

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.



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