

## New Guidelines for 2012-2013

For the upcoming school year 2012-2013, new USDA meal patterns standards will be implemented by sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The New Meal Pattern guidelines will require most schools to increase the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat fluid milk in school meals. In addition it requires schools to reduce the levels of sodium, saturated fat and trans-fat in meals and meet the average caloric needs of school children within their age groups.

The New Meal Pattern changes ensure that every child receives a nutritious meal that includes five components. The new guidelines are more specific, especially in the vegetable category. Vegetables from four categories are required per week, including dark green vegetables, red/orange vegetables, bean/peas (legumes) and starchy vegetables. The amount served for each vegetable subgroup differs but the minimum serving of total vegetables offered per day will be at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup or more depending on the children's age. The new meal pattern now requires a minimum of  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of serving or more per day of fruit, which makes a total of 2.5 cups or 5 cups per week based on the age group. Increasing fruit and vegetables consumption is an essential goal of the New Meal Pattern and sponsors are encouraged to offer a variety, especially fresh produce. It is required starting July 1, 2012 that every student has either a fruit or vegetable on their tray but can have both.

Milk offered must either be fat-free or 1% milk. There is a new guideline for milk substitution, If a school or institution chooses to offer a milk substitute for a child with a medical or special dietary, **water or juice can no longer be offered as a fluid milk substitute, the substitute must be nutritionally equivalent to milk even if the written request specifies water or juice.** We will be offering soymilk substitute to those students that need it.

The regulations require at least 50% of all grain served per be whole grains, Sodium will be reduced in meals, but will not become officially required until the school year 2014-2015.

We're always working to offer our students healthier and tastier choices. School meals are a great value and a huge convenience for busy families too! We look forward to welcoming your children to the cafeteria this fall.

Sincerely,

Carin Clifton-FSD