

# OSPI School Meal Programs Reference Sheet

## School Meal Programs “Quick Bites” for Vendors

The National School Lunch and Breakfast programs (NSLP; SBP) provide nutritiously balanced meals funded by federal reimbursement and Washington state subsidies. In exchange for reimbursement, sponsors must serve meals that meet the Federal meal pattern requirements and comply with federal and state guidelines. This reference sheet is designed to provide Vendors with “quick bites” of information about meal pattern, product documentation and the Buy American Provision to support partnership with School Meal Programs customers.

### Meal Pattern Information

*The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 require minimum daily and weekly servings of five meal components which include Meat-Meat Alternate (MMA), Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, and Milk. Additionally, school menus must meet the weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards) which include calories, saturated fat, sodium and added sugar limits.*

#### **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).

#### **Grains:**

- The Grains component includes cereal grains and products made from their flours and are measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq).
- Grain products and recipes must be made with creditable grains: whole grain rich (WGR) grains; enriched grains, bran and germ. Creditable cooked and ready-to-eat breakfast cereals are WGR, enriched or fortified.
- Noncreditable grains are grain ingredients that don't contribute to the Grains component such as oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch and modified food starch (including potato, legume and other vegetable flours).
- At least 80% of the weekly grains offered at breakfast, lunch and snack must be WGR based on the total oz eq of offered grains.

#### **Vegetables:**

- The Vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables; and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. Most vegetables credit based on volume served. Raw leafy greens credit at half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup romaine lettuce credits as 1/2 cup of the Vegetable component.

- Vegetables are optional at breakfast and may be substituted for the fruits component. If offered one day per week, vegetables from any sub-group can be served. If offered two or more days per week, vegetables from at least two different sub-groups must be served.
- The lunch meal pattern requires servings of the five vegetable sub-groups, Dark Green; Red/Orange; Beans, Peas & Lentils; Starchy and Other, to be served throughout the week to total the minimum weekly requirements.

**Fruits:**

- The Fruits component includes fresh fruit, frozen fruit, canned fruit (packed in water, full-strength juice, or light syrup), dried fruit, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice and credit based on volume served, except dried fruit. Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served, e.g., 1/4 cup of raisins credits as 1/2 cup of the Fruits component.

**Milk:**

- At least two different options of fluid, pasteurized milk must be offered at breakfast and lunch.
- All milk must be fat-free or low-fat (1%), either unflavored or flavored. If flavored milk is served, unflavored milk must also be available at each meal service.
- Milk credits based on volume served.

**Added Sugar:**

- July 1, 2025: Product-based limits for added sugar limits for the following items:
  - Breakfast Cereals must contain no more than 6 grams added sugar per dry ounce.
  - Yogurt must contain no more than 2 grams added sugar per ounce.
  - Flavored Milk must contain no more than 10 grams added sugar per cup.
- July 1, 2027: Weekly Limits— phases in a weekly dietary limit for added sugars of less than 10% calories per week; this weekly limit is in addition to the product-based limits listed above.

**Product Documentation**

*Child Nutrition program sponsors must retain product documentation that demonstrates how menu items credit toward the School Meal Programs meal pattern requirements. Valid product documentation include the following:*

**Child Nutrition (CN) Label:**

- Distinct label issued by USDA.
- Only meat/meat alternates (MMA) items or combination items that include MMA are eligible to apply for CN labels.
- Watermarked copies of CN labels are not acceptable unless accompanied by a bill of lading.

- CN labels have to be renewed by the manufacturer every five years.

#### **Ingredient List and Nutrition Facts:**

- List of ingredients in a food item in order of weight.
- Basic nutrition information about a product that typically includes product weight, serving size, number of servings, and nutrient composition.
- Nutrition Facts must also detail calories, saturated fat, sodium and added sugar contribution per serving.

#### **Product Formulation Statements (PFS):**

- For processed products that don't have a CN Label; obtained from manufacturer
- Provides specific product information: product name; manufacturer's product code / unique identifier code; serving or portion size; and creditable ingredients.
- Lists meal pattern contribution and shows how meal pattern crediting was obtained.
- For items that contain Alternate Protein Product (APP), manufacturers must provide additional documentation regarding the APP (see [Attachment A of the Meat/Meat Alternate PFS form](#)).
- Must be on manufacturers' letterhead, dated and signed.
- USDA provides [Product Formulation Statement Templates](#).

### **Buy American Provision (BAP)**

*The Buy American Provision requires sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast Program (SBP) to purchase domestic commodities and products to the maximum extent practicable.*

#### **BAP Requirements:**

- Sponsors must purchase, to the maximum extent practicable, domestic commodities and products for use in the NSLP.
  - Domestic commodity or product:
    - An agricultural commodity produced in the United States (U.S.) and
    - A food product that is processed in the U.S. using the substantial agricultural commodities that are produced in the United States.
  - Substantial: Over 51% of the final processed product consists of agricultural commodities that were grown domestically.
- Applies to all entities that purchase on behalf of the Local Education Agency (LEA) (i.e. group purchasing cooperatives, Food Service Management Companies, etc.).
- Applies to all food/beverage products purchased using funds from the non-profit food service account.

#### **Limited Exceptions to the Buy American Provision:**

- Two limited exceptions when non-domestic foods may be purchased by LEAs are as follows:

- The product is listed on the [Federal Acquisitions Regulations \(FAR\) Non-Available Articles List](#) and/or is not produced in sufficient and reasonably available quantities of satisfactory quality.
- Competitive bids reveal the cost of a U.S. product are significantly higher than the foreign product.
- LEAs must maintain documentation to demonstrate the use of exceptions.
  - Documentation is not needed for items found on the FAR Non-Available Articles list.
- Non-domestic food purchases each school year must not exceed the following non-domestic food purchase caps by the established deadline:
  - 2025–26: ≤10% of total annual commercial food costs
  - 2028–29: ≤8% of total annual commercial food costs
  - 2031–32: ≤5% of total annual commercial food costs

#### **Support BAP Compliance:**

- Ensure product packaging and/or delivery invoice/receipts identifies the country of origin.

#### **References**

- [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*
- [OSPI School Meal Programs Breakfast and Lunch Meal Pattern Charts](#)
- [Crediting Tip Sheets in Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [7 CFR 210.10](#)
- [7 CFR 220.8](#)
- [OSPI CNS School Meal Programs Product Documentation Reference Sheet](#)
- [SP 23-2024 Buy American Provision Related to the Final Rule](#)

#### **Acronyms**

- CNS – Child Nutrition Services
- FNS – Food and Nutrition Services
- LEA – Local Education Agency
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture