

# 2025 ISBE School Nutrition Training

USDA Risk Assessment Tool

Jean Kinder - Quincy SD 172

Carol Montague - ISBE



**CHILD NUTRITION  
PROGRAMS**



# Dietary Specifications Apply To

- NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12



# Dietary Specifications Do Not Apply To

- Preschool meal patterns
- Afterschool Snack Programs

# Dietary Specifications

The USDA's nutrition standards for school meals for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

- Calorie ranges
  - Fat & Saturated fat
  - Sodium
- 
- How to use the USDA Risk Assessment Tool

Terms to Know

# Dietary Specifications = Weekly Averages

- Individual meal could exceed standards if average over week complies
- Does not look at one day but the average over the course of a week.

# Dietary Specifications - Calories

- The dietary specifications require weekly age-appropriate minimum and maximum calorie levels for lunches and breakfasts offered to each grade group.
- Make sure you are serving appropriate portion sizes for grade groups as there is no overlap in calorie and sodium requirements between elementary and high school students.

# New dietary specification for added sugars for school year 2026-27

- Effective July 1, 2027, the final rule requires a weekly dietary limit for added sugars of less than 10 percent of calories. The weekly limits will be in addition to the new product-based limits for added sugars that are required for breakfast cereals, yogurt, and flavored milk, effective July 1, 2025.

# Final Rule Changes to Dietary Specifications for School Year 2027-2028

- Beginning July 1, 2027
- New weekly limit for added sugars
  - <10 percent of calories

# The Meal Planning Tight Rope



# Dietary Specifications Assessment Tool

- <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/dietary-specs-asmt-tool.pdf>

## Dietary Specifications Assessment Tool

Assess your breakfast and lunch food service practices to determine the risk for violations related to calories, saturated fat, sodium, and trans fat. Think of a response in terms of always, sometimes and never. If practices vary by school, consider standardizing practices across all schools in the SFA.

1.	Do bid specifications for menu items and condiments require vendors to provide information on saturated fat, sodium and trans fat?
2.	Only low-fat (1 percent milk fat or less, unflavored) or fat-free (unflavored or flavored) milk is used for student consumption and in menu recipes.
3.	Low-fat, fat-free milk products are used. This includes yogurt and cottage cheese.
4.	Cheese (all varieties including reduced fat) is controlled by placing items in portion cups, portion controlled packaging or the use of appropriate serving size utensils to limit portion size allowed per meal. This includes cheese offered on salad bars.
5.	Are non-creditable cheese products offered as part of a reimbursable meal? (Non-creditable cheese includes: cheese sauce without a CN label, cheese product, imitation cheese and powdered cheese).
6.	Reduced-fat, low fat, fat-free mayonnaise, sour cream, and/or salad dressings are offered instead of full-fat varieties.
7.	Broths and/or soups with low or reduced sodium are used, rather than regular broths and soups.
8.	Fresh, frozen, and/or low sodium or no sodium canned vegetables are offered, rather than reduced sodium or regular canned vegetables.
9.	How often are pickles, olives, packaged crackers and/or croutons offered on the service line and/or salad bar?
10.	How often are meats such as hot dogs, luncheon meats (e.g. ham, turkey) and/or sausage offered on the service line and/or salad bar? (All varieties - including reduced and/or low sodium).
11.	Canned fruits are packed in water, fruit juice, or light syrup.
12.	Grain-based desserts such as doughnuts, pastries, cakes, and cookies are limited to 2 oz. eq. per week or less.
13.	Whole grain-rich foods offered meet the USDA criteria for "whole grain-rich."

# Dietary Specifications Assessment Tool

**Question1 : Do bid specifications for menu items and condiments require vendors to provide information on saturated fat, sodium and trans fat?**

**Think of your response in terms of**

1- Always

2 Most of the time (items)

3 Sometimes (items)

4 Never

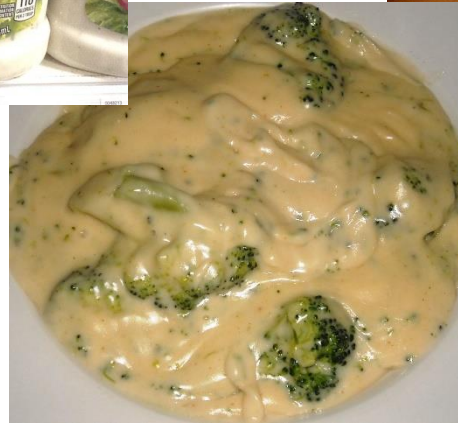
- If practices vary by school consider standardizing.

