

School Nutrition News

A Newsletter from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Division for Finance and Management

Vol. 13 No. 2

Winter 2021

Virtual School Nutrition Skills Development Courses (SNSDC) 2020

Since the [SNSDC](#) videos were released in July, they have had almost 30,000 total views! That is a tremendous increase from the 2,000 total participants who attended in-person SNSDC in the summer of 2019. The School Nutrition Team (SNT) recognizes the benefits of and reach that the virtual platform has provided. Due to the ongoing pandemic, and to ensure safety of our staff and school nutrition professionals of Wisconsin, we will continue with virtual training in the summer of 2021. Thank you for your participation and flexibility. As a reminder, SNSDC videos will stay posted for the remainder of school year (SY) 2020-21.



School Meals Promotion During COVID-19

Many School Food Authorities (SFAs) across the state and nation have experienced a decrease in student participation in the meal programs. During this difficult time, it is important for school nutrition professionals to promote participation in the school meal programs to ensure students are getting the nutrition they need to support learning. Several resources have been developed to assist school nutrition professionals with promoting school meals during COVID-19. The [CDC Partner Toolkit: School Meal Programs Are for All Kids](#) and the [School Nutrition Association COVID-19 resources](#) promote the messages that school meals are available, safe, and healthy. Additionally, the School Nutrition Team



developed the [School Meals During COVID-19](#) infographic and accompanying promotional materials. The infographic contains a

customizable section where SFAs can include specific details about their school meal programs.

Smart Snacks and COVID-19 Meal Service

The [USDA Memorandum SP 01-2021](#) Q6 states that schools operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) offering in-person, virtual, or hybrid classes may still offer a la carte food and beverage items. All food and beverages must continue to meet the Smart Snacks requirements. Schools that are operating grab and go sites in areas outside of the school campus or are providing meals before or after the official school day are not required to meet the Smart Snacks standards. For more information regarding Smart Snacks regulations visit the [Smart Snacks webpage](#).

SNACS Software

Did you know that SNT's School Nutrition Accountability Software (SNACS) can be used for much more than the Administrative Review (AR) process?

SNACS is the perfect solution for smaller districts that currently manage their participation in school nutrition programs by using manual processes. SNACS is free to use and its users have access to online free and reduced meal applications. SNACS also aids with the application approval and direct certification processes, offers step-by-step guidance through the annual verification process and submission of the Verification Collection Report, has automated letter generation capabilities, and more.

To learn more about SNACS or to request a demo please visit the [SNACS webpage](#).



SCORE BIG with School Breakfast: National School Breakfast Week 2021

Students, parents, and staff will go wild over this year's SCORE BIG National School Breakfast Week 2021 (NSBW21), which runs March 8-12. This year's sports theme is sure to get your school pumped and participation up. See SNA's [Toolkit](#) for information, ideas, and activities to promote NSBW21. Be sure to tag #NSBW21 and #WISchoolMealsRock in your school's social media posts!



USDA Equipment Grant 2020

The 2020 USDA NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant application period closed on November 20, 2020. In total, 106 SFAs requested 177 pieces of equipment. SFAs that were selected to move forward were notified. A list of awarded SFAs will be available summer 2021.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

This school year, children from 217 schools are snacking on fresh fruits and vegetables that are not always your average bananas and celery sticks. This is thanks to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program which provides funding for elementary students to receive a fresh fruit or vegetable snack two or more times per week, free of charge.

This challenging school year has many schools thinking outside the box to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to students learning virtually. Some of the great ideas that schools have shared are



having a theme week such as fruits and vegetables used in different cultures, colorful flyers including recipes and nutrition education, providing a week's worth of FFVP at one time, and packaging the FFVP snack separately from the meals to highlight and encourage additional fruits and vegetables. In addition, to ease the burden on schools, the FFVP snack can be given to students of any age when provided to those learning virtually.

The FFVP application for SY 2021-22 will open March 1, 2021 and close April 9, 2021. Look for application instructions on our [FFVP](#) webpage in February.

Thank you for all you do to encourage the children of Wisconsin to eat more fruits and vegetables!

Small Victories

Small Victories training is designed to celebrate the unique environment that is specific to schools with small student enrollments. Small Victories training will be offered this upcoming spring in a virtual format. More information will be sent to schools in the early spring. Participation in this training can be counted toward professional standards and GOALS requirements. For additional information contact Ann Wiebelhaus at ann.weibelhaus@dpi.wi.gov.



