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Get Ready!

What's It All About?

This section provides an overview of the **HealthierUS School Challenge** and helpful information to assist you in getting ready to take the Challenge.

Resources such as the Administrator Fact Sheet, the Sample Family Letter, and the PowerPoint for School Foodservice Staff will help you to promote and build a support system for meeting the Challenge!



Introduction

Within these pages are tools, tips, and ideas for submitting a winning application for the HealthierUS School Challenge.

Your application is best completed by a school's local wellness, coordinated school health, and/or Team Nutrition committee. However, the process can be ignited by any individual committed to student wellness. Turn the pages and take the Challenge today!

What is the HealthierUS School Challenge?

The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) was established to recognize schools that are creating healthier school environments through their promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Four levels of superior performance are awarded: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Gold of Distinction.



To qualify for the awards, a school must submit a formal application and meet basic criteria set forth by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The HUSSC criteria reflect the recommendations of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published recommendations (April 2007) for foods that should be served in schools, outside of the organized school lunch meals.

HealthierUS Schools must also have a local school wellness policy as mandated by Congress. Local school wellness policies support the HUSSC initiative and affirm that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity.





The overarching goal of the HUSSC is to improve the health of the Nation’s children by promoting healthier school environments. To help meet the goal, FNS identifies schools that have made changes to the school nutrition environment to:

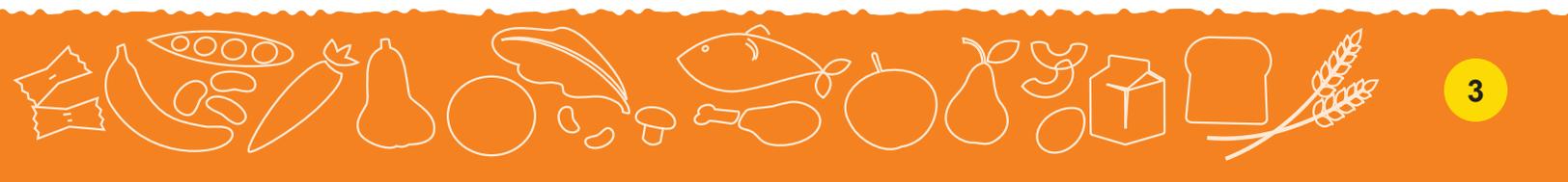
- improve the quality of the foods served,
- provide students with nutrition education, and
- provide students with physical education and opportunities for physical activity.

Ultimately, FNS would like to see all schools receive a HUSSC award.

The following Guiding Principles form the foundation for the Challenge:

Guiding Principles for the HealthierUS School Challenge

- Schools receiving a HUSSC award will commit to meeting the criteria throughout their certification period.
- Schools will meet all the School Meals Initiative (SMI) requirements including energy and nutrient standards and age-appropriate portion sizes on an ongoing basis.
- Schools will serve reimbursable meals that reflect good menu planning principles, such as serving a variety of healthier foods that look good, taste good, and appeal to the cultural sensitivities of the school community populations.
- Schools will plan meals that emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products; that include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and that are low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.
- Schools will offer foods that ensure students can select a meal that meets all the HUSSC criteria. Such foods should be routinely selected by students, not just be token foods to meet HUSSC criteria.





How do I get started?

The first step in taking the HUSSC is the formation of a group of individuals committed to a healthy environment for students. Your team can include any individual committed to student wellness, but at a minimum should include your foodservice manager or director, team nutrition school leader, parent organization representative, physical education teacher(s) responsible for providing nutrition/health education, and principal or other school administrator. This team will certify the accuracy of your application.

How do I apply?

The HUSSC is open to all schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program. Elementary, middle and high schools applying at the Bronze level do not have an Average Daily Participation (ADP) requirement. Elementary and middle schools applying at the Silver level or higher must have a minimum ADP of 60 percent and high schools applying at the Silver level or higher must have a minimum ADP of 45 percent. The school must also be enrolled as a Team Nutrition school, and be in compliance with all USDA nutrition standards for school lunches. In addition, each school must provide nutrition education and meet the physical education and activity requirements. See the application samples starting on page 65 for more details.

Start by reviewing the HUSSC criteria on page 14. Does your menu meet each component criterion? If not, make modifications for a future menu that meets all of the criteria. You may need to order new foods, such as whole-grain products, that meet the criteria. Work with your State Agency or FNS Regional Office to create an award-winning, 4-week menu. Do you meet the a la carte, nutrition education, physical education, and other requirements of the Challenge? Once you have served your award-winning menu, download the application and go over all of the criteria with your committee. Complete and review the application, gather documentation, and obtain the required signatures from your school team. Submit the completed application to your State Agency.





You may apply for multiple schools in your district, using the same 4-week lunch menu and the same foods, but each school must complete a separate application.

Where can I find an application and more information?

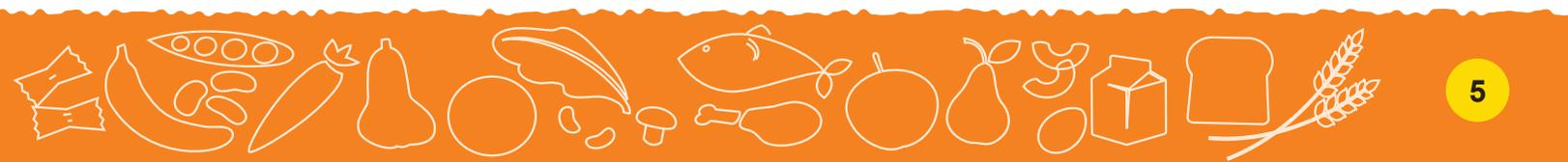
Applications are in this kit (samples start on page 65, full applications are on the enclosed CD) and additional applications and information may be downloaded from the Team Nutrition Web site:

teamnnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html

If you have additional questions, contact your State Agency Child Nutrition office for answers.

What's in it for me?

Your school will receive monetary awards (\$2000 for Gold Award of Distinction, \$1500 for Gold, \$1000 for Silver, \$500 for Bronze), an award plaque, signed by a USDA official, as well as an award banner to display at your school, publicizing your accomplishment to the community. In addition, your school will receive national recognition by being listed on the USDA Team Nutrition Web site. Check the HUSSC Web site often: teamnnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html. Schools may also be selected to participate in special media events, including a visit from USDA officials, and may be recognized by local media. Most importantly, you will be providing your students a healthier school environment, which will support their health and academic achievement. **On the following pages are tools to inform your school community and garner their support in taking the Challenge.**





Administrator Fact Sheet

Is Your School Ready To Take the HealthierUS School Challenge?

The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) is a voluntary school nutrition and wellness initiative established by the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service for schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program. The USDA believes that schools can take a leadership role in helping students learn, at an early age, to make healthier eating and lifestyle choices.

USDA encourages all schools to make positive changes to their school environments and has, through the HUSSC, established four levels of recognition—depending on the degree to which the school commits to meeting the criteria—Bronze, Silver, Gold, and, the highest of honors, a Gold Award of Distinction.

Why Should Our School Apply?

As a HUSSC Award-Winning School, your school will:

- Support the local wellness policy efforts of your school district.
- Support your school’s academic plan. Research indicates a positive relationship between student achievement and nutrition and physical activity.
- Receive a recognition plaque, monetary award (\$2000 for Gold Award of Distinction, \$1500 for Gold, \$1000 for Silver, \$500 for Bronze) and award banner from USDA to display in your school to showcase your school’s achievement.
- Receive positive community and media attention and possibly the appearance of a USDA official at a local event.
- Communicate to parents, students, teachers, and the community a commitment to children’s health and well-being.





What Does Our School Need To Do?

- Enroll as a Team Nutrition school.
- Contact your local school foodservice director and/or visit the Team Nutrition Web site at: teamnutrition.usda.gov to download the application and additional information. Click on “HealthierUS School Challenge.”
- Convene a local review team, including yourself and representatives from school foodservice, classroom teachers, school nurse and/or Physical Education teacher, and parent organization.



- Demonstrate healthy menu-planning practices; provide nutrition education, and offer physical education and opportunities for physical activity.
- Demonstrate a successful school meal program.
- Complete an application with documentation and required signatures.
- Submit the completed application to your State Child Nutrition agency.





Sample Family Letter

Dear Family,

Beginning next (week, month, school year) our school will be making changes to our entire school environment as we work toward becoming certified as an award-winning school by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's voluntary HealthierUS School Challenge. The HealthierUS School Challenge nationally recognizes schools at the Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Gold of Distinction award levels for: 1) serving school lunches that reflect the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*; 2) restricting the availability of foods and beverages at school to those that meet healthier guidelines of lower fat, added sugars, and sodium; 3) offering nutrition education for students to learn to make healthy choices; and 4) providing physical education and opportunities for students to be physically active during the school day.

We believe that children who learn to make healthy food choices and be physically active at school will continue these habits into adulthood. Look for these changes on our school lunch menu:

- A wider variety of fruits and vegetables, including dark green and orange vegetables, dry beans and peas, and fresh fruits
- Frequent use of whole-grain products
- Low-fat or fat-free milk

We invite you to have lunch with your child often and to encourage your child to try new foods. Involving your child in selecting healthy choices at the grocery store and preparing healthy choices at home will reinforce the messages we're teaching at school.

If you are interested in serving on our HealthierUS School Challenge Advisory Team, please contact our office. We hope that you will encourage your children to choose a tasty, nutritious lunch at school. Please call us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

John Doe

Principal

Telephone:





Promotional Flyer

Take the HealthierUS School Challenge

Prove to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community that your school is one of the best in the Nation, committed to nutrition and physical activity!

Apply for a Bronze, Silver, Gold—or even the highest of honors—a Gold of Distinction award. To be certified, a school must meet the following criteria:

- Be enrolled as a Team Nutrition School (don't worry, it's free!)
- Offer reimbursable lunches that demonstrate the principles of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and meet USDA nutrition standards
- Provide nutrition education to students
- Provide students opportunities to engage in physical activity
- Maintain an Average Daily Participation for reimbursable lunches:
 - All schools: No ADP criteria for schools applying at the Bronze level.
 - Elementary and Middle Schools: At least 60 percent (of school enrollment) at the Silver level or 70 percent for Gold and Gold of Distinction level.
 - High Schools: At least 45 percent (of school enrollment) at the Silver level or 65 percent at the Gold and Gold of Distinction level.
- Adhere to guidelines established by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) for all foods served/sold in schools
- Implement a Local Wellness Policy

What is the Challenge?

Obesity is a growing health concern for children in the United States. The USDA believes that schools can take a leadership role in helping students learn to make healthier eating and active lifestyle choices. Many schools have already improved their school nutrition environments, found ways to increase opportunities for physical activity, and provided more nutritious and healthier choices for their students.

FNS encourages schools to make these changes and has established the **HealthierUS School Challenge** to recognize schools that improve their school environment with nutritious foods, physical activity, and nutrition education.

Review the complete criteria on the Team Nutrition Web site at:

teamnutrition.usda.gov





PowerPoint for Administrators

Garner support to ensure success for your school or school district! This presentation can be used to provide Administrators with information about the HealthierUS School Challenge and the requirements to apply, and briefly reviews each of the criteria. The complete presentation is included on the CD.

The image shows three overlapping PowerPoint slide thumbnails. The top slide is titled "Physical Education Criteria" and lists requirements for middle and high schools. The middle slide is titled "HOW can YOU help?" and lists ways to support the challenge. The bottom slide is titled "The Challenge Menu Criteria" and lists menu requirements with images of food.

Physical Education Criteria

Middle and High Schools should:

- Offer structured physical education classes to at least two grades.
- Provide students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activity throughout the school year.
- Actively promote participation in physical activity (school) to all students.

USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge

HOW can YOU help?

- Be supportive of the:
 - Review team
 - School policies and procedures
- Communicate to parents and the community
- Help us celebrate!!

USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge

The Challenge Menu Criteria

- More vegetables and fruits—especially dark green & orange vegetables, dry beans and peas

USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge





PowerPoint for School Foodservice Staff

Create enthusiasm for the HealthierUS School Challenge at your school or in your school district! This presentation can be used as a training tool or a resource. It provides an overview of the HealthierUS School Challenge and also goes into detail about each of the criteria and tips for meeting the criteria. The complete presentation is included on the CD.

Competitive Foods Criteria

A la carte, vending, snack bar, school store

Sodium

- Bronze/Silver/Gold
 - ≤ 480 mg per non-entrée, ≤ 600 per entrée
- Gold Award of Distinction*
 - ≤ 200 mg per non-entrée, ≤ 480 per entrée
- Portion size/Calories
 - Not to exceed NSLP portion or 200 calories

Second or extra servings of NSLP entrée or main dish are exempt!

*Elementary schools that offer more PE (150 minutes) can follow the sodium levels for the other awards and still receive the Gold Award of Distinction. Middle and high schools must meet the lower sodium levels in order to receive the Gold Award of Distinction.

Physical Education Criteria

Middle and High Schools:

- Offer structured physical education classes to at least two grades.
- Provide students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activity throughout the school year.



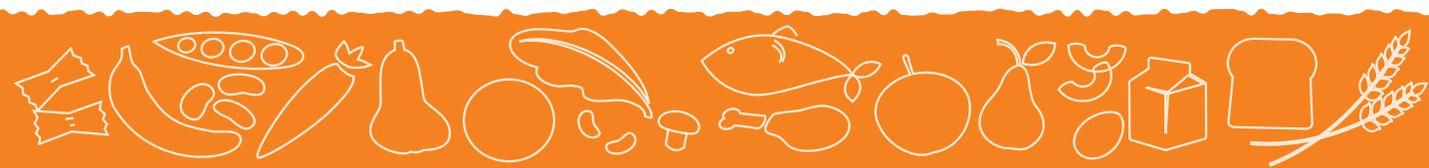
Actively promote participation in physical activities (in and out of school) to all students.

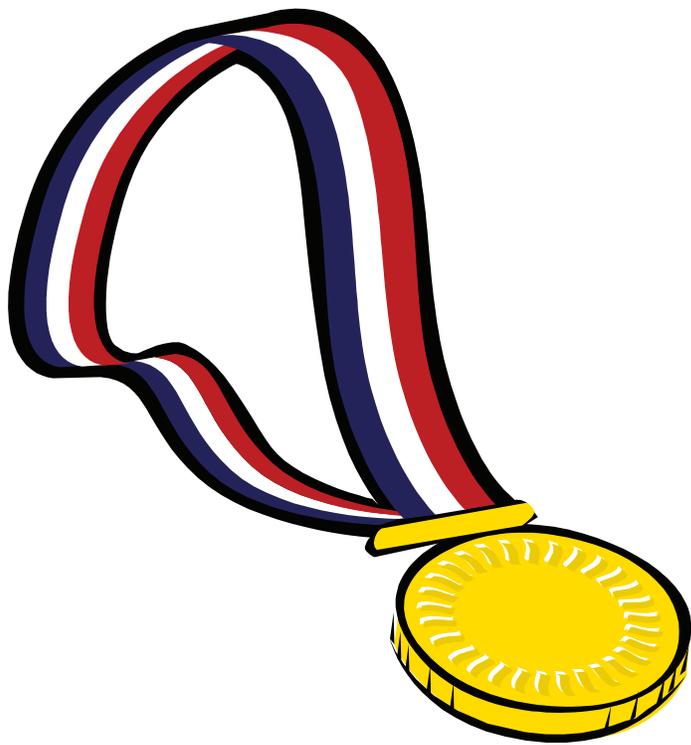


Additional Criteria

Nutrition Education for middle and high schools must:

- Be offered to middle school students in at least one grade level as part of required year round instruction.
- Be offered to high school students in 2 courses required for graduation.
- Involve multiple channels of communication.





Get Set!

Tips for Meeting the Challenge

This section provides detailed charts of the criteria for the HealthierUS School Challenge and additional resources to assist you in maintaining and/or implementing the criteria in your school or school district. Resources such as the HealthierUS School Challenge Checklist, Whole-Grains Resource, and Tips for Increasing Participation will help you meet the Challenge!

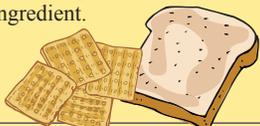
The HealthierUS School Challenge criteria emphasize key areas that are based on the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *MyPyramid* principles. The criteria will assist you in promoting a healthy school environment that provides nutritious meals, while also providing nutrition education, physical education, and opportunities for physical activity.

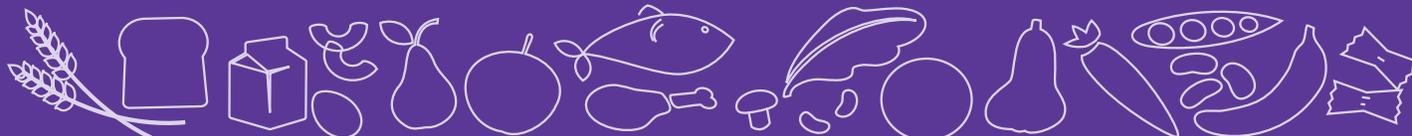
Now that you are ready, there are some tips and resources that can help you meet the Challenge. The following charts list the criteria and the requirements to fulfill in order to meet each award level in elementary and secondary schools.



HealthierUS School Challenge Application Kit

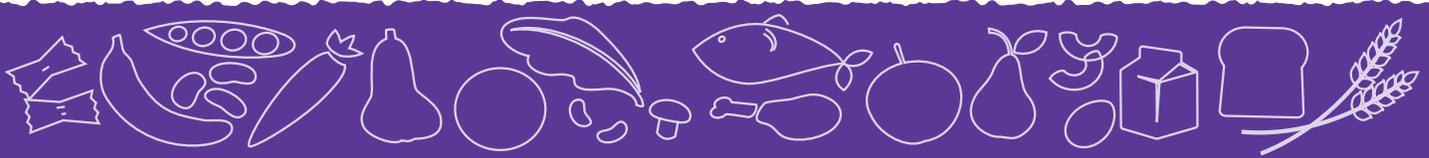
Criteria for Elementary Schools

| HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria for Elementary Schools | | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
|  School is enrolled as a Team Nutrition (TN) school. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Reimbursable lunches meet the USDA nutrition standards. School district had a School Meals Initiative (SMI) review within 5 years and all corrective actions have been completed. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Average Daily Participation for lunch meets or exceeds a minimum. | Elementary Schools | N/A | 60% | 70% | 70% |
| School lunch menu allows students to select each of the food items listed below: | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A different vegetable every day of the week. All servings must be at least ¼ cup. Of these five: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dark green or orange vegetables offered 3 or more days per week (of the 3, at least 2 must be different) Cooked dry beans or peas (legumes) must be offered each week (includes canned dry beans and peas).  | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A different fruit every day of the week (fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% juice). All servings must be at least ¼ cup. Dried fruit must have no added sweetener (nutritive or non-nutritive); canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup.  | | ✓ plus 1 day/ week fruit must be served fresh | ✓ plus 1 day/ week fruit must be served fresh | ✓ plus 2 days/ week fruit must be served fresh | ✓ plus 2 days/ week fruit must be served fresh |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% fruit juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A whole-grain food serving. A serving size of whole-grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Bread as defined in the Food Buying Guide, pages 3.15-3.16. The majority of whole-grain food products served must have the whole grain(s) listed first in the ingredient statement. Other whole-grain servings must have whole grain as the primary grain ingredient.  | | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered 3 or more days per week (not the same one each day) | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered 3 or more days per week (not the same one each day) | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered each day (not the same one each day) | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered each day (not the same one each day) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim) fluid milk, flavored or unflavored, offered each day.  | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |





| HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria for Elementary Schools | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
| <p>If the school sells any other foods and beverages on campus (competitive foods), sales must meet the criteria below, as well as the restricted times and locations stated at the right.</p> <p>Competitive foods are defined as any foods or beverages sold in competition with reimbursable meals. This includes a la carte, vending, snack bar, school store, and/or any other food and beverage sales on campus.</p> <p>Seconds or extra sales of entrees offered as part of the day's reimbursable lunches are exempt.</p> | <p>The criteria apply during meal periods within the foodservice area(s) <i>Foodservice area(s) refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten.</i></p> | <p>The criteria apply during meal periods within the foodservice area(s) <i>Foodservice area(s) refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten.</i></p> | <p>The criteria apply throughout the school day (including meal periods), throughout the school campus</p> | <p>The criteria apply throughout the school day (including meal periods), throughout the school campus</p> |
| <p>Competitive foods and beverages must meet these criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Competitive Foods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total fat: Calories from total fat must be at or below 35% per serving. <i>Excludes nuts, seeds, nut butters, and reduced-fat cheese.</i> Trans fat: Less than 0.5 grams (<i>trans</i> fat free) per serving. Saturated fat: Calories from saturated fat must be below 10% per serving. <i>Excludes reduced-fat cheese.</i> Sugar: Total sugar must be under or equal to 35% sugar by weight (includes naturally occurring and added sugars). <i>Excludes fruits, vegetables, and milk.</i> Sodium: See information at right for sodium limits. <p>Portion size/Calories: Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP; for other items, the package or container is not to exceed 200 calories.</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 200 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 480 mg per entrée OR Physical Education is 150 minutes/week</p> <p>✓</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Competitive Beverages: <i>(Only the following beverages are allowed)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk: Only low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim), flavored or unflavored fluid milk, and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages; <i>limit serving size to maximum of 8 fluid ounces.</i> 100% full strength fruit & vegetable juices with no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive); <i>limit serving size to maximum of 6 fluid ounces.</i> Water: Unflavored, no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive), noncarbonated, caffeine-free. | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> |

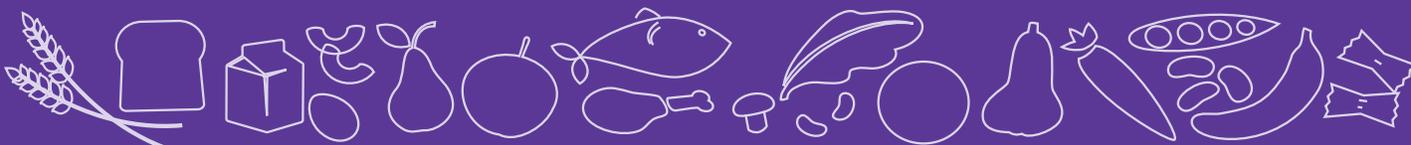




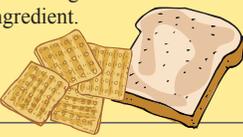
HealthierUS School Challenge Application Kit

Criteria for Elementary Schools

| HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria for Elementary Schools | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
| <p>Nutrition Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is provided for at least half, but no fewer than two, of the grade levels in the school. If the school consists of a single grade, nutrition education is provided to all students in the school. Is part of a structured and systematic unit of instruction, such as <i>MyPyramid</i> lessons from Team Nutrition. Involves multiple channels of communication, including the classroom, cafeteria, and home/parents. Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded). | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>Physical education/activity is promoted by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing structured physical education classes for all full-day students throughout the school year. Providing unstructured daily opportunities for physical activity for all full-day students, such as recess. Reinforcing physical education/activity messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.  | <p>A minimum average of 45 minutes per week throughout school year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> | <p>A minimum average of 45 minutes per week throughout school year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> | <p>A minimum average of 90 minutes per week throughout school year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> | <p>A minimum average of 150 minutes per week throughout school year OR meet stricter sodium requirements plus a minimum average of 90 minutes per week throughout school year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> |
| <p>School policies support a wellness environment by permitting primarily nonfood items being sold through school fundraising activities. However, if food items are sold during the school day, they must meet the guidelines for competitive foods, as outlined in this chart.</p> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>The school district has developed a Wellness Policy. A copy of the Wellness Policy is submitted with the application.</p> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |





| HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria for Secondary Schools | | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
|  <p>School is enrolled as a Team Nutrition (TN) school.</p> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>Reimbursable lunches meet the USDA nutrition standards. School district had a School Meals Initiative (SMI) review within 5 years and all corrective actions have been completed.</p> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Average Daily Participation for lunch meets or exceeds a minimum. | Middle Schools High Schools | N/A | 60% 45% | 70% 65% | 70% 65% |
| <p>School lunch menu allows students to select each of the food items listed below:</p> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A different vegetable every day of the week. All servings must be at least ¼ cup. Of these five: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dark green or orange vegetables offered 3 or more days per week (of the 3, at least 2 must be different). Cooked dry beans or peas (legumes) must be offered each week (includes canned dry beans and peas).  | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A different fruit every day of the week (fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% juice). All servings must be at least ¼ cup. Dried fruit must have no added sweetener (nutritive or non-nutritive); canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup.  | | ✓ plus 1 day/ week fruit must be served fresh | ✓ plus 1 day/ week fruit must be served fresh | ✓ plus 2 days/ week fruit must be served fresh | ✓ plus 2 days/ week fruit must be served fresh |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% fruit juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A whole-grain food serving. A serving size of whole-grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Bread as defined in the Food Buying Guide, pages 3.15-3.16. The majority of whole-grain food products served must have the whole grain(s) listed first in the ingredient statement. Other whole-grain servings must have whole grain as the primary grain ingredient.  | | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered 3 or more days per week (not the same one each day) | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered 3 or more days per week (not the same one each day) | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered each day (not the same one each day) | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered each day (not the same one each day) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim) fluid milk, flavored or unflavored, offered each day.  | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

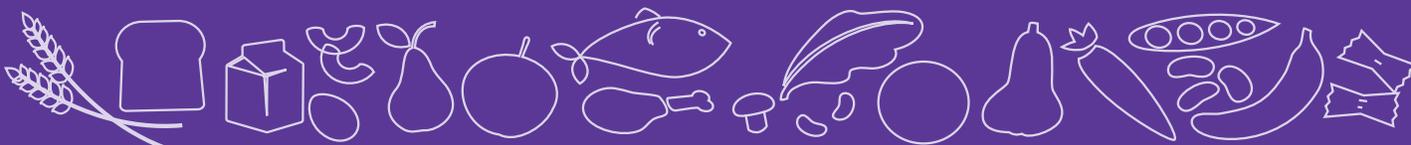




HealthierUS School Challenge Application Kit

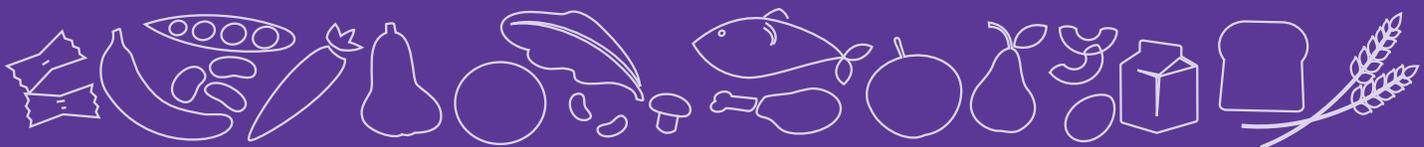
Criteria for Secondary Schools

| HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria for Secondary Schools | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
| <p>If the school sells any other foods and beverages on campus (competitive foods), sales must meet the criteria below, as well as the restricted times and locations stated at the right.</p> <p>Competitive foods are defined as any foods or beverages sold in competition with reimbursable meals. This includes a la carte, vending, snack bar, school store, and/or any other food and beverage sales on campus.</p> <p>Seconds or extra sales of entrees offered as part of the day's reimbursable lunches are exempt.</p> | <p>The criteria apply during meal periods within the foodservice area(s)</p> <p><i>Foodservice area(s) refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten.</i></p> | <p>The criteria apply during meal periods within the foodservice area(s)</p> <p><i>Foodservice area(s) refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten.</i></p> | <p>The criteria apply throughout the school day (including meal periods), throughout the school campus</p> | <p>The criteria apply throughout the school day (including meal periods), throughout the school campus</p> |
| <p>Competitive foods and beverages must meet these criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Foods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total fat: Calories from total fat must be at or below 35% per serving. <i>Excludes nuts, seeds, nut butters, and reduced-fat cheese.</i> Trans fat: Less than 0.5 grams (<i>trans</i> fat free) per serving. Saturated fat: Calories from saturated fat must be below 10% per serving. <i>Excludes reduced-fat cheese.</i> Sugar: Total sugar must be under or equal to 35% sugar by weight (includes naturally occurring and added sugars). <i>Excludes fruits, vegetables, and milk.</i> Sodium: See information at right for sodium limits. Portion size/Calories: Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP; for other items, the package or container is not to exceed 200 calories. | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée;</p> <p>≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée;</p> <p>≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée;</p> <p>≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 200 mg sodium per non-entrée;</p> <p>≤ 480 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Beverages: <i>(Only the following beverages are allowed)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk: Only low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim), flavored or unflavored fluid milk, and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages; <i>limit serving size to maximum of 8 fluid ounces.</i> 100% full strength fruit & vegetable juices with no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive); <i>limit serving size to maximum of 6 fluid ounces for middle schools and 8 fluid ounces for high schools.</i> Water: Unflavored, no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive), noncarbonated, caffeine-free. | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> |





| HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria for Secondary Schools | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--------|------|---------------------------|
| | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
| <p>Nutrition Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offered to middle school students in at least one grade level as part of required year round instruction. Offered to high school students in 2 courses required for graduation. Involves multiple channels of communication. Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded). | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>Physical education/activity is promoted by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering structured physical education classes to at least two grades and providing students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activity (intramural/interscholastic sports or activity clubs) throughout the school year. In addition, actively promoting participation in physical activities (in and out of school) to all students. Reinforcing physical education/activity messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>School policies support a wellness environment by permitting primarily nonfood items being sold through school fundraising activities. However, if food items are sold during the school day, they must meet the guidelines for competitive foods, as outlined in this chart.</p> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>The school district has developed a Wellness Policy. A copy of the Wellness Policy is submitted with the application.</p> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

