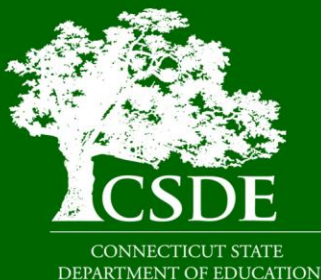




Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program



Revised January 2020

**Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504
Hartford, CT 06103-1841**

Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals

Connecticut State Department of Education • Revised January 2020

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About This Guide

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) publication, *Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals*, contains information, guidance, and resources for implementing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) offer versus serve (OVS) provision for school meals in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. This guide is based on the OVS regulations for the NSLP (7 CFR 210.10 (e)) and SBP (7 CFR 220.8 (e)), and the USDA's publication, *Offer versus Serve Guidance for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program*.

This guide applies only to NSLP, SBP, and SSO meals for grades K-12. The USDA does not allow OVS for preschoolers (ages 1-4) or the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP). For information on the preschool meal patterns, see the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for Preschool Meals in the NSLP and SBP*, and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on the ASP, see the CSDE's publication, *Afterschool Snack Program Handbook*, and visit the CSDE's [Afterschool Snack Program](#) webpage.

Each section of the guide contains links to other sections, when appropriate, and to websites with relevant information and resources. These can be accessed by clicking on the blue text throughout the guide.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA.

The contents of this guide are subject to change. The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policies and guidance regarding OVS in the school nutrition programs. Please check the CSDE's [Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage for the most current version. For more information, contact Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator, at susan.fiore@ct.gov or 860-807-2075.

CSDE Contact Information

For questions regarding the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE’s Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education.

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For information on the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), visit the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CN	Child Nutrition
CNP	Child Nutrition Programs
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
FBG	Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
HHFKA	Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296)
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OVS	offer versus serve
oz eq	ounce equivalent
PFS	product formulation statement
POS	point of service
RCCI	residential child care institution
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SFA	school food authority
SSO	Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WGR	whole grain-rich



1 — Overview of OVS

OVS is a concept that applies to menu planning and the determination of reimbursable meals for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO. OVS must be implemented at lunch in senior high schools, but is optional for all other grades. OVS is optional for the SBP and SSO. The USDA does not allow OVS for the ASP or preschoolers (ages 1-4).

OVS allows students to decline a certain number of food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the meal, and select the foods they prefer to eat. OVS is designed to reduce food cost and waste. It also allows school food authorities (SFAs) the flexibility to address student participation and selection trends to determine what and how much food to prepare. Table 1-1 summarizes the OVS requirements for lunch and breakfast.

Table 1-1. Overview of OVS requirements for grades K-12		
Criteria	Lunch	Breakfast
Implementation	Mandatory in senior high schools and optional for all other grade levels. Optional for the SSO. Not allowed for preschoolers.	Optional for all grade levels. Optional for the SSO. Not allowed for preschoolers.
Reimbursable meals	Must offer five components (milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains). ¹	Must offer at least four food items from three components (milk, fruits, and grains). ²
Required number of student selections	Students must select at least three components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other food components.	Students must select at least three food items, including at least ½ cup of fruits (or vegetable substitutions, if offered) and the full serving of at least two other food items.
Pricing	Priced as a unit (same price regardless of number of food components chosen).	Priced as a unit (same price regardless of number of food items chosen).
Extra foods	Not credited for OVS.	Not credited for OVS.
<p>¹ A food component is one of the five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals. i.e., milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains.</p> <p>² A food item is a specific food offered within the food components. It may contain one or more food components, or more than one serving of the same component. For example, a 2-ounce whole-grain bagel at breakfast is one food component that contains two food items. For more information, see “Food Items at Breakfast” in section 3.</p>		

OVS Requirements for the NSLP and SBP

OVS is implemented differently for lunch and breakfast. However, some OVS requirements are the same, including the procedures for:

- meeting the meal pattern requirements;
- unit pricing;
- point-of-service (POS) meal counts;
- offering choices within components;
- meal identification signage.
- food service staff training;
- a la carte sales; and
- extra foods.



This section include guidance on meeting these requirements.

Meeting the meal pattern requirements

SFAs must plan menus to meet the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for each grade group, and provide all students access to the required types and amounts of food. The NSLP and SBP meal patterns require daily and weekly amounts of each component. OVS applies only to the daily meal pattern requirements.

For detailed guidance on the meal pattern requirements, see the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on crediting foods, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Unit pricing

Meals must be priced as a unit. This means that students pay the same price regardless of whether they take three, four, or five (or more) food components for lunch, or three or more food items for breakfast. SFAs must establish one price for a complete reimbursable meal in the paid meal category and one price for a complete reimbursable meal in the reduced-price meal category.

SFAs may set different unit prices (tiered pricing) for various combinations of foods offered as a reimbursable lunch or breakfast. For example, SFAs could offer a variety of lunch entree choices (such as hamburger, chef’s salad, lasagna, and turkey sandwich), and set different unit prices for each type of lunch. However, all students, including those eligible for free and reduced-price meals, must be allowed to select any reimbursable meal. Meals with a higher unit price must be

available at no cost for all free-eligible students. For reduced-eligible students, the unit price cannot exceed 40 cents for lunch or 30 cents for breakfast.

Point-of-service (POS) meal counts

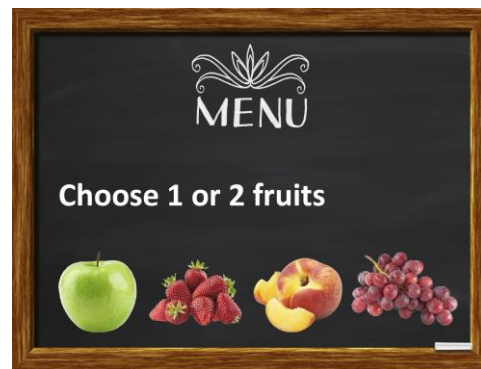
The POS is the point in the food service operation where school food service staff can accurately determine that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid lunch has been served to an eligible child. SFAs should ensure that school food service staff know how to identify reimbursable meals with OVS, and provide training on recognizing reimbursable meals at the POS. For more information, see “[Food service staff training](#)” in this section.

Offering choices within components

The USDA encourages SFAs to give students various options of entrees and other menu items, such as fruits and vegetables, and requires a variety (at least two different kinds) of milk choices (see “[Milk Variety](#)” in section 2). This increases the likelihood that students will select the foods and beverages they prefer, which increases consumption and reduces waste. However, it is important to recognize that offering a variety of choices within the food components (lunch) and food items (breakfast) is different from implementing OVS. For example, if students are required to select a choice from every component, the school is not implementing OVS. With the exception of at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables, OVS allows students to decline some food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) entirely.

SFAs decide if the lunch and breakfast menus will offer variety and how much a student may select. SFAs may offer more than the minimum requirements if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For example, a breakfast menu could offer four $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings of fruit and allow students to select three or four servings, which is more than the minimum required 1-cup offering for each grade group.

SFAs must indicate what choices or combination of choices students may select for a reimbursable meal. Signage must be near or at the beginning of the serving line, prior to the POS, and located on the serving line near each food component, as applicable. This prevents unintentional purchases of a la carte items and help students choose a reimbursable meal. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in this section.



For example, for grades 9-12 at lunch, SFAs may choose to offer the required 1 cup of the fruits component as a variety of $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup fruit selections, and allow students to choose two servings. In

this case, the cafeteria signage near the fruits component must indicate that students may select one or two ½-cup servings of fruit with each meal. This provides a variety of food choices and shows students how to select a reimbursable lunch. It also constitutes OVS because students may choose to decline the fruits component entirely, or take one or two ½-cup servings from the fruits offered. **Note:** Students who decline the fruits component must select at least ½ cup of vegetables.

Meal identification signage

Students must be able to identify what constitutes a reimbursable meal. Signage and menus must provide clear information about allowable choices. This information is critical to help students choose reimbursable meals, and successfully implement OVS. SFAs must use meal identification signage to instruct students on how much food to select from each component for a reimbursable meal, based on the daily menu’s planned servings for each grade group.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) requires that signage must be near or at the beginning of the serving line, prior to the POS, and located on the serving line near each food component (as applicable) to prevent unintentional purchases of a la carte items and help students choose a reimbursable meal. This requirement applies to all schools and institutions, including those that implement family-style meal service. For more information, see “Family-style Meals” in this section, and section 5 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

The CSDE requires that signage regarding what and how much students can take must be located at all applicable points in the serving line where the food components are available. For example, if a high school offers fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings and allows students to select two servings of fruits and two servings of vegetables to meet the required 1-cup serving, the cafeteria signage must clearly communicate that students are allowed to select up to two servings of fruit and two servings of vegetables with each meal. This signage must be located on the serving line where the fruit and vegetable options are located.



SFAs may choose how to identify the foods that are part of reimbursable meals, based on their facilities, layout, and other considerations. Some examples of acceptable signage include menu boards, posters, signs, labels, and table tents. Providing detailed information about the food components, such as identifying the vegetable subgroups, is not required but is an excellent teaching tool. The CSDE strongly encourages SFAs to provide detailed information on food

items and choices whenever possible, within the constraints of the menu and serving line. This helps promote the school nutrition programs and makes it easier for students to understand exactly what school meals include.

Table 1-2 shows some examples of menu signage.

Table 1-2. Examples of menu signage	
 <p>MENU</p> <p>Choose 2 fruits </p> <p>Choose 2 vegetables </p>	 <p>MENU</p> <p>Choose 1 fruit </p> <p>Choose 1 or 2 vegetables </p>
 <p>MENU</p> <p>Choose 2 fruits </p> <p>OR</p> <p>Choose 1 fruit and 1 juice </p>	 <p>MENU</p> <p>Choose one milk</p> <p>Unflavored low-fat milk </p> <p>Unflavored fat-free milk </p> <p>Chocolate fat-free milk </p>
 <p>Lunch</p> <p>MENU</p> <p>Choose 2 fruits </p> <p>Choose 2 vegetables </p> <p>Choose 1 grain </p> <p>Choose 1 meat/meat alternate </p> <p>Choose 1 milk </p>	 <p>Breakfast</p> <p>MENU</p> <p>Choose 1 milk </p> <p>Choose 1 or 2 fruits </p> <p>Choose one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 servings of cereal  2 servings of toast  1 serving of cereal and 1 serving of toast 

Menus are not required to itemize specific portion sizes or food items (such as the vegetable subgroups) if this information is listed on the school's production records. For example, a menu may list "daily salad bar," "fruit choice," or "vegetable choice" if the school's production record includes all food items and amounts served, and the school has appropriate documentation on file, including Child Nutrition (CN) labels, product formulation statements, standardized recipes, and nutrition information. For information on the documentation requirements for school meals, see section 2 of the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Signage is not required for field trips, meals in the classroom, and other venues where signage may be problematic. SFAs that offer meal choices in these situations should use other methods to inform students about what to select and whether OVS is implemented. For more information and resources on signage, see "Signage and Posters" in the CSDE's document, *Menu Planning and Food Production Resources*. For examples of menu signage for OVS at lunch, see "Sample Lunch Menus" in section 2. For examples of menu signage for OVS at breakfast, see "Sample Breakfast Menus" in section 3.

Food service staff training

OVS training is critical for SFAs to ensure correct meal counting and claiming with OVS. School food service staff must understand the OVS requirements, be able to accurately identify reimbursable meals at the POS, and be able to help students select the required quantities of the food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for reimbursable meals.

The CSDE strongly encourages SFAs to conduct OVS training at least annually for cashiers, serving line staff, and other applicable staff. Training is especially important whenever changes occur to the school nutrition programs, such as new staff, new grade configurations, and new menu items. OVS training is most effective when SFAs use actual examples from their own school lunch and breakfast menus.

In addition to regular OVS training, a recommended best practice for cafeteria managers is conducting a daily pre-service meeting with all applicable staff to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. This helps ensure that all staff (including substitutes) can identify reimbursable meals.

OVS training (code 2220) meets the USDA's professional standards requirements for annual training. OVS is listed under the subcategory of "Serving Food" for the key area of "Operations" in the USDA's list of training topics for professional standards. For more information, see the USDA's resources, *Professional Standards Training Topics* and *Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE's [Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals](#) webpage.

For information on OVS training for non-food service employees whose responsibilities include duties related to the operation of school nutrition programs (such as in-classroom meals), see “[Meals in the classroom](#)” in this section.

A la carte sales

A la carte sales include foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals, such as cookies, chips, ice cream, water, and other snack foods. Foods offered as part of reimbursable meals may also be sold a la carte. For example, SFAs could allow students to purchase pizza, fruit, salad, and milk as a la carte items.



Students and cashiers need to know which foods are considered food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for reimbursable meals under OVS, and which foods are a la carte items. SFAs must communicate this information by providing adequate training for staff and appropriate signage for students. Signage must be at the beginning of the serving line and prior to the POS to prevent unintentional purchases of a la carte items and help students choose a reimbursable meal. The CSDE requires that signage regarding what and how much students can take must be located at all applicable points in the serving line, where the food components are available. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in this section.

The meal is not reimbursable if a student does not select the required number of food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the minimum quantities. In this case, SFAs may charge a la carte prices for each item selected by the student. To avoid problems at the POS, SFAs must provide clear signage for students, and should conduct training for cashiers and serving line staff so they understand how to help students select the required foods for reimbursable meals.

Extra foods

Extra foods are foods served in addition to the meal patterns. They include creditable foods from the food components, such as additional servings of grains, fruits, vegetables, meat/meat alternates, and milk. They also include noncreditable foods that do not credit toward the meal patterns, such as potato chips, pudding, ice cream, maple syrup, cream cheese, bacon, and condiments (e.g., salad dressing, ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise).

Some noncreditable foods (such as candy, soda, coffee, tea, and sports drinks) cannot be sold in school nutrition programs due to federal or state requirements. For more information, see the CSDE’s guides, [Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#), [Guide to Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools](#), and [Guide to Competitive Foods in Private Schools and RCCIs](#); and visit the CSDE’s [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage and [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

Schools may offer allowable noncreditable foods as a complement to reimbursable meals. Students may select noncreditable foods in addition to the meal, but noncreditable foods cannot credit toward the required food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for a reimbursable meal under OVS. For information on noncreditable foods, see the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

Note: All extra foods (creditable and noncreditable) offered to students with reimbursable meals count toward the USDA’s weekly dietary specifications for school meals. Extra foods must contain zero trans fat and their inclusion cannot cause the lunch or breakfast menu to exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fats, and sodium. For information on planning menus to meet the USDA’s dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Considerations for Meal Service Systems with OVS

Schools and institutions may use several different meal service systems to offer reimbursable meals to students. Examples include cafeteria-style service, kiosks, classroom meals, and vending machines. At the senior high school level, OVS is required at lunch unless the SFA demonstrates to the CSDE that their meal service system does not accommodate OVS. This is most common in residential child care institutions (RCCIs).

This section addresses some of the meal service systems that might not readily accommodate OVS, and the requirements for ensuring compliance. The USDA strongly encourages SFAs to modify meal service systems to incorporate OVS to the extent possible.

Classroom meals

To implement OVS with meals served in the classroom, SFAs must offer choices that include the required amounts of each component (lunch) or food item (breakfast), and students must select the minimum number of components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for a reimbursable meal. SFAs must provide appropriate job-specific training for non-food service employees whose responsibilities include duties related to the operation of school nutrition programs. For example, teachers, teacher aides, and other applicable staff who conduct in-classroom meal counting and claiming must receive appropriate training to ensure they perform their jobs effectively and in compliance with the USDA’s regulations. SFAs should have a written procedure in place for meal counting in the classroom and provide regular staff training on these procedures.

Note: Non-food service employees whose responsibilities include duties related to the operation of school nutrition programs must be included in the SFA’s annual professional standards tracking log. For more information, see the USDA’s publication, *Guide to Professional Standards for*

School Nutrition Programs, and visit the CSDE’s [Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals](#) webpage.

The USDA requires that NSLP and SBP meal counts must be determined at the POS. Classroom staff must understand how to identify reimbursable meals with OVS and how to implement POS meal counts. For classroom meals, the POS is the point in the meal service where classroom staff can accurately determine that they have served all of the required components for a reimbursable meal to the child. The USDA does not allow any other methods to determine classroom meal counts, such as student attendance, student orders for meals in advance of the meal service, or the number of meals sent to the classroom.



SFAs should have clear written meal count instructions for classroom staff that indicate how to identify reimbursable meals (including reimbursable meals with OVS, if applicable), how to take POS meal counts, how to handle leftover meals or foods (including milk). As a best practice, SFAs should include these instructions with the delivery of the field trip meals. This helps prevent situations where staffing variations (such as teacher absences, substitutes, and parent volunteers) result in staff who do not understand the required procedures.

Classroom meals must also comply with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). The SFA’s standard operating procedures (SOP) for classroom meals must include appropriate food safety procedures (such as ice packs and coolers) to ensure that classroom meals stay at proper temperatures during transportation and service. For examples of SOPs, see the Iowa State University’s handout, *Standard Operating Procedure: Breakfast in the Classroom*, the Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) sample SOPs, *Transporting Food to Remote Sites (Satellite Kitchens)* and *Hot and Cold Holding for Time Temperature Control for Safe Foods*, and the ICN’s [Standard Operating Procedures](#) webpage.

As a reminder, the USDA does not allow OVS for preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP, including classroom meals for preschoolers. For additional guidance on classroom meals, see the CSDE’s handout, *Requirements for Classroom Meals in the NSLP and SBP*.

Vending machine meals

Vending machine that provide reimbursable meals are part of the school food service program and are governed by the NSLP and SBP regulations. School meal vending machines must comply with the same procedures, menu planning requirements, and OVS requirements that apply to meals offered on the cafeteria serving lines. For additional guidance, see [USDA Memo SP 03-](#)

2007: *Vending Machines in the School Meal Programs* and [USDA Memo SP 13-2008: Use of Vending Machines in the School Meal Programs](#).

Advance ordering of meals

SFAs may implement OVS when students order meals in advance of the meal service. OVS does not require students to select the reimbursable meal components on a serving line. To implement OVS with advance ordering of meals, SFAs must offer choices that include the required amounts of each component (lunch) or food item (breakfast), and students must select the minimum number of components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for a reimbursable meal. SFAs must carefully structure this type of meal system, check the resulting meals to ensure they are reimbursable, and provide clear information to students and families regarding the choices and requirements for reimbursable meals.

Pre-plated meals

Pre-plated meals offer all food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the minimum required quantities for each grade group in an entirely or partially pre-served manner. Pre-plated meals must include at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) of each component required by the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

This type of meal service is often used by schools and institutions that have logistical limitations for their meal service. Examples may include facility or space restrictions, or situations where children are unable to select the offered foods. Senior high schools that offer only pre-plated lunches must implement OVS for all or some components, unless the SFA has received prior approval from the CSDE not to implement OVS.

SFAs that use pre-plated meals are not required to change their meal service systems to accommodate OVS. However, pre-plated meals must:

- offer all required food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the required quantities for each grade group, including a variety of milk choices; and
- meet the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements.

The USDA encourages SFAs to modify their meal service systems to include OVS opportunities whenever possible, such as allowing students a choice of different fruits and vegetables.

Pre-packaged meals

Pre-packaged meals such as “grab-and-go” or bagged meals are similar to pre-plated meals. In senior high schools, pre-packaged



meals are allowed only if the meal service system also has cafeteria lines that allow OVS. Senior high schools that offer only pre-packaged lunches must implement OVS for all or some components, unless the SFA has received approval from the CSDE not to implement OVS. Pre-packaged meals are allowed at all other grade levels.

Like pre-plated meals, SFAs using pre-packaged meals are encouraged to offer some choices, and the option to decline some food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) such as grains or milk. OVS is not required (even in senior high schools) if pre-packaged meals are offered as part of breakfast in the classroom, field trips, or for students leaving the campus for work-study.

Family-style meals

Family-style meal service allows students to serve themselves from common dishes of food with assistance from supervising adults. While family-style meal service allows students to make choices in selecting foods, the supervising adult should initially offer the full serving (minimum daily amount) of each food component (lunch) or food item (breakfast) to each student. Over the week, offered meals must meet the daily and weekly food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast), and the weekly dietary specifications. However, since replenishment is immediately available at each table, the initial serving of a food component or food item may be less than the full serving. The supervising adult should encourage additional portions and selections to meet the full serving as appropriate, provided the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications.

Since OVS requires that students must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetable, the supervising adult must ensure that each student selects at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit, vegetable, or combination of both, during the course of the family-style meal service. For additional guidance on family-style meal service, see section 4 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and [USDA Memo SP 35-2011 and CACFP 23-2011: Clarification on the Use of Offer versus Serve and Family Style Meal Service](#).

Salad bars

The following requirements and guidance also apply to other types of food bars, such as pasta bars and baked potato bars. One of the challenges of food bars is ensuring that students actually take the minimum required portions for a reimbursable meal. SFAs must ensure that students and staff understand the required selections for a reimbursable meal.

The USDA encourages SFAs to use salad bars in the meal service to offer a wider variety of vegetables and fruits, and lower plate waste. The USDA permits salad bars with OVS because they enhance the choices available, which may assist students with selecting the foods they will consume. While salad bars offer many benefits, they are not a viable option for some

school food service operations. SFAs must consider whether they can successfully implement the requirements for salad bars, and ensure that students take the minimum required portions for a reimbursable meal.

There are many ways that schools can incorporate salad bars to facilitate service of reimbursable meals. Salad bars may include food options for the complete reimbursable meal (except for milk), or they may include a food or menu item that is part of a reimbursable meal, depending on the food items available and how they are structured. For example, SFAs could offer the meat/meat alternates and grains components on the serving line, the vegetables and fruits components on a salad bar that is available to all students, and a variety of low-fat and fat-free milk choices in the milk cooler.



SFAs can set up salad bars in a variety of ways. One option is providing pre-portioned and pre-packaged food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) that are “grab-and-go” to accommodate a high volume of students in a short period. Pre-portioning is an acceptable method to ensure that students select an appropriate amount from salad bars.

To allow students and cashiers to easily identify and select reimbursable meals from salad bars, SFAs must follow the requirements below.

- **Meet the meal patterns:** When planning a salad bar as part of a reimbursable meal, the servings must be consistent with the meal pattern for the grade group. The planned serving should be an amount that is reasonable for that menu item. For example, 1 cup of lettuce is reasonable, but 1 cup of radishes is more than a child would normally consume. To meet the OVS requirements:
 - the planned serving of fruits or vegetables must be at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup to credit toward the meal patterns;
 - the combined amount of the offered fruits and vegetables must provide the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the vegetables component and the fruits component for each grade group; and
 - students must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables for a reimbursable meal.

For information on the NSLP and SBP meal patterns, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on planning menus for the fruits component and vegetables component, see section 3 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*. For guidance on crediting fruits and vegetables, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

- **Pre-portion foods:** Pre-portioning foods allows staff to quickly identify if the student has a reimbursable meal. If foods are not pre-portioned, SFAs must provide appropriate size serving utensils and instruct students on how to select the required meal components and portions. SFAs must also train cashiers to accurately judge the quantities of self-serve foods on student trays so they can determine if the selected foods count toward a reimbursable meal.
- **Post salad bar signage:** Cafeteria signage must indicate which foods and combinations of foods students may select for a reimbursable salad bar meal with OVS. Clearly identify the food components provided on the salad bar, and the minimum serving size for each component. For self-service items, place signs at the location of the food on the salad bar as a visual aid to help students determine the minimum serving. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in this section.
- **Provide guidance on minimum portions for fruits and vegetables:** Salad bar signs should indicate the number or amount (using a specific serving utensil) that equals $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. For example, eight baby carrots or two scoops of canned fruit. For guidance on the amounts of fruits and vegetables required to provide a $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving, see the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* and the Start with Half a Cup *Portioning Guide for Fresh Fruits* and *Portioning Guide for Fresh Vegetables*. The resources below include examples of signage for salad bar serving sizes.
 - Salad Bar Signage (English) (Colorado Department of Education):
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/saladbarovssignage>
 - Salad Bar Signage (Spanish) (Colorado Department of Education):
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/ovssaladbarsignagespanish>
 - Salad Bar Signage Template (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction):
<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/doc/salad-bar-signage-template.docx>
- **Locate salad bar before the POS:** To ensure that each student’s selections from the salad bar meet the required portions for a reimbursable meal, salad bars should be located before the POS. If a school cannot position the salad bar in a location prior to the POS, the SFA may request approval from the CSDE for an alternative system. The alternative system must ensure that all students who use the salad bar select the required food components to meet the meal pattern and OVS requirements. If the salad bar is located after the POS, the SFA should:
 - pre-portion items;
 - instruct students on how to select the required meal components and quantities;

- provide appropriate size serving utensils to help students select the required quantities;
 - post visual reminders (such as signs and posters) to help students determine how to select foods; and
 - provide staff to monitor meal selections and ensure that students take the food components in the required serving sizes that were credited at the POS. For younger students, schools could assign student “salad bar ambassadors” to assist in selecting the appropriate size portions from the salad bar.
- **Staff training:** Train cashiers on what constitutes a reimbursable meal at the POS. In addition to regular OVS training, the cafeteria manager should conduct a daily pre-service meeting with all servers and cashiers to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. For more information, see “[Food service staff training](#)” in this section.

In addition to the requirements above, SFAs must ensure that salad bars and other food bars comply with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). The SFA’s standard operating procedures (SOP) for salad bars must include appropriate food safety procedures to ensure that foods stay at proper temperatures and are safe from contamination. For examples of SOPs, see the Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) sample SOPs, *Preventing Contamination at Food Bars*, and the ICN’s [Standard Operating Procedures](#) webpage.

For additional guidance on salad bars, see [USDA Memo SP 41-2019: Salad Bars in the National School Lunch Program](#). More resources on salad bars are listed below.

