Welcome to the National School Lunch Program meal pattern overview presented by Oregon Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs.

This presentation is a overview of the National School Lunch Program.

We will start with a brief background of federal regulations for the National School Lunch Program, general meal program guidelines, and then move to the meal pattern.

We will also discuss dietary specifications, meal components and Offer Versus Serve requirements.

Additional guidance on the meal pattern is available on the resources page, which is located at the end of this training.
The revision of the school meal pattern implemented in July 2012 draws from two key pieces of legislation.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires that school meals be consistent with the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Additionally, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires that USDA propose and issue a rule to update the school meal patterns and nutrition standards as recommended by the Institute of Medicine.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act marked a great win for the millions of school children that participate in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs each school day. With this Act, USDA is working to implement historic reforms that will mark the most comprehensive changes to food for more than a generation.

The prevalence of childhood obesity is at an all-time high. Additionally, hunger and food insecurity continue to affect millions of our nation's children.

Since school meals are a major source of nutrition for many of our nation's children, particularly those in low-income families that are at highest risk for inadequate nutrient intake, it is crucial that we provide meals that can address both hunger and obesity.
Further, the school meals standards align with the latest nutrition science. We are working to do what's right for children's health in a way that's achievable across the nation.

Food-based menu planning is required for both breakfast and lunch. The food-based menu planning approach focuses on food components, not nutrients. There are five required food components at lunch; fruits, vegetables, meat/meat alternate, grains and milk.

Sponsors must plan lunch menus using the age/grade groups K-5, 6-8, K-8 and 9-12. Specific calorie levels are required for a meal to be considered a healthy school meal depending on the age/grade groups.

K-5 and 6-8 are the only age/grade groups that overlap. No other customization of the established age/grade group is allowed.

The final rule includes some additional changes that are intended to enhance the overall school nutrition environment and reflect the Dietary Guidelines.

Sponsors are required to have signage to identify the food components that are part of the unitized school lunch and what a
reimbursable meal is, near or at the beginning of all meal serving lines. This seeks to ensure that students understand the components of a reimbursable meal and do not make unintentional purchases of a la carte foods.

These standards are to be met on average over a five day week. This means that the levels of any of these in any ONE MEAL COULD EXCEED THE STANDARD AS LONG AS THE AVERAGE NUMBER FOR THE WEEK MEETS THE STANDARD.

The intent is not to reduce the amount of food but to avoid excessive calories. The meal pattern has an emphasis on serving fruits, vegetables and whole grains and should result in nutrient-dense meals. Nutrient dense foods have little added sugar, fat, or sodium.

A gradual reduction in the sodium content in meals has been implemented, as recommended by the Institute of Medicine. USDA recognizes that it is difficult to achieve substantial reductions in sodium immediately.

Therefore, sponsors are required to meet intermediate sodium specifications.

Target 1 will be required 2014 thru 2017 for both breakfast and lunch.
The next dietary specification is saturated fat.

The standard for saturated fat, is less than 10% of calories.

Offering fat-free and low fat milk will help sponsors reduce the saturated fat content of their meals.

The fourth and final dietary specification is trans fat.

Food products and ingredients used must contain zero grams of trans fat per serving.

Sponsors will have to make sure that the nutrition label or manufacturer specifications for food products, or ingredients used to prepare meals, indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving.

It will be important for menu planners to develop food procurement specifications and recipes to meet the trans fat specification.

However, naturally occurring trans fat found in products such as beef, lamb and dairy is excluded from the requirement.

Following the meal pattern will guide sponsors to meet the dietary specifications. Sponsors are not required to perform Nutrition Analysis.
Now let’s look at the Meal Components.

A single priced, nutritious meal is the goal of a federal reimbursable meal. In order to enhance a student’s ability to choose wisely, the lunch meal pattern guidance requires that all serving lines have an easy method of identifying reimbursable meal components in front or near the front of the serving line that constitute the unit priced reimbursable meal(s).