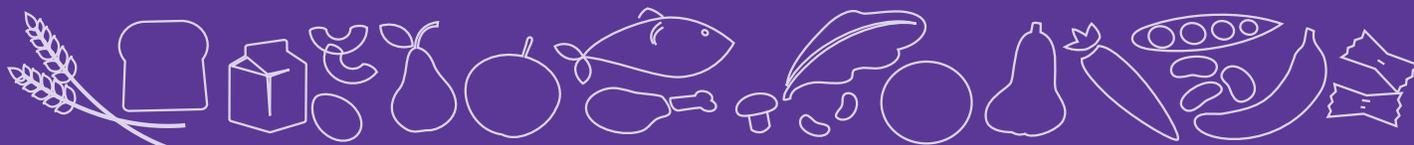




HealthierUS School Challenge Application Kit

Criteria for All Schools

| HealthierUS School Challenge Comparison Criteria for All Schools | | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
|  <p>School is enrolled as a Team Nutrition (TN) school.</p> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>Reimbursable lunches meet the USDA nutrition standards. School district had a School Meals Initiative (SMI) review within 5 years and all corrective actions have been completed.</p> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>Average Daily Participation for lunch meets or exceeds a minimum.</p> | Elementary Schools | N/A | 60% | 70% | 70% |
| | Middle Schools | N/A | 60% | 70% | 70% |
| | High Schools | N/A | 45% | 65% | 65% |
| <p>School lunch menu allows students to select each of the food items listed below:</p> | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A different vegetable every day of the week. All servings must be at least ¼ cup. Of these five: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dark green or orange vegetables offered 3 or more days per week (of the 3, at least 2 must be different) Cooked dry beans or peas (legumes) must be offered each week (includes canned dry beans and peas).  | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A different fruit every day of the week (fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% juice). All servings must be at least ¼ cup. <i>Dried fruit must have no added sweetener (nutritive or non-nutritive); canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup.</i>  | | ✓ plus 1 day/week fruit must be served fresh | ✓ plus 1 day/week fruit must be served fresh | ✓ plus 2 days/week fruit must be served fresh | ✓ plus 2 days/week fruit must be served fresh |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% fruit juice can be counted as a fruit only once per week. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A whole-grain food serving. A serving size of whole-grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Bread as defined in the <i>Food Buying Guide</i>, pages 3.15-3.16. The majority of whole-grain food products served must have the whole grain(s) listed first in the ingredient statement. Other whole-grain servings must have whole grain as the primary grain ingredient.  | | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered 3 or more days per week (not the same one each day) | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered 3 or more days per week (not the same one each day) | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered each day (not the same one each day) | At least 1 serving of whole-grain food offered each day (not the same one each day) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim) fluid milk, flavored or unflavored, offered each day. | | ✓ |  ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |





| HealthierUS School Challenge Comparison Criteria for All Schools | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
| <p>If the school sells any other foods and beverages on campus (competitive foods), sales must meet the criteria below, as well as the restricted times and locations stated at the right.</p> <p>Competitive foods are defined as any foods or beverages sold in competition with reimbursable meals. This includes a la carte, vending, snack bar, school store, and/or any other food and beverage sales on campus.</p> <p>Seconds or extra sales of entrees offered as part of the day's reimbursable lunches are exempt.</p> | <p>The criteria apply during meal periods within the foodservice area(s) <i>Foodservice area(s) refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten.</i></p> | <p>The criteria apply during meal periods within the foodservice area(s) <i>Foodservice area(s) refers to any area on school premises where program meals are served and/or eaten.</i></p> | <p>The criteria apply throughout the school day (including meal periods), throughout the school campus</p> | <p>The criteria apply throughout the school day (including meal periods), throughout the school campus</p> |
| <p>Competitive foods and beverages must meet these criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Foods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total fat: Calories from total fat must be at or below 35% per serving. <i>Excludes nuts, seeds, nut butters, and reduced-fat cheese.</i> Trans fat: Less than 0.5 grams (<i>trans</i> fat free) per serving. Saturated fat: Calories from saturated fat must be below 10% per serving. <i>Excludes reduced-fat cheese.</i> Sugar: Total sugar must be under or equal to 35% sugar by weight (includes naturally occurring and added sugars). <i>Excludes fruits, vegetables, and milk.</i> Sodium: See information at right for sodium limits. Portion size/Calories: Not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP; for other items, the package or container is not to exceed 200 calories. | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 480 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 600 mg per entrée</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>≤ 200 mg sodium per non-entrée; ≤ 480 mg per entrée OR Physical Education is 150 minutes/week for elementary schools</p> <p>✓</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Beverages: <i>(Only the following beverages are allowed)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk: Only low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim), flavored or unflavored fluid milk, and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages; <i>limit serving size to maximum of 8 fluid ounces.</i> 100% full strength fruit & vegetable juices with no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive); <i>limit serving size to maximum of 6 fluid ounces for elementary and middle schools and 8 fluid ounces for high schools.</i> Water: Unflavored, no sweeteners (nutritive or non-nutritive), noncarbonated, caffeine-free. | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> |

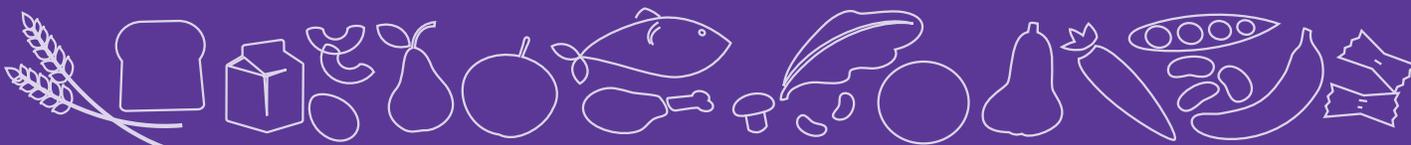




HealthierUS School Challenge Application Kit

Criteria for All Schools

| HealthierUS School Challenge Comparison Criteria for All Schools | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
| Nutrition Education: | | | | |
| Elementary Schools | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is provided for at least half, but no fewer than two, of the grade levels in the school. If the school consists of a single grade, nutrition education is provided to all students in the school. Is part of a structured and systematic unit of instruction, such as <i>MyPyramid</i> lessons from Team Nutrition. Involves multiple channels of communication, including the classroom, cafeteria, and home/parents. Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded). | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Secondary Schools | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offered to middle school students in at least one grade level as part of required year round instruction. Offered to high school students in 2 courses required for graduation. Involves multiple channels of communication. Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded). | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Physical education/activity is promoted by: | | | | |
| Elementary Schools | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing structured physical education classes for all full-day students throughout the school year. | A minimum average of 45 minutes per week throughout school year | A minimum average of 45 minutes per week throughout school year | A minimum average of 90 minutes per week throughout school year | A minimum average of 150 minutes/week throughout school year OR meet stricter sodium requirements plus a minimum average of 90 minutes per week throughout school year |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing unstructured daily opportunities for physical activity for all full-day students, such as recess. Reinforcing physical education/activity messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |





| HealthierUS School Challenge Comparison Criteria for All Schools | Award Level General Requirements | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--------|------|---------------------------|
| | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold Award of Distinction |
| <p>Physical education/activity is promoted by:</p> <p>Secondary Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering structured physical education classes to at least two grades and providing students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activity (intramural/interscholastic sports or activity clubs) throughout the school year. In addition, actively promoting participation in physical activities (in and out of school) to all students. Reinforcing physical education/activity messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>School policies support a wellness environment by permitting primarily nonfood items being sold through school fundraising activities. However, if food items are sold during the school day, they must meet the guidelines for competitive foods, as outlined in this chart.</p> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <p>The school district has developed a Wellness Policy. A copy of the Wellness Policy is submitted with the application.</p> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |





| <h3>HealthierUS School Challenge Checklist</h3> <p>Are You Ready To Take the HealthierUS School Challenge? If You Can Check "Yes!" in Each Box Below, You Are Ready!</p> | |
|--|-------------|
| | YES! |
| Is your school a Team Nutrition School? | |
| Does your school implement a local school wellness policy? | |
| Did your school complete requirements of most recent SMI review? | |
| Does your school provide nutrition education to students? | |
| Elementary Schools: Does your school provide 45 minutes or more of physical education to students in every grade per week? (Gold requirement is 90 minutes; Gold of Distinction is 90 minutes with stricter sodium requirements OR 150 minutes.) | |
| Secondary Schools: Does your school offer physical education classes to at least two grades and provide students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activity? | |
| Elementary and Middle Schools: Does your school maintain an Average Daily Participation (ADP) of at least 60% for Silver level? (For Gold & Gold of Distinction, the requirement is 70% or higher.) There is no ADP requirement for Bronze.) | |
| High Schools: Does your school maintain an ADP of 45% or higher for Silver level? (For Gold and Gold of Distinction, the requirement is 65% or higher.) There is no ADP requirement for Bronze level.) | |
| In your school lunch, do you: | |
| • Offer a different vegetable each day of the week? | |
| • Offer dark green or orange vegetables 3 or more days each week? | |
| • Offer dry beans and/or peas 1 or more days each week? | |
| • Offer a different fruit each day of the week? (At least one being fresh for Bronze/Silver and at least two fresh for Gold/Gold of Distinction) | |
| • Offer at least a serving of whole grains 3 or more days each week? (Daily for Gold and Gold of Distinction) | |
| • Offer only low-fat and fat-free milk each day? | |
| Are competitive foods: | |
| • Served in portions of 200 calories or less (includes fundraising)? | |
| • Under or equal to 35% calories from fat (excluding nuts and reduced-fat cheese)? | |
| • <i>Trans</i> -fat free? | |
| • Under 10% calories from saturated fat (excluding reduced-fat cheese)? | |
| • Under or equal to 35% sugar by weight? (fruits are exempt) | |
| • Under or equal to 480 mg sodium per side dish, 600 mg per entrée for Bronze/Silver/Gold (or Gold of Distinction only for elementary schools with 150 minutes of physical education)? | |
| • Under or equal to 200 mg sodium per side dish; or 480 mg per entrée for Gold of Distinction? | |
| • Are competitive beverages limited to low-fat or fat-free milk, 100% fruit/vegetable juice, or water? | |

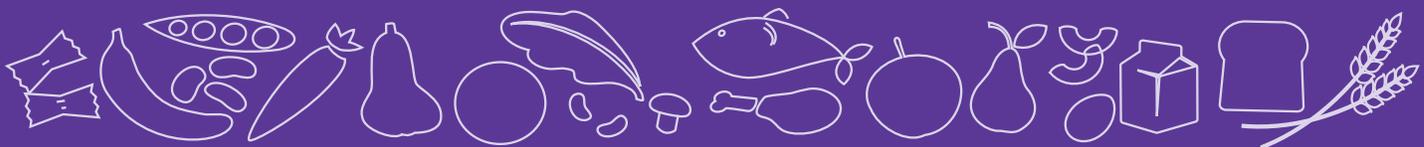




Whole-Grains Resource

This resource outlines the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSCC) whole-grains criteria and offers additional background information to help school food authorities (SFAs) identify whole-grain products and offer them more frequently in their menus. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has updated this resource to reflect the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGAs), which recommend that children and adults consume at least half of their grains as whole grains. These criteria are not required for school meal programs; they apply only for those schools that submit an application for a HealthierUS School Challenge award.

| HealthierUS School Challenge Whole-Grain Criteria | |
|--|--|
| Bronze/Silver | Gold/Gold of Distinction |
| At least one serving of a whole-grain food must be offered three (3) or more times (days) per week in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). | At least one serving of a whole-grain food must be offered each day in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). |
| <p>Whole-grain food is defined as “a food product with whole grain as the primary ingredient by weight,” (i.e., whole grain listed first in the ingredient statement). “A serving is defined by the <i>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</i>, pages 3.15-3.16.”</p> | |
| | |





How Can Schools Comply With the HUSSC Whole-Grain Criteria?

FNS realizes that some schools may face challenges in finding products that meet the criteria. Menu planners should count whole grains to meet the criteria as follows:

- **For a Bronze or Silver Award, a whole-grain food must be offered at least 3 days per week. For Gold or Gold Award of Distinction, a whole-grain food must be offered every day.** Menu planners are encouraged to serve a variety of whole-grain foods and may not serve the same whole-grain product every day to count for the HUSSC criteria.
- Whole-grain food products must be at least the portion size of one Grains/Breads serving as defined in the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*.
- Whole-grain foods that meet the HUSSC criteria are categorized into two groups:

Group A: Food products with whole grain(s) as the primary ingredient by weight

Group B: Food products with whole grain(s) as the primary **grain** ingredient by weight

When a school-made recipe contains multiple whole grains, it will qualify under Group A if the total weight of the whole grains is more than the weight of any other ingredient.

A recipe will qualify under Group B if the total weight of whole grains is more than the weight of the primary grain ingredient. The same principle applies to purchased products that contain multiple grains. Use Attachment I (page 34) for required documentation for multiple-grain products.

- Whole-grain products from Group A must be the majority of whole-grain foods offered each week. For example, for a Gold or Gold of Distinction award, a food product meeting Group A would need to be offered 3 or more days each week; and for a Bronze/Silver award, 2 or more days each week. A whole-grain food from Group B may be counted as a whole-grain food for the remainder of the days in each week. Foods from Group A may be used to meet all the required Grains/Breads.

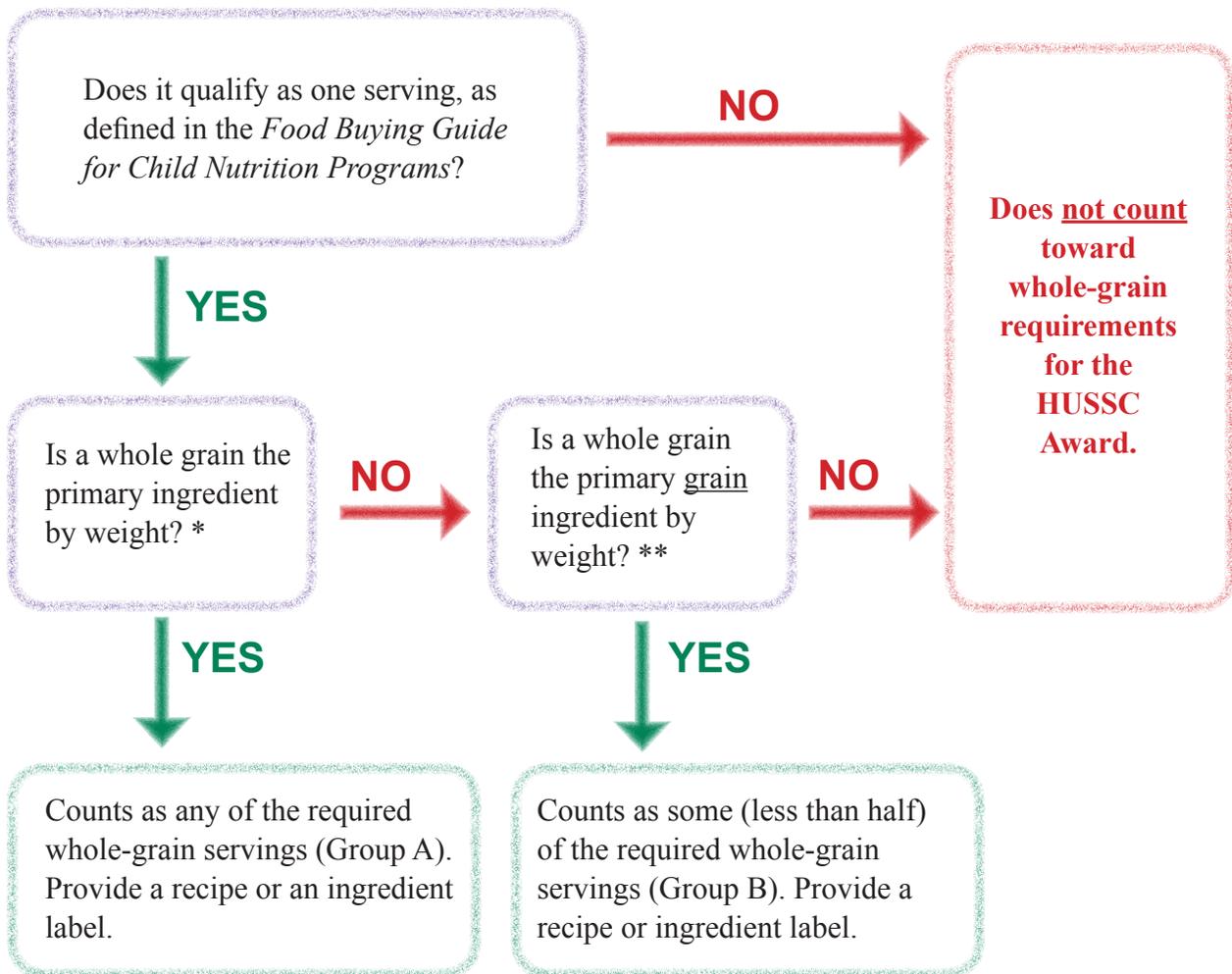




How Do I Know If a Whole-Grain Product Meets HUSSC Criteria?

There are many foods labeled as whole grains, such as pizza crusts, buns, breads, tortillas, and other products. It is helpful to know which products meet the HUSSC criteria. The chart below will assist you in determining if your whole-grain product meets the HUSSC criteria.

HUSSC Criteria for Whole-Grain Products



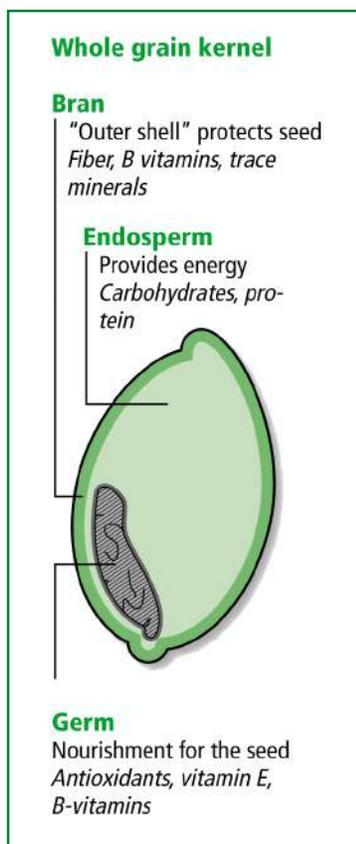
* Includes products with a total whole-grain weight that exceeds the weight of any other ingredient.