- A Field Guide to Salad Bars in Schools (Minnesota Department of Health): <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/healthyeating/docs/saladbars.pdf>
- Promoting and Supporting School Salad Bars: An Action Guide for State Health Practitioners (CDC): https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/state-local-programs/pdf/promoting_supporting_school_saladbars.pdf.pdf
- Salad Bar Posters and Signs (The Lunch Box): <http://www.thelunchbox.org/marketing/posters-and-signs>
- Salad Bar Tools & Resources (The Lunch Box): <http://www.thelunchbox.org/programs/salad-bars/salad-bar-tools-resources>
- Salad Bars (Action for Healthy Kids): <https://www.actionforhealthykids.org/activity/salad-bars/>
- Salad Bars to Schools (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/strategies/saladbars2schools.html>

- Salad Bars to Schools (Chef Ann Foundation):
<https://www.saladbars2schools.org/>

OVS Resources

The resources below assist SFAs with implementing OVS. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

- Lunch Poster Meal Pattern Components (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/lunchpostercomp.pdf>
- Lunch Poster Offer versus Serve (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/lunchposterOVS.pdf>
- Meal or No Meal Activity: Breakfast (from *What's for Breakfast: Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for the School Breakfast Program*) (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials/Documents>
- Meal or No Meal Activity: Lunch (from *What's for Lunch? Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for the National School Lunch Program*) (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials/Documents>
- OVS Guidance for the NSLP and SBP (USDA):
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP41-2015av2.pdf>
- OVS in the NSLP (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/OVSNSLP.pdf>
- OVS in the SBP (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/OVSSBP.pdf>
- OVS Lunch Poster for Elementary Schools (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/OVS_ElemPoster.pdf
- OVS Lunch Poster for High Schools (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/OVS_HS-Poster.pdf
- OVS Lunch Poster for Middle Schools (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/OVS_MiddlePoster.pdf

- OVS Poster Signage for Lunch (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/OVSPoster.pdf>
- OVS Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: National School Lunch Program (USDA):
<http://https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/OVS%20Lunch%20tip%20sheet.pdf>
- OVS Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: School Breakfast Program (USDA):
<http://https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/OVS%20Breakfast%20tip%20sheet.pdf>
- School Breakfast Webinar Part 1: Offer Versus Serve Overview and Strategies for Success (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-webinar-part-1-offer-versus-serve-overview-and-strategies-success>





2 — OVS at Lunch

OVS must be implemented at lunch in senior high schools, but is optional for all other grades. OVS is also optional for the SSO. OVS cannot be implemented for the ASP or preschoolers.

OVS applies only to the daily meal pattern requirements. SFAs must offer the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the five food components. For a reimbursable lunch, students must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other food components.

- A **food component** is one of the five food groups that comprise the reimbursable lunch, including milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains.
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the five food components. It may contain one or more food components, or more than one serving of the same component. For example, a hamburger patty (meat/meat alternates component) on a whole-grain bun (grains component) is one food item that contains two food components. A selection of three different ½-cup servings of fruit (such as peaches, applesauce and pears) includes three food items from one food component (fruits).

Table 2-1 summarizes the daily meal pattern requirements for lunch and the number of food components that students can decline under OVS.

Table 2-1. Summary of OVS requirements for lunch	
SFA must offer five components ¹	Student may decline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk ² • Fruits • Vegetables • Grains ³ • Meat/meat alternates ⁴ 	<p>One or two food components, but must take at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables</p> 
<p>¹ Each component must be at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) for each grade group in the NSLP meal pattern.</p> <p>² SFAs must offer a variety (at least two different choices) of unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk. At least one choice must be unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk.</p> <p>³ Grains must be whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched. At least half of all weekly grains must be WGR.</p> <p>⁴ The meat/meat alternates component must be served in a main dish, or in a main dish and only one other food item.</p>	

Overview of OVS Requirements for Lunch

For a lunch to be reimbursable under OVS, SFAs must meet the criteria below.

- Menu planning:** Lunch menus must include five food components (milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains). The planned serving for each food component must be at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) for each grade group in the NSLP meal pattern. The grains, fruits, and vegetables components may be offered in more than one food item. The meat/meat alternates component must be offered as a main dish, or a main dish and one other food item. Milk must be offered as the full 1-cup serving.
- Larger amounts:** SFAs may serve larger amounts of any component if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*. **Note:** SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the NSLP meal pattern’s minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8. For more information, see section 4 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
- Offering a component as two separate food items:** If the lunch menu offers the full serving (minimum daily amount) of a component as two separate food items, students must take both food items to credit as one component for OVS. For example, if the lunch menu for grades 9-12 provides the required 2 oz eq of meat/meat alternates from ½ cup of low-fat yogurt (1 oz eq) and 1 ounce of low-fat cheese (1 oz eq), students must select both food items to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS. The yogurt or cheese alone do not credit because each serving is less than 2 oz eq. SFAs should consider the serving size of menu items and plan lunch menus so it is easy for students to select (and school food service staff to identify) reimbursable meals. For more information, see “[Offering Food Components as More than One Food Item](#)” in this section.
- Unit pricing:** Meals must be priced as a unit, i.e., students pay the same price regardless of whether they select three, four, or five (or more) food components. SFAs must establish one price for a complete reimbursable lunch in the paid meal category and one price for a complete reimbursable lunch in the reduced-price meal category. SFAs may set different unit prices (tiered pricing) for various



combinations of foods offered as a reimbursable lunch. However, all students, including those eligible for free and reduced-price meals, must be allowed to select any reimbursable lunch. Lunches with a higher unit price must be available at no cost for all free-eligible students, and at no more than 40 cents for all reduced-eligible students.

- Identifying reimbursable meals:** SFAs should plan lunch menus to make it easy for students to select (and food service staff to identify) reimbursable meals. SFAs must post signage that clearly communicates the meal components for each menu choice, and indicates what students must select for a reimbursable meal. SFAs should also provide training for school food service staff on the NSLP meal pattern components, including how to recognize reimbursable meals under OVS. For more information, see [“Meal Identification Signage”](#) and [“Food service staff training”](#) in section 1.
- Required student selections:** Students must select at least three of the five food components offered, including at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving (minimum daily amount) of at least two other food components. Selections of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables do not credit as a component for OVS, unless they are combined with additional fruits or vegetables to provide at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, SFAs should offer all fruits and vegetables in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings.
- Declining foods:** Students may decline any one or two of the required food components, except for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. Students may take smaller portions of the declined food components. However, selections of less than the full serving cannot credit as a food component for OVS.
- Selecting more than the full serving:** SFAs may allow students to select more than the full serving of any component. However, selections of additional servings from the same component credit as only one component for OVS. For more information, see [“Offering Food Components as More than One Food Item,”](#) [“Offering Two Food Items that are each the Full Grain Serving”](#) and [“Offering Two Food Items that are each the Full Meat/Meat Alternates Serving”](#) in this section.



Offering Each Food Component as One Food Item

SFAs may choose to offer the full serving (minimum daily amount) of each food component as one food item. With this menu planning approach, each selection the student takes credits as one of the required components for OVS. Table 2-2 shows OVS examples for grades K-5 and 6-8. Table 2-3 shows OVS examples for grades 9-12.

Table 2-2. OVS examples: Offering each component as one food item for grades K-5 and 6-8				
Planned lunch menu		Meal pattern components		
Turkey (1 ounce) and low-fat cheese (1 ounce)		Meat/meat alternates (MMA), 2 oz eq		
Whole-wheat bread, 2 ounces		Grains (G), 2 oz eq		
Broccoli florets, ¾ cup, with low-fat dip		Vegetables (V), ¾ cup		
Cantaloupe wedges, ½ cup		Fruits (F), ½ cup		
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		Milk (M), 1 cup		
Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Milk (M)	2	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V.
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe (F)	2	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and F).
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli (V)	2	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and V).

Table 2-2. OVS examples: Offering each component as one food item for grades K-5 and 6-8, *continued*

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Broccoli florets (V) Cantaloupe (F) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (V, F, and M).
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli (V) Milk (M)	3	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four full components (MMA, G, V, and M).
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe (F) Milk (M)	3	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four full components (MMA, G, F, and M).



Table 2-3. OVS examples: Offering each component as one food item for grades 9-12

Planned lunch menu		Meal pattern components		
Turkey (1 ounce) and low-fat cheese (1 ounce)		MMA, 2 oz eq		
Whole-wheat bread, 2 ounces		G, 2 oz eq		
Broccoli florets, 1 cup, with low-fat dip		V, 1 cup		
Cantaloupe wedges, 1 cup		F, 1 cup		
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup		
<p>Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.</p>				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Milk (M)	2	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V.
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe (F)	2	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and F).
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli (V)	2	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and V).
Broccoli florets (V) Cantaloupe (F) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (V, F, and M).
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli (V) Milk (M)	3	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four full components (MMA, G, V, and M).

Table 2-3. OVS examples: Offering each component as one food item for grades 9-12, *continued*

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe (F) Milk (M)	3	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four full components (MMA, G, F, and M).

Offering Food Components as More than One Food Item

SFAs may choose to offer the full serving (minimum daily amount) of a component as more than one food item. For example, the lunch menu for grades 9-12 could offer the required 1 cup of vegetables from ½ cup of broccoli and ½ cup of corn. SFAs may offer components as more than one food item only when:

- each food item provides the minimum creditable serving size (¼ oz eq for grains and meat/meat alternates and ⅛ cup for fruits and vegetables); and
- the combined amount of the offered food items provides the full serving (minimum daily amount) for each grade group.



Note: SFAs must offer the meat/meat alternates component as one food item (main dish) or two food items (main dish and one other food item). SFAs must offer the milk component as the full 1-cup serving of fluid milk.

To credit as a food component under OVS, students must select at least the full serving required by the NSLP meal pattern, except for fruits and vegetables. The OVS requirement for fruits and vegetables is at least ½ cup. Selections of less than the full serving of any other components cannot credit for OVS, unless they are combined with additional servings from the same component to meet the required amount. For example, students in grades 9-12 could meet the required 2 oz eq of grains by selecting ½ cup of brown rice (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll (1 oz eq).

If the menu offers the minimum daily amount of a meal component as two separate food items, students must select both food items to credit as one component. SFAs should consider the serving size of menu items and plan lunch menus to make it easy for students to select (and food service staff to identify) reimbursable meals. SFAs must ensure clear communication with

students and staff about the NSLP meal pattern requirements and OVS by:

- posting cafeteria signage in all schools that clearly communicates the meal components for all lunch menu choices and indicates what students may select (see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in section 1); and
- providing adequate training for school food service staff on the NSLP meal pattern components, including the required servings for each grade group, how to credit foods, and how to recognize reimbursable meals under OVS (see “[Food service staff training](#)” in section 1).

For information on offering the components as more than one item, see “[Offering the Full Fruits and Vegetables Components as Two Food Items](#),” “[Offering the Full Grains Component as Two Food Items](#),” and “[Offering the Full Meat/Meat Alternates Component as Two Food Items](#)” in this section.

Table 2-4 shows OVS examples for grades 9-12 with a lunch menu that offers the minimum daily serving of the meat/meat alternates component and grains component as two food items.

- **Meat/meat alternates component:** The planned lunch menu provides the required 2 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component from ½ cup of yogurt (1 oz eq) and 1 ounce of low-fat Swiss cheese cubes (1 oz eq). Since each food item is less than the full serving, students must take both food items to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS.
- **Grains component:** The planned lunch menu provides the required 2 oz eq of the grains component from two 1-oz eq packages of whole-grain crackers. Since each package is less than the full serving, students must take both packages to credit as the grains component for OVS.

When menus offer the full serving of the grains or meat/meat alternates components as two separate food items, it might be more difficult for students to select the required amount for a reimbursable meal. SFAs may want to consider other menu planning approaches that encourage selections of reimbursable meals, such as:

- offering combination entrees that provide the full serving of the grains and meat/meat alternates components (1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8 and 2 oz eq for grades 9-12);
- offering all food items from the grains and meat/meat alternates components in at least the full serving; and
- packaging food items with less than the full serving together, so that students must take both. For example, wrap a 1-oz eq yogurt and a 1-oz eq cheese stick together to provide 2 oz eq for grades 9-12, or wrap two ½-oz eq packages of crackers together to provide 1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8.

For more information, see “[Menu Planning Tips for OVS at Lunch](#)” at the end of this section.

Table 2-4. OVS examples: Offering the full serving of grains and meat/meat alternates for grades 9-12 as two separate food items				
Planned lunch menu		Meal pattern components		
Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup		MMA, 1 oz eq	(2 oz eq total)	
Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes, 1 ounce		MMA, 1 oz eq		
Whole-grain crackers, two packages (1 oz eq each)		G, 2 oz eq		
Spinach salad, 2 cups ¹		V, 1 cup		
Orange wedges, 1 cup		F, 1 cup		
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup		
Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Crackers, two packages (G) Orange wedges (F) Milk (M)	4	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (G, F, and M). ³
Spinach salad (V) Orange wedges (F) Crackers, two packages (G)	4	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (V, F, and G). ³
Yogurt (1 oz eq MMA) ² Cheese (1 oz eq MMA) ² Crackers, one package (1 oz eq G) ² Orange wedges (F) Milk (M)	5	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, F, and M). ³

Table 2-4. OVS examples: Offering the full serving of grains and meat/meat alternates for grades 9-12 as two separate food items, *continued*

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Yogurt (1 oz eq MMA) ² Crackers, two packages (G) Milk (M)	4	2	No	No. The selected meal contains two full components (G and M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V.
Yogurt (1 oz eq MMA) ² Cheese (1 oz eq MMA) ² Crackers, one package (1 oz eq G) ² Orange wedges (F)	4	2	Yes, but the orange wedges cannot credit as ½ cup of F for OVS because they already credit as the full serving of the fruits component. ³	No. The selected meal contains only two full components (MMA and F). It is missing at least ½ cup of V or another full component. ³
Yogurt (1 oz eq MMA) ² Spinach salad (V) Orange wedges (F)	3	2	Yes, but the orange wedges cannot credit as ½ cup of F for OVS because they already credit as the full serving of the fruits component. ³	No. The selected meal contains only two full components (V and F). It is missing another full component. ³

¹ Raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served.

² Selections of less than the full serving cannot credit as a component for OVS, unless they are combined with additional servings from the same component to meet the required amount.

³ Selections of the full serving of fruits and vegetables credit as either the full component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS, but not both in the same meal.

Milk Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the milk component at lunch. For more information on the NSLP meal pattern requirements for milk, see section 3 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Serving Size for Milk

Milk credits based on volume (fluid ounces). Table 2-5 summarizes the NSLP meal pattern requirements for the milk component. The daily amount is the minimum amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch, and the minimum amount that students must select to credit as the milk component for OVS.

Table 2-5. NSLP meal pattern requirements for the milk component

Grade group	Minimum daily serving ^{1,2}	Minimum weekly serving	
		Five-day week	Seven-day week
K-5	1 cup (8 fluid ounces)	5 cups	7 cups
6-8	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

¹ SFAs must offer at least two different choices of unflavored or flavored low-fat and fat-free milk. At least one choice must be unflavored milk. For more information, see “[Milk Variety](#)” in this section.

² SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.



Milk Variety

SFAs must offer a variety (at least two different choices) of milk with all meals. Choices may include unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk. This includes lactose-reduced milk, lactose-free milk, buttermilk, and acidified milk. For example, SFAs could choose to offer:

- unflavored low-fat milk and unflavored fat-free milk;
- flavored low-fat milk and unflavored fat-free milk;
- unflavored low-fat milk, chocolate fat-free milk, and unflavored fat-free milk;
- unflavored low-fat milk, unflavored lactose-free low-fat milk, fat-free chocolate milk, and fat-free strawberry milk; or
- any other combination of fat content and flavors that comply with the milk requirements.



At least one milk choice must be unflavored.

State Requirement for Milk

In addition to meeting the USDA meal pattern requirements for the milk component, all milk sold to students in public schools must meet the beverage requirements for milk under [Section 10-221q](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). The state beverage statute requires that milk cannot contain more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce or any artificial sweeteners. These requirements apply to all milk sold to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals (i.e., a la carte sales). The state beverage statute does not apply to private schools or RCCIs.

Products that meet the federal and state requirements are included on [list 16](#) of the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage, which contains brand-specific lists of foods that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) and beverages that meet the requirements of state statute. For more information on the state beverage statute, see the CSDE's [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

Crediting Milk for OVS

SFAs must offer 1 cup (8 fluid ounces) of fluid milk daily for all grades at lunch. Students must select at least 1 cup of fluid milk to credit as the milk component for OVS. Fluid milk credits as only one food component for OVS, regardless of how much milk is served or selected. Students are not required to select the milk component for a reimbursable meal.

Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the fruits component and vegetables component at lunch. For more information on the NSLP meal pattern requirements for fruits and vegetables, see section 3 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables; and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. For example, a serving of canned corn cannot include the water in which it is packed; and a serving of baked beans cannot include the sauce in which it is packed. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes) credit when rehydrated only if the manufacturer’s product formulation statement (PFS) provides specific documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving.

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned (in light syrup, water, or fruit juice), and dried fruits; and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup. Juice in canned fruit that credits as the fruits component also counts toward the weekly juice limit. For more information, see “[Weekly Juice Limit at Lunch](#)” in this section.



Serving Size for Vegetables

A menu item must provide at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of vegetables to credit toward part of the vegetables component. If the amount of vegetables is less than the minimum daily amount, the planned lunch menu must include additional vegetables to meet the full serving for each grade group. A student's selection of amounts less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup do not credit toward the OVS requirement.



All vegetables credit based on volume (cups) with two exceptions. Raw leafy greens (such as kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce, e.g., iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix) credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup of lettuce credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetable component. Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted, as indicated in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG). One tablespoon of tomato paste or 2 tablespoons of tomato puree credit as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetables (red/orange subgroup).

Table 2-6 summarizes the NSLP meal pattern requirements for the vegetables component. The daily amount is the minimum amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch, and the minimum amount that students must select to credit as the vegetables component for OVS. However, a $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Grade group	Minimum daily serving ¹	Minimum weekly serving ²	
		Five-day week	Seven-day week
K-5	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$3\frac{3}{4}$ cups	$5\frac{1}{4}$ cups
6-8	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$3\frac{3}{4}$ cups	$5\frac{1}{4}$ cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

¹ SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

² The lunch meal pattern requires minimum weekly servings of five vegetable subgroups (dark green, red/orange, starchy, legumes, and other). Students are not required to select each subgroup, but SFAs must provide the opportunity for students to select each subgroup. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP*.

Serving Size for Fruits

A menu item must provide at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruits to credit toward part of the fruits component. If the amount of fruit is less than the minimum daily amount, the planned lunch menu must include additional fruits to meet the full serving for each grade group. A student's selection of amounts less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup do not credit toward the OVS requirement.

All fruits credit based on volume (cups) except for dried fruit such as raisins, apricots, dried cherries, dried cranberries, dried blueberries, and mixed dried fruit. Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served. For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component.

Table 2-7 summarizes the NSLP meal pattern requirements for the fruits component. The daily amount is the minimum amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch, and the minimum amount that students must select to credit as the fruits component for OVS. However, a $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Grade group	Minimum daily serving ¹	Minimum weekly serving	
		Five-day week	Seven-day week
K-5	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups
6-8	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

¹ SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.



Weekly Juice Limit at Lunch

For example, if a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 offers 2½ cups of the fruits component over the week, the lunch menu may offer up to 1¼ cups of juice over the week. If the weekly menu includes larger amounts of fruits and vegetables, the weekly juice limit also increases. For example, if a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 offers 4 cups of the fruits component over the week, the lunch menu may offer up to 2 cups of juice over the week.

SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice available to students during the week toward the weekly juice limit, including:

- juice that is fresh, frozen or made from concentrate;
- frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice;
- pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies; and
- juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice, unless the canned fruit is drained or served as an extra food. Drained fruit and canned fruit in light syrup or water do not count toward the weekly juice limit.



The meal patterns allow a serving of canned fruit to include the juices in which it is packed. For example, canned peaches (¾ cup) in juice (⅛ cup) credit as ½ cup of the fruits component. The juice from canned fruit counts toward the weekly juice limit if the SFA credits the juice toward the fruits component. However, juice from canned fruit does not count toward the weekly juice limit if the SFA plans the juice as an extra food that does not credit toward the meal patterns. For example, if food service personnel portion ½ cup of canned fruit in a 5½-ounce container, then add the juice **after** measuring the full ½-cup serving of fruit, the juice does not count toward the weekly juice limit.

For more information on crediting juice, the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP* and *Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*, and sections 3 and 4 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Assorted Juice Choices at Lunch

When the daily lunch menu offers 1 cup of fruit (such as a lunch menu for grades 9-12), schools cannot offer and students cannot select more than ½ cup of juice. If SFAs allow students to select two ½-cup servings from a variety of daily fruit and juice choices, students may select either two fruits, or one fruit and one juice. **Students cannot select two servings of juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit.** Each school’s lunch menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of juice that students may select with each meal. For more information, see “[Assorted Juice Choice at Breakfast](#)” in section 3.

Planned and Selected Servings of Fruits and Vegetables

With the exception of the fruits component for grades K-5 and 6-8, the planned serving size for the fruits and vegetables components is not the same as the serving size that students must select for a reimbursable meal. Table 2-8 summarizes the menu planning and OVS requirements for the fruits and vegetables components at lunch.

Grade group	Menu planning <i>SFA must plan and offer</i>	OVS <i>Student must select</i>
K-5 and 6-8	½ cup of fruits ¾ cup vegetables	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables
9-12	1 cup of fruits 1 cup of vegetables	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables

SFAs must always plan and offer the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the fruits and vegetables components for each grade group (see tables 2-6 and 2-7). However, students are not required to select the full-planned serving of fruits and vegetables. For a reimbursable meal under OVS, students must select at least ½ cup of vegetables, fruit, or a combination of both; and the full serving of at least two components. For example, a student's selection of any one of the following meets the required ½ cup of fruits and vegetables for OVS:

- ½ cup of one individual fruit;
- ½ cup of mixed fruits, e.g., fruit salad;
- ¼ cup of dried fruit (credits as twice the volume served);
- ½ cup of one individual vegetable;
- ½ cup of mixed vegetables, e.g., peas and carrots;
- 1 cup of salad greens (credits as half the volume served);
- ½ cup combination of fruits and vegetables, e.g.,
¼ cup of fruit and ¼ cup of vegetable; or
- ½ cup of mixed fruits and vegetables, e.g., carrot-pineapple-raisin salad.



Dried fruit and raw leafy greens credit toward the OVS requirements based on their meal pattern crediting volume. Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served. For example, a student's

selection of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component. Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served. For example, a student's selection of 1 cup of raw leafy greens credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables component.

Crediting Selections of Fruits and Vegetables

Whether a student's selection of fruits or vegetables credits as the full component or the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the required serving for each grade group.

- **Full serving:** Selections of the full serving (minimum daily amount) of either fruits or vegetables credit as one component for OVS. **The selection credits as either the full component or the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving, but not both in the same meal.** For example, the NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component. A student who selects $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit (full component) must also select the full serving of at least two other components, or at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables (OVS requirement) and the full serving of at least one other component.
- **More than full serving:** Selections of more than the minimum daily serving of the fruits component or vegetables component credit as only one component for OVS. For example, the NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of vegetables. A student's selection of 1 cup of vegetables credits as one component. For a reimbursable meal, the student must select the full serving of at least two other components, or at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit (OVS requirement) and the full serving of at least one other component. For more information, see "[Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables](#)" in this section.
- **$\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving:** Selections of at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables meet the OVS requirement. For a reimbursable meal, students must also select the full serving of at least two other components.
- **Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving:** Selections of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables cannot credit toward the OVS requirements, unless they are combined with additional servings from either the fruits component or vegetables component to meet the minimum requirement. **Meals without at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables are not reimbursable.** Schools may charge a la carte prices for the selected foods. For more information, see "[A La Carte Sales](#)" in section 1. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals at the POS, food service staff should allow students to return to the serving line and select additional fruits or vegetables. Another strategy is making fruit and vegetable



selections at the POS. For example, the cashier’s station could have a basket of assorted whole fruits and bags of cut vegetables.

Table 2-9 shows examples of crediting a student’s fruit selections with OVS.

Table 2-9. Crediting fruit selections with OVS at lunch					
Grade group	Full serving (minimum daily amount)	Student selects	Credits as full component?	Credits as ½ cup for OVS?	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
K-5 and 6-8	½ cup	½ cup	Yes ¹	Yes ¹	The full serving of at least two other components, or the full serving of one other component and at least ½ cup of vegetables.
9-12	1 cup	½ cup	No	Yes	The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables.

¹ Selections of the full serving credit as either the full component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS, but not both in the same meal.



Tables 2-10 show examples of crediting a student's vegetable selections with OVS.

Table 2-10. Crediting vegetable selections with OVS at lunch					
Grade group	Full serving (minimum daily amount)	Student selects	Credits as full component?	Credits as ½ cup for OVS?	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
K-5 and 6-8	¾ cup	½ cup	No	Yes	The full serving of at least two other components, or the full serving of one other component and at least ½ cup of fruit.
9-12	1 cup	½ cup	No	Yes	The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit.



Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables

If the SFA allows students to select more than the full serving (minimum daily amount) of fruits or vegetables, the selection credits as only one of the three required components for OVS. For example, a student in grades 9-12 selects 1½ cups of fruit salad (one component). For a reimbursable meal, the student must also select the full serving of at least two other components, or at least ½ cup of vegetables and the full serving of one other component.

Table 2-11 shows examples of how to credit selections of multiple servings of the fruits component and vegetables component with OVS at lunch.

Table 2-11. Crediting a student's selection of multiple fruits and vegetables with OVS at lunch				
Grade group	Full serving (minimum daily amount)	Student selects	Number of components	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
K-5 and 6-8	Fruits: ½ cup	Two ½-cup servings of fruit salad (1 cup)	1	The full serving of at least two other components, or at least ½ cup of vegetables and the full serving of one other component.
K-5 and 6-8	Vegetables: ¾ cup	Two ½-cup servings of corn (1 cup)	1	The full serving of at least two other components, or at least ½ cup of fruit and the full serving of one other component.
9-12	Fruits: 1 cup	1½ cups of fruit salad	1	The full serving of at least two other components, or at least ½ cup of vegetables and the full serving of one other component.
9-12	Vegetables: 1 cup	3 cups of salad (credits as 1½ cups of vegetables)	1	The full serving of at least two other components, or at least ½ cup of fruit and the full serving of one other component.