New GOALS Resources

Obtaining your Goal Oriented Achievement Learning Skills (GOALS) Certificate of Excellence has just become more attainable! You will find an organized collection of training materials on the newly revamped [GOALS](#)



[webpage](#). We have made clickable links next to each of the required categories, making it easy to determine which trainings are acceptable to meet the necessary training hours. We have also linked multiple opportunities for you to select how to accomplish your elective hours. The GOALS team looks forward to receiving your completed training trackers soon!

Congratulations to the following people who have earned their GOALS Certificate:

- Ellen Lehman, Cambria-Friesland School District
- Janice Murray, Cambridge School District
- William Zeeh, Prairie du Chien School District
- Dawn Rye, Hurley School District

2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development

The School Nutrition Team was recently awarded the 2021 Team Nutrition Training Grant for School Meal Recipe Development. The purpose of this grant is to develop standardized recipes for school meal programs that feature Wisconsin agricultural products. As part of the grant, Wisconsin Team Nutrition will also be developing a Farm to School recipe toolkit, recipe promotional materials, and educational videos and lessons. Additionally, schools will be encouraged to participate in a Nutritious, Delicious, Wisconsin week in which they serve the new Farm to School recipes. Materials developed out of this grant will be made available in 2022.





New Guidance

[Notice of Vacatur: Rescission of Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Flexibilities](#)

On December 12, 2018, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published a final rule, which allowed for flavored, low-fat milk; half of grains to be whole grain-rich; and Sodium Target 1 to remain until SY 2023-2024, continuing to Target 2 in SY 2024-2025, and eliminating the Final Target that would have gone into effect in SY 2022-2023. However, on April 13, 2020, a procedural error was found which vacated these flexibilities. Therefore, and effective immediately, flavored milk must be fat-free, all grains must be whole grain-rich, and Sodium Target 2 is in effect.

[Proposed Rule: Restoration of Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Flexibilities](#)

In response to the vacatur and remand of the 2018 Final Rule, the USDA is again proposing this rule which would allow for flavored, low-fat milk; half of grains to be whole grain-rich; and Sodium Target 1 to remain until SY 2023-2024, continuing to Target 2 in SY 2024-2025, and eliminating the Final Target that would have gone into effect in SY 2022-2023. The comment period for this proposed rule closed on December 28, 2020.

[P-EBT Assistance for Children in Schools that are Closed or have Reduced Attendance](#)

On November 16, 2020, USDA released this P-EBT Q&A, which provide more information on P-EBT benefits for the school year 2020-21.

[USDA Policy Memorandum SP 01-2021: Questions and Answers Relating to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow SFSP and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School Year 2020-2021 – EXTENSION - Q&As #2](#)

This memorandum includes questions and answers to provide clarification to state agencies and program operators as they operate the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), NSLP Seamless Summer Option (SSO), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[USDA Policy Memorandum SP 03-2021: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Operations for SY 2020-21 during COVID-19](#)

This memorandum includes questions and answers to provide clarification on the operation of the FFVP during implementation of alternative child nutrition program operations throughout school year (SY) 2020-2021 due to the continued novel coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency.

[USDA Policy Memorandum SP 04-2021: Questions and Answers Relating to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow SFSP and Seamless Summer Option Operations through SY 2020-21 – Q&As #3](#)

This memorandum includes questions and answers to provide clarification to state agencies and program operators for the NSLP, SBP, SSO, SFSP, and CACFP during the 2020-21 school year.

Child Nutrition Waivers

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #59: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option Operations through School Year 2020-2021 – EXTENSION](#)

This waiver allows the SFSP and the SSO to continue to operate through June 30, 2021.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #60: Nationwide Waiver to Extend Area Eligibility Waivers – EXTENSION 3](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver to extend Area Eligibility Waivers until June 30, 2021. This waiver extension applies to the SFSP and the SSO.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #61: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option – EXTENSION 5](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non-congregate Feeding in the SFSP through June 30, 2021. This waiver extension applies to the SFSP and the SSO.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #62: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children – EXTENSION 5](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children until June 30, 2021. This waiver extension applies to the SSO and SFSP.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #63: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option – EXTENSION 8](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility for the SFSP and the SSO through June 30, 2021.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #64: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option – EXTENSION 2](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites in the SFSP and SSO through June 30, 2021.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #65: Nationwide Waivers to Waive First Week Site Visits in the Summer Food Service Program – EXTENSION 2](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver of First Week Site Visits in the SFSP through June 30, 2021.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #66: Nationwide Waiver of Meal Service Time Restrictions in the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option – EXTENSION 2](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver of Meal Service Time Restrictions in the SFSP and SSO through June 30, 2021.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #67: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibilities in the Summer Food Service Program – EXTENSION 2](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Flexibilities in the SFSP through June 30, 2021.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #68: Nationwide Waiver of Area Eligibility in the Child and Adult Care Food Program At-Risk Afterschool Care Component- EXTENSION](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver of Area Eligibility in the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Care Component through June 30, 2021.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #69: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Reimbursement for Meals Served Prior to Notification of Approval and Provide Flexibility for Pre-Approval Visits in the Summer Food Service Program - EXTENSION](#)

