

# *OSPI School Meal Programs*

## *Reference Sheet*

### **Meal Patterns – Breakfast and Lunch**

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must offer nutritious, well-balanced, and age-appropriate meals to all children they serve to improve their diets and safeguard their health.

#### **Requirements**

- LEAs must follow a food-based menu planning approach.
- LEAs must offer the food components and quantities required in the lunch and breakfast meal pattern based on age/grade group.
- Age/grade groups are:
  - K-5 (kindergarten through 5th grade)
  - 6-8 (6th through 8th grade)
  - 9-12 (9th through 12th grade)
- Weekly requirements are based on a typical 5-day school week.
  - LEAs that consistently operate on longer or shorter weeks must adjust weekly requirements.
    - [3 Day Week Meal Pattern](#)
    - [4 Day Week Meal Pattern](#)
    - [7 Day Week Meal Pattern](#)
- Breakfast and lunch meals must meet dietary specification for Calories, Saturated Fat, Sodium and Added Sugar limits in the meal patterns.
- LEAs must produce enough food to provide all students with a complete reimbursable meal.

#### **Meal Pattern Components**

- [Meal Pattern Chart Lunch and Breakfast](#)

#### **Meat/Meat Alternate (MMA)**

- The MMA component includes fresh and frozen meats; processed meats and meat alternates such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, nuts, seeds, beans, peas, lentils and tofu and are measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq).
- The quantity of meat/meat alternates must be the edible portion as served.
- Cooked beans, peas, or lentils may be counted as either the MMA or vegetable component but not as both in the same meal.
- The MMA component includes both minimum daily portion size requirements and minimum total weekly requirements for each age/grade group.



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## Grains

- Grains must be either whole grain-rich, defined as  $\geq 50\%$  whole grain with the remaining grains in the product being enriched, or enriched.
- The Grains component includes cereal grains and products made from their flours and are measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq).
- At least 80% of the weekly grains offered at breakfast, lunch and snack must be WGR based on the total ounce equivalents (oz eq) of offered grains.
- The grains component includes both minimum daily portion size requirements and minimum total weekly requirements for each age/grade group.

## Fruit

- All fruits are credited based on volume as served, except dried fruit, which credits as twice the volume served. For example,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Raisins credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fruit.
- Pasteurized, 100% fruit juice may be credited to meet no more than one-half of the fruit component per week.
- The fruit component includes minimum daily portion size requirements.

## Vegetables

- All vegetables are credited based on their volume as served, except:
  - Leafy greens, which credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup Romaine Lettuce credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetable.
  - Tomato paste and puree are credited based on calculated volume of the whole food equivalency (see the Food Buying Guide).
- Pasteurized, full-strength vegetable juice may be used to meet no more than one-half of the vegetable component.
- Cooked beans, peas, or lentils may be counted as either the vegetable or MMA component but not as both in the same meal.
- Vegetable offerings at lunch over the course of the week must include the following vegetable subgroups:
  - *Dark green vegetables*
  - *Red-orange vegetables*
  - *Beans and peas (legumes)*
  - *Starchy vegetables*
  - *Other vegetables*
- Vegetables are optional at breakfast and may be substituted for the fruit component.
  - If offered one day per week, vegetables from any subgroup can be served. If offered two or more days per week, vegetables from at least two different subgroups must be served.
- The vegetable component includes minimum daily portion size requirements and weekly vegetable subgroup requirements for each age/grade group.

## Milk

- **School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, & Seamless Summer Option (SSO)**
  - Milk must be low-fat (1%), fat-free (skim), lactose-free or lactose-reduced (1% milk fat or fat-free).
  - Milk varieties may be flavored or unflavored. Flavored milk cannot exceed 10g of added sugar per 8 fluid ounces.
  - Two types of milk must be offered at breakfast, one of which must be unflavored.
  - The milk component credits as volume served and includes minimum daily portion size requirements.
- **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)**
  - Milk may be whole, reduced-fat (2%), low-fat (1%), fat-free (skim) milk, low-fat or fat-free lactose-free, and lactose-reduced fluid milk.
  - Milk varieties may be flavored or unflavored. Flavored milk cannot exceed 10g of added sugar per 8 fluid ounces.
  - Two types of milk must be offered at lunch, one of which must be unflavored.
  - The milk component credits as volume served and includes minimum daily portion size requirements.
  - The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 excludes fluid milk from the weekly limit for saturated fat.
  - Milk substitutes may be offered to **all students** at lunch if they meet the USDA's nutrient standards:

Fluid Milk Nutritional Profile	
Nutrient	Per Cup (8 fl oz)
Calcium	276 mg
Protein	8 g
Vitamin A	500 IU
Vitamin D	100 IU
Magnesium	24 mg
Phosphorus	222 mg
Potassium	349 mg
Riboflavin	0.44 mg
Vitamin B12	1.1 mcg

## Reference

- [7 CFR 210.10 – NSLP](#)
- [7 CFR 220.8 – SBP](#)
- [SP 01-2026 Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 – Implementation Requirements for the National School Lunch Program](#)

## Resources

- [Menu Builder Tool](#)
- [USDA Whole Grains Resource](#)
- [USDA Menu Worksheets](#)

## Acronym Reference

- CFR – Code of Federal Regulations
- FDP – Food Distribution Program
- LEA – Local Education Agency
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- SSO – Seamless Summer Option
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture