# SNP Memo #2020-2021-52


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: March 16, 2021

TO: Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons Addressed

FROM: Sandra C. Curwood, PhD, RDN, ***Sandy***

## SUBJECT: Requirements for Certification of Compliance with the USDA Meal Patterns and Nutrition Standards

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs (VDOE-SNP) certifies compliance with the USDA meal patterns and nutrition standards for School Food Authorities (SFAs) sponsoring the federal school meal programs. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 established the requirement for the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide performance-based cash assistance for each reimbursable lunch served in compliance with meal pattern and nutrition standards. The 2021-2022 school year performance-based reimbursement rate is seven cents per lunch and is intended to help school divisions meet meal pattern requirements, increase the quality of meals served to children, and encourage healthy eating habits.

New SFAs applying to participate in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program are required to obtain certification of meal pattern compliance prior to operation. Federal regulation 7 CFR 210.7 outlines the certification process and all required information that must be submitted by the SFA to the VDOE-SNP. A summary of this process and the information that must be submitted is outlined below.

SFAs are expected to regularly monitor their menus for compliance, including any new meal pattern requirements. The VDOE-SNP will monitor ongoing compliance through administrative reviews. If the VDOE-SNP determines a SFA to be noncompliant with meal pattern requirements, fiscal action may include removing performance-based reimbursement, disallowance of meals, and/or withholding of payment.

### Menu Certification Requirements for New Sponsors

During the application process, new sponsors are required to submit menu certification documents and a signed attestation form (attachment A). A specific timeline for menu certification will be provided after the New Sponsor Intake Form and Pre-application is accepted by the VDOE-SNP.

Documentation must be provided for both breakfast and lunch, for each of the USDA established grade groups served, and reflect the full cycle menu. Additionally, if more than one distinct menu is served to students within a grade group, these additional menus must be submitted. The sponsor must also submit a USDA certification workbook for each menu planned for each grade group. A separate workbook is required for each five-day week of the cycle menu and must include the menu worksheets and simplified nutrient assessment. Supporting documents (product labels, recipes, etc.) are not required, but must be maintained on file and will be reviewed during the sponsor’s year one Federal Program Administrative Review.

For example, if a private school serves grades K-12 and has a two-week cycle menu for breakfast and a three-week cycle menu for lunch, the submission could include the following:

* K-12 breakfast menu
	+ K-12 breakfast workbook (five-day) for week 1
	+ K-12 breakfast workbook (five-day) for week 2
* K-8 lunch menu
	+ K-8 lunch workbook (five-day) for week 1
	+ K-8 lunch workbook (five-day) for week 2
	+ K-8 lunch workbook (five-day) for week 3
* 9-12 lunch menu
	+ 9-12 lunch workbook (five-day) for week 1
	+ 9-12 lunch workbook (five-day) for week 2
	+ 9-12 lunch workbook (five-day) for week 3
* Signed attestation form (attached)

In this example, it would also be acceptable for the sponsor to submit breakfast menus and workbooks for K-8 and 9-12 or K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. For lunch, it would also be acceptable to submit K-5 and 6-8 menus and workbooks instead of a combined K-8 menu. The submission is determined by the sponsor’s menu planning decisions.

Since new sponsors without an existing meal program may not have menus finalized at the time of certification, SFAs are expected to submit forecasted menus for the upcoming school year and base the workbooks off of these projections. To the extent possible, submitted menus should be based on product information provided by contracted vendors and suppliers.

USDA guidance and certification workbooks are available on the [Certification of Compliance webpage](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/certification-compliance).

### Menu Certification Process for New Sponsors

1. Sponsor submits required documents (i.e. menus, workbooks, and attestation statement) to SNPPolicy@doe.virginia.gov.
2. The VDOE-SNP has 60 days to make a determination from the time a complete certification package is received. Upon approval the sponsor will be notified in writing, can proceed with the application process, and will be eligible for performance-based reimbursement from the first day of operation. If denied, sponsors must reapply.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact your assigned SNP regional specialist.

SCC/AMN/cc

Attachment:

1. Meal Pattern Compliance Attestation Form