

MEAL PATTERN UPDATES

National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs 2019-2020



Starting in the 2019-2020 school year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture introduced flexibilities in three school meal pattern requirements — milk component, grains component and sodium dietary specifications. Contracting entities (CEs) are not required to request approval to implement these flexibilities.

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) encourages CEs to continue making sound nutrition a priority. TDA and local Education Service Centers support districts as they weigh the options and implement flexibilities determined to be the best fit for operations and students.

For additional information on these flexibilities please visit Squaremeals.org



MILK

Schools may now serve low-fat flavored milk as a meal component.

The CE must also offer an unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk choice. This flexibility does not apply to the pre-K meal pattern.



GRAINS

CEs may now serve a combination of whole grain-rich and enriched grain products as a meal component. At least 50% of the grains served each week must be whole grain-rich; the remaining percentage of grains served each week must be enriched.

Previously creditable items were required to be 100% of items whole grain rich.



SODIUM

Sodium levels in food currently being served may remain the same through the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

Decreased sodium targets (Sodium Target 2) will be required for the 2024-2025 school year. CEs may choose to implement Sodium Target 2 at an earlier date.

