools participating in the USDA Breakfast and Lunch Programs.

Due to the new standards, we anticipate to see some variances in meal cost and participation. However, with thoughtful menu reformulations, we will help minimize the impact to your school food service program.

**ARAMARK Education dietitians and culinary professionals have been working to develop menu strategies and systems that will help your District meet the new standards efficiently and cost-effectively, while maintaining student participation in, and satisfaction with, their school meal programs.**

- Our menus feature low and non-fat dairy options; lean protein choices; access to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables; assorted whole grain products; and 100 percent fruit juice and water.
- We continue to reduce added fats, sugar and salt; eliminate added trans fats; and promote and expand the availability of breakfast.
- Our recipes are designed to meet the nutritional standards, but also to focus on student acceptability, so students will participate in a healthy school food service program.



### USDA Final Rule: Food Service Program Implications

#### \$ Program Costs:

Food and operational costs will potentially increase as menus are engineered to meet the minimum requirements.

#### 🍏 Product Availability

Careful selection of vendors and products will be important to ensure compliance and meet student taste preferences.

#### 👍 Student Acceptability

New nutritional requirements may pose challenges in delivering menus that meet student taste preferences; as a result, districts may see a decrease in student food service program participation and in federal program reimbursements.

#### 🍴 Menu Development:

New USDA standards will require a careful and holistic approach—by incorporating dietitians, chefs, purchasing agents, food vendors, and consumer feedback—for successful menu planning.



## Meal Changes and Challenges

The key provisions of the USDA Final Rule went into effect on July 1, 2012. Certain other provisions will be phased in during SY 2013–2014 and SY 2014–2015. Some of the changes, as described below, may create significant cost, staffing, and purchasing challenges for many districts. ARAMARK Education will help make this transition easier for your District.

### Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables will be classified as two separate groups, and there will be daily and weekly minimums for each of these two groups. Districts will be mandated to track selections each week, to ensure students are getting their correct daily intakes. Students must take at least 1/2 cup of either fruit or vegetable with each reimbursable meal.

**Fruits:** Must offer at least 1/2 cup daily for K-8 lunch and 1 cup daily for grades 9-12. Students may take 1/2 cup fruit to meet reimbursable meal requirement..

**Vegetables:** Vegetable selection requirements and portion sizes are increasing. There is now a serving requirement for vegetable subgroups, such as dark green, red/orange, legumes, starchy, and other.

### Calories by School Segment

With childhood obesity at an all-time high in our country, the new USDA Final Rule has changed the calorie requirements for all grade levels. Calorie standards now include a maximum level that cannot be exceeded when averaged over a week. Compliance to these new calorie ranges will be monitored in all districts by State auditors beginning in SY 2012-2013.

### Sodium by School Segment

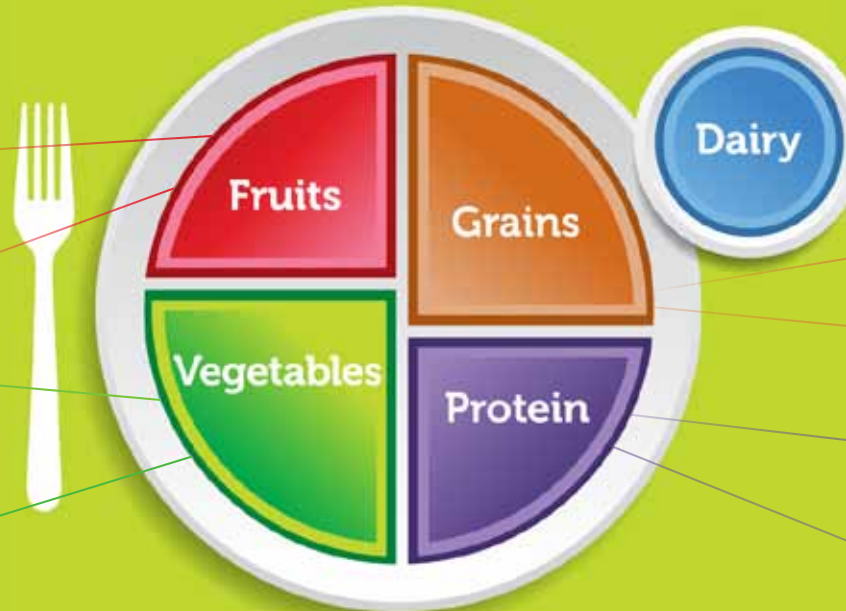
Schools are required to drastically cut sodium levels in school meals, with levels prescribed by age/grade group. This standard poses a significant challenge not only to schools, but to manufacturers and vendors as well. By SY 2014–2015, current sodium levels must be reduced by 11%, followed by another reduction of 24% by SY 2017-2018. Gradually, over the next ten years, districts will be required to meet the very aggressive goal of reducing sodium by 54%.