Offering the Full Fruits Component as Two Food Items

When the lunch menu offers the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the fruits component as two separate food items, students must select both food items to credit as the fruits component for OVS at lunch. Selections of amounts less than the full serving cannot credit as the fruits component. However, a $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup selection meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Whether a student's selection credits as the fruits component for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the required serving for each grade group. The required servings for grades K-5 and 6-8 are different from the required servings for grades 9-12.



Grades K-5 and 6-8

The NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component. Table 2-12 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu offers the full serving of the fruits component as two separate food items. The planned lunch menu provides the required $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit from $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of strawberries and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of oranges. Students must take both food items to credit as the full fruits component, or meet the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. The strawberries or oranges alone cannot credit because each serving is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select both fruit servings (full component) must also select either:

- the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of vegetables; or
- at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component.

Students who select only the strawberries ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) or oranges ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) must also select at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.

When menus offer the full serving of the fruits component as two separate food items, it might be more difficult for students to select the amount required to credit as a component for reimbursable meals. A better menu planning approach is to offer all fruit choices in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings so that any student selection contains at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component for OVS.

Table 2-12. Offering the full fruits component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two food items

Required daily serving: ½ cup				
Planned fruits component		Meal pattern contribution		
Strawberries, ¼ cup		¼ cup		
Oranges, ¼ cup		¼ cup (½ cup total)		
Student Selects	Cups	Credits as at least ½ cup of fruit for OVS?	Credits as full fruits component? <i>Must be at least ½ cup</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Strawberries Oranges	½	Yes	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required ½-cup serving for the fruits component and the minimum ½-cup serving for OVS.	The full serving of at least two other components, or at least ½ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component.
Strawberries	¼	No	No. The student's selection is less than the required ½-cup serving for the fruits component and the minimum ½-cup serving for OVS. Selections of less than ½ cup cannot credit for OVS.	At least ¼ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components.
Oranges	¼	No	No. The student's selection is less than the required ½-cup serving for the fruits component and the minimum ½-cup serving for OVS. Selections of less than ½ cup cannot credit for OVS.	At least ¼ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components.

Grades 9-12

The NSLP meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires at least 1 cup of the fruits component. Table 2-13 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers the full serving of the fruits component as two separate food items. The planned lunch menu provides the required 1 cup of the fruit from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of strawberries and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of oranges. Students must take both food items to credit as the full fruits component. The strawberries or oranges alone cannot credit as the full fruits component because each serving is less than 1 cup. However, each $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select both fruit servings (full component) must also select either:

- the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables; or
- at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component.

Students who select only the strawberries ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) or oranges ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) must also select the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables.



Table 2-13. Offering the full fruits component for grades 9-12 as two food items

Required daily serving: 1 cup				
Planned fruits component		Meal pattern contribution		
Strawberries, ½ cup		½ cup		
Oranges, ½ cup		½ cup (1 cup total)		
Student Selects	Cups	Credits as at least ½ cup of fruit for OVS?	Credits as full fruits component? <i>Must be at least ½ cup</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Strawberries Oranges	1	Yes	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1-cup serving for the fruits component and more than the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.	The full serving of at least two other components, or at least ½ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component.
Strawberries	½	Yes	No. The student's selection is less than the required 1-cup serving for the fruits component, but the same as the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.	The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables.
Oranges	½	Yes	No. The student's selection is less than the required 1-cup serving for the fruits component, but the same as the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.	The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables.

Offering the Full Vegetables Component as Two Food Items

When the lunch menu offers the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the vegetables component as two separate food items, students must select both food items to credit as the full vegetables component for OVS at lunch. Selections of amounts less than the full serving cannot credit as the vegetables component. However, a $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup selection meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Whether a student's selection credits as the vegetables component for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the required serving for each grade group. The required servings for grades K-5 and 6-8 are different from the required servings for grades 9-12.



Grades K-5 and 6-8

The NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires at least $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component. Table 2-14 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu offers the full serving of the vegetables component as two separate food items. The planned lunch menu provides the required $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component from $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of carrot sticks and $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of green peas. Students must take both food items to credit as the full vegetables component, or meet the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. The carrots or peas alone cannot credit as the full vegetables component because each serving is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ cup.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select both vegetable servings (full component) must also select the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit. Students who select only the carrots ($\frac{3}{8}$ cup) or peas ($\frac{3}{8}$ cup) must also select at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruit, and the full serving of two other components.

When menus offer the full serving of the vegetables component as two separate food items, it might be more difficult for students to select the amount required to credit as a component for reimbursable meals. A better menu planning approach is to offer all vegetable choices in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings so that any student selection meets the $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup requirement for OVS.

Table 2-14. Offering the full vegetables component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate food items

Required daily serving: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup				
Planned vegetables component		Meal pattern contribution		
Carrots, $\frac{3}{8}$ cup		$\frac{3}{8}$ cup		
Green peas, $\frac{3}{8}$ cup		$\frac{3}{8}$ cup ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup total)		
Student Selects	Cups	Credits as at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables for OVS?	Credits as full vegetables component? <i>Must be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Carrot sticks Green peas	$\frac{3}{4}$	Yes	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving for the vegetables component and more than the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS.	At least two other components, one of which could be $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit.
Carrot sticks	$\frac{3}{8}$	No	No. The student's selection is less than the required $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving for the vegetables component and the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS. Selections of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cannot credit for OVS.	At least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of two other components.
Green peas	$\frac{3}{8}$	No	No. The student's selection is less than the required $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving for the vegetables component and the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS. Selections of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cannot credit for OVS.	At least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of two other components.

Grades 9-12

The NSLP meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires at least 1 cup of the vegetables component. Table 2-15 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers the full serving of the vegetables requirement as two separate food items. The planned lunch menu provides the required 1 cup of vegetables from ½ cup of carrot sticks and ½ cup of green peas. Students must take both food items to credit as the full vegetables component. The carrots or peas alone cannot credit as the full vegetables component because each serving is less than 1 cup. However, each ½-cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select both vegetable servings (full component) must also select either:

- the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit; or
- at least ½ cup of fruit and the full serving of at least one other component.

Students who select only the carrots (½ cup) or peas (½ cup) must also select the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit.



Table 2-15. Offering the full vegetables component for grades 9-12 as two food items

Required daily serving: 1 cup				
Planned vegetables component		Meal pattern contribution		
Carrots, ½ cup		½ cup		
Green peas, ½ cup		½ cup (1 cup total)		
Student Selects	Cups	Credits as at least ½ cup of vegetables for OVS?	Credits as full vegetables component? <i>Must be at least ½ cup</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Carrot sticks Green peas	1	Yes	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1-cup serving for the vegetables component and more than the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.	At least two other components, or at least ½ cup of fruit and the full serving of at least one other component.
Carrot sticks	½	Yes	No. The student's selection is less than the required 1-cup serving for the vegetables component, but the same as the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.	The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit.
Green peas	½	Yes	No. The student's selection is less than the required 1-cup serving for the vegetables component, but the same as the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.	The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit.

Offering the Full Fruits and Vegetables Components as Two Food Items

When the lunch menu offers the full serving (minimum daily amount) of both the fruits and vegetables components as two separate food items, students must select both food items to credit as the fruits or vegetables component for OVS at lunch. Selections of amounts less than the full serving cannot credit as the full component. However, each ½-cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Whether a student's selection credits as the full component for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the required serving for each grade group. The required servings for grades K-5 and 6-8 are different from the required servings for grades 9-12.

Grades K-5 and 6-8

The NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires at least ¾ cup of the vegetables component and at least ½ cup of the fruits component. Table 2-16 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu offers the full serving of the vegetables component as two food items with different serving sizes and the full serving of the fruits component as two separate food items with the same serving size.

- **Vegetables component:** The planned lunch menu provides the required ¾ cup of vegetables from ⅜ cup of tomato sauce in the vegetable pizza and ⅜ cup of coleslaw. The vegetable pizza or coleslaw alone cannot credit as the full vegetables component because each serving is less than ¾ cup. Students must take both food items to credit as the full vegetables component or meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.
- **Fruits component:** The planned lunch menu provides the required ½ cup of fruit from ¼ cup of green grapes and ¼ cup of applesauce. Students must take both food items to credit as the full fruits component, or meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. The green grapes or applesauce alone cannot credit as the full fruits component because each serving is less than ½ cup.

For more information, see [“Selections of Only Fruits, Vegetables, and One Other Component”](#) in this section.

Note: When menus offer the full serving of the vegetables and fruits components for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate food items, it might be more difficult for students to select the amount required to credit as a component for reimbursable meals. A better menu planning approach is to offer all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings, so that any student selection meets the ½-cup requirement for OVS.

Table 2-16. OVS examples: Offering the full fruits component and full vegetables component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate food items

Planned lunch menu		Meal pattern components		
Cheese and vegetable pizza, 1 slice ¹ (1½ ounces of low-fat mozzarella cheese) WGR pizza crust, 2 ounces		MMA, 1½ oz eq G, 2 oz eq		
Coleslaw, ⅜ cup Tomato sauce and vegetables on pizza, ⅜ cup		V, ⅜ cup V, ⅜ cup (¾ cup total)		
Green grapes, ¼ cup Applesauce, ¼ cup		F, ¼ cup F, ¼ cup (½ cup total)		
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup		
Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Pizza (MMA, G, ⅜ cup V) ²	1	2	No	No. The selected meal contains two full components (MMA and G), but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V.
Applesauce (¼ cup F) ² Grapes (¼ cup F) ² Milk (M)	3	2	Yes, but the fruit servings cannot credit as ½ cup of F for OVS because they already credit as the full serving of the fruits component. ³	No. The selected meal contains only two full components (F and M). It is missing at least ½ cup of V or another full component.
Pizza (MMA, G, ⅜ cup V) ² Coleslaw (⅜ cup V) ²	2	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and V).

Table 2-16. OVS examples: Offering the full fruits component and full vegetables component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two food items <i>continued</i>				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Pizza (MMA, G, ⅜ cup V) ² Grapes (¼ cup F) ²	2	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (MMA and G) and ⅝ cup of V and F combined (⅜ cup of vegetables on pizza and ¼ cup of green grapes).
Pizza (MMA, G, ⅜ cup V) ² Milk (M)	2	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M), but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V.
Pizza (MMA, G, ⅜ cup V) ² Grapes (¼ cup F) ² Coleslaw (⅜ cup V) ²	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and V).
<p>¹ SFAs must document the entree’s meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products, or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE’s handouts, Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, Product Formulation Statements, Accepting Processed Product Documentation, and Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP; and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the “Crediting Foods Prepared on Site” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.</p> <p>² Selections of less than ½ cup of fruits or vegetables do not credit for OVS, unless they are combined with additional servings of fruits or vegetables to provide at least ½ cup. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, offer all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings.</p> <p>³ Selections of the full serving of fruits and vegetables credit as either the full component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS, but not both in the same meal.</p>				

Grades 9-12

The NSLP meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires at least 1 cup of the vegetables component and at least 1 cup of the fruits component. Table 2-17 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers the full serving (minimum daily amount) of each component as two separate food items.

- **Vegetables component:** The planned lunch menu provides the required 1 cup of vegetables from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of tomato sauce in the vegetable pizza and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of coleslaw. Students must take both food items to credit as the full vegetables component for OVS. The vegetable pizza or coleslaw alone cannot credit as the full vegetables component because each serving is less than 1 cup. However, each $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.
- **Fruits component:** The planned lunch menu provides the required 1 cup of fruit from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of green grapes and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of applesauce. Students must take both food items to credit as the full fruits component. The green grapes or applesauce alone cannot credit as the full fruits component because each serving is less than 1 cup. However, each $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

For more information, see [“Selections of Only Fruits, Vegetables, and One Other Component”](#) in this section.



Table 2-17. OVS examples: Offering the full fruits component and full vegetables component for grades 9-12 as two separate food items

Planned lunch menu		Meal pattern components		
Cheese and vegetable pizza, 1 slice ¹ (2 ounces of low-fat mozzarella cheese) WGR pizza crust, 3 ounces		MMA, 2 oz eq G, 3 oz eq		
Coleslaw, ½ cup Tomato sauce and vegetables on pizza, ½ cup		V, ½ cup V, ½ cup (1 cup total)		
Green grapes, ½ cup Applesauce, ½ cup		F, ½ cup F, ½ cup (1 cup total)		
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup		
Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Pizza (MMA, G, ½ cup V) ²	1	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (MMA and G) and ½ cup of V.
Applesauce (½ cup F) ² Green grapes (½ cup F) ² Milk (M)	3	2	Yes, but the fruit servings cannot credit as ½ cup of F for OVS because they already credit as the full serving of the fruits component. ³	No. The selected meal contains only two full components (F and M). It is missing at least ½ cup of vegetables or another full component.
Pizza (MMA, G, ½ cup V) ² Green grapes (½ cup F) ²	2	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (MMA and G) and 1 cup of V and F combined.

Table 2-17. OVS examples: Offering the full fruits component and full vegetables component for grades 9-12 as two separate food items, *continued*

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Pizza (MMA, G, ½ cup V) ² Coleslaw (½ cup V) ²	2	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G and V).
Pizza (MMA, G, ½ cup V) ² Milk (M)	2	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M) and ½ cup of V.
Pizza (MMA, G, ½ cup V) ² Green grapes (½ cup F) ² Coleslaw (½ cup V) ²	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and V) and ½ cup of F.

¹ SFAs must document the entree’s meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products, or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), [Product Formulation Statements](#), [Accepting Processed Product Documentation](#), and [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the “Crediting Foods Prepared on Site” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

² Selections of ½ cup of fruits or vegetables do not credit as the full 1-cup component, but meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

³ Selections of the full serving of fruits or vegetables credit as either the full component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS, but not both in the same meal.

Table 2-18 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu offers the full serving of the vegetables component as two separate food items with different serving sizes. The planned lunch menu provides the required $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component from $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of tomato and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of carrot sticks. The $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of lettuce does not credit because raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served. A $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup serving of lettuce is required to provide minimum creditable amount of $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.



Table 2-18. OVS examples: Offering the full fruits component and full vegetables component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two food items with different serving sizes				
Planned lunch menu		Meal pattern components		
Cheeseburger, 1½ ounces of cooked beef, ½ ounce of cheese		MMA, 1½ oz eq	(2 oz eq total)	
Whole-grain bun, 2 ounces		MMA, ½ oz eq		
Lettuce, ⅛ cup ¹		None		
Tomato, ¼ cup		V, ¼ cup	(¾ cup total)	
Carrot sticks, ½ cup		V, ½ cup		
Green apple, ½ cup		F, ½ cup		
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup		
Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Cheeseburger on bun (MMA, G) Carrot sticks (½ cup V) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M) and ½ cup of V.
Carrot sticks (½ cup V) Apple (F) Milk (M)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (F and M) and ½ cup of V.

Table 2-18. OVS examples: Offering the full fruits component and full vegetables component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two food items with different serving sizes,
continued

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Lettuce and tomato (¼ cup V) ² Carrot sticks (½ cup V) Milk (M)	3	2	Yes, but the vegetable servings cannot credit as ½ cup of V for OVS because they already credit as the full serving of the vegetables component. ³	No. The selected meal contains only two full food components (V and M). It is missing at least one other component.
Cheeseburger on bun (MMA, G) Lettuce and tomato (¼ cup V) ² Low-fat milk (M)	3	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M), but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V.
Lettuce and tomato (¼ cup V) ² Carrot sticks (½ cup V) Apple (F) Milk (M)	4	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (V, F and M).

¹ Raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served. A ¼-cup serving is required to provide minimum creditable amount of ⅛ cup.

² Selections of less than ½ cup of fruits or vegetables do not credit as a component for OVS, unless they are combined with additional servings of fruits or vegetables to provide at least ½ cup. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, offer all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings.

³ Selections of the full serving of fruits and vegetables credit as either the full component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS, but not both in the same meal.

Offering More than the Full Vegetables Component as Two Food Items with Different Servings

Table 2-19 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers more than the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the vegetables component as two separate food items with different serving sizes.

The NSLP meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires at least 1 cup of the vegetables component. The planned lunch menu provides $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups of the vegetables component from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of tomato sauce in the meat sauce and 2 cups of salad (which credits as 1 cup). The salad credits as the full vegetables component or meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. However, the meat sauce alone cannot credit as the vegetables component because the tomato sauce is less than the full 1-cup component and less than the $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup requirement for OVS.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select both the meat sauce and salad (more than the full vegetables component) or the salad alone (full vegetables component) must also select either:

- the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit; or
- at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit and the full serving of at least one other component.

Students who select only the meat sauce ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetables) must also select at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit and the full serving of at least two other components.

When menus offer the full serving of the vegetables component as two food items with different serving sizes, it might be more difficult for students to select the amount required to credit as a component for reimbursable meals. A better menu planning approach is to offer all vegetable choices in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings, so that any student selection meets the $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup requirement for OVS.



Table 2-19. OVS examples: Offering more than the full vegetables component for grades 9-12 as two food items with different serving sizes

Planned lunch menu		Meal pattern components		
WGR pasta, 1 cup cooked		G, 2 oz eq		
Meat sauce, 2 ounces of cooked hamburger ¹		MMA, 2 oz eq		
Tomato sauce in meat sauce, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup		V, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup		
Tossed garden salad, 2 cups ²		V, 1 cup		
Fruit salad, two $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings		F, 1 cup		
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup		
<p>Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.</p>				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
WGR pasta (G) Fruit salad, one serving ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup F) Milk (M)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (G and M) and includes $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of F.
Salad (V) Fruit salad, one serving ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup F) Milk (M)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (V and M) and includes $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of F.
WGR pasta (G) Salad (V) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (G, V, and M).
WGR pasta (G) Meat sauce (MMA, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup V) ³ Milk (M)	3	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three full components (G, MMA, and M), but is missing at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of F or V.

Table 2-19. OVS examples: Offering more than the full vegetables component for grades 9-12 as two food items with different serving sizes, *continued*

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
WGR pasta (G) Meat sauce (MMA, ¼ cup V) ³ Fruit salad, one serving (½ cup F)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (G and MMA) and includes ¾ cup of F and V combined.
Salad (V) Fruit salad, one serving (½ cup F) Milk (M)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (V and M) and includes ½ cup of F.

¹ SFAs must document the entree’s meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products, or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program*, *Product Formulation Statements*, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation*, and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP*; and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the “Crediting Foods Prepared on Site” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

² Raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served. A ¼-cup serving is required to provide minimum creditable amount of ⅛ cup.

³ Selections of less than ½ cup of fruits or vegetables do not credit for OVS, unless they are combined with additional servings of fruits or vegetables to provide at least ½ cup. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, offer all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings.

Selection of Fruits, Vegetables, and One Other Component

With OVS at lunch, students must select at least three of the five food components offered, including at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components. A student's selection of only fruits, vegetables, and one other component could be a reimbursable meal depending on the serving size of the selected food items for each grade group.

Grades K-5 and 6-8

The NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component. If a student selects only fruits, vegetables, and one other component, either the fruit selection or the vegetable selection must be the full serving in order for both to credit as components for OVS. For example, an elementary student who selects $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit (full component), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable (less than full component, but meets OVS requirement) and one other full component has a reimbursable meal.

Table 2-20 shows OVS examples when students in grades K-5 and 6-8 select only fruits, vegetables, and one other component.

- **Vegetables component:** The planned lunch menu offers 1 cup of vegetables from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn. This provides $\frac{1}{4}$ cup more vegetables than the required $\frac{3}{4}$ serving for grades K-5 and 6-8. A student's selection of $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of broccoli or corn does not credit as the full vegetables component. However, each $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. **Note:** SFAs may serve larger amounts of any component if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
- **Fruits component:** The planned lunch menu offers the required $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of red grapes. The $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving provides the full fruits component for grades K-5 and 6-8, and meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn or broccoli (less than full component, but meets OVS requirement) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of grapes (full component) must also select the full serving of at least one other component. Students who select $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn (more than the full vegetables component) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of grapes (full fruits component) must also select the full serving of at least one other component.

Table 2-20. OVS examples: Selecting only fruits, vegetables, and one other component for grades K-5 and 6-8

Planned lunch menu		Meal pattern components		
Grilled chicken, 1½ ounces cooked		MMA, 1½ oz eq		
Whole-grain roll, 2 ounces		G, 2 oz eq		
Broccoli, ½ cup Corn, ½ cup		V, ½ cup V, ½ cup (1 cup total)		
Red grapes, ½ cup		F, ½ cup		
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup		
<p>Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.</p>				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Milk (M)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (F and M) and ½ cup of V.
Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Chicken (MMA)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (F and MMA) and ½ cup of V.
Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Roll (G)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (F and G) and ½ cup of V.
Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Roll (G)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (F and G) and ½ cup of V.

Table 2-20. OVS examples: Selecting only fruits, vegetables, and one other component for grades K-5 and 6-8, *continued*

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Milk (M)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (F and M) and ½ cup of V.
Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Chicken (MMA)	3	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (F and MMA) and ½ cup of V.

¹ Selections of ½ cup of vegetables do not credit as the full ¾-cup component for grades K-5 and 6-8, but meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.



Grades 9-12

The NSLP meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires 1 cup of fruits and 1 cup of vegetables. If a student selects only fruits, vegetables, and one other component, either the fruit selection or the vegetable selection must be the full 1-cup serving in order for both to credit as components for OVS. For example, a high school student who selects 1 cup of fruit (full component), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable (less than full component, but meets OVS requirement), and one other full component has a reimbursable meal.

Table 2-21 shows OVS examples when students in grades 9-12 select only fruits, vegetables, and one other component.

- **Vegetables component:** The planned lunch menu offers the required 1 cup of vegetables from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn. A $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of broccoli or corn does not credit as the full vegetables component. However, each $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.
- **Fruits component:** The planned lunch menu offers the required 1 cup of fruit from two $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings of red grapes. A $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of red grapes does not credit as the full fruits component, but meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn or broccoli (less than the full vegetables component, but meets OVS requirement) and 1 cup of red grapes (full fruits component) must also select the full serving of at least one other full component. Students who select $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn (full vegetables component) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of red grapes (less than full fruits component, but meets OVS requirement) must also select the full serving of at least one other full component.



Table 2-21. OVS examples: Selecting only fruits, vegetables, and one other component for grades 9-12

Planned lunch menu		Meal pattern components		
Grilled chicken, 2 ounces cooked		MMA, 2 oz eq		
Whole-grain roll, 2 ounces		G, 2 oz eq		
Broccoli, ½ cup Corn, ½ cup		V, ½ cup V, ½ cup (1 cup total)		
Red grapes, two ½-cup servings		F, 1 cup		
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup		
<p>Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.</p>				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, one serving (½ cup F) ¹ Milk (M)	3	1	Yes	No. While the selected meal includes 1 cup of F and V combined, it contains only one full component (M).
Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, one serving (½ cup F) ¹ Chicken (MMA)	3	1	Yes	No. While the selected meal includes 1 cup of F and V combined, it contains only one full component (MMA).
Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, one serving (½ cup F) ¹ Roll (G)	3	1	Yes	No. While the selected meal includes 1 cup of F and V combined, it contains only one full component (G).
Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, two servings (F) Roll (G)	4	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (F and G) and ½ cup of V.

Table 2-21. OVS examples: Selecting only fruits, vegetables, and one other component for grades 9-12, *continued*

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, two servings (F) Milk (M)	4	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal includes two full components (F and M) and ½ cup of V.
Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, two servings (F) Chicken (MMA)	4	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (F and MMA) and ½ cup of V.

¹ Selections of ½ cup of fruits or vegetables do not credit as the full component for grades 9-12, but meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Grains Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the grains component at lunch. For more information on the NSLP meal pattern requirements for grains, see section 3 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

WGR Requirement

Effective July 1, 2019, the USDA’s final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements* (83 FR 63775), requires that at least half of the weekly grains offered at lunch and breakfast must be WGR. Grains that are not WGR must be enriched. For guidance on identifying WGR and enriched grains, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*, *Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP*, and *Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP*.

Previously, the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 required that all grains were WGR. The CSDE strongly encourages SFAs to continue to serve only WGR grains, and offer 100 percent whole grains most often. This provides the best nutrition for children.

SFAs that choose to offer enriched grains must document that at least half of the weekly grains offered at lunch and breakfast are WGR. SFAs must maintain this documentation on file for the CSDE’s Administrative Review of school nutrition programs. SFAs may calculate the menu’s percentage of WGR grains using the CSDE’s Excel worksheet, *Calculating Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the NSLP and SBP*. For more information, see [CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 11-19: Weekly Whole Grain-rich \(WGR\) Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#). For additional guidance, see “Weekly WGR Requirement” in section 4 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.



Serving Size for Grains

Table 2-22 summarizes the NSLP meal pattern requirements for the grains component. The daily amount is the minimum amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch, and the minimum amount that students must select to credit as the full grains component for OVS.

Grade group	Minimum daily serving ^{2,3}	Minimum weekly serving	
		Five-day week	Seven-day week
K-5	1 oz eq	8 oz eq	11 oz eq
6-8	1 oz eq	8 oz eq	11 oz eq
9-12	2 oz eq	10 oz eq	14 oz eq

¹ All grains must be WGR or enriched. SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see “[Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains](#)” in this section and the CSDE’s handouts, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP* and *Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

² SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch. For grades 9-12, the minimum weekly requirement is the sum of the minimum daily requirement. For more information, see section 4 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

³ SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

SFAs may offer the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the grains component as one or more individual food items, such as a whole-grain bread stick, WGR roll, whole-corn tortilla, and brown rice. Grains may also be part of combination foods, such as an entree that contains the grains and meat/meat alternates components. Examples include hamburger on a WGR bun, turkey sandwich on a whole-wheat roll, lasagna made with WGR noodles, and pizza made with WGR crust.

A grain food item must contain at least $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq to credit toward part of the grains component. The combined total of all grain food items must provide at least 1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8, and at least 2 oz eq for grades 9-12.

Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains

SFAs have two options for calculating the oz eq for creditable commercial grain products and foods made on site. SFAs are not required to use either method if the grain is part of a product that has a CN label, such as pizza and breaded chicken nuggets. CN-labeled products credit based on the stated crediting information for grain oz eq. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#).

