

HealthierUS School Challenge

Criteria and Instructions for Elementary Schools

The HealthierUS School Nutrition Challenge certification is to recognize your school's commitment to the health and well being of its students.

An individual elementary school that meets the HealthierUS School Challenge standards/criteria may apply for either a *Silver* or a *Gold Certification*. The certification is for a two-year period—the current school year plus the following school year. Certified schools are strongly encouraged to continue their commitment and re-apply at the end of their certification period.

CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

A local certification review panel must be established to review your school against the HealthierUS School Challenge standards/criteria to ensure it meets the criteria for the applicable certification. This panel must include, at a minimum, your school's or site's foodservice manager; the school's Team Nutrition Leader; the school's principal or administrator; the school food authority's (school district's) foodservice director¹; a representative from the school's parent organization; and at least one member from the following group: school nurse, coordinated school health representative, physical education teacher, or classroom teacher.

SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION

Once your school's self-assessment (application) is certified and signed by members of the review panel, the application and required documentation is submitted to the State agency that administers the National School Lunch (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) in your state. After review and approval/denial, the State agency forwards the signed application and documentation to the FNS Regional Office.

APPROVAL PROCESS

The State agency will confirm:

- (1) The school is enrolled as a Team Nutrition School. The school's enrollment can be verified at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Database/index.htm.
- (2) An SMI review of your district's School Food Authority (SFA) was completed within the preceding five years; the SFA has completed all improvement activities agreed to in the corrective action plan; and has no outstanding Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) audit issues or claims.
- (3) The submitted menus from your school were reimbursable meals and met the menu criteria for either the gold or silver certification.

¹ USDA recognizes that in small independent schools, the foodservice manager, the Team Nutrition Leader, and/or the foodservice director may be the same person. Please note on the signature line(s) if this occurs in your school.

- (4) The written description of nutrition education activities at the school meets the criteria/standards.
- (5) The written description of opportunities for physical activity meets the criteria/standards.
- (6) The student Average Daily Participation for your school has been reported correctly.
- (7) The foods or beverages sold/served a la carte, in vending machines, school stores, snack bars, etc. in your school meet the standards/criteria for recognition, **OR** the school has no competitive food or beverage sales. This standard will be reviewed and confirmed by the school's local review panel (self-certification). Documentation of the items sold/served must be maintained at the school during the certification period (2 years) for possible review by the State agency and/or FNS.

The school is encouraged to keep a copy of the signed assessment tool and documentation as originals will not be returned.

After the State agency has completed its review of the application and required documentation, a representative from the State agency will sign and date the application and submit it to the FNS Regional Office.

CRITERIA FOR SILVER CERTIFICATION

1. Your school must enroll or be enrolled as a Team Nutrition (TN) School.

To enroll as a Team Nutrition School or to verify your school's enrollment in Team Nutrition, go to www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Database/index.htm.

2. Your school offers reimbursable school lunches that meet the USDA nutrition standards.

The school food authority (school district) that administers the NSLP and/or SBP for your school must have undergone a School Meals Initiative (SMI review) within five years preceding your school's application for certification. The State agency will verify that all of the improvement activities planned as a result of the SMI review have been achieved. If the SFA did not receive an SMI review within the preceding five years and your school wants to apply for a *Silver* or *Gold* certification, the school food authority may request from the State agency that an SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

3. Your school offers reimbursable school lunches that demonstrate healthful menu planning practices, principles of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and meet or exceed the menu criteria listed in the following chart.

Submit the prior month's menus for reimbursable school lunches *served* in your school. Submitted lunch menus should demonstrate meeting the criteria in the following self-assessment chart. Record, on the submitted menus, the name of your school, the menu planning approach used for lunch, and the most current dates the menu was served.

Menu Criteria—Lunch	YES	NO
• 3 <i>different</i> fruits and 5 <i>different</i> vegetables are offered weekly.		
• Menus include a dark green or deep yellow fruit or vegetable 3 or more times per week.		
• Fresh fruit or raw vegetables are offered three or more times per week.		
• Menus include a good source of vitamin C* every day.		
• 4 <i>different</i> entrées or meat/meat alternates are offered throughout each school week. When choices are not offered, higher fat entrée items are limited to once per week. A higher fat entrée is defined as having $\geq 40\%$ of calories from fat, excluding nuts, seeds, and nut butters.		
• Cooked dried beans or peas are offered at least once per school week.		
• Whole grain foods are offered 3 or more times per school week. A whole grain food is one labeled as a whole grain product or with a whole grain as the <i>primary</i> grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples of a whole grain ingredient include the terms “whole wheat flour,” “entire wheat flour,” “cracked wheat,” “graham flour,” “brown rice,” “old-fashioned oatmeal,” “quick-cooking oats,” and “cornmeal.”		
• Menus provide two or more sources of iron* each day.		
• Lowfat (1%) and/or skim (nonfat) milk is offered daily.		