# It all starts with Purchasing

- **Bid Specifications**
- Purchase items that are specifically designed to help you meet the guidelines
  - Less Sugar
  - Lower Sodium
  - Lower Fat
  - Work Smarter Not Harder



# What's the most beloved 'food group' in school cafeterias—according to students?



# Dietary Specifications Assessment Tool

**22. Portion sizes for condiments (e.g. hot sauce, ketchup, mustard, salad dressing) are controlled by placing items in portion cups, portion controlled packaging or the use of appropriate serving size utensils to limit portion size allowed per meal.**

**Think of your response in terms of**

1- Always

2 Most of the time (items)

3 Sometimes (items)

4 Never

- If practices vary by school, consider standardizing.

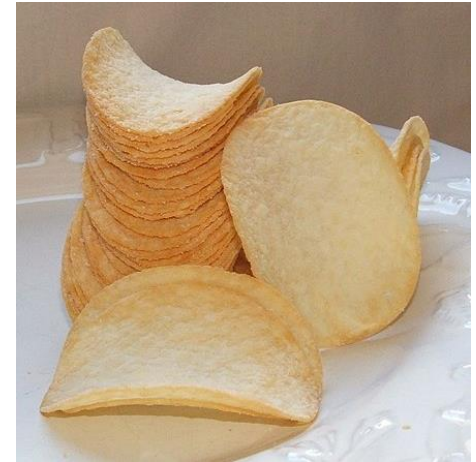
# What do we do about it?

- Portion cups
- Pre-portioned packets
- Only using credible items.  
I.e. No “cheese” sauce
- Buy lower NA, lower sugar, more school meal friendly items or make them yourselves.  
example yogurt based ranch dressing



# Other Food Groups Beloved by All

- Very Tasty Non-credible Extras
  - Potato Chips
  - Pudding
  - Jello
  - Ice Cream
  - “Fruit” Snacks
  - Extras/ Cookies/Donuts



# Dietary Specifications Assessment Tool

**21. How often are extra, non-reimbursable food items (e.g. potato chips, ice cream, pudding and/ or gelatin) offered on the menu?**

**Think of your response in terms of**

1- Always

2 Most of the time (items)

3 Sometimes (items)

4 Never

If practices vary by school consider standardizing.

# Dietary Specification Assessment Tool

**21. How often are extra, non-reimbursable food items (e.g. potato chips, ice cream, pudding and/ or gelatin) offered on the menu?**

Swaps: Instead of Potato Chips – Use a WG Dorito

- Instead of Ice Cream- Use a Frozen Fruit bar
- Instead of Pudding- Consider a "Dessert Hummus with Graham Crackers
- Instead of Jello

# Think Smarter Not Harder

- Fruit
  - Fresh
  - Frozen
  - Canned Packed in Juice or light syrup
- Vegetables
  - Frozen
  - Lower Na Canned
- Meats
  - Limit meats that are higher in Sodium such as deli meats, bacon, etc

# Think Smarter Not Harder

- Cycle Menus
  - If you are not doing a cycle menu you are creating unlimited amounts of work for yourself
- Portion Sizes for Grade Groups
  - Make sure you are serving smaller portion sizes to younger grades
  - Entrees- different portion sizes for different grade groups

## Find the Right Products-

- Talk to your salesperson or distributor
- Attend Food Shows/
- Look at other school districts for ideas.

# USDA Rule Overview

- Added Sugar Guidelines (Effective July 1, 2025)
  - Cereal: < 6 g added sugar/ oz
  - Yogurt: < 2 g added sugar/ oz
  - Flavored Milk: < 10 g added sugar per 8 oz
- 2027 Target
  - Weekly average of added sugars <10% of calories
  - Sodium reduced 10% at breakfast, 15% at lunch

# Rethinking "Traditional Breakfast"

- Traditional American Breakfast Choices
  - High in Fat
  - High in Sodium
  - High in Sugar



# Creative Breakfast Ideas

- Creative Breakfast Choices
  - Add Eggs or Egg whites for a lower fat option
  - Add a low-fat cheese stick as a M/MA
  - Chicken and Waffles (but use grilled chicken bites)
  - Lower Sugar Yogurt or Plain yogurt with Fruit puree
    - Fruit Flavored Yogurt does not count as Fruit
  - Lunch for Breakfast (Pizza Bites)
  - Amazing Chickpea Butter/ Bento Box
  - Chickpea Butter Dip with Graham crackers (snickerdoodle)
  - Savory Grain and Protein bowl (brown rice, egg, and veg)

Thank you