The minimum creditable amount for the grains component is $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq. If a food item contains less than the full serving, the menu must include additional grains to meet the full serving for each grade group. Grains offered in amounts less than $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq are not included in the calculation of daily and weekly grain offerings, but count toward the USDA's dietary specifications. To credit as the grains component for OVS, the amount selected by the student must be at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) for the grade group.



Method 1: Ounce equivalents chart (weights or volumes)

Method 1 determines the oz eq for creditable grain products using the weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the appropriate grain group in the USDA's oz eq chart. This chart is summarized in the CSDE's handout, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#), and groups foods based on the average grain content of similar products. For example, to provide 1 oz eq, a whole-wheat roll (group B) must weigh 28 grams (1 ounce) and a blueberry muffin (group D) must weigh 55 grams (2 ounces).

The USDA's oz eq chart applies to all creditable commercial grain products. SFAs may also use this chart for creditable grain foods made on site, if the standardized recipe indicates the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving. If the standardized recipe does not provide this information, the SFA must calculate the average weight per serving by weighing at least four samples of the cooked product. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Yield Study Data Form](#).

Method 2: Creditable grains

Method 2 determines the oz eq based on the amount of creditable grains (whole and enriched) per serving. The USDA's oz eq chart provides minimum weights for a variety of grain products. There are nine groups (A-I) based on the average grain content of products. For groups A-G (baked goods), 1 oz eq of grains must provide 16 grams of creditable grains. For group H (cereal grains) and group I (RTE breakfast cereals), 1 oz eq of grains must provide 28 grams of creditable grains or meet the specified weights and volumes.

There are six situations when SFAs must use method 2 (instead of the USDA's oz eq chart) to determine the oz eq contribution of commercial grain products. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

Offering the Full Grains Component as Two Food Items

When the lunch menu offers the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the grains component as two separate food items, students must select both food items to credit as the grains component for OVS. Selections of less than the full serving cannot credit.

Whether a student's selection credits as the grains component for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the required oz eq for each grade group. The required oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8 are different from the required oz eq for grades 9-12.

When the menu offers the full serving of the grains component as two separate food items, it might be more difficult for students to select the amount required to credit as the full component for reimbursable meals. A better menu planning approach is to offer all grains in at least the minimum daily serving, or package both grain items together, so that any student selection credits as the full grains component for OVS.

Grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-23 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 offers the full 1-oz eq serving of the grains component as two separate food items with the same oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 1 oz eq of grains from $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of brown rice ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq) and a $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce whole-grain roll ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq). Students must take both food items to credit as the grains component for OVS. The brown rice or roll alone cannot credit as the grains component because each serving is less than 1 oz eq.



Table 2-23. Offering 1 oz eq of the grains component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate ½-oz eq food items

Required daily serving: 1 oz eq				
Planned grains component			Meal pattern contribution	
Brown rice, ¼ cup			½ oz eq	
Whole-grain roll, ½ ounce			½ oz eq (1 oz eq total)	
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Brown rice Whole-grain roll	1	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the grains component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Brown rice	½	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.
Whole-grain roll	½	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.

Grades 9-12

Table 2-24 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers the full 2-oz eq serving of the grains component as two separate food items with the same oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 2 oz eq of grains from ½ cup of brown rice (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll (1 oz eq). Students must take both food items to credit as the grains component for OVS. The brown rice or roll alone cannot credit as the grains component because each serving is less than 2 oz eq.

Table 2-24. Offering 2 oz eq of the grains component for grades 9-12 as two separate 1-oz eq food items				
Required daily serving: 2 oz eq				
Planned grains component		Meal pattern contribution		
Brown rice, ½ cup		1 oz eq		
Whole-grain roll, 1 ounce		1 oz eq (2 oz eq total)		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Brown rice Whole-grain roll	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the grains component	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Brown rice	1	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.
Whole-grain roll	1	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.

Offering Two Food Items that are each the Full Grain Serving

When the lunch menu offers the grains component as two separate food items that each provide the full serving (minimum daily amount), students may select either food item to credit as the full grains component for OVS. Selections of more than the full serving (such as a 2-oz eq WGR roll for grades K-5 and 6-8, or a 3-oz eq WGR roll for grades 9-12) credit as only one component for OVS at lunch.

Note: SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch. For grades 9-12, the minimum weekly requirement is the sum of the minimum daily requirement. For more information on the NSLP meal patterns, see [table 2-22](#) in this section, and sections 1 and 4 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. SFAs may serve larger amounts of any component if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

Grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-25 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 offers more than the full 1-oz eq serving of the grains component as two separate food items with the same oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 2 oz eq of grains from ½ cup of WGR spaghetti (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce WGR roll (1 oz eq). Students may take the spaghetti and roll together, or either one alone, to credit as the grains component for OVS.



Table 2-25. Offering more than the full grains component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate 1-oz eq food items

Required daily serving: 1 oz eq ¹				
Planned grains component			Meal pattern contribution	
WGR spaghetti, ½ cup			1 oz eq	
Whole-grain roll, 1 ounce			1 oz eq (2 oz eq total)	
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
WGR spaghetti WGR roll	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of more than the required serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
WGR spaghetti	1	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the grains component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
WGR roll	1	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the grains component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
¹ SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch. For more information, see table 2-22 in this section, and section 4 of the CSDE's publication, <i>Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12</i> .				

Grades 9-12

Table 2-26 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers more than the full 2 oz eq serving of the grains component as two separate food items with the same oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 4 oz eq of grains from 1 cup of WGR spaghetti (2 oz eq) and a 2-ounce WGR roll (2 oz eq). Students may take the spaghetti and roll together, or either one alone, to credit as the grains component for OVS.

Table 2-26. Offering more than the full grains component for grades 9-12 as two separate 2-oz eq food items				
Required daily serving: 2 oz eq ¹				
Planned grains component		Meal pattern contribution		
Whole-wheat spaghetti, 1 cup		2 oz eq		
Whole-grain roll, 2 ounce		2 oz eq (4 oz eq total)		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
WGR spaghetti WGR roll	4	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of more than the required serving credit as only one component for OVS	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
WGR spaghetti	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the grains component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
WGR roll	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the grains component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
¹ SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 .				

Offering More than the Full Grains Component as Two Food Items with Different Oz Eq

Students must select the full serving (minimum daily amount) to credit as the grains component for OVS. Selections of less than the full serving cannot credit as a food component for OVS. Selections of more than the full serving credit as only one component for OVS. Whether a student's choice credits as the grains component for OVS depends on the planned menu and the required oz eq for each grade group.

When menus offer the full serving of the grains component as two separate food items with different oz eq, it might be more difficult for students to select the amount required to credit as a component for reimbursable meals. SFAs must consider how the menu offerings affect reimbursable meals under OVS. A better menu planning approach is to offer all grains in at least the minimum daily serving, or package both items together, so that any student selection credits as the grains component for OVS.

Grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-27 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 offers more than the full 1-oz eq serving of the grains component from two separate food items with different oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 1½ oz eq of grains from ½ cup of WGR ziti (1 oz eq) and ½ ounce of WGR garlic bread (½ oz eq). Students may take the ziti and garlic bread together, or the ziti alone, to credit as the grains component for OVS. The garlic bread alone cannot credit as the grains component because it is less than 1 oz eq.



Table 2-27. Offering more than the full grains component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate food items with different oz eq

Required daily serving: 1 oz eq ¹				
Planned grains component		Meal pattern contribution		
WGR ziti, ½ cup		1 oz eq		
WGR garlic bread, ½ ounce		½ oz eq (1½ oz eq total)		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
WGR ziti WGR garlic bread	1½	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of more than the required serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
WGR ziti	1	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the grains component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
WGR garlic bread	½	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.
¹ SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch. For more information, see table 2-22 in this section, and section 4 of the CSDE's publication, <i>Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12</i> .				

Grades 9-12

Table 2-27 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers more than the full 2-oz eq serving of the grains component as two separate food items with different oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 3 oz eq of grains from 1 cup of WGR ziti (2 oz eq) and 1 ounce of WGR garlic bread (1 oz eq). Students may take the ziti and garlic bread together, or the ziti alone, to credit as the grains component for OVS. The garlic bread alone cannot credit as the grains component because it is less than 2 oz eq.

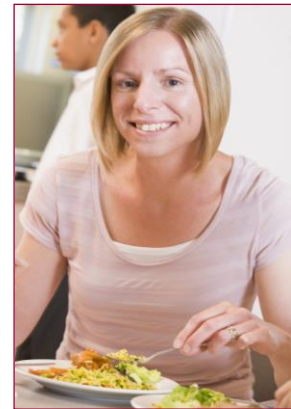
Table 2-28. Offering more than the full grains component for grades 9-12 as two separate food items with different oz eq				
Required daily serving: 2 oz eq ¹				
Planned grains component		Meal pattern contribution		
WGR ziti, 1 cup		2 oz eq	(3 oz eq total)	
WGR garlic bread, 1 ounce		1 oz eq		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
WGR ziti WGR garlic bread	3	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of more than the required serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
WGR ziti	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the grains component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
WGR garlic bread	1	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.
¹ SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, <i>Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12</i> .				

Meat/Meat Alternates Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the meat/meat alternates component at lunch. For more information on the NSLP meal pattern requirements for the meat/meat alternates component, see section 3 of the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage

Main Dish Requirement for Lunch

SFAs must serve the daily meat/meat alternates component at lunch in a main dish, or in a main dish and one other food item. The main dish is generally considered the main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. For example, a lunch menu for grades 9-12 could provide the required 2 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component from a sandwich containing 2 ounces of tuna (2 oz eq), or a half sandwich containing 1 ounce of tuna (1 oz eq) served with ½ cup of yogurt (1 oz eq). SFAs cannot serve the daily meat/meat alternates component for lunch in more than two food items.



SFAs must consider how these menu planning decisions affect students' selection of reimbursable meals when implementing OVS. For example, when the lunch menu provides the minimum daily serving of a component as two food items, students must select both items to credit as the full component for OVS.

Foods that are not a main dish do not credit as the meat/meat alternates component. Examples include soup made with blended soft tofu and muffins made with peanut butter or yogurt. The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that SFAs offer meat/meat alternates in a form that is recognizable to students. The USDA emphasizes the importance of the nutrition education aspect of school nutrition programs, which includes the goal of helping children easily recognize the key food groups that contribute to a healthy meal.

Note: The USDA allows an exception to the main dish requirement for yogurt or soy yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies. Yogurt and soy yogurt credit as the meat/meat alternates component when served in smoothies made on site by the SFA. Other meat/meat alternates, such as peanut butter, cannot credit when served in smoothies. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

Serving Size for Meat/Meat Alternates

Table 2-29 summarizes the NSLP meal pattern requirements for the meat/meat alternates component. The daily amount is the minimum amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch, and the minimum amount that students must select to credit as the full meat/meat alternates component for OVS.

Table 2-29. NSLP meal pattern requirements for the meat/meat alternates component			
Grade group	Minimum daily serving ^{1,2}	Minimum weekly serving	
		Five-day week	Seven-day week
K-5	1 oz eq	8 oz eq	11 oz eq
6-8	1 oz eq ¹	9 oz eq	12½ oz eq
9-12	2 oz eq	10 oz eq	14 oz eq

¹ SFAs must serve additional meat/meat alternates on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and grades 6-8. For grades 9-12, the minimum weekly requirement is the sum of the minimum daily requirement. For more information, see section 4 of the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

² SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

A menu item must provide a minimum of ¼ oz eq of cooked lean meat or equivalent to credit toward the meat/meat alternates component. If the amount of meat/meat alternates is less than the full serving (minimum daily amount), the menu must include an additional meat/meat alternate to meet the full serving for each grade group. SFAs can offer the meat/meat alternates component by itself (such as grilled chicken or yogurt) or in a combination food, such as hamburger on a WGR bun, turkey sandwich on a whole-wheat roll, and pizza made with WGR crust. To credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS, the amount selected by the student must be at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) for the grade group.

The serving size of the meat/meat alternates component refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* defines lean meat and poultry as containing less than 10 grams of fat, 4.5 grams or less of saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per 100 grams and per labeled serving size.

A 1-oz eq serving of the meat/meat alternates component equals:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish;
- 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended);
- 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese, cheese food/spread, or cheese substitute (low-fat recommended);
- ¼ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), e.g., kidney beans, chick peas (garbanzo beans), lentils, and split peas;
- ½ large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter, and sunflower seed butter;
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts;
- ¼ cup (2.2 ounces) of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein;
- 1 ounce of tempeh that contains specific ingredients;
- 3 ounces of surimi;
- ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt; and
- 1 ounce of APP that meets the requirements specified in [appendix A](#) of the SBP regulations (7 CFR 220).

For guidance on the crediting requirements for tofu, tempeh, surimi, and APPs, see section 3 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).



Offering the Full Meat/Meat Alternates Component as Two Food Items

When the lunch menu offers the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the meat/meat alternates component as two separate food items, students must select both food items to credit as the full component for OVS. Selections of less than the full serving cannot credit.

Whether a student's selection credits as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the required oz eq for each grade group. The required oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8 are different from the required oz eq for grades 9-12.

When menus offer the full serving of the meat/meat alternates component as two separate food items, it might be more difficult for students to select the full amount required to credit as a component for reimbursable meals. SFAs must consider how the menu offerings affect reimbursable meals under OVS. A better menu planning approach is to offer all meat/meat alternate choices in at least the minimum daily serving, or package both items together, so that any student selection credits as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS.

Grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-30 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 offers the full 1-oz eq serving of meat/meat alternates component as two separate food items with the same oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternates from $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of low-fat yogurt ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq) and a $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce low-fat cheese stick ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq). Students must take both food items to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS. The yogurt or cheese stick alone cannot credit as the full meat/meat alternates component because each serving is less than 1 oz eq.



Table 2-30. Offering 1 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component for grades K -5 and 6-8 as two separate ½-oz eq food items

Required daily serving: 1 oz eq ¹				
Planned meat/meat alternates component		Meal pattern contribution		
Yogurt, ¼ cup		½ oz eq		
Low-fat cheese stick, ½ ounce		½ oz eq (1 oz eq total)		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Low-fat yogurt Low-fat cheese stick	1	1	Yes. The student’s selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Low-fat yogurt	½	0	No. The student’s selection is less than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.
Low-fat cheese stick	½	0	No. The student’s selection is less than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.

¹ SFAs must serve additional meat/meat alternates on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch. For more information, see [table 2-29](#) in this section, and section 4 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Grades 9-12

Table 2-31 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers the full 2-oz eq serving of meat/meat alternates as two separate food items with the same oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides the required 2 oz eq of meat/meat alternates from ½ cup of low-fat yogurt (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce low-fat cheese stick (1 oz eq). Students must take both food items to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS. The yogurt or cheese stick alone cannot credit as the full meat/meat alternates component because each serving is less than 2 oz eq.

Table 2-31. Offering 2 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component for grades 9-12 as two separate 1-oz eq food items				
Required daily serving: 2 oz eq				
Planned meat/meat alternates component		Meal pattern contribution		
Yogurt, ½ cup		1 oz eq		
Low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce		1 oz eq (2 oz eq total)		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Low-fat yogurt Low-fat cheese stick	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Low-fat yogurt	1	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.

Table 2-31. Offering 2 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component for grades 9-12 as two separate 1-oz eq food items, <i>continued</i>				
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Low-fat cheese stick	1	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.

Offering Two Food Items that are each the Full Meat/Meat Alternates Serving

When the lunch menu offers the meat/meat alternates component as two separate food items that each provide the full serving (minimum daily amount), students may select either food item to credit as the full component for OVS. Selections of more than the full serving (such as a 2-oz eq chicken patty for grades K-5 or 6-8, or a 3-oz eq chicken patty for grades 9-12) credit as only one component.

Note: SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

Grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-32 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 offers more than the full 1-oz eq serving of the meat/meat alternates component as two separate food items with the same oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 2 oz eq of meat/meat alternates from ½ cup of low-fat yogurt (1 oz eq) and 1 ounce of low-fat Swiss cheese cubes (1 oz eq). Students may take the yogurt and cheese together, or either one alone, to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS.

Table 2-32. Offering more than the full meat/meat alternates component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate food items

Required daily serving: 1 oz eq ¹				
Planned meat/meat alternates component		Meal pattern contribution		
Yogurt, ½ cup		1 oz eq		
Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes, 1 ounce		1 oz eq (2 oz eq total)		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Low-fat yogurt Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of more than the required serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Low-fat yogurt	1	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes	1	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
<p>¹ SFAs must serve additional meat/meat alternates on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch. For more information, see table 2-29 in this section, and section 4 of the CSDE's publication, <i>Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12</i>.</p>				

Grades 9-12

Table 2-33 shows OVS examples when the lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers more than the full 2-oz eq serving of the meat/meat alternates component as two separate food items with the same oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 4 oz eq of meat/meat alternates from 1 cup of low-fat yogurt (2 oz eq) and 2 ounces of low-fat Swiss cheese cubes (2 oz eq). Students may take the yogurt and cheese together, or either one alone, to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS.

Table 2-33. Offering more than the full meat/meat alternates component for grades 9-12 as two separate 2-oz eq food items				
Required daily serving: 2 oz eq				
Planned meat/meat alternates component		Meal pattern contribution		
Yogurt, 1 cup		2 oz eq		(4 oz eq total)
Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes, 2 ounces		2 oz eq		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Low-fat yogurt Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes	4	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of more than the full serving size credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Low-fat yogurt	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.

Table 2-33. Offering more than the full meat/meat alternates component for grades 9-12 as two separate 2-oz eq food items, *continued*

Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Low-fat Swiss cheese Cubes	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.

¹ SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

Offering More than the Full Meat/Meat Alternates Component as Two Food Items with Different Oz Eq

Students must select the full serving (minimum daily amount) to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS. Selections of less than the full serving cannot credit as a food component for OVS. Selections of more than the full serving credit as only one component for OVS. Whether a student's choice credits as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS depends on the planned menu and the required oz eq for each grade group.

When menus offer the full serving of the meat/meat alternates component as two separate food items with different oz eq, it might be more difficult for students to select the full amount required to credit as a component for reimbursable meals. SFAs must consider how the menu offerings affect reimbursable meals under OVS. A better menu planning approach is to offer meat/meat alternates in at least the minimum daily serving, or package both items together, so that any student selection credits as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS.

Grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-34 shows OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that offers more than the full 1 oz-eq serving of the meat/meat alternates component from two separate food items with different oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 2 oz eq of meat/meat alternates from $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of bean soup (1½ oz eq) and $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of low-fat cheese cubes ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq). Students may take the bean soup and cheese cubes together, or the bean soup alone, to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS. The cheese cubes alone cannot credit as the meat/meat alternates component because they are less than 1 oz eq.



Table 2-34. Offering more than the full meat/meat alternates component for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate food items with different oz eq

Required daily serving: 1 oz eq ¹				
Planned meat/meat alternates component		Meal pattern contribution		
Bean soup, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup ²		1½ oz eq		
Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes, ½ ounce		½ oz eq (2 oz eq total)		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Bean soup Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of more than the required serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Bean soup	1½	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of more than the required serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes	½	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.
<p>¹ SFAs must serve additional meat/meat alternates on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch. For more information, see table 2-29 in this section, and section 4 of the CSDE's publication, <i>Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12</i>.</p> <p>² SFAs must document the crediting contribution for soup with a PFS for commercial products and a standardized recipe for foods made on site. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, <i>Crediting Soup in the NSLP and SBP</i>.</p>				

Grades 9-12

Table 2-35 shows OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades 9-12 that offers more than the full 2-oz eq serving of the meat/meat alternates component from two separate food items with different oz eq. The planned lunch menu provides 3 oz eq of meat/meat alternates from 1 cup of bean soup (2 oz eq) and 1 ounce of low-fat cheese cubes (1 oz eq). Students may take the bean soup and cheese cubes together, or the bean soup alone, to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS. The cheese cubes alone cannot credit as the full meat/meat alternates component because they are less than 2 oz eq.

Table 2-34. Offering more than the full meat/meat alternates component for grades 9-12 as two separate food items with different oz eq				
Required daily serving: 2 oz eq ¹				
Planned meat/meat alternates component		Meal pattern contribution		
Bean soup, 1 cup ²		2 oz eq		
Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes, 1/2 ounce		1/2 oz eq (2 1/2 oz eq total)		
Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Bean soup Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes	2 1/2	1	Yes. The student’s selection is more than the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of more than the required serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Bean soup	2	1	Yes. The student’s selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.

Table 2-34. Offering more than the full meat/meat alternates component for grades 9-12 as two separate food items with different oz eq, *continued*

Student selects	Oz eq	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes	½	0	No. The student's selection is less than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of less than the required serving cannot credit as a component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.

¹ SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

² SFAs must document the crediting contribution for soup with a PFS for commercial products and a standardized recipe for foods made on site. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Soup in the NSLP and SBP](#).



Offering Entree Choices with Different Oz Eq

If the lunch menu offers a variety of daily entrees choices with different oz eq., only the entrees that contain the full serving (minimum daily amount) credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS. Table 2-36 (grades K-5 and 6-8) and table 2-37 (grades 9-12) show examples of OVS when the lunch menu allows students to choose from entree selections with different oz eq. The planned lunch menu includes four entree choices that each provide at least 2 oz eq of meat/meat alternates.

Two choices provide the meat/meat alternates component in one food item (main dish), including:

- 3 oz eq from beef stew that contains 3 ounces of cooked beef; and
- 2 oz eq from roast chicken that contains 2 ounces of cooked chicken.

Two choices split the meat/meat alternates component into two different food items (main dish and side item), including:

- 2 oz eq from 3 tablespoons of peanut butter (1½ oz eq) in a peanut butter sandwich served with a ¾-ounce low-fat cheese cubes (¾ oz eq); and
- 2 oz eq from chickpea salad with ¼ cup of chickpeas (1 oz eq) served with ½ cup of yogurt (1 oz eq). **Note:** Legumes may credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same meal.

The NSLP meal pattern requires 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternates for grade K-5 and 6-8, and 2 oz eq for grades 9-12. Since each entree choice provides at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) for all grade groups, students may select any entree to credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS.

However, if a student selects only one of the two items from the split entrees (peanut butter sandwich with cheese cubes, and chickpea salad with yogurt), some choices are less than the full serving and cannot credit as the meat/meat alternates component for OVS. For example, the peanut butter sandwich credits as the meat/meat alternates component for grades K-5 and 6-8 (see table 2-36), but not for grades 9-12 (see table 2-37). SFAs must consider how entrees with different oz eq affect reimbursable meals under OVS.



Table 2-36. Offering entree choices with different oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8

Required daily serving: 1 oz eq				
Student selects	Oz eq ¹	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Beef stew (3 oz eq)	3	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of more than the full serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component. Note: If the beef stew provides at least ½ cup of vegetables, the student only needs to select the full serving of at least one other component.
Roast chicken (2 oz eq)	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of more than the full serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Chickpea salad (1 oz eq) ^{2,3} Yogurt (1 oz eq) ²	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of more than the full serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.

Table 2-36. Offering entree choices with different oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8, *continued*

Required daily serving: 1 oz eq				
Student selects	Oz eq ¹	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Peanut butter sandwich (1½ oz eq of peanut butter) ⁴ Low-fat cheese cubes (¾ oz eq) ⁴	2¼	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of more than the full serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component. Note: If the bread on the sandwich provides at least 2 oz eq of the grains component, the student only needs to select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

¹ SFAs must document the entree's meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products, or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE's handouts, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program*, *Product Formulation Statements*, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation*, and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP*; and visit the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's *Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs* webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the "Crediting Foods Prepared on Site" section of the CSDE's *Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs* webpage.

² The chickpea salad (1 oz eq) or yogurt (1 oz eq) alone each credit as the meat/meat alternates component.

³ The chickpea salad cannot credit as the vegetables component because they already credit as the meat/meat alternates component.

⁴ The peanut butter sandwich (1½ oz eq) alone credits as the meat/meat alternates component. However, the cheese cubes (¾ oz eq) alone do not credit as the meat/meat alternates component because the serving is less than 1 oz eq.

Table 2-37. Offering entree choices with different oz eq for grades 9-12

Required daily serving: 2 oz eq				
Student selects	Oz eq ¹	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Beef stew (3 oz eq)	3	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component. Selections of more than the full serving credit as only one component for OVS.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component. Note: If the beef stew provides at least ½ cup of vegetables, the student only needs to select the full serving of at least one other component.
Roast chicken (2 oz eq)	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.
Chickpea salad (1 oz eq) ^{2,3} Yogurt (1 oz eq) ²	2	1	Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component.



Table 2-37. Offering different size entree choices for grades 9-12, *continued*

Required daily serving: 2 oz eq				
Student selects	Oz eq ¹	OVS contribution (full component)	Credits as full meat/meat alternates component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i>	Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal
Peanut butter sandwich (1½ oz eq of peanut butter) ⁴ Low-fat cheese cubes (¾ oz eq) ⁴	2¼	1	Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 2 oz eq for the meat/meat alternates component.	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other component. Note: If the bread on the sandwich provides at least 1 oz eq of the grains component, the student only needs to select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

¹ SFAs must document the entree's meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products, or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE's handouts, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program*, *Product Formulation Statements*, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation*, and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP*; and visit the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the "Crediting Foods Prepared on Site" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

² The chickpea salad (1 oz eq) or yogurt (1 oz eq) alone cannot credit as the meat/meat alternates component because each choice is less than 2 oz eq.

³ The chickpea salad cannot credit as the vegetables component because they already credit as the meat/meat alternates component.

⁴ The peanut butter sandwich (1½ oz eq) or cheese cubes (¾ oz eq) alone do not credit as the meat/meat alternates component because each serving is less than 2 oz eq.

Menu Planning Tips for OVS at Lunch

SFAs decide how to offer the food components for OVS at lunch. These menu planning decisions determine the choices that students may select for reimbursable meals. SFAs can increase the likelihood that students will select reimbursable meals by using strategies that encourage students to take at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving (minimum daily amount) of at least two other components. The following guidelines help simplify the menu planning process, and make it easier for students to select (and school food service staff to identify) reimbursable lunches with OVS.

