

## Information YOU Need to Know: School Year 2012-13

### New School Meal Patterns and Nutrition Standards to Enhance Student Academics and Health

Starting in school year 2012-13, schools participating in the USDA's School Meal Programs are required to meet new nutrition standards for breakfast and lunch meal patterns. This change is driven by the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (Public Law 111-296) which was signed into law by President Obama and is part of the First Lady's *Let's Move! Campaign* to improve the health our nation. The standards will be implemented gradually, over a multiple year period, giving school district staff and students time to adjust to the changes. The new meal patterns;

- Includes more fruits , vegetables, and whole grains.
- Contains less fat and sodium.
- Meets specific calorie ranges for children in grades K-5; 6-8; and 9-12.

### The GOOD News About the New Meal Patterns For:

- **School administrators, educators, and school board trustees:** Consistent with the USDA's My Plate nutrition recommendations and serves as an academic support for students to learn and behave better.
- **Students:** Nutrient-rich foods and beverages provide the energy and nutrients necessary to grow, learn, and play.
- **Parents:** Reinforces healthy eating habits necessary for adequate growth and good health.

### Five Things School Administrators Need to Know About the New Meal Patterns and Nutrition Standards

1. Focus on the Changes in the Lunch Meal Pattern for SY 2012-13. A food-based lunch meal pattern must be followed by all programs. Meals must meet grade specific portion sizes for grades K-5; 6-8; and 9-12, and a reimbursable lunch must include at least a ½ cup serving of fruit or vegetable.
2. Support Your Foodservice Staff by encouraging them to attend the 2012 Montana School Nutrition Association Annual Conference. The conference takes place June 19-21 in Great Falls at the Heritage Inn. Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs staff will conduct training on the new standards and meal patterns during the conference. Registration information will be posted to the OPI School Nutrition Programs web site and sent to your foodservice manager in March.
3. Purchasing, Meal Pricing and Meal Costs Considerations. As you are preparing bids, menus, and meal prices for the SY 2012-13, please keep in mind these new menu regulations. The USDA is committed to enhancing the *USDA Foods items* to support the new meal patterns.
4. Meal Schedules and Service. As more schools offer a wider variety of menu choices and salad or fruit/vegetable bars to students, it is important to ensure the meal schedule allows adequate time for children to eat and *enjoy* their meals. Montana Team Nutrition has developed a *Comfortable Cafeteria* resource guide to assist schools with ensuring a positive and pleasant mealtime experience for children (See page 2).
5. Cash Assistance from USDA for Meeting New Standards and Meal Pattern. The USDA is offering performance-based cash assistance to School Food Authorities that become certified compliant with the meal pattern and nutrition standards. Cash assistance equals an additional six cents per lunch, available beginning October 1, 2012. Information on this certification process will be forth coming from OPI School Nutrition Programs.



## Training Opportunities and Resources

The Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs is committed to assisting schools in meeting these new USDA requirements through on-going training and technical assistance. In collaboration with statewide partners, like Montana School Nutrition Association and Montana Action for Healthy Kids, we are developing a comprehensive training plan to be delivered through statewide, regional, or local workshops. Individualized school district level professional development opportunities will also be available. While we are confident that many Montana schools are close to or already meeting these new standards, we are ready to help you meet them. We encourage you to check out the many resources available on the following web sites or please feel free to contact us for additional information. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this effort.

USDA Nutrition Standard for School Meals. Check out the meal patterns, timeline, question and answers, policy memo and final rule at this site:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>

Office of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Programs Web Site:

[http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/](http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/)

Comfortable Cafeterias Resource to Ensure Pleasant and Positive Mealtimes:

[http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/MTTeam.html#p7GPc1\\_7](http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/MTTeam.html#p7GPc1_7)

Montana Team Nutrition Program for a variety of foodservice training resources:

[http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/MTTeam.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/MTTeam.html)

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