For more detailed information, the complete Final Rule standards can be found at [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov).

### Fats

Saturated fat is limited to less than 10% of total calories, with no trans fats permitted.

Choose**MyPlate.gov**



**Milk:** All plain milk must be fat-free or 1% and flavored milk must be fat-free, beginning in SY 2012–2013.

**Grains:** Half of grains served at lunch in SY 2012-2013 must meet the new USDA definition of whole grain-rich. By SY 2014-2015, all grains served at breakfast and lunch will have to be whole grain-rich.

**Meat / Meat Alternatives:** There will be limits on the number of servings permitted over the course of the week, depending on student grade level.

# Key Provisions of the USDA Final Rule Became Effective on July 1, 2012

## Menu Plans

A single food-based menu planning approach will be required for your lunch program. Districts that are currently running a nutrient-based lunch menu will need to convert to a food-based menu. Because of potential cost implications, this conversion in your breakfast programs is not required until SY 2013–2014, unless required by your State.



## Age/Grade Classifications

To provide age-appropriate meals, age and grade group classifications are now defined by three segments of Grades: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The Final Rule allows some flexibility for

schools with different grade configurations. This change goes into effect in SY 2012-2013 for lunch and SY 2013-2014 for breakfast.

## Meal Identification

Schools are now required to identify and clearly communicate the components of a reimbursable meal at or near the beginning of service lines. The purpose is to ensure students understand what items they may select for a reimbursable meal and to discourage unintentional purchases of à la carte foods or less healthy items.



## Summary Highlights: USDA Final Rule Changes to the Required Meal Components

### Lunch

- Meals offered to students must have 5 components: Grain, Meat/Meat Alternate, Fruit, Vegetable, and Fluid Milk. Students MUST take at least 1/2 cup of fruit OR vegetable for a reimbursable meal.
- Fruits and vegetables are now considered two separate groups, with increased serving sizes/day and number of servings/week of each required.
- Vegetables are now divided into sub-groups, with minimum daily and weekly requirements for each sub-group.
- One-half of grains must be whole grain; 2 years post-implementation, all grain products will have to contain at least 51% whole grain.

### Breakfast

- The only change required for breakfast in SY 2012-2013 is limiting milk offerings to flavored skim milk and 1% or skim unflavored milk. Some States or districts with State approval may choose to implement SY 2013-2014 and/or SY 2014-2015 breakfast requirements in SY 2012-2013.
- Beginning SY 2013-2014, there will be daily and weekly ranges for bread/grains and half of the grains served must meet the USDA definition of whole grain-rich.
- Beginning in SY 2013-2014, meals offered to students must have 4 items from 3 components: Bread/Grains, Fruit and Milk. Meat/Meat Alternates may be offered in place of some of the Bread/Grains.
- Beginning in SY 2013-2014, schools may substitute Meat/Meat Alternates after the minimum daily grain requirement is met.
- In SY 2014-2015, schools must offer 1 cup fruit at breakfast and students must select at least 1/2 cup serving for a reimbursable meal. All grains offered must be whole grain-rich.



## ARAMARK Education Expertise Is Helping Your District Food Service Program Ensure Healthy Students and Healthy Returns



Our focus at ARAMARK Education is to help you nurture your students' well-being and growth with nutritious menus; innovative, student-inspired dining environments; and wellness education programs that support student achievement. With self-sustaining food programs that increase meal participation, our K-12 experts work closely with you to cultivate healthy students as well as healthy financial returns.

Since key elements of the Final Rule standards went into effect July 1, 2012 (with other provisions to be required in upcoming years), now is an important time to closely consider the upcoming changes. **We will continue to work with you to properly and effectively address these new requirements with the greatest benefit for your District and students.**

For the past two years, we've been testing solutions to the upcoming Final Rule mandates, and developing meal plans and other programs that will help districts comply with the rules efficiently and cost-effectively. Our solutions are not "cookie-cutter programs." **As your food service partner, we are committed to understanding your District's individual needs** and to achieving financial efficiencies for your District, while helping ensure that your students flourish.



Contact your ARAMARK Food Service Director to learn how we are helping your District successfully manage through the cost and menu planning implications of the USDA Final Rule.

[www.myhealthyforlife.com](http://www.myhealthyforlife.com)



### FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Breakfast and Lunch Programs / Nutrition and Wellness / After School and Summer Feeding / Catering  
[aramarkschools.com](http://aramarkschools.com) / 800.926.9700

© ARAMARK All rights reserved.