- **Offer combination entrees:** Offer combination entrees (such as pizza, lasagna, and hamburger on a bun) that provide the full serving of both the grains and meat/meat alternates components. Students who choose the entree have already selected two full components, and only need to select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables for a reimbursable meal.
- **Offer components as one food item:** Offer the full serving of the grains and meat/meat alternates components as one food item instead of two, so any selection credits as a full component for OVS. For example, offer one 2-oz eq WGR muffin instead of two 1-oz eq WGR mini-muffins. For more information, see [“Offering Two Food Items that are each the Full Grain Serving”](#) and [“Offering Two Food Items that are each the Full Meat/Meat Alternates Serving”](#) in this section.
- **Package foods together:** When a food item is less than the full serving of the grains or meat/meat alternates components, package it together with another food items so students must take both. For example, wrap a 1-oz eq yogurt and a 1-oz eq cheese stick together to provide 2 oz eq for grades 9-12, or wrap two $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz eq packages of crackers together to provide 1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8.
- **Offer all vegetable choices in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings:** Offer all grades a variety of vegetables in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings and allow students to select up to two servings. This makes it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. **Note:** This menu planning approach provides an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of daily vegetables for grades K-5 and 6-8. SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

- **Offer all fruits in ½-cup servings:** Offer all grades a variety of fruits in ½-cup servings. Allow students in grades K-5 and 6-8 to select at least one serving. Allow students in grades 9-12 to select at least two servings. This makes it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables
- **Plan fruit and vegetable choices to meet weekly juice limit:** Review lunch menus for compliance with the weekly juice limit. Provide clear information on lunch menus and cafeteria signage that instructs students on the amount of juice they can select with each lunch. For more information, see “[Weekly Juice Limit at Lunch](#)” in this section and “[Assorted Juice Choice at Breakfast](#)” in section 3. **Note:** For best nutrition, serve more fruit than juice. Juice is more calorie dense than whole fruits and vegetables and does not provide the same nutritional benefits.
- **Provide clear signage:** Check that lunch menus and cafeteria signage clearly communicate all menu choices and what students must select for a reimbursable lunch, and that signage is located on the serving line near the food component to which it applies. A helpful strategy for determining if signage is clear and effective is to conduct a cafeteria walk-through from the beginning of the serving line to the POS. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in section 1.
- **Provide staff training:** Provide regular OVS training to help school food service staff understand and identify the required NSLP meal pattern components, how food items credit for each meal choice on the lunch menu, and what constitutes a reimbursable meal at the POS. For more information, see “[Food service staff training](#)” in section 1.

For more information on menu planning for lunch, see the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and the CSDE’s handout, *Menu Planning for the National School Lunch Program*.



Sample Lunch Menus

The menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate what students may select from each component for a reimbursable lunch, based on the planned daily lunch menu for each grade group. Signage must be located at the beginning of the serving line and near each food component to indicate what and how much students can take for a reimbursable meal. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in section 1.

This section contains four sample daily lunch menus that show how SFAs could communicate the OVS requirements to students. To demonstrate how menu planning choices affect OVS, each sample menu:

- offers the same food items, but changes the amounts that students may select from each component;
- provides at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) of each component;
- includes choices within each component; and
- offers all entrees as combination foods that provide at least the full serving of the grains component and at least the full serving of the meat/meat alternates component.

Note: These sample lunch menus meet the daily meal pattern requirements for the purpose of illustrating the OVS requirements. However, the NSLP meal pattern also requires weekly minimums for the grains component and meat/meat alternates component. To meet these requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8, weekly lunch menus must include additional servings of grains and meat/meat alternates on some days over the week. For more information, see [table 2-22](#) and [table 2-29](#) in this section, and section 4 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.



Sample lunch menu 1 for grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-38 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that allows students to select one choice from each component. All menu items offer each component in at least the full serving for both grade groups. This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices, but must select at least one serving of fruits or vegetables and two other components. Each 1/2-cup fruit choice credits as either the full component or the minimum 1/2-cup requirement for OVS, but not both in the same meal. Each 3/4-cup vegetable choice credits the full vegetables component, or meets the OVS requirement for at least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables.

Table 2-38. Sample lunch menu 1 for grades K-5 and 6-8			
Each lunch includes five components: milk, fruits, vegetables, grains and meat/meat alternates. Choose at least one fruit or vegetable and two other components. For best nutrition, take all choices!			
	Choose at least one serving		
Milk	Fruits	Vegetables	Meat/meat alternates and grains
Choose one	Choose one	Choose one	Choose one
Low-fat (1%) Fat-free plain Fat-free chocolate Fat-free strawberry	Raisins Blueberries Green grapes Pineapple chunks Sliced peaches Banana	Carrot sticks Broccoli florets Garden salad Seasoned corn Roasted potatoes Green beans	Hamburger on whole-wheat bun Turkey whole-grain wrap Baked chicken with WGR corn bread Southwest chili with whole-grain roll

Table 2-39 shows OVS examples with selections for sample lunch menu 1.



Table 2-39. OVS examples for sample lunch menu 1

Planned lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8			Meal pattern components	
Milk <i>Choose one</i>	Low-fat or fat-free milk, flavored or unflavored		M, 1 cup	
Fruits <i>Choose one</i>	Raisins, 1/4 cup ¹ Blueberries, 1/2 cup Green grapes, 1/2 cup	Pineapple chunks, 1/2 cup Sliced peaches, 1/2 cup Banana, 1/2 cup	F, 1/2 cup	
Vegetables <i>Choose one</i>	Carrot sticks, 3/4 cup Broccoli florets, 3/4 cup Garden salad, 1 1/2 cups ¹	Seasoned corn, 3/4 cup Roasted potatoes, 3/4 cup Green beans, 3/4 cup	V, 3/4 cup	
Meat/meat alternates and grains <i>Choose one</i>	Hamburger (2 ounces cooked) on whole-wheat bun (2 ounces) Turkey (2 ounces) in whole-grain wrap (2 ounces) Baked chicken (2 ounces cooked) with WGR corn bread (2.4 ounces) Southwest chili (1/2 cup beans) with whole-grain roll (2 ounces)		G, 2 oz eq MMA, 2 oz eq	
Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least 1/2 cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Hamburger on whole-wheat bun (MMA, G) Pineapple chunks (F)	2	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and F).
Carrot sticks (V) Banana (F) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (V, F, and M).

Table 2-39. OVS examples for sample lunch menu 1, *continued*

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Hamburger on whole-wheat bun (MMA, G) Milk (M)	2	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M), but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V.
Baked chicken (MMA) Corn bread (G) Roasted potatoes (V)	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and V).
Baked chicken (MMA) Green grapes (F) Broccoli florets (V)	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, F, and V).
Baked chicken (MMA) Raisins (F) Milk (M)	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, F, and M).
Southwest chili (MMA) Whole-grain roll (G) Milk (M)	3	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M), but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V.
Turkey wrap (MMA and G) Garden salad (V) Milk (M)	3	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four full components (MMA, G, V, and M).

¹ Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served and raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served.

Sample lunch menu 2 for grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-40 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that allows students to select one choice from the milk, fruits, grains, and meat/meat alternates components, and two choices from the vegetables component. The menu offers all vegetables in 1/2-cup servings to make it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for fruits and vegetables. Each 1/2-cup vegetable choice does not provide the full vegetables component, but meets the OVS requirement.

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices, but must select at least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables and two other components. Students may select two different vegetables or two servings of the same vegetable because the planned menu allows any two choices from the vegetables component. Selections of two 1/2-cup vegetable servings credit as only one component for OVS at lunch. For more information, see “[Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables](#)” in the “Fruits and Vegetables” section.



Table 2-40. Sample lunch menu 2 for grades K-5 and 6-8

Each lunch includes five components: milk, fruits, vegetables, grains and meat/meat alternates. Choose **at least one** fruit or vegetable and two other components. For best nutrition, take all choices!

Choose at least one serving (1/2 cup)			
Milk	Fruits	Vegetables	Meat/meat alternates and grains
Choose one	Choose one	Choose up to two	Choose one
Low-fat (1%) Fat-free plain Fat-free chocolate Fat-free strawberry	Raisins Blueberries Green grapes Pineapple chunks Sliced peaches Banana	Carrot sticks Broccoli florets Garden salad Seasoned corn Roasted potatoes Green beans	Hamburger on whole-wheat bun Turkey whole-grain wrap Baked chicken with WGR corn bread Southwest chili with whole-grain roll

Sample lunch menu 3 for grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-41 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that allows students to select one choice from the milk, grains and meat/meat alternates components; two choices from the fruits component; and two choices from the vegetables component. The menu offers all fruits and vegetables in 1/2-cup servings to make it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement. Each 1/2-cup fruit choice credits as either the full component or the minimum 1/2-cup requirement for OVS, but not both in the same meal. Each 1/2-cup vegetable choice does not credit as the full vegetables component, but meets the OVS requirement.

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices, but must select at least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables and two other components. Students may select two different fruits, or two servings of the same fruit, because the planned menu allows any two choices from the fruits component. Students may select two different vegetables, or two servings of the same vegetable, because the planned menu allows any two choices from the vegetable component. Selections of two 1/2-cup fruit servings or two 1/2-cup vegetable servings credit as only one component for OVS at lunch. For more information, see “[Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables](#)” in the “Fruits and Vegetables” section.

Table 2-41. Sample lunch menu 3 for grades K-5 and 6-8			
Each lunch includes five components: milk, fruits, vegetables, grains and meat/meat alternates. Choose at least one fruit or vegetable and two other components. For best nutrition, take all choices!			
	Choose at least one serving (1/2 cup)		
Milk	Fruits	Vegetables	Meat/meat alternates and grains
Choose one	Choose up to two	Choose up to two	Choose one
Low-fat (1%) Fat-free plain Fat-free chocolate Fat-free strawberry	Raisins Blueberries Green grapes Pineapple chunks Sliced peaches Banana	Carrot sticks Broccoli florets Garden salad Seasoned corn Roasted potatoes Green beans	Hamburger on whole-wheat bun Turkey whole-grain wrap Baked chicken with WGR corn bread Southwest chili with whole-grain roll

Sample lunch menu 4 for grades 9-12

Table 2-42 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily lunch menu for grades 9-12 that allows students to select one choice from the milk, grains and meat/meat alternates components, two choices from the fruits component, and two choices from the vegetables component. The menu offers all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings to make it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement to select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. Each ½-cup fruit choice does not credit as the full fruits component, but meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. Each ½-cup vegetable choice does not credit as the full vegetables component, but meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices, but must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and two other components. Students may select two different fruits, or two servings of the same fruit, because the planned menu allows any two choices from the fruits component. Students may select two different vegetables, or two servings of the same vegetable, because the planned menu allows any two choices from the vegetable component. Selections of two ½-cup fruit servings or two ½-cup vegetable servings credit as only one component for OVS at lunch. For more information, see “[Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables](#)” in the “Fruits and Vegetables” section.

Table 2-42. Sample lunch menu 4 for grades 9-12

Each lunch includes five components: milk, fruits, vegetables, grains and meat/meat alternates. Choose **at least one** fruit or vegetable and two other components. For best nutrition, take all choices!

Choose at least one serving (½ cup)			
Milk	Fruits	Vegetables	Meat/meat alternates and grains
Choose one	Choose up to two	Choose up to two	Choose one
Low-fat (1%) Fat-free plain Fat-free chocolate Fat-free strawberry	Raisins Blueberries Green grapes Pineapple chunks Sliced peaches Banana	Carrot sticks Broccoli florets Garden salad Seasoned corn Roasted potatoes Green beans	Hamburger on whole-wheat bun Turkey whole-grain wrap Baked chicken with WGR corn bread Southwest chili with whole-grain roll

Table 2-43 shows OVS examples with student selections for sample lunch menu 4.

Table 2-43. OVS examples for sample lunch menu 4				
Planned lunch menu for grades 9-12				Meal pattern components
Milk <i>Choose one</i>	Low-fat or fat-free milk, flavored or unflavored			M, 1 cup
Fruits <i>Choose one or two</i>	Raisins, ¼ cup ¹ Blueberries, ½ cup Green grapes, ½ cup	Pineapple chunks, ½ cup Sliced peaches, ½ cup Banana, ½ cup	F, 1 cup	
Vegetables <i>Choose one or two</i>	Carrot sticks, ½ cup Broccoli florets, ½ cup Garden salad, 1 cup ¹	Seasoned corn, ½ cup Roasted potatoes, ½ cup Green beans, ½ cup	V, 1 cup	
Meat/meat alternates and grains <i>Choose one</i>	Hamburger (2 ounces cooked) on whole-wheat bun (2 ounces) Turkey (2 ounces) in whole-grain wrap (2 ounces) Baked chicken (2 ounces cooked) with WGR corn bread (2.4 ounces) Southwest chili (½ cup beans) with whole-grain roll (2 ounces)			G, 2 oz eq MMA, 2 oz eq
Students must select at least three of the five food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other components.				
Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Baked chicken (MMA) Peaches (½ cup F) ² Garden salad (½ cup V) ²	3	1	Yes	No. The selected meal contains one full component (MMA) and at least ½ cup of F or V (1 cup combined), but is missing another full component.

Table 2-43. OVS examples for sample lunch menu 4, *continued*

Student selects	Food items	Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i>	At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Southwest chili (MMA) Carrot sticks (½ cup V) ² Carrot sticks (½ cup V) ² Milk (1 M)	4	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, V, and M).
Turkey wrap (MMA and G) Garden salad (½ cup V) ² Milk (M)	3	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M) and includes ½ cup of V.
Southwest chili (MMA) Whole-grain roll (G) Milk (1 M)	3	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three full components (MMA, G, and M),, but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V.
Green beans (½ cup V) ² Seasoned corn (½ cup V) ² Blueberries (½ cup F) ² Milk (1 M)	4	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (V and M) and includes ½ cup of F.
Baked chicken (MMA) Corn bread (G) Green grapes (½ cup F) ² Roasted potatoes (½ cup V) ²	4	2	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains two full components (MMA and G) and includes 1 cup of F and V combined.
<p>¹ Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served and raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served.</p> <p>² Selections of ½ cup of fruits or vegetables do not credit as the full component, but meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.</p>				

3 — OVS at Breakfast

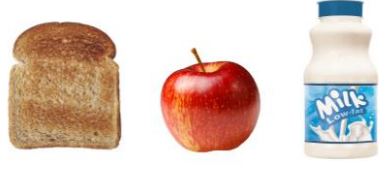
At breakfast, OVS is optional for all grades. When implemented, OVS applies only to the **daily** SBP meal pattern requirements.

The OVS requirements for breakfast are different from the OVS requirements for lunch. OVS at breakfast requires a minimum number of food items instead of food components. The definitions below apply only to OVS at breakfast.

- A **food component** is one of the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts, including grains (with optional meat/meat alternate substitutions), fruits (with optional vegetable substitutions), and milk.
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the three food components. It may contain one or more food components, or more than one serving of the same component. For example, a 2-ounce whole-grain bagel is one food component (grains) that contains two food items (two grains). For more information, see “[Food Items at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

Without OVS, breakfast menus must offer at least three food items from the three food components, and students must select all items. To implement the OVS option at breakfast, breakfast menus must offer a minimum of four food items from the three food components. For a reimbursable meal, students must select at least three items, including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered) and the full serving of least two other food items. These requirements apply regardless of the number of food items offered. For example, if a breakfast menu offers more than four items, students must still select at least the required three items. Table 3-1 summarizes the SBP meal pattern requirements with and without OVS.



Table 3-1. SBP daily meal pattern requirements		
Requirements	Without OVS (minimum of three food items)	With OVS (minimum of four food items)
SFA must offer	1. Milk 2. Fruits (or optional vegetable substitutions) 3. Grains 	1. Milk 2. Fruits (or optional vegetable substitutions) 3. Grains 4. Additional food item from either fruits (including optional vegetable substitutions) or grains (including meat/meat alternate substitutions)
Student must select	All food items.	At least three food items, including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered) and the full serving of at least two other food items.

Overview of OVS Requirements for Breakfast

For a breakfast to be reimbursable under OVS, SFAs must meet the criteria below.

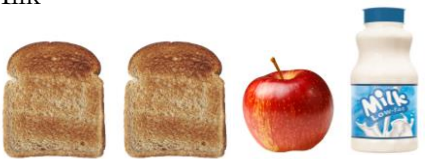

- **Menu planning:** Breakfast menus must include at least four food items from the three food components (milk, fruits, and grains). The planned serving for each food item must be at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) for each grade group in the SBP meal pattern. The four food items may include two servings of grains (either two of the same grain or two different grains) or two servings of fruit (either two of the same fruit or two different fruits), but cannot include two servings of milk. Table 3-2 shows examples of acceptable menu planning for breakfast.
 - **Meat/meat alternates substitutions:** SFAs may choose to substitute meat/meat alternates in place of grains after offering 1 oz eq of grains. For more information, see “[Meat/Meat Alternate Substitutions](#)” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.
 - **Vegetable substitutions:** SFAs may substitute vegetables for the fruits component if the substitutions meet the USDA’s requirements. For more

information, see “[Vegetable Substitutions](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

- **Duplicate servings:** SFAs may offer duplicate servings of the fruits component (including vegetable substitutions) and the grains component (including meat/meat alternate substitutions). For example, SFAs may allow students to select two servings of the same 1 oz eq grain item (such as two servings of toast) or the same two ½-cup serving of the fruits component (such as two ½-cup serving of fruit salad). SFAs must clearly communicate this information on the breakfast menu and cafeteria signage, and must train food service staff on how to recognize reimbursable meals with duplicate servings. For more information, see “[Duplicate Fruit Selections at Breakfast](#)” and “[Duplicate Grain Selections at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

- **Larger amounts:** SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*. SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements. For more information, see section 4 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Table 3-2. Examples of acceptable menu planning for breakfast

Plan a minimum of four food items ¹	
Menu A	Menu B
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grains 2. Grains (or meat/meat alternate substitutions) 3. Fruits 4. Milk 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grains 2. Fruits (or vegetable substitutions) 3. Fruits (or vegetable substitutions) 4. Milk 
<p>¹ The four food items may include two servings of fruits or two servings of grains, but cannot include two servings of milk. The four food items may include two servings of grains (either two of the same grain or two different grains) or two servings of fruit (either two of the same fruit or two different fruits) but cannot include two servings of milk.</p>	

- **Unit pricing:** Meals must be priced as a unit, i.e., students pay the same price regardless of whether they take three or more food items. SFAs must establish one price for a complete reimbursable meal in the paid meal category and one price for a complete reimbursable meal in the reduced-price meal category. SFAs may set different unit prices (tiered pricing) for various combinations of foods offered as a reimbursable lunch. However, all students, including those eligible for free and reduced-price meals, must be allowed to select any reimbursable meal. Breakfasts with a higher unit price must be available at no cost for all free-eligible students, and at no more than 30 cents for all reduced-eligible students.
- **Identifying reimbursable meals:** SFAs should plan breakfast menus to make it easy for students to select (and food service staff to identify) reimbursable meals. SFAs must post signage that clearly communicates the food items for each menu choice, and indicates what students must select for a reimbursable meal. SFAs should also provide training for school food service staff on the SBP meal pattern components, including how to recognize reimbursable meals under OVS. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” and “[Food service staff training](#)” in section 1.
- **Required student selections:** Students must select at least three food items, including at least ½ cup of fruits (or vegetable substitutions, if offered) and the full serving of at least two other food items. Selections of less than ½ cup of fruits or vegetables do not credit as a component for OVS, unless they are combined with additional fruits or vegetables to provide at least ½ cup. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, SFAs should offer all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings.
- **Declining foods:** After selecting the required three food items (including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables), students may decline any other food items. Students may take smaller portions of the declined food items. However, selections of less than the full serving cannot credit as a food item for OVS.

Table 3-3 summarizes the OVS requirements for all grade groups at breakfast.



Table 3-3. Summary of OVS requirements for breakfast

SFAs must offer at least four food items from three food components ¹	Student must select
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Milk (1 cup)² 2. Fruits or optional vegetable substitutions (1 cup)^{3,4} 3. Grains (1 oz eq)⁵ 4. Additional item from either fruits (including vegetable substitutions) or grains (including meat/meat alternate substitutions)^{6,7} 	<p>At least three food items, including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).</p>

¹ Each food item must be at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) for each grade group in the SBP meal pattern.

² SFAs must offer a variety (at least two different choices) of unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk. At least one milk choice must be unflavored. For more information, see “[Milk Variety](#)” in section 2.

³ Fruit and vegetable juice (including vegetable/fruit juice blends) must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice. Fruit juice together with vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the total fruits offered during the week. The juice limit includes juice that is fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate; frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice; pureed fruits or vegetables in fruit or vegetable smoothies; and juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice, unless the canned fruit is drained or served as an extra food. For more information, see “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

⁴ SFAs may substitute vegetables for the fruits component if the substitutions meet the USDA’s requirements. For more information, see “[Vegetable Substitutions](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

⁵ All grains must be WGR or enriched. At least 50 percent of all grains served at breakfast must be WGR. For more information, see “[WGR Requirement](#)” in section 2.

⁶ The fourth planned food item cannot be another serving of milk.

⁷ SFAs may substitute 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternates for 1 oz eq of grains after offering 1 oz eq of grains. For more information, see “[Meat/Meat Alternate Substitutions](#)” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section. Meat/meat alternate substitutions credit toward the minimum weekly grains requirement.

Table 3-4 shows sample breakfast menus that meet the OVS menu planning requirements for all grade groups. Each menu contains at least four food items from the three components (milk, fruits, and grains).

Table 3-4. Sample acceptable breakfast menus for OVS			
Planned menu items	Meal pattern components	Number of food items	Total food items
Whole-grain corn muffin, 2½ ounces ¹	G, 2 oz eq	2 G	5
Orange juice, ½ cup ²	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Strawberries, ½ cup ²	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Choice of milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	
Whole-grain granola cereal, ¼ cup ¹	G, 1 oz eq	1 G	4
Vanilla yogurt, ½ cup ³	G (MMA substitution), 1 oz eq	1 G	
Fruit salad, 1 cup ⁴	F, 1 cup	1 F	
Choice of milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	
Whole-grain mini pancakes, 2½ ounces ¹	G, 2 oz eq	2 G	5
Choice of juice, ½ cup ²	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Peaches, ½ cup ²	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Choice of milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	
Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce ¹	G, 1 oz eq	1 G	7
Cheese omelet, 1 egg and 1 ounce cheese ³	G (MMA substitution), 3 oz eq	3 G	
Strawberries, 1 cup ³	F, 1 cup	2 F	
Choice of milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	

Table 3-4. Sample acceptable breakfast menus for OVS, *continued*

Planned menu items	Meal pattern components	Number of food items	Total food items
Whole-grain cereal flakes, 1 cup ¹	G, 1 oz eq	1 G	5
Whole-grain blueberry muffin, 2 ounces ¹	G, 1 oz eq	1 G	
Apple and orange wedges, 1 cup ⁴	F, 1 cup	2 F	
Choice of milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	
Oatmeal, ½ cup ¹	G, 1 oz eq	1 G	4
Blueberries, ½ cup ²	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Banana, one 150 count (½ cup) ²	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Choice of milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	

¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP* and *Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

² SFAs may choose to credit each ½-cup serving of fruit as one food item.

³ SFAs may choose to credit 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternates as a 1 oz eq grain substitution or an extra food. For more information, see “[Meat/Meat Alternate Substitutions](#)” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

⁴ SFAs may choose to credit 1 cup of the same fruit as either one or two food items. For more information, see “[Crediting Fruit Items](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

Food Items at Breakfast

Food items at breakfast credit differently from food items at lunch. A food item is a specific food offered within the three food components for breakfast. It may contain one or more food components, or more than one serving of the same component. Table 3-5 shows how some menu offerings credit as food items at breakfast.



Table 3-5. Examples of crediting menu offerings at breakfast

Example 1: Whole-grain bagel

A 2-ounce whole-grain bagel (2 oz eq) contains one food component (grains) that provides two food items (two grains) for OVS at breakfast. Alternatively, SFAs may choose to credit the bagel as one food item. For more information, see “[Crediting Grains as One or More Food Items](#)” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

**Example 2: Variety of assorted fruit choices**

A variety of assorted ½-cup fruit choices (such as apples, oranges, blueberries, and red grapes) is one food component (fruits) that contains four food items (four fruits) for OVS at breakfast. SFAs may choose to credit two separate ½-cup servings of the same fruit as two food items for breakfast. For more information, see “[Crediting Fruit Items](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

**Example 3: School-made fruit and milk smoothie**

A smoothie made on site with ½ cup of pureed fruit and 1 cup of milk contains two food components (milk and fruit) that provide two food items for OVS. Amounts less than the required 1-cup serving of milk do not credit as a food item for OVS. Pureed fruit in smoothies credits only as juice and counts toward the weekly juice limit. For more information, see “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section, “[Milk Variety](#)” in section 2, and the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

**Example 4: School-made yogurt parfait**

A school-made yogurt parfait made with ½ cup (1 oz eq) of low-fat yogurt (meat/meat alternate as a grain substitution), ½ cup of sliced fresh fruit, and ¼ cup (1 oz eq) of whole-grain granola contains two food components (grains and fruit) that provide three food items for OVS (two grains and one fruit).



Offering Breakfast Components in More than One Food Item

SFAs may choose to offer the full serving of the fruits component (including vegetable substitutions) and the full serving of grains component (including meat/meat alternate substitutions) as more than one food item. This menu planning option is allowed only when:

- each food item provides the minimum creditable amount, i.e., $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq for grains (including meat/meat alternate substitutions) and $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for fruits (including vegetable substitutions); and
- the combined total of all food items for the component provides the full serving (minimum daily amount) required by the SBP meal pattern, i.e., 1 oz eq of grains (including meat/meat alternate substitutions) and 1 cup of fruits (including vegetable substitutions).

To credit as a food item for OVS, students must select at least the full serving, except for the fruits component (including vegetable substitutions). The OVS requirement for the fruits component is at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. Fluid milk must be offered as one food item.