* Food sources provided in Attachment A

4. Nutrition education is provided to students in multiple grades of your school and meets or exceeds the criteria listed below.

- Nutrition education must be provided for at least half, but no fewer than two, of the grade levels in your school. If your school consists of a single grade, nutrition education must be provided to all students in the school. In your written description, document that the students in a single grade school will be provided with nutrition education in at least one other grade as they complete elementary school.
- Nutrition education must be delivered as part of a structured and systematic unit of instruction.
- Nutrition education must involve multiple channels of communication—at least classrooms, school cafeteria, and home/parents—for each grade to which it’s provided.

Submit a brief written description of nutrition education activities in your school that demonstrates the criteria for nutrition education:

5. The opportunity for physical activity is provided to students in every grade of your school, except kindergarten, and meets or exceeds the following criterion.

Physical education classes or the equivalent must be provided on a regularly scheduled basis each school week during the entire school year. Examples of equivalents include school walking clubs, bike clubs, intramural sports, walk-to-school programs, approval of community physical activity programs for academic credit, etc. The objective is to ensure that children are routinely encouraged to be physically active in your school.

Submit a brief written description of regularly scheduled physical education or structured physical activity opportunities before, during, or after school hours, for students in your school.

6. A student Average Daily Participation (ADP) of 70% of school enrollment or higher is maintained for reimbursable lunches².

The percent Average Daily Participation (ADP) of school enrollment is calculated by dividing the total student participation for a typical operating month by the number of operating days in that month, then dividing by the school enrollment, and multiplying by 100. A typical month of operation to use is October.

For example:

During the month of October, the school served 20,000 reimbursable lunches. It operated or served lunches 20 days. There were 1,200 students enrolled in October. $20,000 \div 20 = 1,000$. $1,000 \div 1,200 = 0.83 \times 100 = 83\%$ ADP

7. (a) During meal periods in the foodservice area, your school does not sell/serve foods or beverages in competition with reimbursable meals.

Meal period is defined as the time from the beginning of the school's scheduled meal service until the end of the scheduled meal service, or until the last student is served, whichever comes last.

OR

(b) During meal periods in the foodservice area, your school sells/serves only these foods and beverages (listed in following chart) in competition with reimbursable meals.

Meal period is defined as the time from the beginning of the school's scheduled meal service until the end of the scheduled meal service, or until the last student is served, whichever comes last.

To meet the criteria noted in 7 (b) above, if your school sells *any* foods or beverages during meal service, either a la carte, vending machines, school snack stores, etc., the item(s) must meet the criteria in the following chart. It is possible that an item may be served as part of a reimbursable meal but not meet the criteria for an individual sell item³.

² The average daily participation in elementary schools, based on enrollment, included in a national sample of schools for a target week from the *School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study II* (July 2001) was 67%.

³ All foods in reimbursable meals are planned so that the menus meet the nutrition standards for calories, Calories from fat and saturated fat, and key nutrients over a school week, appropriate to age/grade levels. This requires a balance of lowfat foods, foods rich in nutrients, etc. to meet the weekly nutrition standards. In contrast, foods and beverages sold on an individual or a la carte basis have not been nutritionally averaged into the weekly planned menus. Therefore they must be able to "stand alone" on established

