# SNP Memo #2022-2023-51


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: March 2, 2023

TO: Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons Addressed

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

## SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to School Meal Standards

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform school food authorities (SFAs) of the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA's) proposed rules to the school nutrition meal standards. The USDA is required by law to periodically update the school nutrition standards to reflect the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These proposed meal standards are draft updates to the School Nutrition Programs regulations.

Elements of the proposal include:

* Limits on added sugar, starting with grain-based desserts, breakfast cereals, yogurts, and flavored milks.
* Options for offering flavored milk.
* Options for grains, both of which allow for some enriched grains to be served.
* Sodium reduction.
* Professional standards hiring flexibilities for medium and large local education agencies recruiting new directors.
* Aligns National School Lunch Program (NSLP) afterschool snack standards with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) snack standards.
* Schools that substitute vegetables for fruits at breakfast more than one day per school week are required to offer different vegetable subgroups throughout the week.
* Allows nuts and seeds to credit for 100 percent of the meat/meat alternate component in all child nutrition programs and meals.
* Strengthens Buy American standards to set a 5 percent limit on non-domestic food purchases.
* Allows for geographic preference expansion with the procurement of local foods.

Schools must currently follow the standards laid out in the Transitional Rule through school year (SY) 2023–2024. The USDA considers comments on the proposal and updates the standards to reflect input. The timeline for implementation of the Final Rule would begin taking effect in SY 2024–2025. The proposal includes some rules, such as limits on sugar and sodium, phasing in over several school years.

This proposal primarily applies to schools participating in the NSLP and School Breakfast Program, and by extension, the Seamless Summer Option. However, it does propose to align some standards and terminology across programs. The USDA developed a useful [School Meal Standards Comparison Chart](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/school-meal-standards-comparison-chart) to show the differences between current and proposed standards.

**The proposal is now open for** [**public comment**](https://nokidhungry.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=283504c3b3add96827a4ae4b9&id=9d94e8142a&e=da74b84d9d) **until April 10, 2023.** You can read the full proposal and submit a comment online at [Regulations.gov](https://nokidhungry.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=283504c3b3add96827a4ae4b9&id=f219bd8f68&e=da74b84d9d). This is an opportunity for your voice to be heard and to help ensure that the rules we follow reflect your community and students' nutrition needs.

For more information, please contact your assigned School Nutrition Programs regional specialist or the SNP policy mailbox via email at SNPpolicy@doe.virginia.gov.

SCC/AMN/cc