SFAs must ensure clear communication with students and staff about the SBP meal pattern requirements and OVS by:

- posting cafeteria signage in all schools that clearly communicates the meal components for all breakfast choices, and indicates what students must select for a reimbursable meal (see [Meal Identification Signage](#)” in section 1); and
- providing adequate training for school food service staff on the SBP meal pattern requirements, including the required servings for each grade group, how to credit foods, and how to recognize reimbursable meals under OVS. For more information, see [“Food service staff training”](#) in section 1.

SFAs should consider the serving size of food items and plan breakfast menus so that it is easy for students to select (and school food service staff to identify) reimbursable meals. To implement OVS at breakfast, SFAs must always plan breakfast menus to include the full serving of at least four food items from the three food components (see [table 3-3](#)).

For more information on offering the full fruits component as more than one item, see [“Crediting Fruit Items”](#) under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section. For more information on offering the grains component as more than one item, see [“Crediting Grains as One or More Food Items”](#) under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

Milk Component with OVS at Breakfast

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the milk component at breakfast. For more information on the SBP meal pattern requirements for milk, see section 3 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Serving Size for Milk

Milk credits based on volume (fluid ounces). Table 3-6 summarizes the required daily serving of the milk component for all grade groups at breakfast. This is the minimum amount that SFAs must offer with each breakfast, and the minimum amount that students must select to credit as a food item for OVS.

Grade group	Minimum daily serving ^{1,2}	Minimum weekly serving	
		Five-day week	Seven-day week
K-5	1 cup (8 fluid ounces)	5 cups	7 cups
6-8	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

¹ SFAs must offer at least two different choices of unflavored or flavored low-fat and fat-free milk. At least one choice must be unflavored milk. For more information, see “[Milk Variety](#)” in this section.

² SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Milk may be used as a beverage, on cereal, or both. SFAs must offer a variety (at least two different choices) of milk with all meals. Choices may include unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk. At least one milk choice must be unflavored. For more information, see “[Milk Variety](#)” in section 2.

In addition to meeting the USDA meal pattern requirements for the milk component, all milk sold to students in public schools must meet the beverage requirements for milk under C.G.S. [Section 10-221q](#). The state beverage statute requires that milk cannot contain more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce or any artificial sweeteners. These requirements apply to all milk sold to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals (i.e., a la carte sales). The state beverage statute does not apply to private schools or RCCIs. For more information, see “[State Requirement for Milk](#)” in section 2.

Crediting Milk Items for OVS

OVS at breakfast requires a minimum of four food items, which may include two servings of grains or two servings of fruits, but cannot include two servings of milk (see table 3-3). Students must select the full 1 cup of milk to credit as one food item for OVS. SFAs may offer larger servings of milk; however, a student’s selection of more than 1 cup of milk credits as only one food item for OVS.

Milk in Breakfast Smoothies

Milk used in fruit or vegetable smoothies made on site by the SFA credits as the milk component if it is unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free milk. The requirements below apply to crediting smoothies as food items for OVS at breakfast.

- Smoothies that contain less than 1 cup of milk cannot credit as a milk food item for OVS.
- When reimbursable meals include smoothies, SFAs must also offer a variety of fluid milk on the serving line to meet the USDA’s requirement for a variety of milk options. For more information, see “[Milk Variety](#)” in section 2.
- Commercial smoothies cannot credit as a milk food item for OVS. They do not meet the USDA’s requirements for fluid milk because they do not comply with the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) standard of identity for milk.

For additional OVS crediting information, see “[Fruits and Vegetables in Breakfast Smoothies](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section. For more information on crediting smoothies in school meals, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

Table 3-7 shows OVS examples and student selections for a breakfast menu that offers four food items, including a smoothie made with ½ cup of pureed fruit and ½ cup of milk. The pureed fruit credits only as juice and provides one food item (one fruit). The milk is an extra food. It does not credit as a food item for OVS because the amount is less than the required 1-cup

serving. Smoothies made with at least 1 cup of milk and at least ½ cup of fruit or juice may credit as two food items (one milk and one fruit) at breakfast.

Table 3-7. OVS examples: Offering breakfast smoothies made with fruit and milk			
Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern contribution	Food items
WGR corn muffin, 2½ ounces ¹		G, 2 oz eq	2 G
Kiwi, ½ cup		F, ½ cup ²	1 F
Strawberry smoothie		Extra	0
½ cup of low-fat milk			
½ cup of pureed strawberries		F, ½ cup ³	1 F
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup ⁴		M, 1 cup	1 M
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Smoothie (1 F)	1	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only one food item (1 F).
Smoothie (1 F) Milk (1 M)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 F and 1 M).
Smoothie (1 F) Corn muffin (2 G)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F and 2 G).
Smoothie (1 F) Kiwi (1 F)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (2 F).

Table 3-7. OVS examples: Offering breakfast smoothies made with fruit and milk, *continued*

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Kiwi (1 F) Corn muffin (2 G) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (1 F, 2 G, and 1 M).
Smoothie (1 F) Corn muffin (2 G) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (1 F, 2 G, and 1 M).

- ¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).
- ² SFAs may choose to credit a ½-cup serving of fruit as one food item. For more information, see “[Crediting Fruit Items](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.
- ³ Pureed fruit credits only as juice and counts with all other juices toward the weekly juice limit. For more information, see “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.
- ⁴ When reimbursable meals include smoothies, SFAs must also offer a variety of fluid milk on the serving line to meet the USDA’s requirement for a variety of milk options.



Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the fruits component at breakfast, including optional vegetable substitutions. For more information on the SBP meal pattern requirements for fruits and vegetables, see section 3 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Serving Size for Fruits

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned (in light syrup, water, or fruit juice), and dried fruits; and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup.

A menu item must provide at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruit to credit toward part of the fruits component. If the amount of fruit is less than the minimum daily amount, the planned breakfast menu must include additional fruits (or vegetable substitutions) to meet the full serving for each grade group. Selections of amounts less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup do not credit toward the OVS requirement.

Table 3-8 summarizes the required daily serving of the fruits component for each grade group at breakfast. This is the minimum amount that SFAs must offer with each breakfast. Students must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup for a reimbursable meal under OVS

Grade group	Minimum daily serving ^{1, 2}	Minimum weekly serving	
		Five-day week	Seven-day week
K-5	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
6-8	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups
9-12	1 cup	5 cups	7 cups

¹ SFAs may substitute vegetables for the fruits component if the substitutions meet the USDA’s requirements. For more information, see “[Vegetable Substitutions](#)” in this section.

² SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

A food item must contain at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution) to credit toward part of the fruits component. The combined total of all fruit food items (including vegetable substitutions) must provide at least 1 cup for all grades.

Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast

Fruit juice together with vegetable juice (including fruit/vegetable juice blends) cannot exceed half of the weekly amount of the fruits component offered at breakfast. SFAs must calculate the weekly juice limit based on the amount of fruits (and vegetable substitutions, if offered) that students are allowed to select at a given meal, regardless of the number of options or variety of fruits available. For example, if a five-day breakfast menu for grades 9-12 offers 5 cups of the fruits component over the week, the breakfast menu may offer up to $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups of juice over the week. If the weekly menu includes larger amounts of fruits and vegetables, the weekly juice limit also increases.

When calculating the total amount of juice offered during the week, SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice available to students at breakfast during the week. This includes juice that is fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate; frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice; pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies; and juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice, unless the canned fruit is drained or served as an extra food.



Drained fruit and canned fruit in light syrup or water do not count toward the weekly juice limit. The meal patterns allow a serving of canned fruit to include the juice in which it is packed. For example, canned peaches ($\frac{3}{8}$ cup) in juice ($\frac{1}{8}$ cup) credit as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component. The juice from canned fruit counts toward the weekly juice limit if the SFA credits the juice toward the fruits component.

However, juice from canned fruit does not count toward the weekly juice limit if the SFA plans the juice as an extra food that does not credit toward the meal patterns. For example, if food service personnel portion $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of canned fruit in a $5\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce container, then add the juice **after** measuring the full $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of fruit, the juice does not count toward the weekly juice limit.

For more information, the CSDE's handout, [Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#), and sections 3 and 4 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast

Fruit juice together with vegetable juice (including fruit and vegetable juice blends) cannot exceed **half** of the weekly fruits offered at breakfast. When the daily breakfast menu offers 1 cup of fruit (minimum daily amount), schools cannot offer and students cannot select more than ½ cup of juice.

When SFAs allow students to select two ½-cup servings from a variety of daily fruit and juice choices, students may select either two fruits, or one fruit and one juice. **Students cannot select two servings of juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit.** Each school’s breakfast menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of juice that students may select with each meal.

If the breakfast menu offers more than 1 cup of fruits daily, the maximum amount of juice that students may select also increases. For example, the breakfast menu offers a variety of four ½-cup fruit choices (2 cups total) each day and allows students to select all four choices. With this menu, students may select up to 1 cup of juice daily (half of the daily 2 cups of fruit).

Table 3-11 shows sample language for assorted fruit and juice choices with OVS when the SFAs allow students to select two ½-cup servings of fruit to meet the required 1-cup serving. This breakfast menu offers 5 cups of fruit per week (1 cup per day). Therefore, SFAs cannot offer, and students cannot select, more than ½ cup of juice per day. For more information, see “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section.



Table 3-11. Sample language for assorted fruit and juice choices

Fruits	Fruits
Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice	Choose up to two fruits (no more than one juice)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fresh fruit ■ Canned fruit, drained ¹ ■ 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice ■ Fresh vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fresh fruit ■ Canned fruit, drained ¹ ■ 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice ■ Fresh vegetables
<p>¹ If canned fruit is not drained, students cannot select juice and canned fruit because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. For more information, see “Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast” in this section.</p>	

Crediting Fruit Items

SFAs may choose to offer the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the fruits component as more than one food item. At breakfast, ½ cup of fruit credits as one food item for OVS. SFAs may choose to credit 1 cup of fruit as either one or two food items at breakfast only. **This provision does not apply to fruit servings offered at lunch.**






This practice is at the discretion of the menu planner. If implemented, SFAs must clearly communicate this information to staff and students to minimize confusion and ensure that students are selecting reimbursable meals, and staff are correctly identifying reimbursable meals. The USDA allows SFAs to make these decisions for maximum flexibility in menu planning.

Crediting 1 cup of fruit as two food items

Table 3-9 shows how crediting 1 cup of fruit as two food items affects a student’s selections for reimbursable breakfasts with OVS. For this example, the planned breakfast menu includes:

- two grains (1 oz eq each) from two WGR mini-blueberry muffins (2 oz eq total);
- 1 cup of blueberries (credited as two food items); and
- one milk (choice of 1 cup of unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free milk).

Since the SFA credits 1 cup of blueberries as two food items (two fruits), the breakfast menu offers five food items. Students may select the blueberries (two food items) and milk (one food item) for a reimbursable meal. This selection includes three food items including two fruits and one milk.





Table 3-9. OVS example: Crediting 1 cup of fruit as two items			
Planned breakfast menu  2 oz eq (2 G)		 1 cup (2 F)	 1 cup (1 M)
		Student selects  2 F	 1 M
Reimbursable meal? Yes			

Crediting 1 cup of fruit as one food item

Table 3-9 shows how crediting 1 cup of fruit as one food item affects a student’s selections for reimbursable breakfasts with OVS. For this example, the planned breakfast menu includes:

- two grains (1 oz eq each) from two WGR mini-blueberry muffins (2 oz eq total);
- 1 cup of blueberries (credited as one food item); and
- one milk (choice of 1 cup of unflavored or favored low-fat or fat-free milk).

Since the SFA credits 1 cup of blueberries as one food item (one fruit), the breakfast menu offers four food items. Students cannot select the blueberries (one food item) and milk (one food item) for a reimbursable breakfast because it includes only two food items. For a reimbursable meal, students must also select at least one 1 oz-eq mini-muffin (one food item).

Table 3-10. OVS example: Crediting 1 cup of fruit as one item			
Planned breakfast menu			Student selects
			
2 oz eq (2 G)	1 cup (1 F)	1 cup (1 M)	1 F 1 M
Reimbursable meal? No			

To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, it is generally advantageous for SFAs to credit 1 cup of fruit as two food items. However, there may be some situations when SFAs might want to credit 1 cup of fruit as only one food item. One example is when schools serve whole apples as part of assorted daily fresh whole fruit choices at breakfast, such as apples, bananas, and oranges.



The FBG indicates that one 125-138 count apple credits as 1 cup of fruit. However, one banana (150 count) and one orange (138 count) each credit as ½ cup of fruit. When implementing OVS, it might be confusing to staff and students to credit one apple as two fruits (two food items), while one banana and one orange each credit as one fruit (one food item). In this situation, SFAs could choose to simplify OVS for students and staff by crediting all fresh fruit choices at breakfast as one fruit (one food item).

The simplest method of helping students choose the required ½-cup serving of fruits (or vegetable substitutions) for a reimbursable breakfast with OVS is to offer all fruits (and vegetable substitutions) in ½-cup servings and allow students to choose any two.

Vegetable Substitutions

The SBP meal pattern does not require the vegetables component. The USDA SBP regulations (7 CFR 220.8 (c)) indicate that SFAs may substitute vegetables from the dark green, red/orange, legumes, and “other” subgroups for the fruits component at any breakfast. However, SFAs cannot substitute starchy vegetables (such as hash-brown potatoes) unless the weekly breakfast menu includes at least 2 cups of nonstarchy vegetables. For example, SFAs could offer hash-brown potatoes (starchy vegetables) on any day of the week if the other days of the week include at least 2 cups of nonstarchy vegetables. For more information on the vegetable subgroups, see the CSDE’s handout, *Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP*.

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables; and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. For example, a serving of canned corn cannot include the water in which it is packed. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes) credit when rehydrated only if the PFS provides specific documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving.

All vegetables credit based on volume (cups) with two exceptions. Raw leafy greens (such as kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce, e.g., iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix) credit as half the volume served. Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted, as indicated in the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG). One tablespoon of tomato paste or 2 tablespoons of tomato puree credit as ¼ cup of vegetables (red/orange subgroup).



Note: On March 18, 2019, the USDA indicated that SFAs could substitute any vegetables (including starchy vegetables) for the required 1 cup of the fruits component through September 30, 2019 (see [USDA Memo SP 16-2019: School Breakfast Program: Substitution of Vegetables for Fruit](#)). The CSDE provided guidance on this requirement in [CSDE Operational Memorandum 13-19: Substitution of Vegetables for the Fruits Component in the School Breakfast Program \(SBP\) for Grades K-12](#). On December 3, 2019, the USDA notified state agencies that the short-term continuing resolution that funds federal agencies, *Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2020, and Further Health Extenders Act of 2019* (P.L. 116-69), enacted November 21, 2019, extended this flexibility through

December 20, 2019. As of the publication of this document, the USDA has not indicated if this flexibility will continue.

Fruits and Vegetables in Breakfast Smoothies

Smoothies made from any combination of pureed fruits and vegetables, 100 percent juice (including vegetable/fruit juice blends), and milk credit as two food items for OVS at breakfast if they contain:

- at least 1 cup of milk (see “[Milk in Breakfast Smoothies](#)” under “Milk Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section); and
- at least ½ cup of pureed fruits, pureed vegetables, or any combination of 100 percent fruit or vegetables juice.



Students who select the smoothie (two food items) must also select at least one other food item for a reimbursable meal.

Pureed fruits and vegetables used in smoothies credit only as **juice**. SFAs must count pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies with all other juices toward the weekly juice limit. For more information, see “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section.





Yogurt and soy yogurt credit as the meat/meat alternates component (grains substitution) in school-made smoothies. For example, a smoothie made with ½ cup of pureed fruit, ½ cup of low-fat yogurt, and ½ cup of low-fat milk credits as two food items (one fruit and one grain from the meat/meat alternates substitution). In this example, the milk is an extra food. It cannot credit as a food item for OVS because it is less than the required 1-cup serving. For more information on meat/meat alternate substitutions for the grains component, see “[Meat/Meat Alternate Substitutions](#)” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

For more information on crediting smoothies, see the CSDE’s handout, *Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*, and [USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019 and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs](#).

Duplicate Fruit Selections at Breakfast

The SBP meal pattern requires at least 1 cup of fruit daily for all grades. If the SFA offers a variety of different ½-cup servings of fruits (or optional vegetable substitutions), students must be allowed to select up to two choices. Students may select two of the same fruit (duplicate selections) or two different fruits to credit as two food items for OVS. To credit as one food item for OVS, students must select at least ½ cup of fruit.

If the daily breakfast menu offers a variety of ½-cup juice choices, students cannot select more than one juice to comply with the weekly juice limit. The menu signage must clearly communicate this requirement. For more information, see “[Assorted Juice Choice at Breakfast](#)” in this section. Tables 3-12 and 3-13 show examples of OVS with a breakfast menu that allows duplicate fruit selections. Since this menu is planned to allow any two fruit choices, students may select two ½-cup servings of the same fruit (two servings of blueberries or two servings of strawberries), or two ½-cup servings of different fruits (one serving of blueberries and one serving of strawberries). Each ½-cup serving of fruit credits as one food item (one fruit) for OVS.

Table 3-12. Examples of reimbursable breakfast selections with duplicate fruits		
<p>Planned breakfast menu (five food items)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 oz eq of grains Two 1-ounce WGR pancakes • 1 cup of fruit <i>Choose any two:</i> ½ cup of blueberries and ½ cup of strawberries • 1 cup of milk <i>Choose any one:</i> Unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk. 		
		
Reimbursable meals		
 <p>2 F and 2 G</p>	 <p>2 F and 2 G</p>	 <p>2 F and 2 G</p>

When breakfast menus allow duplicate fruit choices, the school’s meal identification signage must clearly instruct students on how much food to select daily from each component for a reimbursable meal, based on the planned serving sizes for each menu item.

Table 3-13 shows OVS examples with a menu that allows students to select one or two ½-cup servings of fruit with each breakfast. Since this menu is planned to allow any two fruit choices, students may select two ½-cup servings of the same fruit, or two ½-cup servings of different fruits. To implement this menu, schools must have signage located on the serving line near the fruits component that informs students of this choice. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in section 1.

Table 3-13. OVS examples: Offering duplicate fruit selections at breakfast			
Component	Planned breakfast menu	Meal pattern contribution	Food items
Grains	WGR pancakes, 2.4 ounces ¹	G, 2 oz eq	2 G
Fruits <i>Choose one or two</i>	Strawberries, ½ cup Blueberries, ½ cup Watermelon, ½ cup Cinnamon applesauce, ½ cup	F, 1 cup	2 F
Milk <i>Choose one</i>	Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Pancakes (2 G) Watermelon (1 F) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G, 1 F and 1 M).
Pancakes (2 G) Blueberries (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 F).
Strawberries (1 F) Blueberries (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 M).
Watermelon (1 F) Watermelon (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 M).
Pancakes (2 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 M), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.

Table 3-13. OVS examples: Offering duplicate fruit selections at breakfast, *continued*

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Pancakes (2 G) Blueberries (1 F) Strawberries (1 F)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G and 2 F).
Pancakes (2 G) Cinnamon applesauce (1 F) Cinnamon applesauce (1 F)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G and 2 F). Students may select two servings of the same fruit because the planned menu allows any two fruit choices.
Pancakes (2 G) Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Pancakes (2 G) Blueberries (1 F) Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M)	5	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains five food items (2 G, 2 F, and 1 M).
<p>¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP and Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.</p>			

Dried Fruit

Dried fruit (such as such as raisins, apricots, dried cherries, dried cranberries, dried blueberries, and mixed dried fruit) credits as twice the volume served. For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of died fruit credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component, i.e., one food item for OVS at breakfast. SFAs may choose to credit $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dried fruit as one or two food items for OVS at breakfast. For more information, see “[Crediting Fruit Items](#)” in this section.

Table 3-14 shows OVS examples with a breakfast menu that credits $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of raisins as two food items. The menu includes four foods that provide five food items. Students who select the raisins (two fruits) must select one other food item for a reimbursable breakfast.



Table 3-14. OVS examples: Offering dried fruit as two food items

Table 3-14. OVS examples: Offering dried fruit as two food items			
Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern components	Food items
Whole-grain banana muffin, 2 ounces ¹		G, 1 oz eq	1 G
Whole-grain granola cereal, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ¹		G, 1 oz eq	1 G
Raisins, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ²		F, 1 cup	2 F
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		Milk, 1 cup	1 M
Students must select at least three food items including at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Raisins (2 F) Banana muffin (1 G)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 G).
Raisins (2 F) Cereal (1 G)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 G).

Table 3-14. OVS examples: Offering dried fruit as two food items, *continued*

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Raisins (2 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 M).
Cereal (1 G) Banana muffin (1 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 M), but is missing at least ½ cup of fruit.
Cereal (1 G) Raisins (2 F) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (1 G, 2 F and 1 M).
Banana muffin (1 G) Raisins (2 F) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (1 G, 2 F, and 1 M).
Cereal (1 G) Banana muffin (1 G) Raisins (2 F)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G and 2 F).

¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

² SFAs may choose to credit ½ cup of dried fruit as one or two food items for OVS at breakfast.

Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the grains component at breakfast, including optional meat/meat alternate substitutions. Grains served at breakfast must meet the same WGR criteria as grains served at lunch. For more information, see “[WGR Requirement](#)” in section 2.

For more information on the SBP meal pattern requirements for grains, see section 3 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Serving Size for Grains

Table 3-15 summarizes the SBP meal pattern requirements for the grains component at breakfast. The daily amount is the minimum amount that SFAs must offer with each breakfast, and the minimum amount that students must select to credit as a food item for OVS.

Grade group	Minimum daily serving ^{2,3,4}	Minimum weekly serving	
		Five-day week	Seven-day week
K-5	1 oz eq	7 oz eq	10 oz eq
6-8	1 oz eq	8 oz eq	11 oz eq
9-12	1 oz eq	9 oz eq	12½ oz eq

¹ All grains must be WGR or enriched. SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

² SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

³ SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements. For more information, see section 4 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

⁴ SFAs may substitute 1 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component for 1 oz eq of the grains component after offering at 1 oz eq of grains. For more information, see “[Meat/Meat Alternate Substitutions](#)” in this section.

SFAs have two options for calculating the oz eq for creditable commercial products and foods made on site.

- **Method 1: Ounce equivalents chart (weights or volume):** This method determines the oz eq for creditable grain products and recipes using the weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the appropriate grain group in the USDA’s oz eq chart. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.
- **Method 2: Creditable grains:** This method determines the serving size for grain products and recipes based on the amount of creditable grains (whole and enriched) per serving. For groups A-G (baked goods), 1 oz eq of grains must provide 16 grams of creditable grains. For group H (cereal grains) and group I (RTE breakfast cereals), 1 oz eq of grains must provide 28 grams of creditable grains or meet the specified weights and volumes.

For more information on both methods, see “[Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains](#)” in section 2, and the CSDE’s handout, *Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

Crediting Grains for OVS versus the SBP Meal Pattern

At breakfast, the crediting of grains as food items for OVS is different from the crediting of grains for the SBP meal pattern. Each procedure has a different rounding requirement.

- **Meal pattern:** When crediting grain products toward the WGR requirement and the minimum daily and weekly servings for the SBP meal pattern, SFAs must round down the total amount of oz eq to the **nearest ¼ oz eq**.
- **OVS:** When crediting grain products as food items for OVS, SFAs must round down the total amount of oz eq to the **nearest whole number of oz eq**. For more information, see “[Multiple Servings of Grains](#)” in this section.

For example, a 1.9-oz eq WGR product credits as 1¾ oz eq of grains toward the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements, but credits as only one food item for OVS. Table 3-16 shows some examples of crediting grains for OVS and the SBP meal pattern.

Table 3-16. Crediting grains for OVS and the SBP meal pattern

Planned grains component	Product weight (ounces)	USDA serving size (oz eq chart)		Meal pattern contribution (oz eq) ¹	OVS contribution (food items)
		Group	Required weight (ounces)		
Whole-grain bagel ²	2	B	1	2	2
Whole-grain roll	1.49	B	1	1.25	1
WGR pancakes ²	2.75	C	1.2	2.25	2
WGR corn muffin	2	C	1.2	1.5	1
WGR apple muffin	2	D	2	1	1
WGR French toast	4	E	2.4	1.5	1

¹ SFAs must document the meal pattern contribution with a PFS for commercial products or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE's handouts, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), [Product Formulation Statements](#), [Accepting Processed Product Documentation](#), and [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the "Crediting Foods Prepared on Site" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

² For OVS at breakfast, SFAs may choose to credit a 2-oz eq grain product as one or two food items. For more information, see "Multiple Servings of Grains" and "Crediting Grains as One or More Food Items" in this section.



Multiple Servings of Grains

Breakfast menu items that provide more than 1 oz eq of grains (or meat/meat alternate substitutions) may credit as more than one food item for OVS, if the additional amount of grains (or meat/meat alternates) provides a minimum of 1 oz eq. For example, SFAs may credit:

- a 2-oz eq WGR muffin or bagel as two food items (two grains);
- a 3-oz eq WGR muffin or bagel as three food items (three grains); and
- a 2-oz eq omelet offered as a meat/meat alternate substitution as two food items (two grains).



Amounts less than 1 oz eq do not credit as a food item for OVS. When crediting grains and meat/meat alternate substitutions as food items for OVS, SFAs must round down to the nearest whole number of oz eq. For example, a 1½-oz eq WGR muffin credits as only one food item (one grain) for OVS. Table 3-17 shows examples of crediting grains and meat/meat alternate substitutions as food items for OVS at breakfast.