Food or Beverage	Criteria for Sales/Service of A La Carte and/or Vended Items These criteria focus on decreasing fat and added sugar, increasing nutrient density, and moderating portion size
Fruits and Non-Fried Vegetables	Fruits and vegetables may be fresh, frozen, canned or dried, and they must be found in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs. http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/FBG/2003FBG/%20Section%202.pdf Examples of products that <i>cannot</i> be sold/served as a fruit or vegetable include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snack-type foods made from vegetables or fruits, such as potato chips, and banana chips; • Pickle relish, jam, and jelly; and • Tomato catsup and chili sauce.
Approved Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced fat (2%), lowfat (1%), skim/nonfat fluid milk meeting State and local standards for pasteurized fluid milk and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages⁴; • 100% full strength fruit and vegetable juices; and • Water (non-flavored, non-sweetened, <i>and</i> non-carbonated)
Any Other Individual Food Sales/Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calories from total fat must be at or below 35%, <i>excluding nuts, seeds, and nut butters</i>. This is determined by dividing the calories from total fat by the total calories and multiplying by 100. If calories from fat are not available, multiply the grams of fat by 9 to equal calories from fat. • Calories from saturated fat must be at or below 10%. This is determined by dividing the calories from saturated fat by the total calories and multiplying by 100. If calories from saturated fat are not available, multiply grams of saturated fat by 9 to equal calories from saturated fat. • Total sugar must be at or below 35% by weight. This is determined by dividing the grams of sugar by the gram weight of the product and multiplying by 100. This includes both naturally occurring and added sugars. This limit does not include fruits and vegetables as defined above. • Portion size for a la carte sales in the school cafeteria are not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the NSLP/SBP; for vending sales, the item package or container is not to exceed 200 calories .

nutritional criteria.

⁴ There are no USDA approved alternative dairy beverages at this time. Public Law 108-265 (Child Nutrition Program Reauthorization) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish nutritionally equivalent non-dairy beverages by July 1, 2005. Please check with your State agency for further clarification.

CRITERIA FOR GOLD CERTIFICATION

1. **If your school wishes to apply for the gold certification, it must meet the criteria for the silver certification (1-6 above) and also meet the following criteria.**

2. (a) **Throughout *the school day (including meal periods)*, your school does not sell/serve foods or beverages other than reimbursable meals.** Self-explanatory.

OR

- (b) ***Throughout the school day (including meal periods)*, your school sells/serves only the following foods or beverages other than reimbursable meals:** Refer to the Food and Beverage Criteria described in the chart for #7(b), *Silver Criteria*.

3. **Your school lunch menus also offer the following foods for reimbursable lunches each school day:**
 - A fresh fruit or raw vegetable
 - A whole grain food (defined as being labeled as a whole grain product, or in the ingredient statement, the primary grain ingredient is designated as a whole grain).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide the name and contact information of someone at your school in case there is a question during the review process.

RECOGNITION

After the application has received final approval, your school will be recognized by USDA in the following ways:

- Receiving a renewable plaque, recognizing the school's achievement.
- Posting of the school's name and certification status on USDA's Team Nutrition website.

Your school must keep copies of the following documentations that were included with your application on file during the certification period:

- Copies of menus served and required menu documentation (food production records).
- Nutrition facts labels, or recipes if school-made, for products sold/served under provisions of #7(b) *Silver Criteria* and #2(b) *Gold Criteria*.

Foods Sources of Vitamin C

Best sources (1/4c = 25 mg or more)

- **Fruits:** oranges, orange juice, papayas, guavas, kiwifruit
- **Vegetables:** raw and cooked sweet red and green peppers, red and green chili peppers; cooked broccoli

Good sources (1/4c = 15-25 mg or more)

- **Fruits:** grapefruit, grapefruit juice, grapefruit/orange juice, kumquats, strawberries, tangerine juice, tangerines
- **Vegetables:** Brussels sprouts, edible pod peas, kohlrabi, parsley, sweet potato, vegetable juice cocktail

Other sources (1/4c = 8-15 mg or more)

- **Fruits:** cantaloupe, mango, tangelos, raw pineapple
- **Vegetables:** asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, collards, kale, mustard greens, red cabbage (raw), tomatoes, tomato juice or reconstituted paste or puree

Food Sources of Iron

- **Meat/Meat (M/MA) alternates** (provide a range of 1 to 4 mg iron per 1 oz serving or equivalent): cooked dried beans and peas (such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black-eyed peas, and lentils), lean meats (especially beef), liver and other organ meats provide greatest amount of iron, shellfish (like shrimp, clams, mussels, and oysters), turkey, dark meat (remove skin to reduce fat).
- **Bread/Grain (G/B) Products** (provide a range of .6 to 8 mg iron per G/B serving): enriched and whole-grain breads, grain products, and ready-to-eat cereal with added iron (iron-fortified cereals contain the highest non-heme source of iron).
- **Vegetable/Fruits (V/F)** (provide a range of .3 to 1 mg iron per 1/4 c serving): dried fruits (such as apricots, dates, figs, prunes, and raisins), chard, beet greens, collard greens, turnip greens, sauerkraut, spinach, and tomatoes.

Note: Heme iron is found only in meat, fish and poultry and is absorbed much more easily than non-heme iron which is found primarily in fruits, vegetables, dried beans, nuts and grain products.