This nationwide waiver is to allow state agencies to reimburse SFSP sponsors for meals served prior to the sponsor receiving written notification that the sponsor or site has been approved for participation in the program.

[COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #70: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs - EXTENSION #5](#)

This waiver extends the Nationwide Waiver to Allow Meal Pattern Flexibility in the Child Nutrition Programs for NSLP, SBP, and CACFP through June 30, 2021.

Infants and Preschool in the NSLP and SBP

A new [Feeding Infants in School Nutrition Programs](#) webcast is now available. As a reminder, if a School Food Authority (SFA) cares for infants (birth through 11 months of age) and offers the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and/or National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to preschool children, the SFA must also offer the program to infants. If your SFA cares for infants, be sure to view this webcast to learn more about the infant meal pattern, creditable and non-creditable infant foods, documenting infant meals, and more!



School Breakfast Program Updates

As the learning environment may vary for schools across the state (i.e. virtual, in-person, or a hybrid), the 2020-2021 School Breakfast Challenge and the 2021 School Breakfast Video Contest have been canceled. Our heartfelt thanks to all the foodservice professionals and administrators who continue to persevere through adversity to ensure that Wisconsin's students get the breakfasts they deserve! Please visit the [School Breakfast Program webpage](#) for resources. Questions about breakfast or starting a breakfast program? Contact the School Breakfast Specialists at DPISBP@dpi.wi.gov

SNT Member Updates

Welcome to...

Heidi Rolf

Public Health Nutritionist



Favorite Meal: My favorite meal is lasagna soup made in the crockpot but I love all crockpot and instant pot meals.

Hobbies and Interests: I love crafting with my Cricut, running, camping, and spending time with my family and friends!

Favorite Part of Your Job with SNT:

My favorite part about this job so far is being a part of such a fun, welcoming team!

Farewell and Best Wishes to...



Julie Cox, Assistant Director on the School Nutrition Team, who retired in December after 23 years with the DPI. Julie looks forward to spending lots of time with her children and grandchildren in retirement.

Congratulations to...



Janelle Winter, previously a Public Health Nutritionist, who has stepped into Julie Cox's role as a new Assistant Director on the School Nutrition Team.

Social Media Scrapbook

#WISchoolMealsRock



The Menasha Joint School District Through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and partnering with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, their team and Feeding America have provided breakfast, lunch, and supper for kids through their weekly Farm to Family Drive-Up Food Distribution. Approximately 18,000 meals are packaged throughout the week and then distributed alongside the Feeding America boxes.



The WI DPI School & Community Nutrition Teams (and our families) crunched into locally grown apples to celebrate National #farmtoschool month 🍏🍎 #GreatLakesGreatAppleCrunch



Congratulations to the Mequon-Thiensville School District for receiving the "Great Grains Award" in the [USDA Foods Photo Contest](#) for their Asian Noodle Bowl Recipe! 🎉 The USDA received over 250 photos from 38 states for this contest and one of our very own Wisconsin schools was a winner!



You may have seen some the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) staff on the news being featured for their wonderful work with the FFVP. As part of the FFVP, each week in October, MPS provided a produce bag to celebrate a different culture. Each produce bag came with suggested recipes that children and their parents can enjoy. Way to go MPS!



The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created a new toolkit titled "[School Meal Programs are for All Kids](#)" In it, you can find background about the USDA waivers, sample social media posts, graphics and newsletter text to use in your own communication efforts! [#CDCHealthySchools](#)

Virtual Cooking Lessons Get Students Out of Their Seats and Into Their Kitchens

Co-authored by Candace Raines and Maire Cait Mullen
AmeriCorps Farm to School Specialists

The pandemic has taken an immense toll on everyone, no matter the age. We all feel it; the anger, frustration, exhaustion. We can get so wrapped up in our adult feelings, it is easy to forget the weight our children are bearing too. Kids of all ages are experiencing virtual learning for the first time, implemented by school staff who are also new to this style of learning.