** Includes products with a total whole-grain weight that exceeds the weight of the primary refined-grain ingredient.





What is a Whole Grain?



Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel. The kernel has three parts—the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Usually the kernel is cracked, crushed, or flaked during the milling process. If the finished product retains the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain, it is considered a whole grain.

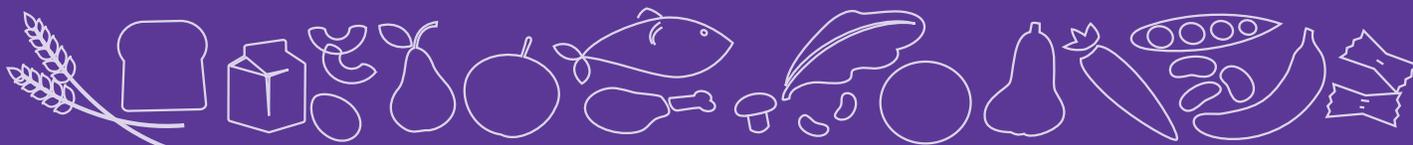
When you see the following words, you will know that, by regulation {Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Standards of Identity}, they describe whole grains that are used as ingredients:

- Cracked wheat
- Crushed wheat
- Whole-wheat flour
- Graham flour
- Entire-wheat flour
- Bromated whole-wheat flour
- Whole durum wheat flour

Common and usual names for other whole grains are noted below:

- The word whole listed before a grain, for example, whole corn.
- The words berries and groats are also used to designate whole grains, for example, wheat berries or oat groats.
- Rolled oats and oatmeal (including old-fashioned, quick-cooking, and instant oatmeal).
- Other whole-grain products that do not use the word "whole" in their description, for example, brown rice, brown rice flour, or wild rice.

A more comprehensive list of whole grains is provided as Attachment II (page 35).





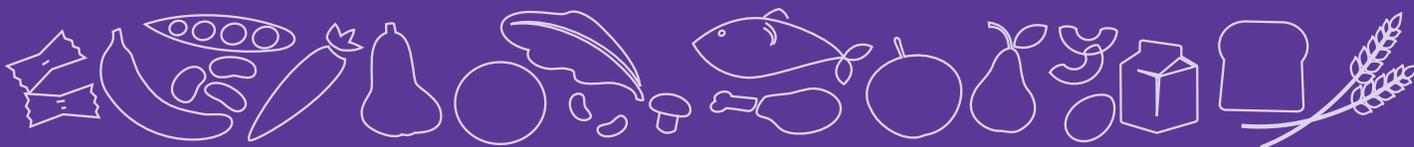
Grain products (ingredients) that are not whole grains:

Flour has been designated by the FDA as the term for refined wheat flour. The following ingredients are not whole grains:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • flour | • instantized flour | • corn grits |
| • white flour | • phosphated flour | • hominy grits |
| • wheat flour | • self-rising flour | • hominy |
| • all-purpose flour | • self-rising wheat flour | • farina |
| • unbleached flour | • enriched self-rising flour | • semolina |
| • bromated flour | • bread flour | • degerminated corn meal |
| • enriched bromated flour | • cake flour | • enriched rice |
| • enriched flour | • durum flour | • rice flour |
| | | • couscous |

Grain products that may or may not be whole-grain:

- “Pot” or “Scotch” barley and “pearl” or “pearled” barley are not whole grains because bran has been removed. Look for the words whole barley or whole-grain barley on the product label or in the ingredient statement. However, the FDA has recognized that “dehulled barley” is a whole grain.
- “Stone ground” does not necessarily mean that the product is whole-grain. “Stone ground” describes the process used for making the flour or meal. Look for “whole” in combination with “stone ground” in the ingredient statement.
- Whole corn “treated with lime” (often used in tortilla products, and may be called “masa”) would only be a whole grain if documentation from the manufacturer indicates that the manufacturing process used to prepare the corn with lime retains the pericarp, or bran layer.
- When a grain name, such as corn, oats, or rye flour, is listed in the ingredient statement, but no descriptor (such as “whole grain” for corn or “brown” for rice) is listed, the SFA needs to obtain further documentation from the manufacturer before purchasing the food product to meet the HUSSC criteria.





How Do I Purchase Whole-Grain Products or Develop Whole-Grain Product Descriptions (Specifications)?

Use the following information to guide your decisions.

A: Whole grains as the primary ingredient by weight of the product.

Specify that a whole grain will be the first ingredient on the ingredient label or the primary ingredient by weight. Ask that food product labels and ingredient statements be submitted with the vendor's bid on whole-grain products. If the first ingredient is not a whole grain, and there are multiple whole grains in the ingredient list, request documentation from the manufacturer as to the weight of the first ingredient and the total weight of all of the whole-grain ingredients (See Attachment I, page 34). If the total weight of the whole-grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first ingredient, the food product would meet Group A.

B: Whole grains as the primary grain ingredients of the product.

Specify that a whole grain be the first grain ingredient of the product. Ask that food product labels and ingredient statements be submitted with the vendor's bid on whole-grain products. If the first grain ingredient is not a whole grain but there are multiple whole-grain ingredients in the product, require the manufacturer to complete a product formulation statement documenting the weight of the first (refined) grain ingredient and the total weight of the whole grains (See Attachment I, page 34). If the total weight of the whole-grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first grain ingredient, the food product would meet Group B.

Flour blends of whole-grain and enriched flours—some manufacturers make products using a specialty blend of two or more flours that is part whole grain and part refined flour. In this case, the manufacturer must provide documentation to show that the primary grains in the product are whole grains to meet Group B.

Regardless of the type of whole-grain food purchased, ensure in your specification that the serving size of the whole-grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Breads as defined in the *Food Buying Guide*, pages 3.15-3.16.



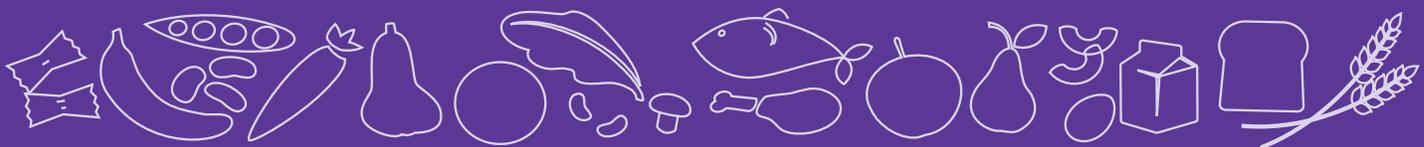


Looking at the Whole Product

Before purchasing new products containing whole grains, look carefully at the whole product, not just the whole grains. In keeping with the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA) recommendations, SFAs should offer whole-grain products that are low in sugars and/or fat. The goal is to offer nutritious whole-grain foods that students can enjoy. Including a dessert on a limited basis as an element of a reimbursable meal can have the positive effect of increasing acceptance and encouraging children to more fully participate in the meal service. We do not support using dessert items to meet the bread requirement in every meal, but we do acknowledge the benefit on occasion.

Storing Whole Grains

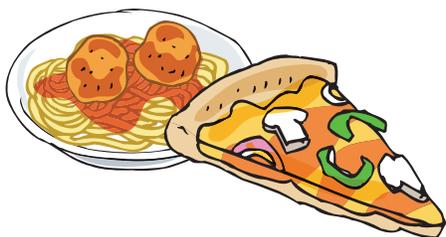
As with all foods, use FIFO (First In, First Out) principles when storing whole grains. Because whole-grain ingredients (e.g., whole-wheat flour, brown rice) retain the bran and the oil-rich germ, these items may turn rancid when stored in warm areas. To increase the shelf life, store these products in a cool, dry place in airtight containers. If the whole-grain products will not be used within a short period of time, they should be stored in the refrigerator or freezer.



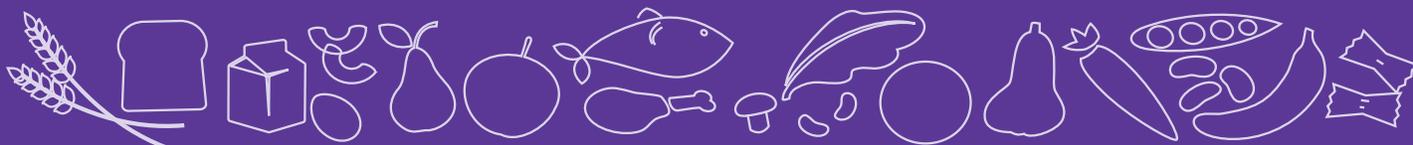


Taste-Testing of Whole-Grain Products

Some students may not be familiar with whole-grain products. To encourage them to try different products, schools can have student taste tests to select products that have the most student appeal. By documenting the taste tests and student preferences, SFAs may develop a list of approved whole-grain products for purchase.



Introduce whole grains in student favorites, such as pizza or spaghetti, and gradually increase the amount of whole grains in recipes over the school year as students adapt to the changes.





Ideas for Adding Whole Grains to Menus in Child Nutrition Programs



Whole-grain ready-to-eat cereals



Whole-grain chips/pretzels

Whole-grain cooked breakfast cereals

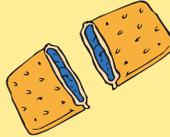
Whole-grain pita pockets

Granola made from whole grains

Whole-grain cornbread



Whole-grain cereal or granola bars



Whole-grain crackers or cookies

Whole-grain pancakes or waffles

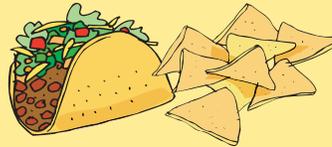
Whole-grain bagels or muffins



Whole-wheat breads, rolls, or buns

Other whole-grain breads, rolls, or buns

Whole-grain tortillas, taco shells



Whole-wheat pasta, such as macaroni, spaghetti, vermicelli, or whole-grain noodles

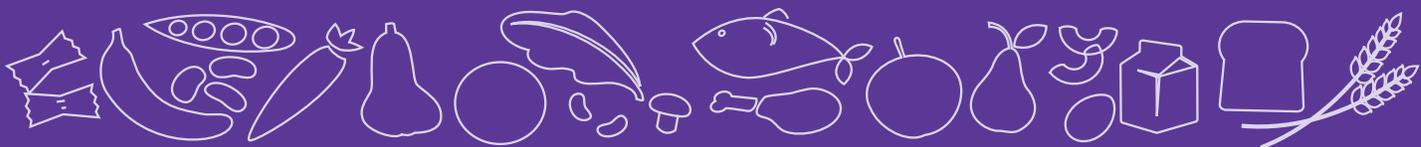
Soba noodles (with whole buckwheat flour as primary ingredient)



Whole-grain side dishes (e.g., brown rice, wild rice, cracked wheat, whole-grain bulgur or barley, whole specialty grains)

Whole-grain salads (cracked wheat, whole-grain bulgur, whole specialty grains)

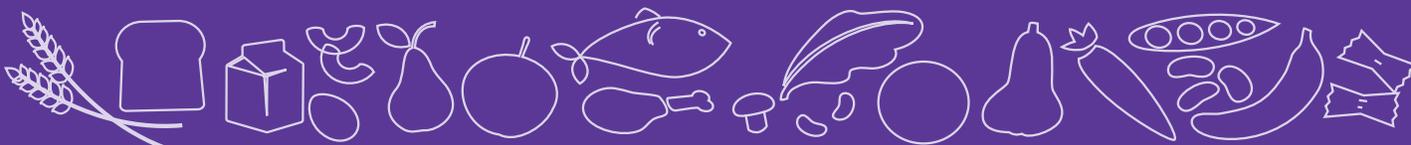
Other uses of whole grains (soups, casseroles, combination dishes)





Attachment I: Documentation for Foods Containing Multiple Whole Grains

| Documentation for Foods Containing Multiple Whole Grains for the HealthierUS School Challenge | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|----|--|
| Schools should provide this documentation on school letterhead for recipes. Manufacturers should provide this information on company letterhead for commercial products. | | | | |
| School District or Company Name: | | | | |
| Recipe/Product Name: | | | | |
| Product Code (if applicable): | | | | |
| 1 | Attach copy of recipe or product ingredient statement. | | | |
| 2 | Highlight or underline all items that are whole grains in the attached recipe or product ingredient statement. | | | |
| 3 | Serving size according to the recipe: | or in grams for product: | | |
| 4 | Total weight of all whole-grain ingredients in the recipe or product: | | | |
| 5 | Weight of primary ingredient in recipe or listed first in ingredient statement: (To qualify for Group A: Weight of Item #4 is greater than Item #5.) | | | |
| 6 | Weight of primary grain ingredient in recipe or listed first in ingredient statement: (To qualify for Group B: Weight of Item #4 is greater than Item #6.) | | | |
| 7 | School District or Company representative's signature that all information is accurate: | | | |
| Signature | | | | |
| | Printed Name | Title | | |
| | Email | Date | | |
| | | | | |
| | | Yes | No | |
| A | Does the serving size for this food equal 1 Grains/Breads serving? (see Item #3) | | | |
| B | Are all of the ingredients highlighted in Item #2 above considered whole grains according to HUSSC criteria? If not, ask for corrected information. | | | |
| C | Does weight of Item #4 exceed weight of Item #5? | | | |
| D | Does weight of Item #4 exceed weight of Item #6? | | | |
| E | Are answers to Items A, B, and C yes? If yes, food product meets Group A. | | | |
| F | Are answers to Items A, B, and D yes? If yes, food product meets Group B. | | | |





Attachment II: List of Common Whole Grains

While this list is extensive, it is **NOT** comprehensive and therefore may not contain all possible representations of whole-grain ingredient names on food labels.

Barley

- dehulled barley
- dehulled-barley flour
- whole barley
- whole-barley flakes
- whole-barley flour
- whole-grain barley
- whole-grain barley flour

Brown Rice

- brown rice
- brown-rice flour

Corn

- whole corn
- whole-corn flour
- whole cornmeal
- whole-grain corn flour
- whole-grain grits

Oats

- oat groats
- oatmeal or rolled oats
- whole oats
- whole-oat flour

Rye

- whole rye
- rye berries
- whole-rye flour
- whole-rye flakes

Wheat (Red)

The most common kind of wheat in the U.S.

- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- bromated whole-wheat flour
- cracked wheat or crushed wheat
- entire wheat flour

- graham flour
- sprouted wheat
- sprouted wheat berries
- stone ground whole-wheat flour
- toasted crushed whole wheat
- wheat berries
- whole bulgur
- whole durum flour
- whole durum wheat flour
- whole-grain bulgur
- whole-grain wheat
- whole-wheat flour
- whole-wheat pastry flour
- whole-wheat flakes

Wheat (White)

- whole white wheat
- whole white wheat flour

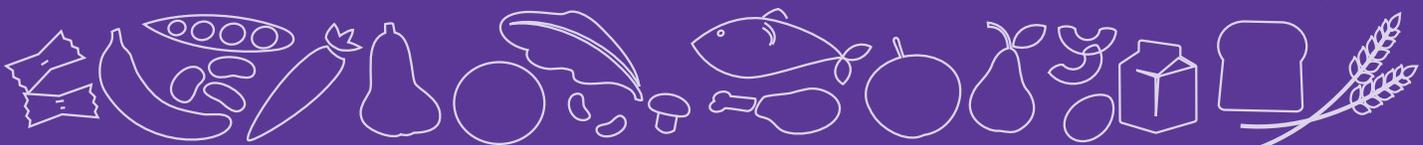
Wild Rice

- wild rice
- wild-rice flour

Less Common Grains

To be whole grains, “whole” must be listed before the grain name.

- amaranth
- buckwheat
- einkorn
- emmer (farro)
- Kamut®
- millet
- quinoa
- sorghum (milo)
- spelt
- teff
- triticale





Guidance on Dark Green and Orange Vegetables and Dry Beans and Peas

The basic HUSSC vegetable criteria are to offer a different vegetable each day with all servings at least ¼ cup serving size. Vegetables from any group may be offered to meet these criteria. Any vegetable or 100 percent vegetable juice counts in the vegetable group in MyPyramid. Vegetables are organized into subgroups, based on their nutrient content.

