

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top left shows two yellow school buses, with the one in front having the number '32' on its side. The bottom left shows a classroom with blue walls, decorated with colorful balloons and framed pictures. There are several small white tables and chairs arranged in the room.

School Meal Programs

Administered by the Kentucky Department of Education
through the United States Department of Agriculture

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Program Operators

- 169 public school districts, 11 private schools, and 8 residential childcare institutions participated in the USDA School Meal Programs in school year 2024-25
 - National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
 - Number of Meals in School Year 24-25: 74,731,631
 - Total Reimbursement: \$304,037,602.59
 - School Breakfast Program (SBP)
 - Number of Meals in School Year 24-25: 47,258,190
 - Total Reimbursement: \$123,791,942.02
 - The NSLP requires states to match federal funds with state revenues. The rates varies slightly each year.
 - NSLP State Match in School Year 24-25: \$3,599,174

Funding

- Program operators are reimbursed on a per meal basis based upon the student's eligibility status.
- Reimbursement rates are established annually by the USDA based upon the Consumer Price Index.
- NSLP base rates for school year 24-25:
 - Free - \$4.43 , Reduced - \$4.03 , Paid - \$0.42
- SBP base rates for school year 24-25:
 - Free - \$2.37 , Reduced - \$2.07 , Paid - \$0.39

Community Eligibility Provision

- The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) provides meals at no cost to all students in eligible schools.
- Schools are eligible to participate if 25% or more of the student population is directly certified for free meals.
 - Students are directly certified based on their participation in other means-tested programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Medicaid.
- CEP schools receive reimbursement based on the percentage of directly certified students in the school. Meals are reimbursed at the free and paid rates depending upon the percentage.
- 166 public school districts, 1,149 public schools, participated in the CEP in school year 24-25. 403 CEP schools were reimbursed at the free rate for 100% of the meals.

National School Lunch Meal Pattern

- National School Lunch Program meals include:
 - Fruits – offered daily (no more than half of offering can be in juice form)
 - Vegetables (including vegetable subgroups) – variety offered across the week
 - Grains – at least 80% must be whole grain-rich
 - Meats/meat alternates – required daily
 - Fluid milk – offered daily
- Meals are tailored to grade groups (Preschool, K-5, 6-8, and 9-12)

School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern

- Meal Items:
 - Fruit
 - Vegetables may substitute for fruits under specific conditions
 - Grains or meats/meat alternates
 - Fluid milk
- Meals are tailored to grade groups (Preschool, K-5, 6-8, and 9-12)
 - Popular items include smoothies and parfaits.
- Meal service options include traditional cafeteria style, grab and go, breakfast in the classroom, breakfast after the bell, second chance.

Meal Patterns – Nutritional Standards

- Aligned with the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Calorie limits: average minimum/maximum per meal
- Sodium reduction targets: phased in over time
- Limits on saturated fat and added sugar at breakfast
- Zero grams of trans fat per serving

Smart Snacks

- Foods and Beverages sold inside the school building during the school day must meet Smart Snacks requirements.
- Promote options that have whole grains, fruits, vegetables, or low-fat dairy as their main ingredients.
- Sets limits for calories, sugar, fat, and sodium.
- Kentucky has established additional requirements in KRS 158.854.
 - No competitive foods may be sold from the start of the school day until 30 minutes after the last lunch period.
 - Competitive foods are defined as all foods and beverages available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day, other than meals served in the USDA's school nutrition programs.

Local Wellness Policy

- Written document required by local educational agencies participating in the NSLP and/or SBP.
- Designed to promote student health, well-being, and academic success through healthy eating and physical activity.
- Key components:
 - Nutrition education goals
 - Nutrition promotion goals
 - Physical activity goals
 - Nutrition guidelines for foods and beverages
 - Involvement of stakeholders
 - Implementation and evaluation – Must conduct a triennial assessment to evaluate progress toward goals.
 - Public updates

Local Purchasing

- According to the USDA Farm to School Census of 2024, more than 74% of Kentucky School Meal Program Operators participate in Farm to School Activities (local purchasing, agricultural education, school gardens).
 - 55% of Kentucky School Food Authorities report serving local food (compared to 62.7% national average).
- Menus, food items, and vendors are all choices made at the district level.
- Procurement is conducted at the local level, with many working with educational cooperatives.
- KDE provides training and technical assistance to support local purchasing efforts.

Grant Opportunities

- Farm to School - USDA awards competitive Farm to School grants that support planning, developing, and implementing farm to school programs. USDA's Farm to School grants are an important way to help state, regional, and local organizations as they initiate, expand, and institutionalize farm to school efforts.
- Healthy Meal Incentives - HMI Initiative established to improve the nutritional quality of school meals through food system transformation, SFA recognition and technical assistance and sharing of innovative ideas and grants.
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program – Provides fresh fruits and vegetables to children in eligible elementary schools promoting healthy eating habits and increased fruit and vegetable consumption.



Questions