Some people are worried that students are not receiving the same level of education and socialization as in-person learning. According to an article by Talia Soglin in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel from August 2020, "Many are concerned about the quality of remote learning and the effects of social isolation on their kids." Educators everywhere agree that being able to quickly adapt has been key to keeping student learning on track. FoodRight, a Milwaukee non-profit specializing in culinary and garden education, did just that — immediately pivoted when COVID-19 hit. Instead of group-based classroom cooking, FoodRight staff partnered with two AmeriCorps Farm to School members to provide individual meal kits for students to prepare at home during virtual cooking lessons.

The partnership between FoodRight and the AmeriCorps Farm to School program is a part of an innovative approach to building a healthier Milwaukee community. Together, they are able to provide the weekly virtual cooking lessons along with other farm-to-school activities including nutrition education for Milwaukee's youth, changing the school food environment with school gardens, partnering with school food service directors to increase access to local and fresh foods, and participating in community events that will increase capacity of the program.

But even with the extra help from the AmeriCorps members, the shift from classroom cooking lessons to virtual cooking lessons has not been easy. Ingredients are purchased by the FoodRight organization, and are then individually packaged and delivered to schools with help from the AmeriCorps members. Parents pick up

the ingredient kits the day before the scheduled lessons, which allows for safe, social-distanced procurement.

This past fall semester has been busy, with approximately 115 meal kits going to students from three different schools, every week, for most of the semester. It is anticipated that the spring semester will be even busier, with several more Milwaukee schools interested in participating.



The cooking lessons are currently offered to fifth through eighth graders in Milwaukee schools, and are tailored to the skills and abilities of the different age groups. Each recipe takes about an hour and half, starting with food safety and ending with sharing a virtual meal or snack together. The meals are plant-based, made from scratch, and globally minded with flavors from around the world. FoodRight predicts they will distribute over 8,000 meal kits by the end of the 2020-2021 school year, if able to reach their year-end fundraising goal of \$45,000.



And it's about more than just cooking! The lessons give students practice with geography, math skills, food science knowledge, and



even allow them to flex their artistic abilities. They might spend time garnishing with parsley or arranging a radish slaw to make the colors pop. Or the instructor might ask, "How does the orange of these carrot ribbons look against the green of the salad?"

FoodRight recognizes the silver lining of virtual learning brought on by the pandemic. It means that kids are cooking at home with their families, sharing fresh, whole produce and nutritious meals. It means children from 1,200 Milwaukee families can feel proud about the food they create, which in turn will empower them to make healthy food choices for life.

Mark Your Calendar!

[National School Breakfast Week](#)

March 8-12, 2021
Score Big with School Breakfast!



[2021 Annual SNA-WI Conference](#)

June 27-30, 2021
Kalahari Resort
Wisconsin Dells, WI

New! Fillable Medical Statement for Special Dietary Needs

A new, fillable medical statement template has been posted on our [Special Dietary Needs](#) webpage. This form, which may be used for families to request special dietary accommodations for their children, can be completed electronically or printed and filled out by hand. Licensed medical practitioners may sign this form electronically, avoiding the need for an in-person medical visit or for the form to be printed, scanned, and emailed.

Schools are not required to use this template. Any type of medical statement may be used if it is signed by a licensed medical practitioner and contains:

- an explanation of how the child's physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet;
- the food(s) to be avoided; and
- the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

Please contact Claire Koenig (claire.koenig@dpi.wi.gov) or Michelle Zvonar (michelle.zvonar@dpi.wi.gov) with special dietary needs questions.

Wisconsin Chili Lunch

Mark your calendar for the 3rd annual Wisconsin Chili Lunch on February 25, 2021. Join schools, hospitals, colleges, businesses, campuses and early care sites by using Wisconsin-grown products in your Wisconsin Chili Lunch on the day of the event or throughout the month of February. This event encourages healthy

eating and supports Wisconsin farms by increasing purchases of Wisconsin-grown foods by institutions.

Learn more, find credible recipes and register for the event on the [UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems](#).



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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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School Nutrition News

 is published three times per year by the DPI. Questions or comments should be directed to:

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