The lunch program has 5 components in the meal pattern.

- Fruit
- Vegetable
- Grains
- Meat/Meat Alternate
- Milk

Fruit is a stand alone component in the lunch program. Sponsors must offer at least ½ cup of fruit per day at lunch for grades K-5 and 6-8, and at least 1 cup per day for grades 9-12.

A daily serving of fruit must be offered at lunch.

Fruit may be offered in several different forms. These forms include: fresh, frozen, canned in juice or light syrup, and dried. However, no more than half of fruit offerings may be in the form of juice, and only 100% juice can be served. For crediting purposes, dried fruit is credited as twice the volume as served.
Therefore, \( \frac{1}{4} \) of a cup of dried fruit is creditable as \( \frac{1}{2} \) of a cup of fruit. Example: One box of USDA Foods Raisins measure \( \frac{1}{4} \) cup and would credit as \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup.

Menu planners must continue to use the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs to determine how to credit whole fruit.

The next food component is vegetables.

The school lunch program provides participants with variety of vegetables, and requires weekly minimums of all vegetable subgroups.

For lunch, a daily serving of vegetables is required. There are also weekly minimums for the vegetable subgroups- this means that over the course of the week, the required amount of each subgroup must be met, but that on any given day there are no specific subgroup requirements.

The subgroups required each week consist of: dark green, red/orange, legumes, starchy, and other.

The “other” vegetable subgroup is a distinct grouping of food items, as classified by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.

Additionally, there is a catch-all category added for additional vegetables that can come from any subgroup to meet the weekly total.
Only serving the weekly minimum amounts of each vegetable subgroups will not meet the overall weekly meal pattern requirement for amount of vegetables that are required to be served. This is why additional vegetables are able to be served, and there is no maximum limit on the amount of vegetables that may be served from any subgroup.

Sponsors may select from a variety of vegetable preparation methods to meet these requirements. Fresh, frozen and canned products are all allowable.

Sponsors have access to many nutritious vegetable choices through USDA Foods. For instance, sponsors can select reduced sodium canned vegetables with no more than 140 mg of sodium per half-cup serving, which is in line with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.

1/8 of a cup of vegetables is the minimum creditable amount. Uncooked, leafy greens will credit as half of volume as served. Therefore, one cup of romaine lettuce is creditable as one half of a cup of vegetables.

Additionally, local menu planners can decide how to incorporate legumes into the meal. These foods may count toward either the requirement for vegetables or the meat/meat alternate component. As an example, if you are menuing a black bean and cheese burrito, you can either credit the black beans
While children generally eat enough total grains, most of the grains they consume are refined grains rather than whole grain-rich foods. Whole grain-rich foods are a good source of nutrients such as iron, magnesium, selenium, B vitamins, and dietary fiber.

Sponsors must offer daily and weekly servings of grains at lunch.

All grains offered at lunch must be whole-grain rich.

The grain quantities required at lunch for five day programs are 1 ounce equivalent daily for grades K-5 and 6-8 with a minimum of 8 ounce equivalents met weekly and 2 ounce equivalent daily for grades 9-12 with a minimum of 10 ounce equivalents weekly. Sponsors operating 4 day programs will have less weekly requirements, and sponsors offering a 7 day program will have greater weekly requirements. Please see the resource page for more information.

At lunch, up to two (2.0) ounce equivalent grains per week may be in the form of a grain-based dessert.

toward the meat/meat alternate component or the legume vegetable subgroup component, not both.
Now we will discuss meat/meat alternate meal component.

Students in grades 9-12 must be offered at least 2 ounce equivalents daily, and younger students must be offered at least one ounce equivalent daily. Meal planners have flexibility to determine how to reach the required weekly ranges. The meat/meat alternate has a weekly minimum-amount. Please note one oz. meat alternative is not an allowable minimum portion size for 9-12; 2 oz. is the minimum daily portion size.