The following are the only foods that meet the HUSSC criteria for dark green or orange vegetables and dry beans and peas (including those peas and beans listed on pages 1-5 through 1-12 and on page 1-40 in the *Food Buying Guide*).

Dark green and orange vegetables: Offer dark green or orange vegetables on 3 or more days per week. Of the three, at least two must be different. Serving size must be at least ¼ cup.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Acorn squash | | Kale |  |
| Beet greens | | Mesclun | |
| Bok choy | | Mustard greens | |
| Broccoli |  | Pumpkin | |
| Butternut squash | | Romaine lettuce | |
| Carrots |  | Spinach | |
| Collard greens | | Sweet potatoes |  |
| Dark green leafy lettuce | | Swiss chard | |
| Endive | | Turnip greens | |
| Escarole | | Watercress | |
| Hubbard squash | | | |





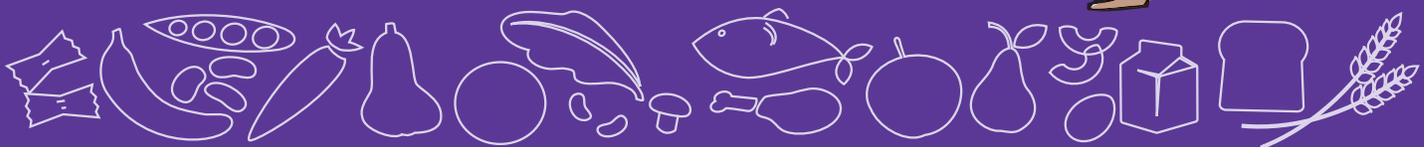

* Dry beans and peas: Offer at least 1 serving per week.
Serving size must be at least ¼ cup.

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------|
| Black beans | | Navy (Pea) beans |
| Black-eyed peas, mature | | Pink beans |
| Garbanzo beans (chickpeas) | | Pinto beans |
| Great Northern beans | | Red beans |
| Kidney beans | | Soybeans, mature |
| Lentils | | Split peas |
| Lima beans, mature | | |



- * Mature dry beans and peas are creditable in food-based menu planning as either a vegetable or meat/meat alternate component, but not as both components in the same meal.

Dry refers to the bean being harvested dry, not to the purchase form of the bean. Many canned beans and peas are actually dry beans and peas that have been cooked and canned, and are therefore acceptable. Any fresh or frozen bean or pea does not qualify.





Tips for Increasing Participation ... Go for the Gold!

Make HealthierUS School Challenge menus the popular choice!

Jazz up cycle menus to offer student favorites that meet the criteria!
Serve a whole-grain pizza crust with reduced-fat cheese and veggies.
Or, try whole-grain rotini or spaghetti with meat sauce.

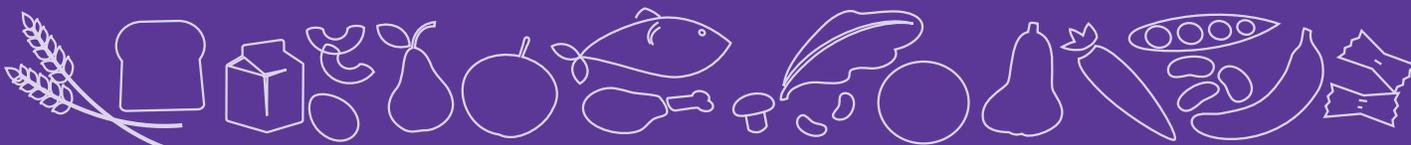


Celebrate diversity with ethnic meals! For example, serve Southwest favorites like burritos and tacos with pinto beans, or teriyaki bowls with grilled chicken and brown rice.



Serve age-appropriate portion sizes, especially for younger students. Serve the food-based optional portion size for grades K-3 to better target their calorie and nutrient needs and reduce waste.

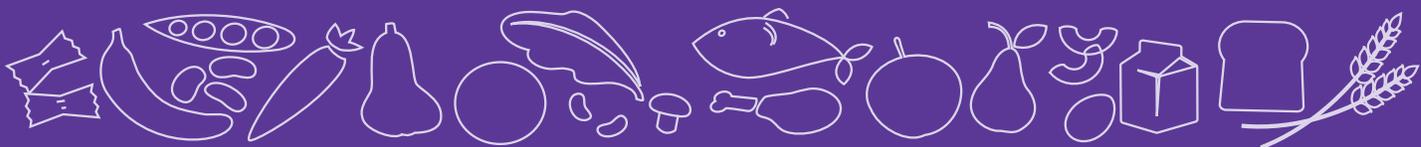
- Market your program to students, teachers, staff, and parents as the healthy, convenient choice! Include information about the link between nutrition and learning, National School Lunch Program (NSLP) nutrition requirements, and how your meals exceed these standards; and compare the cost and nutritional quality of a typical lunch brought from home. Have parents sample foods during Back to School Night.





Make the cafeteria a fun place to eat! Have student contests to design murals or posters that promote healthy school lunches! Decorate the cafeteria with bold colors and use different themes each month. Offer prizes to students who choose the HealthierUS meal more often!

- Jazz up your meal service with a different theme each month! For example, celebrate Valentine's Day with favorite foods cut into heart shapes, or partner with Physical Education teachers during National Heart Month.
- Create new customers through catering! Cater classroom parties or activities like Back to School Night. Showcase healthy menus at board meetings and other school events to reinforce the link between nutrition and academic performance.
- Charge higher prices for a la carte foods and beverages. Encourage students to take a complete meal instead of buying additional foods.





Healthy Fundraising Tips

USDA’s HealthierUS School Challenge encourages schools to limit fundraising activities involving foods and/or beverages. There are many other fun, creative, and lucrative strategies to raise money. Fundraisers that involve physical activity reinforce positive messages to students, families, and the community about the importance of active lifestyles. Healthy fundraising can have a positive effect and strengthen support within the community.

Why Healthy Fundraising?

Students’ lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. When less nutritious foods are sold, even “for a good cause,” students may think that these foods are part of a healthful, balanced diet. When made available during meal periods, these “extra” foods can replace healthier options available at breakfast and lunch. Schools can encourage healthful eating habits and raise needed funds by selling nonfood items. Here are just a few ideas to get you started:

Support the Arts

- Art shows
- Concerts
- Dances
- Plays and musicals
- Talent shows
- Singing telegrams
- Rent-a-band, choir, or music group



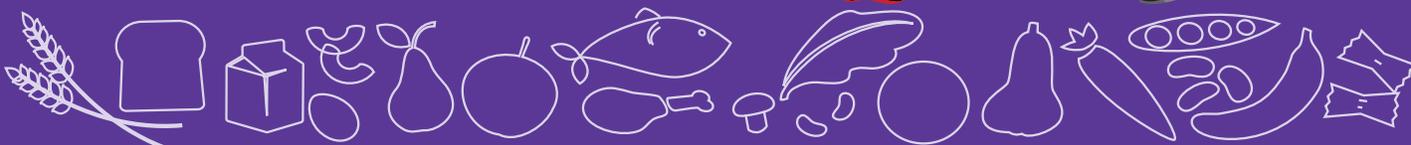
Support Physical Activity

- Walk-a-thon, Bike-a-thon, Jump-rope-a-thon
- 5-mile run/walk or fun run
- Golf, tennis, or other sports tournaments
- Bowling or skate night
- Sports camps or clinics



Support Academics

- Read-a-thon
- Spelling bee
- Science fair
- Workshops or classes





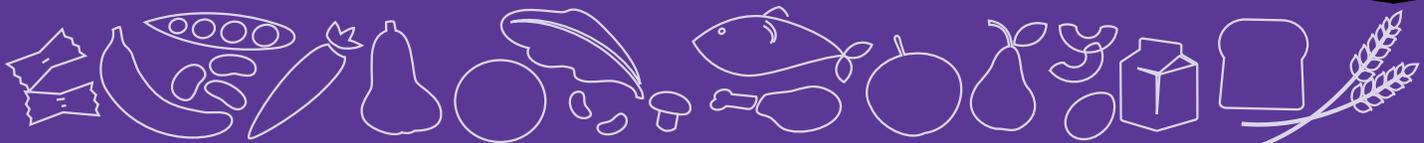
Support Community Activities

- Recycling drive
- Bingo night
- Karaoke competition
- Chess, checkers, or other tournament
- Treasure hunt or scavenger hunt
- Soup dinner, with student-designed hand-painted bowls for purchase
- Garage sale
- Live auction or silent auction
- Carnivals, festivals, craft fairs
- Car wash
- Game night
- Penny drive



Sell Items Other Than Food

- Reusable cloth shopping bags
- Gift wrap, greeting cards, boxes and bags
- Holiday wreaths, ornaments, poinsettias, mistletoe
- Gift certificates or coupon books
- Cookbooks
- T-shirts and sweatshirts
- Books, calendars, coloring books
- Buttons and pins
- Artwork, crafts, jewelry, candles
- Picnic baskets
- First aid/emergency preparedness kits
- School spirit items (decals, bumper stickers, license plate holders)
- Brick, stone, or tile memorials
- Cups and mugs
- Pet treats, toys, and accessories
- Rent a special parking space
- Spirit, seasonal, State, or U.S. flags
- Tickets to sporting or fine arts events
- Stadium cushions
- Plants, flowers (especially for Valentine's Day or proms), seeds, or student-painted flower pots!

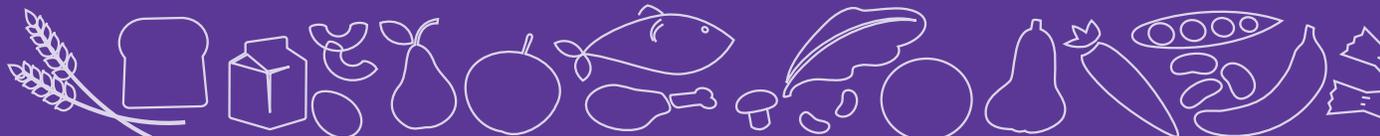




Fact Sheets for Healthier School Meals

The complete PDF package of these fact sheets is available on the enclosed CD:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <h3>Fact Sheet</h3> <h4>Limit Saturated Fat & Cholesterol for Healthier School Meals</h4> <p>KEY ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Americans need to decrease their dietary intakes of saturated fat. Many Americans also need to decrease their intake of cholesterol to reduce the risk of heart disease. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend we eat less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat and less than 300 mg of cholesterol per day. When averaged over a week, school meals must provide less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. <p>When it comes to heart health, the type and amount of fat we eat makes a big difference. Many Americans eat too much saturated fat and cholesterol, which increase unhealthy blood lipids (low-density lipoproteins, or "LDL cholesterol"). Most of the saturated fat in our diet comes from cheese and other higher fat dairy products, beef, and baked goods like cakes, cookies, and doughnuts. Foods higher in saturated fat usually contain more cholesterol, too.</p> <p>Look for the amount of "saturated fat," "trans fat," and "cholesterol" per serving listed on the Nutrition Facts label. Choose foods that have the least amount of all three. A manufacturer can claim a food as "low-cholesterol" if the product contains 20 mg of cholesterol or less and 2 g or less of saturated fat per serving.</p> <p><i>Easy ways to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i></p> | <h3>Fact Sheet</h3> <h4>Serve More Whole Grains for Healthier School Meals</h4> <p>Although some students may not be familiar with the color, taste, and texture of whole grains and whole-grain products, they can enjoy these good-for-you foods if you gradually add them to your menus.</p> <p>Recognizing Whole Grains Is Easy!</p> <p>Read the ingredient statement for the products you purchase. Manufacturers must list ingredients in descending order by weight. Look for products that list whole grains first. If your students aren't used to eating whole grains, start with products that list whole grains further down the list and make a plan to gradually offer more whole grains throughout the school year.</p> <p>For many whole grains, the word "whole" usually is listed before the type of grain, such as "whole-wheat flour," "whole durum flour," "whole-grain barley," "whole cornmeal," or "whole white wheat." Other ways to identify whole grains are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole grains have a standard of identity and do not include the word "whole," such as "cracked wheat," "crushed wheat," and "graham flour." | <h3>Fact Sheet</h3> <h4>Use Low-fat Milk, Cheese, and Yogurt for Healthier School Meals</h4> <p>SUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many children recommended in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are not getting enough calcium and vitamin D. Low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt are good sources of calcium and vitamin D. <p>Recipe for Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free (skim) milk. This meets the requirement to offer milk in a variety of fat contents. Consider offering milk in snazzy packaging. Kids drink more milk when it's offered in "cool" packages, like milk "chugs." Offer flavored low-fat or fat-free milk to encourage children to drink more milk. Work with your local dairy to lower the amount of added sugar in flavored milks. Keep it DOL! Ask your local dairy council about purchasing low-cost or no-cost milk coolers with promotional messages. <p><i>Easy ways to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i></p> |
| <h3>Fact Sheet</h3> <h4>Jazz Up Your Menu With Fruits for Healthier School Meals</h4> <p>KEY ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who eat a variety of fruits as part of a healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that we eat two cups of fruit every day (based on a 2,000-calorie meal plan). Remember, fruits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide nutrients that we need for good health, such as potassium, fiber, vitamin C, and folate. are naturally low in fat. <p>When we eat with our eyes—then our mouths, if it looks good, we'll taste it. If it tastes good, we'll eat it. Because fruits are colorful and delicious, they have built-in kid appeal. And because they are available in so many forms—fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or juice—they give you a quick and easy way to boost the nutrition of your school meals and snacks.</p> <p><i>Easy ways to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i></p> <p>Recipe for Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go easy on juice. Offer most fruit whole or cut up to get more dietary fiber. Vary fruit choices. Offer fruits with more potassium often, such as bananas, prunes, dried peaches and apricots, cantaloupe, and honeydew melon. Select fruit canned in 100 percent fruit juice or water, rather than syrup. | <h3>Fact Sheet</h3> <h4>Vary Your Vegetables for Healthier School Meals</h4> <p>Want to add more color, crunch, and flavor to your menus? Offering a wide variety of vegetables provides a quick and easy way to make school meals pop with dazzling eye appeal and help students get the nutritional benefits they need. By eating more vegetables, students develop lifelong habits that promote good health!</p> <p>Recipe for Success</p> <p>Go for variety!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer different veggies every day, and include servings in each of these groups over a week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dark green: broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce, and other dark leafy greens. Orange: acorn and butternut squash, carrots, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin. Dry beans and peas: black beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo. <p><i>Easy ways to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i></p> | <h3>Fact Sheet</h3> <h4>Be Salt Savvy – Cut Back on Sodium for Healthier School Meals</h4> <p>SUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many children recommended in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are not getting enough calcium and vitamin D. Low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt are good sources of calcium and vitamin D. <p>When nearly all Americans consume more sodium than they need. Often we don't know how much sodium we are getting. Taste alone may not tell us which foods are high in sodium. Table salt (sodium chloride) isn't the only source of sodium. Look at ingredient lists for other sources, such as monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking soda, baking powder, disodium phosphate, sodium alginate, and sodium nitrate or nitrite.</p> <p>Children's taste for salt is a learned habit. By gradually reducing the salt and sodium in school meals, students' tastes can change. Offer lower sodium versions of popular menu items and recipes at the beginning of a school year. Students may hardly notice the difference. Be "salt savvy" and help students enjoy the taste of the food instead of the salt!</p> <p><i>Easy ways to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i></p> |
| <h3>Fact Sheet</h3> <h4>Serve More Dry Beans and Peas for Healthier School Meals</h4> <p>KEY ISSUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dietary fiber from dry beans and peas (legumes) as part of a healthy diet helps to lower the risk of heart disease. Dry beans and peas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are excellent sources of plant protein. provide other nutrients such as iron, potassium, folate, and zinc. are naturally low in fat and sodium. have no saturated fat or cholesterol. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating three cups of beans a week, based on a 2,000-calorie meal plan. Serve beans or other legumes at least once per week to help students get these important nutrients! <p>How delicious they taste! Beans are an inexpensive food that can boost the nutritional content of school meals. Beans are versatile, too. Whether served as a vegetarian option, or served with meats, poultry, fish and cheese, beans complement the meal. Find creative ways to add more beans to school menus! For example, try savory pinto beans and salsa in a chef salad, or add red beans to rice pilaf!</p> <p>Dry beans and peas are mature forms of legumes, or plants which have pods with rows of seeds inside. Some popular varieties include pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, lentils, split peas, and garbanzo beans (chickpeas). Only a few types, such as green beans, string beans, baby green lima beans, and fresh soybeans (edamame) are not considered dry beans.</p> <p><i>Easy ways to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i></p> <p>Recipe for Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the easiest form! Use canned, pre-cooked beans to simplify recipes (no soaking needed) and reduce cooking times. Power up recipes with more beans! Add dry-packaged or canned beans and peas when preparing casseroles, stews, and side dishes. Make chili more interesting by combining kidney and pinto beans. Serve satisfying soups. Attract students and teachers with low-sodium split pea, lentil, minestrone, or white bean soups. Use pureed beans to thicken soups and sauces. Spice up your menus with Southwest flair! Offer black bean enchiladas, low-fat refried beans, or tacos with whole pinto beans. | <h3>Fact Sheet</h3> <h4>Trim Trans Fat for Healthier School Meals</h4> <p>We know that fats and oils are a part of a healthful diet, but the type of fat makes a difference to heart health. Although a small amount of trans fat is found naturally in foods like meat, butter, and milk, most trans fat is formed when hydrogen is added to an oil to make a more solid fat like shortening or margarine. This process, called "hydrogenation," increases shelf life and helps maintain the flavor and texture of foods.</p> <p>You can reduce the amount of trans fat your students consume by eliminating products with trans fat or serving them less often. Check the Nutrition Facts labels and note the amount of "trans fat" listed just below "saturated fat." Food manufacturers can show "0 grams of trans fat" if a serving contains less than 0.5 gram.</p> <p><i>Easy ways to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i></p> <p>Recipe for Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your menu. Serve foods with trans fat less often. Check Nutrition Facts labels and ingredient lists on similar foods. Choose the food with the lowest amount of trans fat. Review nutrition labels frequently, as manufacturers change products regularly. Foods that list "shortening" or "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil" as an ingredient may contain trans fat. Talk with your current food vendors about new products with little or no trans fat. Look for vendors that have eliminated or reduced trans fat in their products. | <h3>Fact Sheet</h3> <h4>Meeting the Challenge of Rising Food Costs for Healthier School Meals</h4> <p>SUES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many school districts are feeling the squeeze of increasing food costs. It can also be challenging to provide school meals that meet the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. <p>What can school food service managers do to meet these challenges? Some strategies include: maximizing use of available USDA Foods, purchasing foods in season, focusing on lower-cost foods, increasing participation in school meals programs, tightening procurement practices, and sharing cost-savings strategies with others.</p> <p>Recipe for Success</p> <p>The following strategies may be helpful in controlling costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revamp cycle menus to serve less expensive, popular student choices more often. For example, serve spaghetti instead of lasagna, using whole-grain commodity pasta to reduce food costs. Serve low-cost beans or other legumes more often as a meat alternate or vegetable choice. For example, serve a bean and cheese burrito, substitute kidney beans for some of the meat in chili, or offer garbanzo beans on a salad bar. Train staff to follow standardized recipes precisely. Every extra scoop costs money! For example, don't add extra ground beef to the spaghetti sauce recipe. Serve portion sizes according to the recipe. For example, serve a level 1/2-cup scoop of mashed potatoes, instead of a heaping scoop. Plan age-appropriate portion sizes. Serve the food-based optimal portion size for grades K-5 to better target their calorie and nutrient needs and reduce waste. Join a purchasing co-op to help maximize your purchasing power! Combine bids with neighboring school districts to purchase larger quantities at lower prices. Compare produce prices among various vendors. Contact local farmers about products they can supply at a reasonable price. If available, use the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season to get the best price and peak flavor. Use canned or frozen fruits and vegetables more often. |





Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

| FAQ: | TOPIC: |
|-------|---|
| 1-8 | Application Procedures |
| 9-12 | Menu Criteria |
| 13-21 | Fruits and Vegetables |
| 22-30 | Whole Grains |
| 31 | Milk |
| 32-36 | Nutrition Education/Physical Activity |
| 37-46 | Competitive Foods/Beverages (Including a la carte and/or vended items) |
| 47-51 | Participation |
| 52 | Recognition |
| 53-54 | Recordkeeping/Documentation |

Application Procedures

1. Is it possible to apply for the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSCC) as a district, instead of as an individual school?

Yes, multiple schools can apply under the same district. However, each individual school must submit its own application packet, except:

- If the same menu and same foods were served throughout the district, the district can submit only one set of 4-week lunch menus, one set of menu worksheets and recipes.
- If the same competitive foods and beverages were sold throughout the cafeteria and/or school campus, submit only one set of the Competitive Foods worksheet.
- If each individual school follows its district's wellness policy, submit only one School Policies and Practices checklist.

2. If schools apply for a Gold award and do not meet the criteria, but do meet the criteria for the Silver or Bronze, will they be given the HUSCC award for the lower level?

Yes, if they did not meet the Gold of Distinction or Gold requirements, their application would be reviewed against the Silver and Bronze criteria.

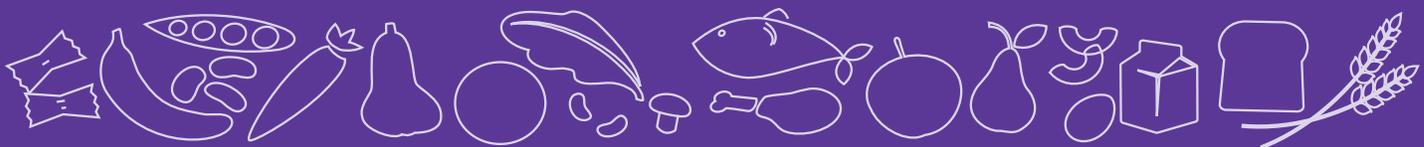
3. If my school had a 3-day week scheduled (the minimum), but 1 day was cancelled due to inclement weather, can we still use that week since they had the planned menu?

No, schools should submit 4 consecutive weeks with at least 3 days of served meals each week. If this is not possible due to unusual circumstances, work with your State Agency and USDA Regional Office.

4. How do we demonstrate we have healthy menu planning practices?

Healthy menu planning practices should be implemented throughout the menu. Ideally, entrée choices should appeal to students, incorporate whole-grain products, and offer a variety of fruits and vegetables on the serving line or salad bar. The HUSCC vision supports a goal that every student should have the opportunity to select a reimbursable lunch that meets the HUSCC criteria.

The use of token items, such as a loaf of whole wheat bread/rolls offered at the end of the serving line, but not menued as part of the meal or planning a very small





quantity of the HUSSC items with only a few servings being taken by the students does not support the HUSSC vision. A Gold Award of Distinction application must demonstrate that at least 10% of the students take the HUSSC items on a regular basis.

5. How can I find out if my school is already enrolled as a Team Nutrition (TN) School? If my school is not a TN School, how do I apply?

To see if your school is enrolled in Team Nutrition, go to teamnutrition.usda.gov/database.html. Select the search page hyperlink and enter the school's ZIP Code to determine if the school is listed in the TN School Database.

The TN school enrollment form can be downloaded online and submitted only by mail or fax. Signatures of the principal and foodservice manager are required in order to process the enrollment form.

6. Why must the State Agency child nutrition director sign off on each application?

By signing off on an application, the State director assures USDA that the application has been thoroughly reviewed by the State Agency and that the school is meeting all HUSSC criteria and is serving reimbursable meals according to 7 CFR 210.10.

7. Will a school be asked to submit additional documentation after it submitted its application?

Possibly. FNS reserves the right to request additional information to verify

that the school: (1) serves reimbursable meals, and (2) meets all HUSSC criteria. The menu structure should be fully explained in question 2 on pages 4, 5, 6, and 7 (Lunch Menu Worksheet) of the HUSSC application and should include information on entrée choices, side dish choices, number of choices the student can choose, and how Offer vs Serve (OVS) is implemented, if applicable. The review process can be significantly delayed if additional information is needed.

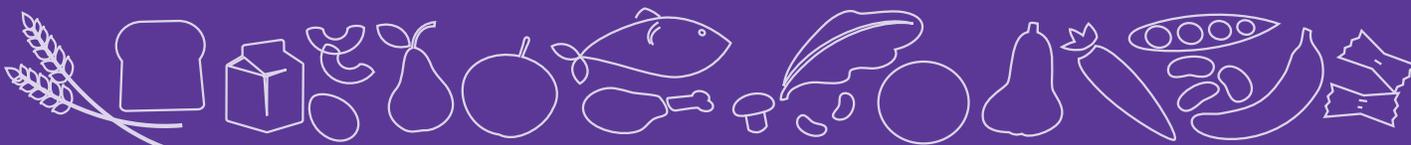
8. What information should the production records include?

Production records should be submitted for the 4-week lunch menus for all applications, except the Bronze. They should indicate actual daily meal count (students and adults); menu items (used to meet meal pattern requirements), planned portion size (by age/grade); quantity prepared for each menu item, a la carte items sold (if applicable), and leftovers.

Menu Criteria

9. What is the basis for the menu criteria for school lunches?

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* serves as the basis for the menu criteria for school lunches. The menu criteria emphasize the same foods that are encouraged in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines. Some of these foods include whole grains, dark green and orange vegetables, fruits, dry beans and peas, and low-fat/fat-free milk.





10. Can we provide 2 weeks of menus from one month and then 2 weeks from the next month?

Yes, as long as the weeks are consecutive. The weeks do not have to be confined within the same calendar month.

11. If the menu weeks used are shorter than 5 days, do we still have to meet the same menu criteria as those schools that are using 5 days in the weeks?

Yes. Requirements to meet the menu criteria are not prorated for less than 5 days in the week. Whether you have 3, 4, or 5 days in the week, each day should reflect the menu criteria. For example, if you have a 3-day week for a school that is applying for a Silver/Bronze award, they would have to offer whole-grain foods and dark green/orange vegetables all 3 days for that 3-day week. For vegetables and fruits, you must offer a different choice each day.

12. What is meant by the statement that “each child should have the opportunity to select a meal that supports the HealthierUS School Challenge goals”?

Sometimes, the way menus are structured or served can, unknowingly, prevent a child from being able to select all healthful foods included in your meals. This statement is better explained using examples.

- Example 1: School XYZ allows students to select only one side dish from the following options: spinach salad, baked beans, and corn. The spinach salad is used to meet the dark green/orange vegetable criteria and the baked beans to meet the weekly dry beans/peas criteria. Since the student

can only select one side, he/she would not be able to select both the spinach salad and the baked beans. Because of this, the student would not have the opportunity to select a meal that supports the HUSSC goals.

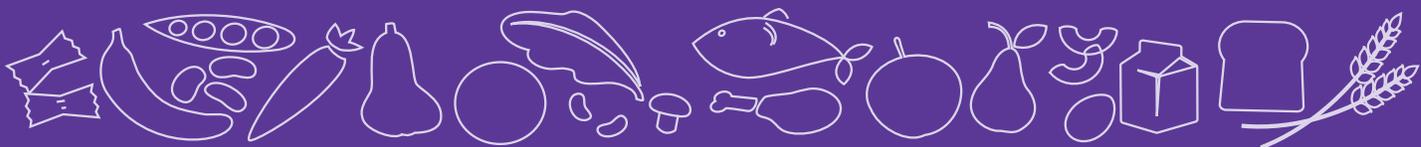
- Example 2: One reimbursable meal serving line offers all the items needed to meet the HUSSC goals and the other reimbursable meal serving line does not. Students are not allowed to cross over from one line to another when selecting food for their meal. In this situation, students have the opportunity to select a HUSSC meal by selecting the serving line that offers the HUSSC items.
- Example 3: The school offers a “food court” type of meal serving lines. Students can freely move between all lines and select a reimbursable meal. In this situation, students are able to select a HUSSC meal by selecting HUSSC items from any of the serving lines before passing through the point of sale.

While Example 2 and 3 above are currently acceptable, the intent of the HUSSC is that schools should be actively moving toward offering meals that meet HUSSC criteria on all reimbursable lunch lines.

Fruits/Vegetables

13. Why is there a requirement to offer dry beans or peas at least once per week?

The *Dietary Guidelines* emphasize more dry beans and peas (legumes) because they provide a broad array of vitamins,





minerals, and macronutrients, including those that are nutrients of concern. They are also a great economical source of dietary fiber and plant protein. These products can be purchased in the dry form and cooked at the school, or purchased as canned, precooked. A variety of dry beans/peas are available through the USDA Foods program. They can be served as a meat/meat alternate or as a vegetable, and they may be incorporated into entrees, side dishes, or salad bars. Note that fresh, canned, or frozen green peas, fresh or frozen soybeans (edamame), and green lima beans, which have a very different nutrition profile, do not count as dry beans or peas.

14. Why is there a requirement for fresh fruits in the menu criteria?

It is important that menus reflect a variety in the types and forms of fruits that are offered, including fresh fruits. The *Dietary Guidelines* encourages consuming more fruit. Fresh fruits provide fiber and an array of micronutrients including vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. Also, schools have opportunities to offer fruit to students throughout the school year that are predominately available fresh, such as apples, melons, bananas, strawberries, kiwi, oranges, and grapes, which increases the number of potential fruit choices.

15. Can 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice count as a serving of fruit or vegetable for HUSSC?

Yes. If the serving size is at least ¼ cup, schools may offer 100 percent fruit juice once per week to count toward the

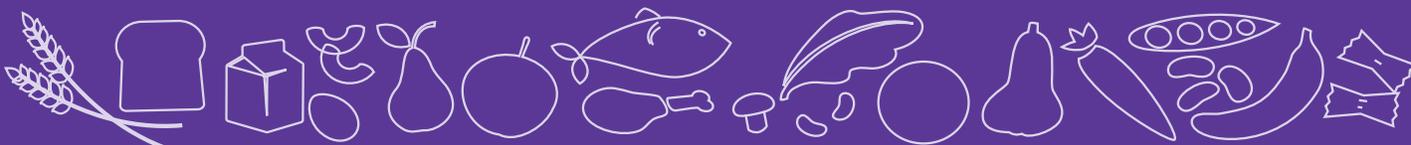
HUSSC criteria for fruit. Similarly, 100 percent vegetable juice may count once per week as a vegetable serving. Note that 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice may count toward only half of the total fruit/vegetable requirement in Traditional or Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning. See the *USDA Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*, page 2-1.

16. What vegetables are counted as “dark green and orange” vegetables? Can we use dark green or orange vegetables that are not on the list?

“Dark Green Vegetables” include dark green leafy vegetables and broccoli. In addition to broccoli, vegetables in this subgroup include spinach, romaine lettuce, collard greens, kale, and turnip greens. Dark green leafy vegetables and broccoli are sources of important vitamins and minerals such as vitamins A, C, and E, folate, calcium, iron, and potassium. Orange vegetables include acorn squash, butternut squash, carrots, hubbard squash, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes. You can only count dark green or orange vegetables that are on the HUSSC list.

17. Can schools offer a salad bar every day of the week to meet the HUSSC criteria for vegetables and fruits?

Yes. Schools that offer salad bars usually offer a variety of vegetables and fruits. As long as the planned serving size is at least ¼ cup for each fruit and vegetable selected, and the required number and kind of fruits or vegetables are offered, schools may count the salad bar toward meeting the criteria.





18. If a school is counting fruits and vegetables from a self-serve salad bar where the foods are not pre-portioned, how is it determined if they are meeting the ¼-cup requirement?

The menu planner defines what the typical serving is from the salad bar, based on actual student consumption. The production records show sufficient quantities are planned.

19. What is meant by “a different vegetable every day” or “a different fruit every day”?

In keeping with the *Dietary Guidelines*, HUSSC encourages schools to offer a wide variety of vegetables and fruits, so that a student can select a different one every day, not merely different forms of the same vegetable or fruit. For example, if a school offers mashed potatoes, it cannot also count a serving of potato rounds that same week to meet the HUSSC criteria. Apple slices and applesauce also are considered as the same fruit.