Amount of product	Daily and weekly meal pattern contribution	Number of food items (grains) for OVS
¼ oz eq	¼ oz eq	0
½ oz eq	½ oz eq	0
1 oz eq	1 oz eq	1
1½ oz eq	1½ oz eq	1
1¾ oz eq	1¾ oz eq	1
2 oz eq	2 oz eq	2
2½ oz eq	2½ oz eq	2
2¾ oz eq	2¾ oz eq	2
3 oz eq	3 oz eq	3

Crediting Grains as One or More Food Items

SFAs may choose to credit 2-oz eq grain products as one or two food items. SFAs may choose to credit 3-oz eq grain products as one, two, or three food items. These decisions are at the discretion of the SFA and apply only to breakfast menus. The USDA allows SFAs to make these decisions for maximum flexibility in menu planning. **This option does not apply to grain servings offered at lunch.**






Regardless of how SFAs decide to credit grains for OVS, all grains must count toward the minimum daily and weekly grains and the USDA’s weekly dietary specifications. If breakfasts regularly include larger servings of grains, it might be difficult for menus to comply with the weekly limits for calories, saturated fats, and sodium. For information on planning menus to meet the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Crediting 2 oz eq of grains as two food items

Table 3-18 shows how crediting 2 oz eq of grains as two food items affects the number of other food items that students must select for a reimbursable breakfast with OVS. For this example, the planned breakfast includes:

- one 4-ounce WGR blueberry muffin (2 oz eq), credited as two grain items;
- two fruit items from ½ cup of strawberries and ½ cup of orange juice (1 cup); and
- one milk item (1 cup) from a choice of unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free milk.

Since the SFA credits the 4-ounce muffin as two food items (two grains), the breakfast menu offers five food items. Students may select the muffin (two food items) and ½ cup of fruit (one food item) for a reimbursable breakfast. This selection contains three food items, including two grains and one fruit.







Table 3-18. OVS example: Crediting 2 oz eq of grains as two food items				
Planned breakfast menu				Student selects
				
2 oz eq (2 G)	½ cup (1 F)	½ cup (1 F)	1 cup (1 M)	2 G 1 F
				Reimbursable meal? Yes

Crediting 2 oz eq of grains as one food item

Table 3-19 shows how crediting 2 oz eq of grains as one food item affects the number of other food items that students must select for a reimbursable breakfast with OVS. For this example, the planned breakfast includes:

- one 4-ounce WGR blueberry muffin (2 oz eq), credited as one grain item;
- two fruit items from ½ cup of strawberries and ½ cup of orange juice (1 cup); and
- one milk item (1 cup) from a choice of unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free milk.

Since the SFA credits the 4-ounce muffin as one food item (one grain), the breakfast menu offers four food items. Students cannot select the muffin (one food item) and ½ cup of fruit (one food item) for a reimbursable breakfast because it includes only two food items. Students must also select at least one additional food item (juice or milk) for a reimbursable meal.

Table 3-19. OVS example: Crediting 2 oz eq of grains as one food item			
Planned breakfast menu		Student selects	
			
2 oz eq (1 G)	½ cup (1 F)	½ cup (1 F)	1 cup (1 M)
			 
			1 G 1 F
		Reimbursable meal? No	

SFAs must clearly communicate the crediting information for grains at breakfast to staff and students to minimize confusion and ensure that students are selecting reimbursable meals. Signage must be located at the beginning of the serving line and near each food component to indicate what and how much students can take for a reimbursable meal.

Table 3-20 shows OVS examples with a breakfast menu that credits a 2-ounce whole-grain bagel (2 oz eq) as two food items. Students who select the bagel must also select at least ½ cup of fruit for a reimbursable breakfast.

Table 3-20. OVS examples: Offering 2 oz eq of grains as two food items			
Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern components	Food items
Whole-grain bagel, 2 ounces ¹		G, 2 oz eq	2 G
Orange, ½ cup		F, ½ cup	1 F
Banana, ½ cup		F, ½ cup	1 F
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup	1 M
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Orange (1 F) Milk (1 M)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 F and 1 M).
Bagel (2 G) Orange (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 F).
Bagel (2 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 M), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Orange (1 F) Banana (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 M).
Bagel (2 G) Orange (1 F) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Bagel (2 G) Orange (1 F) Banana (1 F) Milk (1 M)	5	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains five food items (2 G, 2 F, and 1 M).
¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP and Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP .			

Offering 1 Oz Eq of Grains as Two Separate Foods

When the breakfast menu offers the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the grains component as two separate food items, students must select both food items to credit as one food item for OVS. Selections of less than 1 oz eq cannot credit.

Table 3-21 shows an example of OVS when the breakfast menu offers the full serving of the grains component as two separate food items with the same oz eq. The planned breakfast menu provides 1 oz eq of grains from two ½-oz eq WGR blueberry mini-muffins. Students must take both muffins to credit as one food item for OVS. One muffin alone cannot credit as a food item because it is less than 1 oz eq.

Note: When the menu offers the full serving of the grains component as two food items, it might be more difficult for students to select the amount required to credit as one food item for reimbursable breakfasts. A better menu planning approach is to offer all grains in at least 1 oz eq so any student selection credits as at least one food item for OVS.


Planned grains component (1 oz eq)	Student selects	Meal pattern contribution (oz eq)	OVS contribution (food items)	Additional food items student must select for reimbursable breakfast
Two WGR 1-ounce blueberry mini-muffins, (2 ounces total) ¹	Two 1-ounce muffins	1	1	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least one other food item
 One 1-ounce muffin ²	One 1-ounce muffin ²	½	0	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other food items
<p>¹ Blueberry muffins are in group D of the USDA's oz eq chart. Group D requires 2 ounces to provide 1 oz eq of grains. SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP and Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.</p> <p>² Selections of less than 1 oz eq of grains do not credit as a food item for OVS. For more information, see "Multiple Servings of Grains" in this section.</p>				

Table 3-22 shows OVS examples with a breakfast menu that offers 1 oz eq of grains from two ½-oz eq blueberry mini-muffins.

Table 3-22. OVS examples: Offering 1 oz eq of grains as two separate ½ oz eq food items			
Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern components	Food items
WGR 1-ounce blueberry mini-muffins, two ¹		G, 1 oz eq	1 G
Orange juice, ½ cup		F, ½ cup	1 F
Strawberries, ½ cup		F, ½ cup	1 F
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup	1 M
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Mini-muffins, two (1 G) Orange juice (1 F) Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (1 G, 2 F, and 1 M).
Mini-muffins, one (½ oz eq G) ² Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 F and 1 M).
Mini-muffins, two (1 G) Orange juice (1 F) Strawberries (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G and 2 F).
Mini-muffins, two (1 G) Orange juice (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).

Table 3-22. OVS examples: Offering 1 oz eq of grains as two separate ½ oz eq food items, *continued*



Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Mini-muffins, two (1 G) Milk (1 M)	2	No	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 M) and is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Orange juice (1 F) Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 M).
<p>¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP and Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.</p> <p>² Selections of less than 1 oz eq of grains do not credit as a food item for OVS. For more information, see “Multiple Servings of Grains” in this section.</p>			

Offering Two Food Items that are each at Least 1 Oz Eq

When the breakfast menu offers the grains component as two food items that are each at least 1 oz eq, students may select either one to credit as one grain item for OVS. The same concept applies to meat/meat alternates offered as grain substitutions. Table 3-23 shows OVS examples with this menu planning approach.

Note: SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for each grade group at breakfast. For more information on the SBP meal patterns, see [table 3-15](#) in this section, and sections 1 and 4 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. SFAs may serve larger amounts if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

Table 3-23. Offering two 1-oz eq grain items

Planned grains component	Student selects	Meal pattern contribution	OVS contribution (food items)	Additional food items student must select for reimbursable breakfast
Breakfast 1: 2 oz eq Oatmeal, ½ cup (1 oz eq) WGR corn muffin, 1.2 ounces (1 oz eq) ¹	Oatmeal	2 oz eq	2	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.
	WGR corn muffin			
	Oatmeal	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of one other food item.
 Breakfast 2: 2 oz eq Oatmeal, ½ cup (1 oz eq) Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup (1 oz eq) ²	WGR corn muffin	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of one other food item.
	Oatmeal	2 oz eq	2	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.
	Oatmeal	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of one other food item.
 Low-fat yogurt	Low-fat yogurt	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of one other food item.

¹ Corn muffins are in group C of the USDA's oz eq chart. Foods in group D require 1.2 ounces to provide 1 oz eq of grains. SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP* and *Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

² The yogurt is a meat/meat alternate planned as a grain substitution. For more information, see "Meat/Meat Alternate Substitutions" in this section.

Offering More than 1 Oz Eq of Grains as Two Food Items with Different Oz Eq

When the breakfast menu offers more than 1 oz eq of the grains component as two foods with different serving sizes, only the food that provides at least 1 oz eq credits as one food item for OVS. Selections of less than 1 oz eq cannot credit. The same concept applies to meat/meat alternates offered as grain substitutions. Table 3-24 shows OVS examples with this menu planning approach.

Table 3-24. Offering more than 1 oz eq of grains as two food items with different oz eq				
Planned grains component	Student selects	Meal pattern contribution	OVS contribution (food items)	Additional food items student must select for reimbursable breakfast
Breakfast 1: 1½ oz eq: Whole-wheat toast, 1 slice (1 oz eq) ¹ Peanut butter, 1 tablespoon (½ oz eq) ²	Toast, 1 slice Peanut butter, 1 tablespoon	1½ oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the minimum daily serving of one other food item.
	Toast, 1 slice	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the minimum daily serving of one other food item.
	Peanut butter, 1 tablespoon	½ oz eq ³	0	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving of at least two other food items.



Table 3-24. Offering more than 1 oz eq of grains as two food items with different oz eq, *continued*

Planned grains component	Student selects	Meal pattern contribution	OVS contribution (food items)	Additional food items student must select for reimbursable breakfast
Breakfast 2: 3 oz eq: Whole-wheat mini bagel, 1 ounce (1 oz eq) ¹ Hard-boiled egg, one (2 oz eq) ²	Mini bagel, 1 ounce	3 oz eq	3	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.
	Egg, one	2 oz eq	2	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.
	Mini bagel, 1 ounce	1 oz eq	1	At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the minimum daily serving of one other food item.



¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

² These food items are meat/meat alternates planned as grain substitutions. For more information, see “[Meat/Meat Alternate Substitutions](#)” in this section.

³ Selections of less than 1 oz eq do not credit as a food item for OVS. For more information, see “[Multiple Servings of Grains](#)” in this section.

Duplicate Grain Selections at Breakfast

SFAs may choose whether to allow students to select duplicate grain items at breakfast. Breakfast menus may offer two or more different grain items of at least 1 oz eq, and allow students to take any two grain items. A student's selection of two of the same grain items (duplicate selections) credits as two food items (grains) for OVS.

Tables 3-25 and 3-26 show OVS examples of reimbursable meals for a breakfast menu with five food items, including duplicate grains. Since the planned breakfast menu allows any two grain choices, students may select two pieces of toast or two servings of cereal to credit as two food items (grains) for OVS. For a reimbursable breakfast, students must also select at least ½ cup of fruit.

The school's meal identification signage must clearly instruct students on how much food to select daily from each component for a reimbursable meal, based on the planned serving sizes for each grade group. For this example, the cafeteria signage must communicate that students may select either:

- two servings of whole-grain cereal;
- two servings of whole-grain toast; or
- one serving of each.

This signage must be located on the serving line near the grains component. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in section 1.

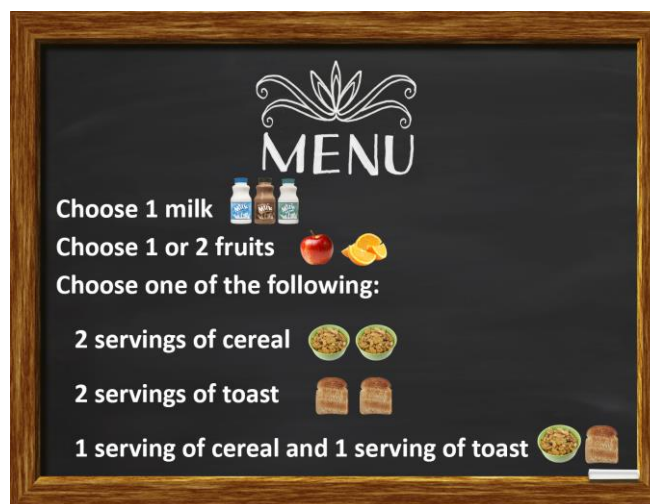


Table 3-25. Examples of reimbursable breakfast selections with duplicate grains

Planned breakfast menu (five food items)

- **2 oz eq of grains**
Choose any two: 1 oz eq of whole-grain cereal and 1 oz eq of whole-grain toast
- **1 cup of fruit**
Choose any two: ½ cup of cantaloupe and ½ cup of fresh plums
- **1 cup of milk**
Choose any one: Unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk.



Reimbursable meals

<p>2 G and 1 F</p>	<p>2 G and 1 F</p>	<p>2 G and 1 F</p>

Table 3-26. OVS examples: Offering duplicate grain selections at breakfast

Component	Planned breakfast menu	Meal pattern contribution	Food items
Grains <i>Choose one or two</i>	Whole-grain cereal flakes, 1 cup ¹	G, 1 oz eq	1 G
	Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce ¹	G, 1 oz eq	1 G
Fruits <i>Choose one or two</i>	Cantaloupe, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F
	Fresh plums, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F
Milk <i>Choose one</i>	Low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Cereal (1 G) Cantaloupe (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Toast (1 G) Cantaloupe (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Cereal, two servings (2 G) Cantaloupe (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 F).
Cereal, two servings (2 G) Plum (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 F).
Cereal (1 G) Toast (1 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 M), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.

Table 3-26. OVS examples: Offering duplicate grain selections at breakfast, *continued*

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Cereal (1 G) Toast (1 G) Cantaloupe (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 F).
Plum (1 F) Cantaloupe (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 M).
Toast, two servings (2 G) Plum (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 F).
Toast (1 G) Cantaloupe (1 F)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 F).

¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

Meat/Meat Alternate Substitutions

The SBP meal pattern does not require the meat/meat alternates component. SFAs may choose to offer 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternates in place of 1 oz eq of grains, if the menu already includes 1 oz eq of grains. For example, a breakfast menu that includes a 1-oz eq whole-grain bagel may also include 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (1 oz eq of meat/meat alternates). Meat/meat alternate substitutions credit toward the daily and weekly servings of grains.



Meat/meat alternates used as grain substitutions credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis, i.e., 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternates credits as 1 oz eq of grains. The amount of meat/meat alternates

required to provide 1 oz eq of grains (one grain item) includes:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish (edible portion as served, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients);
- 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended);
- 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese, cheese food/spread, or cheese substitute (low-fat recommended);
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), e.g., kidney beans, chick peas (garbanzo beans), lentils, and split peas;
- $\frac{1}{2}$ large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter, and sunflower seed butter;
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts;
- 2.2 ounces of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein;
- 1 ounce of tempeh that contains specific ingredients;
- 3 ounces of surimi;
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt; and
- 1 ounce of APP that meets the requirements specified in [appendix A](#) of the SBP regulations (7 CFR 220).

For guidance on the crediting requirements for tofu, tempeh, surimi, and APPs, see the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

Menu planning options for meat/meat alternate substitutions

The SFA decides whether a meat/meat alternate substitution credits as a food item for OVS. The USDA allows two options for crediting meat/meat alternates at breakfast.

- **Option 1:** Offer a serving of meat/meat alternate as a **grain substitution** that counts toward the weekly grains requirement. Meat/meat alternates offered in place of grains credit as grain food items for OVS. Meat/meat alternate substitutions credit toward the daily and weekly servings of grains. Tables 3-27 and 3-28 show examples of menu planning and OVS using this option.
- **Option 2:** Offer a serving of meat/meat alternate as an **extra food** that does not count toward the weekly grains requirement. Meat/meat alternates offered as extras do not credit as food items for OVS. When SFAs use this option, the breakfast menu must include at least four food items in addition to the extra meat/meat alternate item. Tables 3-29 and 3-39 show examples of menu planning and OVS using this option.

To simplify OVS for staff and students, the CSDE strongly recommends consistent crediting of meat/meat alternates at breakfast. SFAs should choose one option and credit foods the same way for all breakfast menus.

For both options, meat/meat alternates must count toward the weekly dietary specifications. The inclusion of meat/meat alternates cannot cause the breakfast menu to exceed the average weekly limits for calories, saturated fats, and sodium. For information on planning menus to meet the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Offering meat/meat alternates as one or more food items

SFAs may choose to credit breakfast foods with 2 oz eq of meat/meat alternates as 1 oz eq of grain substitution and 1 oz eq of extra food. For example, an egg omelet made with one egg contains 2 oz eq of meat/meat alternates. The SFA may choose to credit the omelet as any of the following:

- 2 oz eq of meat/meat alternate substitutions (two food items);
- 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternate substitution (one food item) and 1 oz eq of extra food; or
- 2 oz eq of meat/meat alternates as extra foods (zero food items).



These decisions are at the discretion of the SFA and apply only to breakfast menus. **This option does not apply to meat/meat alternates offered at lunch.**

The USDA allows SFAs to make these decisions for maximum flexibility in menu planning. SFAs must clearly communicate this information to staff and students, to minimize confusion and ensure that students are selecting reimbursable meals.

When considering how to credit meat/meat alternates as grain substitutions, SFAs must ensure that breakfast menus meet the OVS requirements. Breakfast menus must include at least four food items from the three food components. Students must select at least three food items for a reimbursable meal, including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered). For more information, see [table 3-1](#) and [table 3-2](#) in this section.

SFAs should ensure that school food service personnel receive appropriate training on how to identify reimbursable breakfasts under OVS. SFAs must clearly communicate with school food service staff regarding how to credit breakfast meat/meat alternates for OVS. The cafeteria must also have appropriate signage that clearly communicates the breakfast meal components, and

what students must select for a reimbursable meal. Signage must be located on the serving line near the food component to which it applies. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in section 1.

Table 3-27 shows OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items, including a meat/meat alternate (peanut butter) offered as a grain substitution (option 1).



**Table 3-27. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items:
Offering a meat/meat alternate as a grain substitution**

Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern components	Food items
Whole-wheat bagel, 1-ounce ¹		G, 1 oz eq	1 G
Peanut butter, 1 ounce		G, 1 oz eq (MMA substitution)	1 G
Red apple slices, ½ cup		F, ½ cup	1 F
Blueberries, ½ cup		F, ½ cup	1 F
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup	1 M
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter, (1 G) Blueberries (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution).
Bagel (1 G) Blueberries (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F and 1 M).

**Table 3-27. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items:
Offering a meat/meat alternate as a grain substitution, *continued***

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Blueberries (1 F) Red apple slices (1 F) Cheese (1 G)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 G from MMA substitution).
Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter, (1 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (1 M and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Peanut butter (1 G) Red apple slices (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F, 1 M, and 1 G from MMA substitution).
Bagel (1 G) Red apple slices (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Blueberries (1 F) Peanut butter (1 G) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F, 1 M, and 1 G from MMA substitution).

¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

Table 3-28 shows OVS examples for a breakfast menu with seven food items, including two meat/meat alternates (hard-boiled egg) offered as grain substitutions (option 1).

Table 3-28. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with seven food items: Offering a meat/meat alternate as a grain substitution			
Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern components	Food items
Whole-wheat blueberry muffin, 4 ounces ¹		G, 2 oz eq	2 G
Hard-boiled egg, 1 egg		G, 2 oz eq (MMA substitution)	2 G
Red grapes, ½ cup		F, ½ cup	1 F
Pineapple tidbits, ½ cup		F, ½ cup	1 F
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup	1 M
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Egg (2 G) Muffin (2 G) Pineapple tidbits (1 F)	5	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains five food items (1 F and 4 G including 2 MMA substitutions).
Egg (2 G) Muffin (2 G) Milk (1 M)	5	No	No. The selected meal contains five food items (1 M and 4 G including 2 MMA substitutions), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Egg (2 G) Muffin (2 G) Red grapes (1 F)	5	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains five food items (1 F and 4 G including 2 MMA substitutions).

**Table 3-28. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with seven food items:
Offering a meat/meat alternate as a grain substitution, *continued***

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Muffin (2 G) Milk (1 M) Red grapes (1 F)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G, 1 M, and 1 F).
Egg (2 G) Pineapple tidbits (1 F) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (1 F, 1 M, and 2 G from MMA substitution).
Egg (2 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (1 M and 2 G from MMA substitution), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Egg (2 G) Pineapple tidbits (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F and 2 G from MMA substitution).

¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).



Table 3-29 shows OVS examples for a breakfast menu with four food items, including one meat/meat alternate (peanut butter) offered as an extra food item (option 2).

Table 3-29. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with four food items: Offering a meat/meat alternate as an extra food			
Planned breakfast menu	Meal pattern components	Food items	
Whole-wheat bagel, 1-ounce ¹	G, 1 oz eq	1 G	
Peanut butter, 1 ounce	None (extra food)	0	
Red apple slices, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Blueberries, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Bagel (1 G) Red apple slices (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Bagel (1 G) Blueberries (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Peanut butter (extra) ² Red apple slices (1 F) Milk (1 M)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 F and 1 M).
Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter (extra) ² Blueberries (1 F)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 F).

**Table 3-29. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with four food items:
Offering a meat/meat alternate as an extra food, *continued***

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter (extra) ² Milk (1 M)	2	No	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 M) and is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Blueberries (1 F) Red apple slices (1 F) Peanut butter (extra) ²	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (2 F).
Blueberries (1 F) Peanut butter (extra) ² Milk (1 M)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 F and 1 M).

¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

² Meat/meat alternates planned as extra foods do not credit as food items for OVS.



Table 3-30 shows OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items, including two meat/meat alternates (hard-boiled egg) offered as extra food items (option 2).

Table 3-30. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items: Offering a meat/meat alternate as an extra food			
Planned breakfast menu	Meal pattern components	Food items	
Whole-wheat blueberry muffin, 4 ounces ¹	G, 2 oz eq	2 G	
Hard-boiled egg, 1 egg	None (extra food)	0	
Red grapes, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Pineapple tidbits, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Egg (extra) ² Muffin (2 G) Pineapple tidbits (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 F).
Egg (extra) ² Pineapple tidbits (1 F) Milk (1 M)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 F and 1 M).
Egg (extra) ² Muffin (2 G) Red grapes (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 F).
Muffin (2 G) Milk (1 M) Red grapes (1 F)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G, 1 M, and 1 F).

**Table 3-30. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items:
Offering a meat/meat alternate as an extra food, *continued***

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Egg (extra) ² Muffin (2 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 M), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Egg (extra) ² Milk (1 M)	1	No	No. The selected meal contains only one food item (1 M) and is missing at least ½ cup of fruit.
Egg (extra) ² Pineapple tidbits (1 F)	1	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only one food item (1 F).

¹ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

² Meat/meat alternates planned as extra foods do not credit as food items for OVS.



Combination Breakfast Foods

Combination breakfast foods often contain at least one serving of grains and one serving of meat/meat alternates. Examples include:

- breakfast burritos with scrambled egg (meat/meat alternates) in a whole-corn tortilla shell (grains); and
- breakfast sandwiches with ham and cheese (meat/meat alternates) on a whole-wheat English muffin (grains).

The two options for crediting meat/meat alternates at breakfast also apply to combination foods. For more information, see “[Meat/Meat Alternate Substitutions](#)” in this section.

Crediting combination foods containing one grain item and one meat/meat alternate item

Table 3-31 and 32 show how SFAs could use each meat/meat alternate substitutions option to credit a breakfast burrito (combination food) that contains 1 oz eq of grains and 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternates.

- **Using option 1:** Table 3-31 shows OVS examples when the SFA chooses to credit the scrambled egg in the breakfast burrito as a grain substitution (option 1). For this example, the burrito credits as two grains (one grain and one meat/meat alternate as a grain substitution) and the menu offers five food items.
- **Using option 2:** Table 3-32 shows OVS examples when the SFA chooses to credit the scrambled egg in the breakfast burrito as an extra food that does not credit toward the grains component (option 2). For this example, the burrito credits as one grain and the menu offers four food items.



**Table 3-31. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items:
Offering a 2-oz eq combination food as two grain items**

Planned breakfast menu	Meal pattern components	Food items	
Breakfast burrito with scrambled egg (½ egg) in whole-corn tortilla shell (1 ounce) ¹	G, 1 oz eq (MMA substitution) G, 1 oz eq	2 G	
Garden salsa, ½ cup	F, ½ cup (V substitution) ²	1 F	
Cantaloupe wedges, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Breakfast burrito (2 G) Garden salsa (1 F) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 F including V substitution and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution).
Breakfast burrito (2 G) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G including 1 MMA substitution), 1 M and 1 F.
Breakfast burrito (2 G) Garden salsa (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F from V substitution and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution).
Breakfast burrito (2 G) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution).

**Table 3-31. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items:
Offering a 2-oz eq combination food as two grain items, *continued***

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Breakfast burrito (2 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (1 M and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Garden salsa (1 F) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 M and 2 F including 1 V substitution).
<p>¹ SFAs must document the entree’s meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products, or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE’s handouts, Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, Product Formulation Statements, Accepting Processed Product Documentation, and Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP; and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the “Crediting Foods Prepared on Site” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.</p> <p>² Vegetable substitutions credit as the fruits component. For more information, see “Vegetable Substitutions” in this section.</p>			

**Table 3-32. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with four food items:
Offering a 2-oz eq combination food as one grain item**

Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern components	Food items
Breakfast burrito with scrambled egg (½ egg) in whole-corn tortilla shell (1 ounce) ¹		None (extra food) ² G, 1 oz eq	0 1 G
Garden salsa, ½ cup		F, ½ cup (V substitution) ³	1 F
Cantaloupe wedges, ½ cup		F, ½ cup	1 F
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup		M, 1 cup	1 M
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Breakfast burrito (1 G) ² Garden salsa (1 F) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F including V substitution and 1 G).
Breakfast burrito (1 G) ² Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Breakfast burrito (1 G) ² Garden salsa (1 F)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 F from V substitution).
Breakfast burrito (1 G) ² Cantaloupe wedges (1 F)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 F).

**Table 3-32. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with four food items:
Offering a 2-oz eq combination food as one grain item, *continued***

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Breakfast burrito (1 G) ² Milk (1 M)	2	No	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 F) and is missing at least ½ cup of fruit.
Garden salsa (1 F) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 M and 2 F including 1 V substitution).

¹ SFAs must document the entree’s meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products, or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), [Product Formulation Statements](#), [Accepting Processed Product Documentation](#), and [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the “Crediting Foods Prepared on Site” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

² Meat/meat alternates planned as extra foods do not credit as food items for OVS.

³ Vegetable substitutions credit as the fruits component. For more information, see “[Vegetable Substitutions](#)” in this section.

