

# **New School Meal Requirements**



You may have heard that there will be new requirements for school meals beginning with the coming school year. Many of the new rules will begin for school year 2012-2013. Knowing what changes were likely to take place, Sweetwater County School District Number One Food Service Department has already been gradually making many of these changes so it wouldn't be such a shock to the students when they were finally required.

## **Biggest Changes:**

Students will now required to have  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fruit or vegetables on their tray for it to count as a full meal. In addition, the amounts for fruits and vegetables students can take has increased and students will be able to take more fruits and vegetables than before. However, anything less than a full meal (a tray without a fruit or vegetable) must be charged at a la carte prices. We plan to offer a variety of fruits and vegetables daily to give the students more to select from.

All flavored milks will continue to be reduced sugar, with no high fructose corn syrup, and fat free.

We are now limited as to how much meat/meat alternate (cheese, yogurt, etc) and grain servings we can offer. Previously, we only had a minimum to meet, but could offer more. Now we have to stay within the specified ranges for particular age groups. This means main entrees may not be as large as they have been or they may not be served as often. Remember though, that students will be able to select larger quantities of fruits and vegetables. We'll have to be a little creative to make this work, but we feel certain we can make each meal something our students will enjoy.

Breakfast meals will also require 1 cup of fruit or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fruit and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fruit juice.

### **What We're Already Doing:**

Half of all grains offered must be whole grain rich. Almost all of our grains offered already meet this requirement.

We must offer vegetables from the following groups each week: dark green, orange/red, and bean/legumes. We then have the option to include starchy and other vegetables.

We've been working towards this goal by offering more fresh fruits and vegetables, adding spinach greens to our mixed salads, but students will also see us offering beans/legumes weekly and a variety of other colored vegetables during the week to meet the new regulations.

Schools have until 2014-2015 to meet the first level of sodium limits. This might be quite a challenge and we will start evaluating sodium in our meals more closely. We expect as manufacturers reformulate some of their products to bring down sodium levels that it will not be a problem to meet this requirement at all. In addition, some of our foods, such as vegetables, may be offered with little to no sodium, in addition to a reduction in the use of margarine which also has added sodium to help us reach established target levels.

### **How You Can Help:**

- \*Encourage your children to try new things at home and school.
- \*Serve a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains at home or encourage your child to eat them when dining out.
- \* If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.  
We're here to help!