



Department of Education


Townsend Building
401 Federal Street Suite 2
Dover, Delaware 19901-3639
education.delaware.gov

Cynthia Marten
Secretary of Education
302-735-4000
302-739-4654 (fax)

April 29, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors of Residential Child Care Institutions
Other Appropriate Personnel

FROM: Aimee F. Beam, MS, RD 
Director, Nutrition Programs

RE: **SY 2025-2026 Operational Memo #21**
Reviewing Product-Based Added Sugar Limits

On April 28, 2026, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released the following document: SP 07-2026, School Meal Programs: Reviewing Product-Based Added Sugars Limits for Breakfast Cereals, Flavored Milk, and Yogurt.

Effective July 1, 2025, USDA nutrition standards include a limit on the amount of added sugars allowed in breakfast cereals, flavored milk, and yogurt served in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), and for flavored milk sold as competitive foods known as Smart Snacks in School. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide resources, including the new USDA Product-Based Added Sugars Limits Tool, to assist program operators in assessing and documenting product compliance.

The memorandum and tool are attached for your review. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact us at 302-857-3356.

Attachment: SP 07-2026; SP 07-2026a

cc: DDOE Nutrition Team



Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DATE: April 28, 2026

MEMO CODE: SP 07-2026

SUBJECT: School Meal Programs: Reviewing Product-Based Added Sugars Limits for Breakfast Cereals, Flavored Milk, and Yogurt

TO: Regional Directors, Child Nutrition Programs, All Regions
State Directors, Child Nutrition Programs, All States

Each school day the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) serve around 30 million and 15 million students, respectively.¹ About 70% of lunches and 80% of breakfasts served in schools are provided to students for free or at a reduced-price.²

Research shows meals served through the NSLP and SBP are often the healthiest meals that children consume in a day.³ Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins is committed to making them even healthier.

USDA maintains nutrition standards and meal pattern requirements for the Child Nutrition Programs that align with the goals of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, ensuring children get a variety of nutrients and are offered all the components of a

¹ Food and Nutrition Service. Child Nutrition Tables. April 11, 2025. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>.

² Economic Research Service. Child Nutrition Programs. February 11, 2025. Available at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/child-nutrition-programs>.

³ Liu J, Micha R, Li Y, Mozaffarian D. *Trends in Food Sources and Diet Quality Among US Children and Adults, 2003-2018*. JAMA. April 12, 2021. Available at: [https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2778453?utm_source=For The Media&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_term=040921](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2778453?utm_source=For%20The%20Media&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_term=040921).

Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.

healthy diet. With the release of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will begin work to update regulations through the rulemaking process. In the interim, the NSLP must provide meals that meet current nutrition requirements. The latest nutrition standards were published July 1, 2024, and USDA is gradually phasing in required changes over time.

Effective July 1, 2025 (school year 2025-26), those nutrition standards include a limit on the amount of added sugars allowed in breakfast cereals, flavored milk, and yogurt served in the NSLP and SBP, and for flavored milk sold as competitive foods known as Smart Snacks in School. Schools must meet the following requirements for product-based added sugars limits:

1. Breakfast cereals⁴ may have no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.⁵
2. Flavored milk may have no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces, or 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces for flavored milk sold as a competitive beverage for middle and high schools.⁶
3. Yogurt⁷ may have no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams per ounce).⁸

These product-based limits support efforts to reduce added sugars in school meals.

The following resources are available to assist State and local agencies in complying with these product-based limits:

⁴ Breakfast cereals are those as categorized by the Food and Drug Administration in [21 CFR 170.3\(n\)\(4\)](#) as ready-to-eat and instant and regular hot cereals.

⁵ Added sugars limit requirements for breakfast cereals are outlined at [7 CFR 210.10\(c\)\(2\)\(iii\)\(B\)](#).

⁶ Added sugars limit requirements for flavored milk are outlined at [7 CFR 210.10\(d\)\(1\)\(iii\)](#).

⁷ Yogurt as defined by [7 CFR 210.2](#) and [7 CFR 220.2](#).

⁸ Added sugars limit requirements for yogurt are outlined at [7 CFR 210.10\(c\)\(2\)\(iv\)\(C\)](#).

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- [Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast](#)
- [Nutrition Standards for Added Sugars Fact Sheets](#)

These resources help school nutrition professionals in identifying and reducing sources of added sugars in school meals. The guides also highlight ways to determine added sugars in foods and beverages using tools such as the Nutrition Facts label, ingredients list, and nutrient analysis.

After USDA oversight tools are updated, the School Meal Programs Administrative Review materials will include instructions on reviewing product-based added sugars limits through a streamlined review of meal pattern requirements. Until then, State agencies should:

1. Assess each breakfast cereal, flavored milk, and yogurt product offered during the review period;
2. Review products by looking at product information such as Nutrition Facts labels; and
3. Use USDA's Product-Based Added Sugars Limits Tool, or a comparable tool, to assess and document product compliance.

State agencies may request and review documentation off-site or review items onsite during a review. In addition to using the Product-Based Added Sugars Limits Tool, State agencies have the discretion to identify the most appropriate location within existing school meal program Administrative Review materials or the State's online review system to document results related to their review of product-based added sugars limits.

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State agencies and schools are welcome to provide feedback on the review and documentation processes for product-based added sugars limits to USDA for consideration as the Administrative Review materials are updated.

As a reminder, no fiscal action is required for noncompliance with the product-based added sugars limits. USDA encourages State agencies to focus on providing technical assistance and training as new requirements take effect.

State agencies are reminded to distribute this information to Program operators immediately. Program operators should direct any questions regarding this memorandum to the appropriate State agency. State agencies should direct questions to the appropriate Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office.

JESSICA SARACINO

Digitally signed by JESSICA
SARACINO
Date: 2026.04.28 08:35:47 -04'00'

Jessica Saracino
Acting Associate Administrator
Child Nutrition Programs

Attachments:

- A. Product-Based Added Sugars Limit Tool
- B. Product-Based Added Sugars Limits Tables

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ATTACHMENT B
Product-Based Added Sugars Limits Tables

The purpose of this attachment is to help State agencies and school food authorities determine whether breakfast cereals, flavored milk, and yogurt offered in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program meet the product-based added sugar limits. To assess products:

1. Identify the appropriate table below.
2. Use a product's nutrition label to determine which added sugars limit corresponds to the product's serving size.
3. Evaluate whether the product's added sugars, as listed on the nutrition label, are equal to or less than the limit listed in the table. If so, the product meets the added sugar limits.

Table 1: Limits for Added Sugars in Breakfast Cereals

If the serving size (g) is:	Added sugars (g) should be this amount or
12-16 g	3 g
26-30 g	6 g
31-35 g	7 g
36-40 g	8 g
45-49 g	10 g
55-58 g	12 g
59-63 g	13 g
74-77 g	16 g

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Table 2: Limits for Added Sugars in Yogurts

If the serving size (oz) is:	If the serving size (g) is:	Added sugars (g) should be
2 oz	57 g	4 g
3 oz	85 g	6 g
4 oz	113 g	8 g
5.3 oz	150 g	10 g
6 oz	170 g	12 g
8 oz	227 g	16 g

Table 3: Limits for Added Sugars in Flavored Milk

If the serving size (fl oz) is:	Added sugars (g) should be this amount or
8 fl oz	10 g
12 fl oz	15 g

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