Schools that offer a variety of individual fruits or vegetables throughout the week may count a mixture of these as a serving in order to minimize waste.

20. Can baked beans count as both a vegetable serving and the weekly dry bean/pea requirement for the Challenge?

Yes, they can meet the dry bean and pea and the vegetable requirement for the HUSSC.

21. When several vegetables or fruits are in one dish (e.g., a California Medley or Fruit Salad), can this dish meet the requirement

of the HUSSC vegetable or fruit criteria?

Yes, in dishes such as a California Medley, where more than one vegetable is used, one of the single vegetables in the dish can be used to meet the vegetable criteria for HUSSC. For example, the broccoli in the California Medley would meet the dark green vegetable criteria.

Whole Grains

22. How can I determine if a whole-grain product credits as a serving of grains/breads?

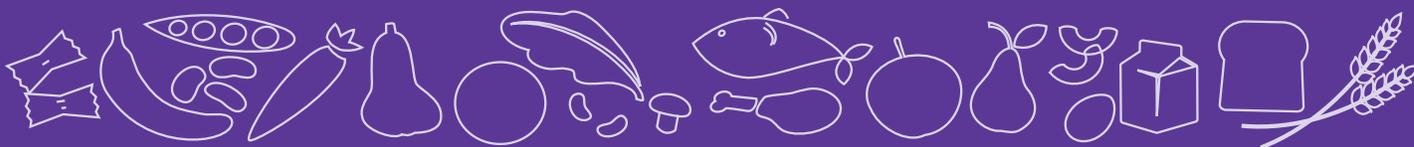
Schools should compare the weight of 1 serving of the grains/breads in ounces or grams with the weights listed in the charts on p. 3-15 and 3-16 in the *USDA Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*.

23. How do you determine if the whole grain is the primary ingredient by weight in a grains/breads product?

A whole grain is the primary ingredient by weight when:

- A whole grain is listed first on an ingredient statement, or
- In purchased products that contain multiple grains, if the total weight of all the whole-grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first ingredient listed, then it meets the criteria of whole grains being the primary ingredient by weight.

If a school-made recipe contains multiple whole grains, the total of whole grains must weigh more than any other ingredient.





24. If the grains/breads product contains some whole grain, but whole grain is not the primary ingredient by weight, can I still count the product as a whole grain?

Yes. As long as the product equals 1 grains/breads serving and whole grain(s) is the primary grain ingredient. However, schools must serve a majority of whole-grain products in which whole grain is the primary ingredient by weight. See Question #23.

25. How many times per week must I offer items in which whole grain is the primary ingredient by weight?

To meet the whole-grain criteria, schools which apply for a Gold/Gold of Distinction award must offer products in which whole grain is the primary ingredient at least 3 of the 5 required serving days. For Silver/Bronze award, schools must serve these products at least 2 of the 3 required serving days. For example, brown rice, whole-grain pasta, and oatmeal are considered Group A whole-grain foods, if they meet the serving size requirement. See Question #22.

26. Can I offer the same whole-grain food item each day?

No, at least one of the weekly servings must be a different whole-grain food or product in order to meet the HUSSC criteria. Schools should offer a variety of whole grains each week and over the course of the 4 weeks. Schools will not meet the HUSSC criteria by offering whole-wheat bread as a daily optional whole-grain item. Schools are encouraged to use brown rice, whole-grain pasta, whole

cornmeal, oatmeal, or other cooked whole grains to increase the use of whole grains in schools.

A variety of whole-grain foods are also available for schools to use through the USDA Foods program (formerly known as Commodity Foods). Various forms of a grain may be counted as different whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, whole-wheat rolls, and whole-wheat tortillas. Check the whole-grains resources on the HUSSC section of the Team Nutrition Web site.

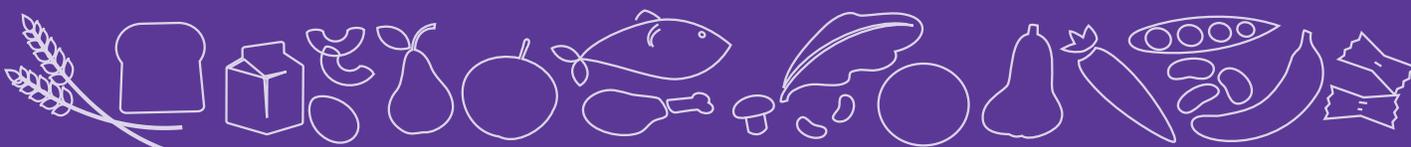
27. How can my school obtain whole-grain USDA Foods (in the USDA Foods Program)?

The USDA Foods program (which offers foods to schools) is administered at the State level. The State distributing agency selects food items from the USDA foods available list, those foods that they believe will be most popular in the school/child nutrition programs in their State. If you would like to see more whole-grain product options, please contact your State distributing agency.

A list of State contacts can be found at www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/contacts/sdacontacts.htm. A list of foods available can be found at www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/foods_available.htm.

28. Can flax seed count as a whole grain?

No, flax seed is not a grain. Grains are generally the seeds of various grasses. Flax seed is a seed product of a flowering plant, and is not considered a grain product.





29. Can popcorn meet the whole-grain requirement?

No. While popcorn is a whole grain, it is considered a snack food item and is not credited as grains/breads in the USDA *Food Buying Guide*. Popcorn will not count toward the HUSSC whole-grain criteria even if it is served as an extra component of the reimbursable meal.

30. If the ingredient label lists “whole corn treated with lime” as an ingredient, would the whole-corn ingredient still be considered a whole grain?

The product would only be considered a whole grain if the documentation from the manufacturer indicates that the manufacturing process used to prepare the corn with lime retains the pericarp, or bran layer.

Milk

31. Can flavored fluid milk be offered?

Yes. Low-fat (1% or less) and fat-free (skim), flavored or unflavored milk can be offered.

Nutrition Education and Physical Activity

32. What are the nutrition education criteria for elementary schools?

- Nutrition education is provided to at least half of the grade levels in the school.
- Healthy eating messages and activities are integrated into existing classroom instruction, such as health education,

science, language arts, and reading and writing classes. This type of instruction should include the use of *MyPyramid* and *MyPyramid for Kids Classroom Lessons*, other Team Nutrition materials, or their equivalent. You can download *MyPyramid Classroom Lessons* at: teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/mypyramidclassroom.html.

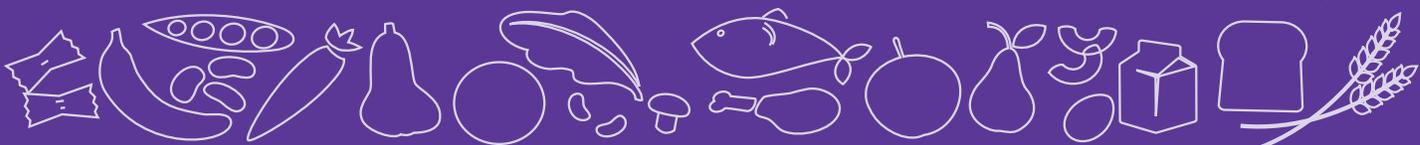
- Nutrition education activities involve the classroom, cafeteria, and home/parents.
- Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded).

33. What are the nutrition education criteria for middle and high schools?

- Nutrition education is offered to middle school students in at least one grade level as part of required year round instruction.
- Nutrition education is offered to high school students in 2 courses required for graduation.
- Nutrition education involves multiple channels of communication.
- Messages are reinforced by prohibiting the use of food as a reward (school holiday parties are excluded).

34. What are the physical education/activity criteria for elementary schools?

- Structured physical education classes are provided to students throughout the school year. These classes count toward the time requirements.





- In addition, physical activity opportunities are provided daily for students outside of physical education class. For example, regular scheduled recess, physical activity breaks during the school day within the classroom, school walking clubs, bike clubs, intramural sports, walk to school program, etc. This does not count toward the time requirements for physical education.
- Reinforcing physical activity education messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.

35. What are the physical education/ activity criteria for middle and high schools?

- Offer structured physical education classes to at least two grades and provide students in all grades opportunities to participate in physical activity (intramural/interscholastic sports or activity clubs) throughout the school year.
- In addition, actively promote participation in physical activities (in and out of school) to all students.
- Reinforcing physical activity education messages by neither denying nor requiring physical activity as a means of punishment.

36. If my school’s competitive foods meet the stricter sodium requirements for the Gold of Distinction, what level of structured physical education would be required?

For elementary schools, the school would

have to provide a minimum average of 90 minutes per week of structured physical education throughout the school year and meet stricter sodium requirements for competitive foods to qualify for the Gold of Distinction Award. If the elementary school provides a minimum average of 150 minutes per week of structured physical education throughout the year, they do not have to meet the stricter sodium requirements to receive a Gold of Distinction Award. For secondary schools, the school’s competitive foods would only have to meet the stricter sodium requirement for the Gold of Distinction Award.

Competitive Foods and Beverages (Including a la Carte and/or Vended Items)

37. What is the basis for the competitive foods criteria?

The HUSSC criteria reflect the recommendations of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published recommendations (April 2007) for foods that should be served in schools outside of the organized school lunch meals. Competitive foods criteria emphasize limiting the intake of foods high in calories, total fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, added sugars, and sodium.

38. Do these criteria eliminate selling whole milk and 2 percent milk either a la carte and/or through school vending? Why?

Yes. The *2005 Dietary Guidelines* specifies





that Americans (age 2 and older) use fat-free and low-fat milk and milk products.

39. Why was a 200-calorie limit put on portions of items for vended sale?

A 200-calorie limit was placed upon pre-packaged vended or a la carte sales in an effort to control portion size and thus calories. Additionally, schools that prepare foods for a la carte sales are required to limit the portion to the serving size of the food served in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

40. Can my school offer an entrée as an a la carte item if it is not offered as part of the lunch menu that day?

Yes. However, the entrée would have to meet the HUSSC Competitive Foods criteria. For example, if pizza is sold a la carte, but is not offered as an NSLP entrée on that day, the pizza would have to meet the criteria for fat, *trans* fat, saturated fat, sugar, sodium, and portion size/calories.

41. If my school uses Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP), what serving sizes do I need to use in order to meet the competitive food portion size criteria?

For NSMP, the serving size is defined by the menu planner based on the planned meal. If a school sells a second entrée a la carte, that entrée is exempt from meeting the competitive foods criteria, and the portion size of the second entrée must be the same or smaller than the serving size offered in the school lunch program. Any a la carte items that are not part of a reimbursable meal must meet the competitive foods criteria.

42. If my school meets all of the Gold award criteria and only sells low-fat or fat-free milk a la carte, does my school qualify for a Gold Award of Distinction?

Yes. By selling only milk a la carte, the school meets the competitive foods criteria of the Gold Award of Distinction award. Schools do not need to meet both the Competitive Foods criteria and the higher Physical Education criteria to qualify for the Gold Award of Distinction. Elementary schools that meet the stricter sodium requirement under competitive foods must still provide 90 minutes per week of physical education throughout the school year.

43. Do beverages have to meet the sugar criteria?

No. Only low-fat or fat-free milk, 100 percent juice, and water can be sold as competitive beverages in order to meet any of the HUSSC award levels. These beverages are exempt from the sugar criteria.

44. Does the Gold/Gold Award of Distinction competitive foods criteria address only items sold by the school, or does this include other school-sponsored activity sales?

The Gold/Gold Award of Distinction criteria include all foods and beverages made available at the school, to students on the school campus, and throughout the school day.

Examples of food and beverage sales/service that would require meeting the nutrition guidelines or standards are:





Foods or beverages sold a la carte in the school cafeteria

- Foods or beverages sold in vending machines, school stores, or snack bars operated by the school
- School-sponsored food and beverage sales during the school day

45. Do the foods served at birthday parties or other classroom events have to meet the Challenge criteria?

No. Schools are not expected to monitor what a parent sends to school for a birthday party. However, schools may have policies on birthday parties/classroom events as part of their school wellness policies.

46. Do the food items sold at a fundraiser after school have to meet the competitive foods criteria? Why or why not?

No, the food items sold at an afterschool fundraiser do not have to meet the competitive foods criteria. The competitive foods criteria only apply to school-sponsored foods and beverages sold during the school day. For creative ideas related to fundraising, see the Healthy Fundraising Tips resource included on page 40.

Participation

47. Why was the elementary school lunch average daily participation (ADP) criteria for elementary schools set at 70 percent for Gold & Gold of Distinction?

Data from the School Nutrition Dietary Assessment (SNDA) Study II (July 2001) indicated that the average daily participation, based upon enrollment, of

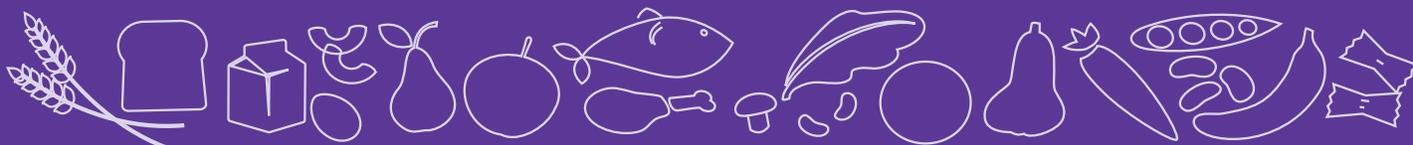
elementary schools randomly selected for this national study was 67 percent. The SNDA Study III (November 2007) showed that average daily participation of elementary schools has improved to 73 percent. An elementary school that is being nationally recognized as having an excellent school nutrition program is expected to have an average daily participation rate of at least 70 percent.

48. How was the middle and high school ADP criteria established?

Due to the popularity of the Challenge, draft secondary school HUSSC criteria were established in the spring of 2009 by members of the working group that established the elementary school criteria in 2004 and others. Because of the inherent difference between elementary and middle and high schools, the draft secondary school criteria were reviewed by local school foodservice directors of HUSSC awardees, State agency personnel across the country and regional and national office staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. The criteria established reflect the HUSSC vision of recognizing excellence in nutrition and physical activity.

49. Our school has a low percentage of students approved for free and reduced-price meals, thus our participation is low. Will USDA make allowances for lowering the ADP for such schools?

The ADP criteria apply to all schools regardless of percentage of low-income students. USDA recognizes that many factors may influence ADP rates. In order to address this, there is no ADP criteria for





the Bronze level to serve as incentive for schools to begin serving healthier meals that will ultimately lead to higher ADP and the opportunity to achieve a higher level award. Additionally, the ADP for silver level has been eased to 60% for elementary/middle schools and 45% for high schools. USDA believes that any school recognized as having excellence in nutrition should maintain a high school lunch participation rate. Meals that are planned and prepared to meet quality standards should be appealing to all children in the school. For helpful ideas to increase participation, see page 38.

50. Do we need to use a specific month for reporting our ADP?

No. You can report your ADP for any month prior to the date the submitted menus are served.

51. In my school, kindergarten students do not stay for lunch. Must I include these students in my enrollment in order to calculate my ADP?

No. If school lunch is not accessible or available for kindergartners, do not count them in the participation data.

Recognition

52. What type of recognition will schools receive if they receive an HUSSC award?

Schools that successfully meet the Challenge will receive a recognition plaque, a monetary award (\$2000 for Gold Award of Distinction, \$1500 for Gold, \$1000 for Silver, \$500 for Bronze)

and a banner. Schools are encouraged to market their success to their community via the newspaper, parent newsletters, etc. and are expected to maintain their high level of excellence throughout the 4-year certification period.

Recordkeeping/Documentation

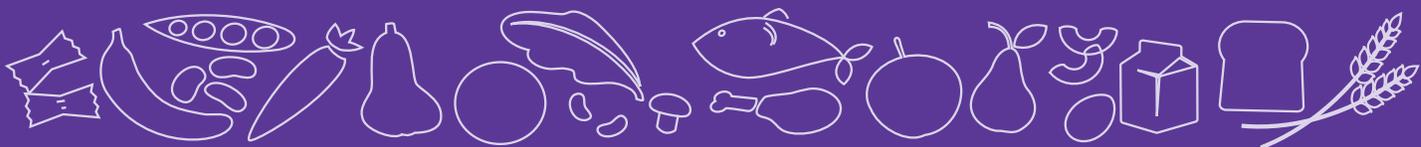
53. What kind of recordkeeping and/or documentation is required of schools after they have received certification?

