

OSPI School Meal Programs Reference Sheet

School Meal Programs Meal Pattern Flexibilities

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* final rule on April 24, 2024 which finalizes updates to the meal pattern requirements. Program operators can begin implementing menu planning flexibility in school year 2024–25.

Meal Pattern Final Rule — Available Menu Planning Flexibilities

Combined Meats/Meat Alternate (MMA) & Grain meal component at Breakfast:

- Schools may offer grains, MMAs, or a combination of both, to meet the minimum daily and weekly ounce equivalent requirements at breakfast.

Substituting Vegetables for Fruit at Breakfast:

- Schools can offer any vegetable in place of fruits at breakfast in school year 2024–25.
- Beginning in 2025–26, schools that choose to offer vegetables in place of fruit at breakfast may offer any vegetable subgroup one day per week. If vegetables are offered at breakfast two days or more per week, at least two different subgroups must be offered.

Beans, Peas & Lentils (formerly Legumes) at Lunch:

- Schools may serve beans, peas, and lentils as a MMA at lunch and also count them toward the weekly beans, peas, and lentils (formerly Legumes) vegetable subgroup requirement.

Nuts & Seeds:

- Allows nuts and seeds to credit for the full MMA component.

Substituting Vegetables for Grains in Tribal Communities:

- Allows schools that are tribally operated, operated by the Bureau of Indian Education, and that serve primarily American Indian or Alaska Native children to serve vegetables to meet the grains requirement.

Traditional Indigenous Foods:

- Explicitly includes in regulation that traditional indigenous foods may be served in reimbursable school meals.



Reference

- [SP 19-2024, CACFP 07-2024, SFSP 12-2024](#) Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: *Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
- [USDA FNS Implementation Timeline for Updating the School Meal Standards](#)
- [OSPI SY 2024-25 Breakfast and Lunch Meal Pattern Charts](#)

Acronyms

- CNS – Child Nutrition Services
- FNS – Food and Nutrition Services
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

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