



State of New Jersey


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Division of Food & Nutrition
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To: School Business Administrators, Charter School Leads; Non Public School Administrators; Food Service Directors

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, Coordinator 
School Nutrition Programs

Date: September 1, 2016

Subject: "Back to School" Information and Reminders

The 2016-2017 School Year is beginning, and the School Nutrition Programs' Unit is continuing to embrace and implement the changes resulting from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Please take a few moments to read the important reminders and updates noted below.

2016-2017 Administrative Reviews & the Implementation of the Schools Online Administrative Review System (SOARS): The School Nutrition Programs' Unit proudly announces the implementation of a new online Administrative Review system designed to increase efficiency and ease for both School Food Authorities (SFAs) and Nutrition Program Specialists during the Administrative Review process.

SFAs receiving an Administrative Review for the 2016-2017 School Year will receive notification at the end of September. A series of webinars for the selected SFAs will then be provided in October, including training on SOARS, the Administrative Review, and Resource Management.

Requirement of a School Breakfast Program Onsite Review: The "Administrative Review" Final Rule released in July of 2016 added the requirement of an onsite review for all SFAs operating a School Breakfast Program. The onsite review for breakfast and lunch must be conducted by February 1, 2017 by the SFA. Updated forms will be posted on the NJDA website at <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/applic/forms/#5> for your use and convenience.

Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School (Smart Snacks): The "Smart Snacks" Final Rule will take effect September 27, 2016, and can be found in SNEARS, under "Resources/Smart Snacks" tabs. Further information and training materials will be forthcoming, but please note that the Final Rule:

- Confirms the expiration of the ability to use the 10% Daily Value for calcium, potassium, vitamin D and fiber as a General Standard effective July 1, 2016
- Confirms that, effective July 1, 2016, snacks and side dishes must contain less than 200 mg of sodium per item as packaged or served
- Adds a specific exemption to the total fat and saturated fat standards for eggs
- Modifies the exemption to the General Standards for canned vegetables to exempt low sodium and no-salt added vegetables with no added fat to more closely align with USDA Foods standards and industry production standards
- Amends the definition of "entrée item" to include reference to whole grain rich, grain-only breakfast items served in the School Breakfast Program

Local Wellness Policy: The "Local Wellness Policy" Final Rule was released on July 29, 2016, and can be found, along with accompanying resources, in SNEARS under the "Resources/Local Wellness Policy" tabs. For School Year 2016-2017, SFAs are expected to begin developing a revised Local School Wellness Policy. SFAs must fully comply with the requirements of the final rule by June 30, 2017. At a minimum, this school year, SFAs should begin developing:

- Specific goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. SFAs are required to review and consider evidence-based strategies in determining these goals
- Standards and nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day that are consistent with Federal regulations for School meal nutrition standards, and the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards
- Standards for all foods and beverages provided, but not sold, to students during the school day (e.g., in classroom parties, classroom snacks brought by parents, or other foods given as incentives)
- Policies for food and beverage marketing that allow marketing and advertising of only those foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards
- Description of public involvement, public updates, policy leadership, and evaluation plan

Professional Standards: With the implementation of Professional Standards, every SFA must assign a Food Service Director. The Food Service Director may be located on or off-site, and may oversee multiple SFAs. Food Service Directors hired after July 1, 2015 must meet the hiring standards according to the Professional Standards Final Rule.

In New Jersey, all Food Service Directors, regardless of the date of hire, must have completed at least 8 hours of food safety training within the last five years. Although food safety training can be obtained through a variety of sources, a free, online food safety course is available from the Institute of Child Nutrition. Additional webinar trainings on various topics have been posted in SNEARS to assist School Nutrition Programs Personnel in reaching Professional Standard training hours.

Please note that excess training hours may be carried over into additional years.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP): The CEP Final Rule released on July 29, 2016 established the following policy regarding carryover for CEP students transferring to non-CEP schools:

- A non-CEP school receiving a student from a CEP school in September must offer the student a free, reimbursable meal for up to 30 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made in the current school year, whichever comes first
- A non-CEP school receiving a student transferring from a CEP school mid-year must provide free meals to the CEP student for up to 10 operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made

SFAs can refer to the listing of schools participating in CEP located in SNEARS and on the NJDA website when working with students transferring from CEP schools. The final rule can be found in SNEARS under “Resources/CEP” tabs.

