



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent
of Education

USDA RELEASES NEW SCHOOL MEAL PATTERNS

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome back to a new school year!

The new nutrition standards for school meals are great news for Alabama students. They will help school nutrition professionals build on the work we are already doing to provide more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthier entrees in our school cafeterias.

Your school has already made progress toward meeting the new nutrition standards.

- ✓ More fresh fruits and vegetables every day
- ✓ 1% or fat free milk
- ✓ Trans-fat free food items
- ✓ More whole grain offerings

Over the next few months, we'll be building on the progress we've made and planning our menus to meet these new nutrition guidelines. We know how important it is to encourage students to accept and consume these healthier options. Our school nutrition staff has found great ways to get students excited about healthy food choices and we'll continue to work on creative solutions to ensure healthy foods appeal to students.

Most schools have offer-versus-serve which refers to the option children may be given to refuse up to two items offered as part of a federally subsidized school lunch or breakfast without the meal service operation losing the federal reimbursement for the meal. Offer-versus-serve consists of a minimum of five components: meat/meat alternate, vegetable, fruit, bread/grains, and milk. The milk choices will consist of 1% white, skim, and flavored skim. Students must select at least three components, at least one of which is a fruit or vegetable, in order to comply with state regulations.

We'll face some challenges to meet all the new requirements on a tight budget, but our school nutrition program will ensure these healthy changes are made for our students. We hope parents will support this effort by encouraging their students to give the healthier meals a try. Students are far more likely to pick up a fruit or vegetable in the lunch line if they have been introduced to those foods at home.

If you have any questions regarding these changes, please contact your local school. You may also learn more at the Alabama State Department of Education (ADE) website:

<http://www.alsde.edu/home/Default.aspx> and the USDA website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/>

Thank you, Child Nutrition Section, ADE
334-242-1988

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More Yummy, Healthy Choices Now Available!

- * Fruits and vegetables will be served each day.
- * Milk will be either unflavored 1% or unflavored and flavored fat-free milk.
- * Hot and cold sandwiches will be offered on whole wheat bread products.
- * Our cafeterias have altered recipes to lower sodium for entrees and vegetables.
- * Pre-plated salads/salad bars are encouraged to be offered every day with vitamin-packed romaine lettuce and spinach.
- * Other beverages offered will be unflavored water and 100% fruit juices.
- * Fried foods are being replaced by baked products to include baked chicken and baked white and sweet potato fries.



all photos courtesy of usda.gov



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THOMAS R. BICE, STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

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