The meat/meat alternate quantities required at lunch for a five day week are minimum of 8 ounce equivalents weekly and 1 oz equivalent daily for grades K-5, minimum of 9 ounce equivalents weekly and 1 oz equivalent daily for grades 6-8, and minimum of 10 ounce equivalents weekly and 2 oz equivalent daily for grades 9-12. If you serve your daily minimum for K-8 you may not meet your weekly requirement.

Sponsors are encouraged to offer a variety of protein foods such as lean...
or extra lean meats, seafood, and poultry; legumes; fat-free and low fat milk products such as cheese and yogurt; and unsalted nuts and seeds, to meet the meat/meat alternate requirement.

Additionally, both tofu and soy yogurt are creditable as meat alternates. This allows sponsors to diversify the sources of protein available to students and better meet the dietary needs of vegetarians and culturally diverse groups.

The last meal component is the fluid milk.

Sponsors must offer a variety of milk during lunch and breakfast. These include: fat-free (unflavored or flavored), 1% low fat (unflavored only), and fat-free or 1% low fat (lactose reduced or lactose-free). Note that if flavored lactose reduced or lactose-free milk is offered, it also must be fat-free. Sponsors are not allowed to offer 2% reduced fat or whole milk.

Sponsors must offer at least two choices within the types of milk listed.

Lastly, the milk fat and flavor restrictions established also apply to meals for children in the 3-4 year-old age group.
There are a number of different meal service systems used by sponsors to offer their students reimbursable meals. For example, a sponsor may have cafeteria-style service, kiosks, or meals in the classroom.

Pre-plated meals offer all food components or food items in the quantities required for each grade group in an entirely or partially pre-served manner. Pre-plated meals must include at least the daily minimum quantities required under the meal pattern. This system is often used by schools and RCCIs that have logistical limitations, such as facility or space restrictions or situations where children are unable to select the foods offered.

Family style meal service allows students to serve themselves from common dishes of food with assistance from supervising adults. While family style meal service allows students to make choices in selecting foods, the supervising adult should initially offer the full planned serving of each food component/food item to each child. Offered meals must meet all of the daily and weekly food component/food item requirements, and the weekly dietary specifications.

Sponsors are encouraged to use food bars and salad bars as a way to offer a wider variety of vegetables and fruits and to lower plate waste. Food and salad bars are permitted with OVS because they offer a lot of variety, which may facilitate students selecting foods that they will consume.

Pre-packaged meals are allowed at all
levels. Sponsors are encouraged to have some food components/food items with choices and/or the option to decline, such as fruit or milk. If these meals are offered as part of breakfast in the classroom, field trips, or for students leaving the campus for work study, OVS is not required, even at the senior high level.

Offer Versus Serve is a menu planning option that sponsors may use to reduce food waste by allowing students to select or decline a food component. It is optional for grades K-8 and is required for grades 9-12. Residential Child Care Centers are not required to participate in Offer Versus Serve.

A reimbursable lunch meal consists of students selecting at least 3 out of the 5 meal components offered. The components that are selected must be in the full portion size.

1 of the 3 components selected by the student must be a fruit, vegetable, or a combination of fruits and vegetables. Students are not able to decline both the fruit and vegetable components. The fruit or vegetable component must be offered to students in the full serving size, but the student may select to take less than the full portion size and at a minimum must select a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving. Students are allowed to take smaller portions of the Fruit and Vegetable components only. If a
student selects less than the full portion size of Meat/Meat Alternate, Grains, or Milk; it does not count as one of the minimum 3 required components at lunch.

Under Offer Versus Serve students may decline as many as two food components, except for the fruit or vegetable component.

Please refer to ODE CNP resources available for further information on National School Lunch Program, meal pattern resources and the school nutrition training webpages.

Please visit our SNP training webpage for additional training on meal pattern requirements for other meal programs and the individual meal components.

If you have any questions please contact your assigned specialist.
Thank you for participating in the Lunch overview training. We greatly appreciate all of the work that you do to fuel Oregon’s future.