Schools should maintain the HUSSC criteria during the 4-year award period and the school must keep copies of the following documents on file during the certification period:

- Menus served.
- Menu documentation (including food production records, Child Nutrition (CN) Labels, Food Product Ingredient Labels, Nutrition Facts Labels, etc.).
- Recipes, if school-made, for products sold/served.
- Food Product Ingredient and Nutrition Facts labels for items sold a la carte.

54. What is the time period for my award?

Awards are good for a 4-year period, from the date of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approval. Before your award expires, you should apply for recertification. If possible, try for the next higher award level.





Success Stories

The following stories describing successful strategies were summarized from statements by officials involved in the process of becoming prize-winning schools. Allow them to inspire you as you take the HealthierUS School Challenge!

Barnes County Schools
Valley City, North Dakota
35 Percent Free and Reduced-Price
Sue Milender
Sue.Milender@sendit.nodak.edu
(701) 845-0483

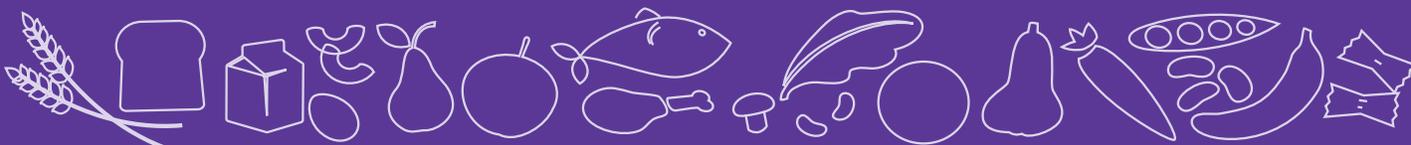


Gather a progressive team. Evaluate the areas having the greatest need and plan to work on mini-projects until your ultimate goal is realized. This challenge has allowed us to showcase all of our hard work over the years. The greatest result is the camaraderie that is felt as a group of professionals work on a piece of the puzzle together.

How We Did It!

Everyone in our school community came together; administrators, physical education teachers, nutrition professionals, and the school board toward a common goal. We all felt it was imperative to change direction and begin making healthy lifestyles a normal part of our school environment.

We utilized grants from several sources to get started. These grants allowed us to complete mini-projects, that over the years, helped develop a wonderful overall environment of wellness. The HealthierUS School Challenge was another important step in our journey to promote health.





Moss Public School
Holdenville, Oklahoma
52 Percent Free and Reduced-Price
Cheryl Carpenter
Cherylcarpenter@mossps.k12.ok.us
(405) 379-7251

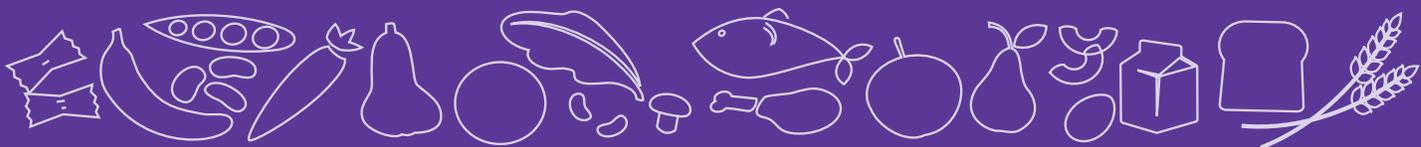


It has become more important than ever for our children to learn about healthy eating. The HealthierUS School Challenge is one of the best ways to educate the children about fitness and healthier eating. By implementing this program in the school, our children have realized that fruits and vegetables are good to eat, and now they choose them over candy and junk food when they are away from school. In return they are feeling better and have more active lifestyles.

How We Did It!

I first approached our Superintendent with the pros and cons. On the upside, we would be the first school in Oklahoma to receive the award and our students would benefit from healthier meals. The downside is the possibility of higher food cost and more paperwork. After gaining his approval (he said, “Go for It!”) we put it to a student vote to either “accept or not accept the challenge!”

At first the application may seem a little overwhelming, but if you break down the menu planning to meet each days’ requirements, then check the weekly totals, it is not so difficult. Let your students be part of the decision to apply and they will take ownership of the award and may even use what they have learned outside of school.





Arroyo Elementary
Glendale, Arizona
81 Percent Free and Reduced-Price
Connie Parmenter
connie.parmenter@wedschools.org
(602) 896-8505 or 896-5230

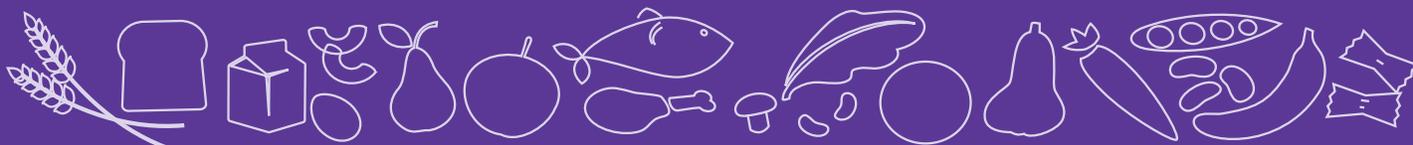


Obtaining the HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Award builds a sense of pride in that other schools, school districts, and States recognize that you are a step above the rest in regard to child nutrition, and the result is that kids are better for it.

How We Did It!

District staff came together as a team to work with schools, specifically on physical activity opportunities and lunch menus, to meet qualifications. Several schools were approached, and Arroyo accepted the challenge. Sue Lange, Arroyo Elementary Cafeteria Manager, and Melissa Paulsen, a Registered Dietitian, were instrumental in assembling the winning application.

Applying for the Challenge may seem overwhelming at first, but some schools may already be meeting or close to meeting the requirements and just need a bit of encouragement to complete the application.





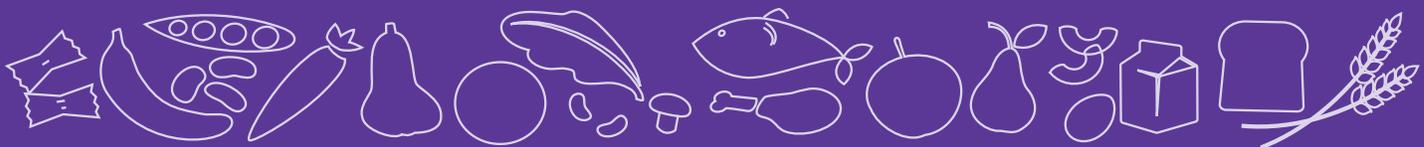
Prince William County Schools
Manassas, Virginia
30 Percent Free and Reduced-Price
Serena Suthers
sutherss@pwcs.edu
(703) 791-7314



Winning the HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Award brought our Food Service Program more recognition than any other promotional campaign we've done. Our staff received a real morale boost from the attention and respect they have received from the superintendent, school board, principals, teachers, and parents for their hard work and success.

How We Did It!

We reviewed our centralized menus, added a source of whole grain, and juggled existing menu items around a bit until the well-balanced result met the Challenge criteria. With our menu and district-wide physical education programs we were able to meet the criteria for 53 out of 55 schools.





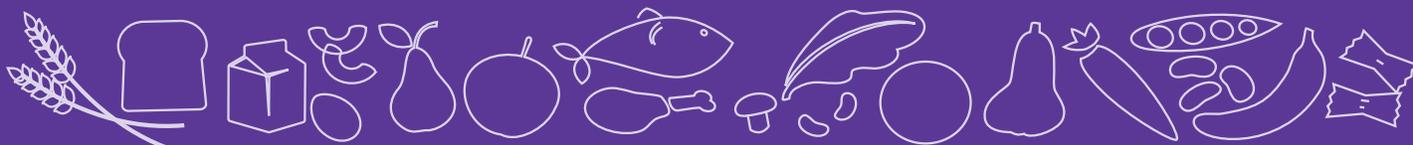
Elementary School
Pennsylvania
42 Percent Free and Reduced-Price



At times it got frustrating for the team, but it also proved to be a good training opportunity for the staff. Our mantra became, “If it was easy, it wouldn’t be called a challenge!”

How We Did It!

We made many alterations to our menu over an 18-month period. Some of the changes were very dramatic, others more subtle, but all of them were learning experiences. Our students were excited to be “guinea pigs.” The students became partners in the Challenge and asked how we were doing with it. We really worked to make them feel part of the process and gave them opportunities to voice their opinions and ideas. Since making the menu changes at the elementary level, I have noticed that those students (who are now in 5th, 6th, and 7th grades) are making healthy choices at the middle school level.





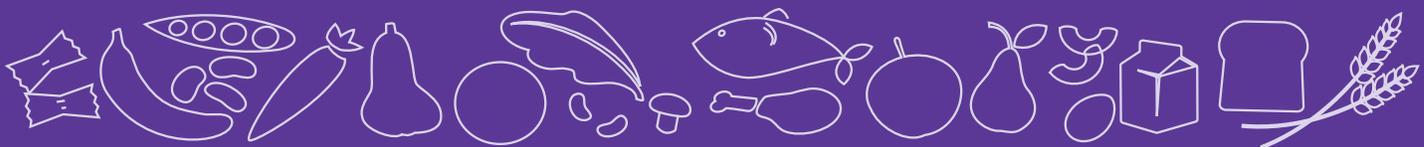
Kettering City County Schools
Kettering, Ohio
32 Percent Free and Reduced-Price
Louise Easterly
Louise.easterly@ketteringschools.org
(937) 499-1446



Receiving the award gives a lot of credibility to our programs, and it shows that it's a matter of doing the right thing for kids. Concentrate more on marketing meals and less on a la carte sales.

How We Did It!

We switched all milk to 1 percent and skim, used whole-grain foods in menus three times per week, and provided a variety of fresh fruits/vegetables daily. We had to carefully review all whole-grain labels for legitimacy. It truly takes determination and leadership to work towards a voluntary program with the biggest reward being providing children with a nourishing meal and opportunities for nutrition education and physical activity. We hope to serve as an inspiration to other schools who are considering applying for the Challenge.





Elementary School

Iowa

13 Percent Free and Reduced-Price



What a great opportunity for administrators to lead the way in nutrition and fitness for students of today and the future through the HealthierUS School Challenge! Yes, it is a challenge to take the first step to lead the way, but be supportive and open-minded to new ideas in nutrition and physical activity. The benefit it gives back to the students, staff, and parents is priceless. Take the Challenge and move your school to the next level!

How We Did It!

Our path to the HUSSC began several years ago when the principal agreed to and supported a change to the daily schedule by allowing recess before lunch. After the first year, the dramatic change in fruit/vegetable and milk consumption made us believe the guidelines we implement could make a difference in the children's eating habits. We bake fresh almost daily, so using whole-grain flour was easy; the acceptance of the students was a little more challenging. With the change in the nutritional part of our curriculum and guidance of our teachers and staff, along with the support of our parents, our students are gaining the knowledge to point them in a much healthier direction to benefit them throughout their lives.





Additional Resources

The resources below will assist you in various steps along the way to becoming a HealthierUS School Challenge applicant. These are available online on the HUSSC Web site at:

teamnnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html

Brochure

Use this colorful and informative tool to increase the support for your efforts toward your school becoming a HealthierUS School Challenge award recipient! It contains brief details about how to apply and an overview of the criteria. It can also be used to introduce others to the HealthierUS School Challenge.

Poster

This 11" X 17" poster features a place to check off the boxes as you meet the criteria. It can be hung in the school foodservice office or even the cafeteria to track your journey to becoming a HealthierUS School!

Press Release

This ready-to-use press release contains blanks where you plug in the information specific to your school or school district. It can highlight the efforts of those persons in your school or school district that work to make your school nutrition program great!

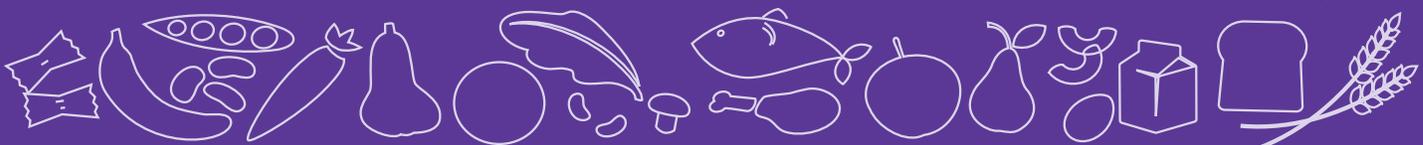
National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) Training

The National Food Service Management Institute will send child nutrition consultants to your school to provide technical assistance services and conduct training on HealthierUS School Challenge and other topics, if needed.

The criteria of the HUSSC are taught through lectures and hands-on activities. This service is provided free through Team Nutrition. The request must come from your State Agency. For more information, contact NFSMI at (800) 321-3054 or nfsmi@olemiss.edu.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidance on Wellness, Nutrition Education and Physical Education/Activity

The resource offers additional information to provide a healthier school environment.

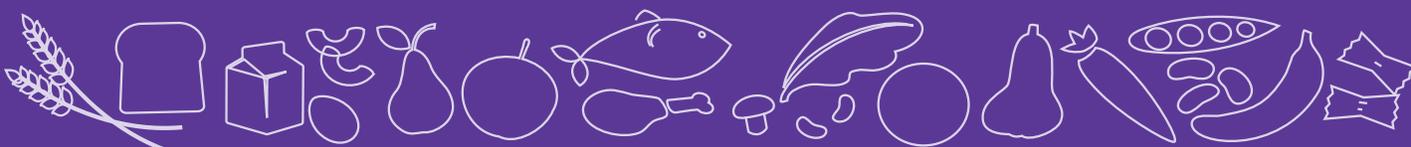




Guidance on Wellness, Nutrition Education and Physical Education/Activity from CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

The CDC provided additional recommendations, by award level, for the Wellness, Nutrition Education and Physical Education/Activity criteria for secondary schools. While not required for HUSSC at this time, FNS strongly encourages schools to work toward meeting these criteria designed to improve the health status of secondary level students. Suggested Additional Criteria for Secondary Schools:

| Wellness Policy | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold of Distinction |
|---|--------|--------|------|-------------------------------|
| School reports to the district on a regular basis regarding its compliance with the district wellness policy. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Goals from the school health/wellness action plan are integrated into the overall School Improvement Plan. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| School policy prohibits the use of physical activity and withholding physical education class as punishment. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Nutrition Education | | | | |
| Skills-based instruction on healthy eating is required for every middle school student in at least one grade level as a part of a dedicated, stand alone, health education course, or the equivalent. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | In more than one grade level. |
| Every high school student is required to take 2 courses that include skills-based instruction on healthy eating as a part of a dedicated, stand alone, health education course, or the equivalent. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |





| Physical Education | Bronze | Silver | Gold | Gold of Distinction |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Middle School: School requires students to complete physical education courses. | For at least two full years. | For three full years. | At least 135 minutes of PE/week for three full years. | At least 225 minutes of PE/week for three full years. |
| High School: School requires students to complete physical education courses. | For at least one full year. | For at least two full years. | At least 135 minutes of PE/week for two full years. | At least 225 minutes of PE/week for two full years. |
| School prohibits the substitution of other courses or activities (ROTC, band, etc.) for physical education | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| School uses a physical education curriculum | ✓ | Meets Bronze and teachers use a chart describing the scope and sequence of instruction for physical education. | Meets Silver and teachers implement plans for assessing or evaluating students in physical education. | Meets Gold and teacher provides lesson plans or learning activities for physical education. |
| Student/teacher ratio in physical education is approximately the same number of students per teacher in other academic classes at all grade levels. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| School is implementing a plan to promote safe walking and bicycling to school and ensure safe intersections and crosswalks adjacent to the school. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| School offers a range of non-competitive physical activity opportunities (intramurals or physical activity clubs) aimed at engaging students in fun, recreational, and life-long learning opportunities before or after the school day. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