2017 Application Packets: SNEARS documents must be submitted and certified by September 30, 2016 in order to participate in the School Nutrition Programs for School Year 2016-2017.

Charge Policies: The USDA released a memo dated July 8, 2016 establishing Federal Charge Policy Requirements. The memo can be found in SNEARS under “Resources/USDA Memos FY2016” tabs, and requires that all SFAs:

- Develop and implement a meal charge policy for each school operating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs
- Communicate the policy to school administrators, school food service professionals, families and students
- Include in the policy how delinquent meal charge debt will be collected
- Provide the policy in writing to all households at the start of the year, and to households that transfer to the SFA during the year

Please note that New Jersey SFAs have always been required to establish and post a clear, written charge policy. The passing of the NJ State A-1796/S-2000 law on February 5, 2015 further emphasized the importance of providing written notification to parents of students who have accumulated foodservice debt. SFAs should refer to the April 15, 2015 memo titled, “Guidance for Parent Notification of Payment Owed for School Breakfast and School Lunch Meals” located in SNEARS under “Resources/NJ Memos School Year 2014-2015” tabs when

developing and communicating the meal charge policy to school personnel and households. In addition, a “Meal Charge Fact Sheet” summarizing both federal and state requirements will be posted in SNEARS.

Whole Grain-Rich Exemption: SFAs may still apply for an exemption to the whole grain-rich requirement for School Year 2016-2017 by completing the New Jersey Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Form #279 available in SNEARS under “Resources/Equipment & Waivers” tabs. Please note that all previously approved whole grain-rich exemptions, including Pasta Waivers granted for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, expired at the end of School Year 2015-2016.

Direct Certification: New this year, SFAs must conduct Direct Certification four times per year during the following timeframes:

- July 15th – August 30, 2016
- September 1st – September 30, 2016
- October 1st – October 30th, 2016
- March 1st – March 30th, 2017

In addition, there are now two file upload processes to choose from, depending on the SFAs’ total enrollment with access to meals:

- **Batch Process:** SFAs whose total enrollment (with access to meals) is greater than or equal to 5000 must use the Batch Process. This will allow large SFAs to upload multiple enrollment files at the same time for processing. The system will send a notification e-mail to the SFA when the files are ready to view to complete the matching process. The turnaround time may take up to twenty-four hours.
- **Regular DC Process:** SFAs whose total enrollment (with access to meals) is less than 5000 can use either the batch process or the regular DC process to obtain direct certification matches the same day.

Civil Rights Data Collection Report: All SFAs must complete the Civil Rights Data Collection Report (Form #86) for each school/site under its sponsorship. The form must reflect data as of October 15th of each year and must be maintained on file. The form can be accessed on the NJDA website at <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/applic/forms/#5> and in SNEARS under “Resources/Annual Application and Agreement Documents” tabs.

Food Safety Inspection Report: SFAs must report the number of health/sanitation inspections each school/site had during the 2015-2016 school year in SNEARS by October 30th.

NJDA’s Jets Play 60 Eat Right, Move More Program: The NY Jets are partnering once again with the NJDA to sponsor the *Eat Right, Move More* program. The application can be found on the Messages & Memos screen in SNEARS, and can be submitted electronically or by mail to the School Nutrition Programs’ Office.

Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week – September 26th – 30th: Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week was designated as the last week of each September by a law signed in 2010 by Governor Christie. During this celebration, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) showcases schools that connect with New Jersey farmers to purchase local produce for school meals and to increase student consumption of healthy produce through school garden, agriculture and nutrition education. A Farm to School Toolkit can be accessed at: <http://www.farmtoschool.nj.gov/agriculture/farmtoschool/schools/toolkit/> for resources and additional information. In addition, SFAs can access Farm to School ideas at: <http://farmtoschool.nj.gov/agriculture/farmtoschool/documents/F2Sweekprogramideas.pdf>.

Calendar of Important School Nutrition Program Events: A calendar outlining important School Nutrition dates and events has been posted in SNEARS under “Resources/Annual Application and Agreement Documents” tabs to assist SFAs in complying with all School Nutrition Program deadlines.

We look forward to working with you and your staff, and helping you to provide healthy, safe and low-priced meals for your students for the 2016-2017 School Year. Please direct any questions to the School Nutrition Programs’ Unit at 609-984-0692.