Crediting combination foods containing two grain items and one meat/meat alternate item

Tables 3-33 and 34 show how SFAs could use the meat/meat alternates substitutions options to credit a breakfast sandwich (combination food) that contains 2 oz eq of grains and 1 oz eq of meat/meat alternate substitution.

- **Using option 1:** Table 3-33 shows OVS examples when the SFA chooses to credit the egg in the breakfast sandwich as a grain substitution (option 1). For this example, the

breakfast sandwich credits as three grains (two grains and one meat/meat alternate as a grain substitution) and the menu offers six food items.

- **Using option 2:** Table 3-34 shows OVS examples when the SFA chooses to credit the egg in the breakfast sandwich as an extra food that does not credit toward the grains component (option 2). For this example, the breakfast sandwich credits as two grains and the menu offers five food items.

**Table 3-33. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with six food items:
Offering a 3-oz eq combination food as three grain items**

Planned breakfast menu	Meal pattern components	Food items	
Egg sandwich (½ egg) with ham and cheese (½ ounce total) on whole-wheat English muffin (2 ounces) ¹	G, 1½ oz eq (MMA substitution) ² G, 2 oz eq	3 G	
Green grapes, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Apple juice, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Egg sandwich (3 G) Green grapes (1 F) Milk (1 M)	5	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains five food items (1 F, 1 M, and 3 G including 1 MMA substitution).
Egg sandwich (3 G) Milk (1 M)	4	No	No. The selected meal contains four food items (1 M and 3 G including 1 MMA substitution), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.

**Table 3-33. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with six food items:
Offering a 3-oz eq combination food as three grain items, *continued***

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Egg sandwich (3 G) Green grapes (1 F)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (1 F and 3 G including 1 MMA substitution).
Egg sandwich (3 G) Apple juice (1 F)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (1 F and 3 G including 1 MMA substitution).
Green grapes (1 F) Apple juice (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 M).

¹ SFAs must document the entree’s meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products, or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), [Product Formulation Statements](#), [Accepting Processed Product Documentation](#), and [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the “[Crediting Foods Prepared on Site](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

² When crediting grains (and meat/meat alternate substitutions) as food items for OVS, SFAs must round down the total amount of oz eq to the nearest whole number of oz eq. For more information, see “[Multiple Servings of Grains](#)” and “[Crediting Grains for OVS versus the SBP Meal Pattern](#)” in this section.



**Table 3-34. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items:
Offering a 3-oz eq combination food as two grain items**

Planned breakfast menu	Meal pattern components	Food items	
Egg sandwich (½ egg) with ham and cheese (½ ounce total) on whole-wheat English muffin (2 ounces) ¹	None (extra food) ² None (extra food) ² G, 2 oz eq	0 0 2 G	
Green grapes, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Apple juice, ½ cup	F, ½ cup	1 F	
Choice of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, 1 cup	M, 1 cup	1 M	
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Egg sandwich (2 G) ² Green grapes (1 F) Milk (1 M)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (2 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Egg sandwich (2 G) ² Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 M), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Egg sandwich (2 G) ² Green grapes (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 F).
Egg sandwich (2 G) ² Apple juice (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F and 2 G).

**Table 3-34. OVS examples for a breakfast menu with five food items:
Offering a 3-oz eq combination food as two grain items, *continued***

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Green grapes (1 F) Apple juice (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 M).

¹ SFAs must document the entree’s meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products, or a standardized recipe for food made on site. For information on evaluating commercial products, see the CSDE’s handouts, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), [Product Formulation Statements](#), [Accepting Processed Product Documentation](#), and [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on evaluating recipes, visit the “Crediting Foods Prepared on Site” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

² Meat/meat alternates planned as extra foods do not credit as food items for OVS.

Menu Planning Tips for OVS at Breakfast

SFAs decide how to offer the food components for OVS at breakfast. These menu planning decisions determine the choices that students may select for reimbursable meals. SFAs can increase the likelihood that students will select reimbursable meals by using strategies that encourage students to take at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the full serving (minimum daily amount) of at least two food items.

The following guidelines help simplify the menu planning process and make it easier for students to select (and school food service staff to identify) reimbursable breakfasts with OVS.

- **Consistent crediting:** Be consistent with the crediting of food items. For example, the USDA allows SFAs to decide whether to credit meat/meat alternate substitutions as grain items or extra items. Choose one option and credit foods the same way for all menus. For more information, see “[Meat/Meat Alternates Substitutions](#)” in this section.
- **Offer all fruits and vegetables in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings:** Offer a variety of fruits (and optional vegetable substitutions) in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings for all grades. Allow students to select at least two servings (1 cup total) to meet the minimum daily requirement for the fruits component. This makes it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. Provide clear information on menus and signage instructing students on the amount of fruit they can select.
- **Plan fruit and vegetable choices to meet weekly juice limit:** Review breakfast menus for compliance with the weekly juice limit. Provide clear information on lunch menus and cafeteria signage that instructs students on the amount of juice they can select with each breakfast. For more information, see “[Assorted Juice Choice at Breakfast](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section. **Note:** For best nutrition, serve more fruit than juice. Juice is more calorie dense than whole fruits and vegetables and does not provide the same nutritional benefits.
- **Offer the full serving of all grain choices:** Offer all grains in at least 1 oz eq so any choice credits as at least one food item for OVS. For example, offer a 1-oz eq muffin (one food item) instead of two $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz eq muffins (one food item). For more information, see “[Offering 1 Oz Eq of Grains as Two Separate Foods](#)” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

- **Offer breakfast choices that provide at least two food items:** Students who select a choice with two food items (such as two grains from a 2-oz eq whole-grain bagel) only need $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits (or optional vegetable substitutions) for a reimbursable breakfast. Another example is a yogurt parfait that includes three food items from $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of whole-grain granola (one grain), 4 ounces of low-fat yogurt (one grain from meat/meat alternate substitution), and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sliced fresh fruit (one fruit). Students who select the yogurt parfait have a reimbursable breakfast. For more information, see “[Crediting Grains as One or More Food Items](#)” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.
- **Provide clear signage:** Check that breakfast menus and cafeteria signage clearly communicate all menu choices and what students must select for reimbursable breakfasts. Schools must have signage located on the serving line near each food component that informs students of the menu choices. A helpful strategy for determining if signage is sufficient and effective is to conduct a cafeteria walk-through from beginning of the serving line to the POS. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in section 1.
- **Provide staff training:** Provide regular OVS training to help school food service staff understand and identify the required S meal pattern components, how food items credit for each meal choice on the lunch menu, and what constitutes a reimbursable meal at the POS. For more information, see “[Food service staff training](#)” in section 1.

For more information on menu planning for breakfast, see sections 3 and 4 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and the CSDE’s handout, *Menu Planning for the School Breakfast Program*.



Sample Breakfast Menus

The menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate how many food items students may select daily from each component for a reimbursable breakfast, based on the planned daily breakfast menu for each grade group. Signage must be located at the beginning of the serving line and near each food component to indicate what and how much students can take for a reimbursable meal. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in section 1.

Sample breakfast menus 1 through 3 show how SFAs could communicate the OVS requirements to students. To demonstrate how menu planning choices affect OVS, each sample menu:

- includes at least four food items;
- offers the same food items, but changes the amounts that students may select from each component;
- includes choices within each component; and
- offers each component in at least the full serving (minimum daily amount) of the grains component and at least the full serving required by the SBP meal pattern.

Each sample breakfast menu could be served to any grade group. However, SFAs must be careful to meet the more restrictive sodium and calorie requirements when using one breakfast menu for grades K-12. For information on planning menus to meet the dietary specifications, see section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

Note: These sample breakfast menus meet the daily SBP meal pattern requirements for the purpose of illustrating the OVS requirements. However, the SBP meal pattern also requires weekly minimums for the grains component. To meet this requirement, weekly breakfast menus must include additional servings of grains on some days over the week. For more information, see [table 3-15](#) in this section, and section 4 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).



Sample breakfast menu 1

Table 3-35 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily breakfast menu that allows students to select four food items including:

- one food item from the grains component (1 oz eq);
- two food items (½ cup each) from the fruits component (1 cup total); and
- one food item from the milk component (1 cup).



This menu clearly communicates that students may select all four food items, but must select at least three food items, including ½ cup of fruit and two other food items. Students may select duplicate food items from the fruits component such as two servings of the same fruit (except for juice), or two different fruits, because the planned menu allows any two choices (food items) from the fruits component. For more information, see “[Duplicate Fruit Selections at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

Table 3-35. Sample breakfast menu 1		
<p>Choose at least three of the four food items, including at least one fruit. For best nutrition, choose all four!</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Milk</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choose one</p> <p>Low-fat (1%) Fat-free Fat-free chocolate Fat-free strawberry</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fruits</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choose up to two</p> <p><i>Choose two fruits OR one fruit and one juice</i></p> <p>Fresh cut-up fruit Canned fruit ¹ Whole fruit Dried fruit 100 percent fruit juice ¹</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Grains</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choose one</p> <p>Whole-grain cereals, assorted Oatmeal Whole-grain toast Whole-grain muffins Whole-grain mini bagel Whole-grain mini pancakes</p>
<p>¹ SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice toward the weekly juice limit, including juice in canned fruit, unless the fruit is drained. If canned fruit is not drained, students cannot select juice and canned fruit because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. Since this menu offers 5 cups of fruit per week (1 cup per day), schools cannot offer and students cannot select more than ½ cup of juice per day. For more information, see “Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.</p>		

Table 3-36 shows OVS examples with student selections for sample breakfast menu 1.

Table 3-36. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 1			
Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern components	Food items
Milk <i>Choose one</i>	Low-fat or fat-free milk, flavored or unflavored	M, 1 cup	1 M
Fruit <i>Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice</i>	Fresh cut-up fruit choices, ½ cup Whole fruit choices, ½ cup Canned fruit choices, ½ cup Dried fruit, ¼ cup ¹ 100 percent fruit juice, assorted, ½ cup	F, 1 cup	2 F
Grains ² <i>Choose one</i> ³	Whole-grain cereal (1 cup flakes or rounds, 1¼ cups puffed and ½ cup granola) Oatmeal, ½ cup cooked Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce Whole-grain muffins, 2 ounces Whole-grain corn muffin, 1.2 ounces Whole-grain mini bagel, 1 ounce Whole-grain pancakes, 1.2 ounces	G, 1 oz eq	1 G
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Oatmeal (1 G) Corn muffin (1 G) Canned fruit (1 F)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 F). The second G does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one G choice. ²

Table 3-36. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 1, *continued*

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Muffin (1 G) Whole fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (G, 1 F and 1 M).
Toast, 2 slices (2 G) Fruit juice (1 F)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 F). The second G does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one G choice. ²
Bagel (1 G) Fresh cut-up fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F and 1 M).
Fruit juice (1 F) Canned fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 F and 1 M).
<p>¹ Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.</p> <p>² SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP and Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.</p> <p>³ The SFA decides the number of food items that students may select from each component. Since this planned menu allows only one grain choice, an additional grain selection cannot credit as a food item for OVS. For more information, see “Multiple Servings of Grains” and “Crediting Grains for OVS versus the SBP Meal Pattern” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.</p>			

Sample breakfast menu 2

Table 3-37 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily breakfast menu that allows students to select five food items including:

- one food item from the grains component (1 oz eq);
- one food item from the meat/meat alternates component as a grain substitution (1 oz eq);
- two food items (½ cup each) from the fruits component (1 cup total); and
- one food item from the milk component (1 cup).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all five food items, but must select at least three food items, including ½ cup of fruit and two other food items. Students may select duplicate food items from the fruits component (such as two servings of the same fruit, except for juice), or two different fruits, because the planned menu allows any two choices (food items) from the fruits component. Students cannot select duplicate food items from the grains component, such as two bagels or two yogurts (meat/meat alternate substitutions), because the planned menu allows only one choice (food item) from each component. For more information, see [“Duplicate Fruit Selections at Breakfast”](#) and [“Duplicate Grain Selections at Breakfast”](#) in this section.



Table 3-37. Sample breakfast menu 2

Choose **at least three** of the five food items including at least one fruit.
For best nutrition, choose all five!

Milk	Fruits	Grains	Meat/meat alternates
Choose one	Choose up to two	Choose one	Choose one
Low-fat (1%) Fat-free Fat-free chocolate Fat-free strawberry	<i>Choose two fruits OR one fruit and one juice</i> Fresh cut-up fruit Canned fruit ¹ Whole fruit Dried fruit 100 percent fruit juice ¹	Whole-grain cereals, assorted Oatmeal Whole-grain toast Whole-grain muffins Whole-grain mini bagel Whole-grain mini pancakes	Low-fat yogurt, assorted flavors Peanut butter Low-fat cheese stick

¹ SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice toward the weekly juice limit, including juice in canned fruit, unless the fruit is drained. If canned fruit is not drained, students cannot select juice and canned fruit because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. Since this menu offers 5 cups of fruit per week (1 cup per day), schools cannot offer and students cannot select more than ½ cup of juice per day. For more information, see “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

Table 3-38 shows OVS examples with student selections for sample breakfast menu 2.

Table 3-38. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 2

Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern components	Food items
Milk <i>Choose one</i>	Low-fat or fat-free milk, flavored or unflavored	M, 1 cup	1 M
Fruit <i>Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice</i>	Fresh cut-up fruit choices, ½ cup Whole fruit choices, ½ cup Canned fruit choices, ½ cup Dried fruit, ¼ cup (credits as ½ cup) ¹ 100 percent fruit juice, assorted, ½ cup	F, 1 cup	2 F
Grains ² <i>Choose one</i> ³	Whole-grain cereal (1 cup flakes or rounds, 1¼ cups puffed and ½ cup granola) Oatmeal, ½ cup cooked Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce Whole-grain muffins, 2 ounces Whole-grain corn muffin, 1.2 ounces Whole-grain mini bagel, 1 ounce Whole-grain pancakes, 1.2 ounces	G, 1 oz eq	1 G
Meat/meat alternates <i>Choose one</i> ³	Low-fat yogurt, assorted flavors, ½ cup Low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce Peanut butter, 2 tablespoons	G, 1 oz eq (MMA substitution)	1 G
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Bagel (1 G) Cheese stick (1 G) Milk (1 M) Fresh fruit (1 F)	4	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains four food items (1 F, 1 M, and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution).
Muffin (1 G) Canned fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).

Table 3-38. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 2, *continued*

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Waffles (1 G) Yogurt (1 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (1 M and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution), but is missing at least ½ cup of F.
Fruit juice (1 F) Yogurt (1 G) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F, 1 M, and 1 G from MMA substitution).
Yogurt, two servings (2 G) Canned fruit (1 F)	2	Yes	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G from MMA substitution and 1 F). The second yogurt does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one MMA choice. ²

¹ Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.

² SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP* and *Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

³ The SFA decides the number of food items that students may select from each component. Since this planned menu allows only one grain choice and one meat/meat alternate choice, an additional grain or meat/meat alternate selection cannot credit as a food item for OVS. For more information, see “Multiple Servings of Grains” and “Crediting Grains for OVS versus the SBP Meal Pattern” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

Sample Breakfast Menu 3

Table 3-39 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily breakfast menu that allows students to select five items including:

- two food items (each containing 1 oz eq) from the grains and meat/meat alternates components combined, including meat/meat alternates as grains substitutions (2 oz eq total);
- two food items ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup each) from the fruits component (1 cup total); and
- one food item from the milk component (1 cup).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all five food items, but must select at least three food items, including $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit and two other food items. Students may select duplicate food items from the fruits component, such as two servings of the same fruit (except for juice) or two different fruits, because the planned menu allows any two choices (food items) from the fruits component. Students may also select duplicate food items from the grains and meat/meat alternates component (such as two bagels or two cheese sticks) because the planned menu allows any two choices (two food items). For more information, see “[Duplicate Grain Selections](#)” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.



Table 3-39. Sample breakfast menu 3

Choose **at least three** of the five food items, including at least one fruit.
For best nutrition, choose all five!

Milk	Fruits	Grains and meat/meat alternates	
Choose one	Choose up to two	Choose up to two	
Low-fat (1%) Fat-free Fat-free chocolate Fat-free strawberry	<i>Choose two fruits OR one fruit and one juice</i> Fresh cut-up fruit Canned fruit ¹ Whole fruit Dried fruit 100 percent fruit juice ¹	Whole-grain cereals, assorted Oatmeal Whole-grain toast Whole-grain muffins, assorted Whole-grain mini bagel Whole-grain mini pancakes	Low-fat yogurt, assorted flavors Peanut butter Low-fat cheese stick

¹ SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice toward the weekly juice limit, including juice in canned fruit, unless the fruit is drained. If canned fruit is not drained, students cannot select juice and canned fruit because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. Since this menu offers 5 cups of fruit per week (1 cup per day), schools cannot offer and students cannot select more than ½ cup of juice per day. For more information, see “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.

Table 3-40 shows OVS examples with student selections for sample breakfast menu 4.

Table 3-40. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 3

Planned breakfast menu		Meal pattern components	Food items
Milk <i>Choose one</i>	Low-fat or fat-free milk, flavored or unflavored	M, 1 cup	1 M
Fruit <i>Choose two fruits or one fruit and one juice¹</i>	Fresh cut-up fruit choices, ½ cup Whole fruit choices, ½ cup Canned fruit choices, ½ cup Dried fruit, ¼ cup ² 100 percent fruit juice, assorted, ½ cup	F, 1 cup	2 F
Grains³ and meat/meat alternates <i>Choose one or two⁴</i>	Whole-grain cereal (1 cup flakes or rounds, 1¼ cups puffed and ¼ cup granola) Oatmeal, ½ cup cooked Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce Whole-grain muffins, 2 ounces Whole-grain corn muffin, 1.2 ounces Whole-grain mini bagel, 1 ounce Whole-grain pancakes, 1.2 ounces Low-fat yogurt, assorted flavors, ½ cup ⁵ Low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce ⁵ Peanut butter, 2 tablespoons ⁵	G, 2 oz eq	2 G
Students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).			
Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Yogurt, two servings (2 G) Canned fruit (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G from MMA substitutions and 1 F).
Oatmeal (1 G) Whole fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).

Table 3-40. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 3, *continued*

Student selects	Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i>	Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i>	Reimbursable meal?
Cheese sticks, two (2 G) Fresh cut-up fruit (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G from MMA substitutions and 1 F).
Cereal, two servings (2 G) Milk (1 M)	3	No	No. The selected meal contains three food items (2 G and 1 M), but is missing at least ½ cup of fruit.
Muffin (1 G) Whole fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M).
Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter (1 G) Juice (1 F)	3	Yes	Yes. The selected meal contains three food items (1 F and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution).
<p>¹ If the ½-cup serving of canned fruit is not drained, students cannot select juice and canned fruit because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. For more information, see “Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast” under “Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.</p> <p>² Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served.</p> <p>³ SFAs must document that the grain product or recipe serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP and Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP.</p> <p>⁴ The SFA decides the number of food items that students may select from each component. Since this planned menu allows any two grain or meat/meat alternates choices, students may select any two choices (same or different) to credit as two food items for OVS. For more information, see “Multiple Servings of Grains” and “Crediting Grains for OVS versus the SBP Meal Pattern” under “Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast” in this section.</p> <p>⁵ This food item is a meat/meat alternate planned as a grain substitution.</p>			

4 — Resources

This section includes links to federal and state regulations, policy memoranda, websites, and the CSDE’s guides, resource lists, forms, and handouts.

CSDE Handouts

Lunch Offer versus Serve Poster:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition//-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/lunchposterOVS.pdf>

Lunch Meal Pattern Components Poster:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition//-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/lunchpostercomp.pdf>

Offer versus Serve in the National School Lunch Program:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition//-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/OVSNSLP.pdf>

Offer versus Serve in the School Breakfast Program:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition//-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/OVSSBP.pdf>

Offer versus Serve Poster for Lunch:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition//-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/OVSPoster.pdf>

CSDE Guides

Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SpecDiet/SpecialDietsGuide.pdf>

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASPHandbook.pdf>

Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/CompetitiveFoodsGuideHFC.pdf>

Guide to Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/CompetitiveFoodsGuideNonHFC.pdf>

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Guide to Competitive Foods in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/CompetitiveFoodsPrivateRCCL.pdf>

Guidelines for Feeding and Swallowing Programs in Schools:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/feeding_and_swallowing.pdf

Guidelines for Managing Life-threatening Food Allergies in Connecticut Schools:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Publications/Managing-Life-Threatening-Food-Allergies-in-Connecticut-Schools>

Menu Planning Guide for Preschool Meals in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/MPGpreschool.pdf>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition//-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/OVSguide.pdf>

Smarter Lunchrooms Action Guide:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SmarterLunch/SLAG.pdf>

For information on the USDA's manuals and guides, see the CSDE's [Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

CSDE Resource Lists

The CSDE resource lists are available on the CSDE's Resources for Child Nutrition Programs webpage at <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Resources-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>.

Child Nutrition Programs Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesChildNutritionPrograms.pdf>

Competitive Foods Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesCompetitiveFoods.pdf>

Dietary Guidelines and Nutrition Information Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesDietaryGuidelines.pdf>

Food Safety Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesFoodSafety.pdf>

Health and Achievement Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesAchievement.pdf>

Menu Planning and Food Production Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesMenuPlanning.pdf>

Nutrition Education Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesNutritionEducation.pdf>

Physical Activity and Physical Education Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesPhysicalActivity.pdf>

Promoting Healthy Weight Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesHealthyWeight.pdf>

Special Diets Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesSpecialDiets.pdf>

Wellness Policies for Schools and Child Care Resource List:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesWellnessPolicy.pdf>

Websites

Afterschool Snack Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Afterschool-Snack-Program>

Afterschool Snack Program (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/afterschool-snacks>

Beverage Requirements (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Beverage-Requirements>

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/child-nutrition-cn-labeling-program>

Child Nutrition Sharing Site (ICN):

<https://theicn.org/cnss/>

Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Competitive-Foods>

Connecticut Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Dietary Guidelines for Americans (USDA):

<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

4 | Resources

FNS Instructions (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/FNS-Instructions-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Fruits & Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/fruits-vegetables-galore-helping-kids-eat-more>

Fruits and Vegetables (ICN Child Nutrition Sharing Site):

<https://theicn.org/cnss/menu-planning/fruits-and-vegetables/>

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Laws-and-Regulations-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/List-of-Acceptable-Foods-and-Beverages>

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Manuals-and-Guides-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Pattern Training Materials (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

National School Lunch Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/National-School-Lunch-Program>

National School Lunch Program (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp>

Nutrition Standards for School Meals (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>

Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Offer-versus-Serve-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Operational Memos for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Production Records for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Production-Records-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Resources-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/School-Breakfast-Program>

School Breakfast Program (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program-sbp>

School Wellness Policies (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/School-Wellness-Policies>

Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Seamless-Summer-Option-SSO-of-the-NSLP>

Smarter Lunchrooms (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Smarter-Lunchrooms>

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Special Milk Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Milk-Program>

USDA Foods (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/food-distribution-programs>

Wellness Policy Resources (ICN Child Nutrition Sharing Site):

<https://theicn.org/cnss/community-connection/wellness-policy-elements/>

What's Shaking: Creative Ways to Boost Flavor With Less Sodium (USDA):

<https://theicn.org/cnss/about-whats-shaking/>



USDA Regulations and Policy

Comparison of Programs SFSP/NSLP/Seamless Summer Option (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/comparison-programs-sfspnslpseamless-option>

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>

National School Lunch Program Regulations (7 CFR 210) (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/part-210—national-school-lunch-program>

School Breakfast Program Regulations (7 CFR 220) (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/part-220—school-breakfast-program>

USDA Memo SP 10-2012 (v9): Questions and Answers on the Final Rule, “Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs”:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-final-rule-nutrition-standards-national-school-lunch-and-school-breakfast-programs>

USDA Memo SP 35-2011 and CACFP 23-2011: Clarification on the Use of Offer versus Serve and Family Style Meal Service:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/clarification-use-offer-vs-serve-and-family-style-meal-service>

USDA Memo SP 41-2015: Offer versus Serve: Guidance for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program SBP (School Year 2015-16):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/updated-offer-vs-serve-guidance-nslp-and-sbp-beginning-sy2015-16>

USDA Memo SP 41-2019: Salad Bars in the National School Lunch Program.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/salad-bars-national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program>

USDA Memo SP 57-2014: Updated Offer versus Serve Guidance for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program in School Year 2014-2015:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/updated-offer-versus-serve-guidance-national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program>

Glossary

a la carte sales: Foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals in the USDA school nutrition programs. For more information, see “competitive foods” in this section.

Afterschool Snack Program (ASP): The USDA’s federally assisted snack program implemented through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The ASP provides cash reimbursement to help schools serve snacks to children in afterschool activities aimed at promoting the health and well-being of children and youth. Schools must provide children with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities, e.g., mentoring/tutoring programs. Programs must meet state or local licensing requirements and health and safety standards. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Afterschool Snack Program](#) webpage.

age/grade groups: The three grade groupings (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) of the USDA meal patterns for breakfast and lunch. The classification of grade groups is based on the nutritional needs of children and the ages that typically correspond with these grade levels (ages 5-10 for grades K-5, ages 11-13 for grades 6-8, and ages 14-18 for grades 9-12).

alternate protein products (APP): APPs are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods. Some examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs include vegetable protein products. The USDA has specific requirements for the crediting of APP in Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products](#), and the USDA’s handout, [Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products](#).

bran: Bran is the seed husk or outer coating of cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and oats. Examples include oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran. Bran does not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. It must count toward the limit for noncreditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

cereal grains: The seeds that come from grasses. Cereal grains can be whole grain (such as amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, oats, quinoa, rice, rolled wheat, rye, sorghum, triticale, wheat, and wheat berries) or enriched, such as cornmeal, corn grits, and farina.

Child Nutrition (CN) label: A statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA’s evaluation of the product’s formulation. Products eligible for CN labeling include main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the meal pattern requirements, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. The CN label will also indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program*, and visit the USDA’s [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling](#) webpage.

Child Nutrition Programs: The USDA’s federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

combination foods: Foods that contain more than one food component such as pizza, burritos and a smoothie made with milk and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains) and cheese (meat/meat alternate). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as pizza or a burrito), or are not intended to be separated (such as a hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).

creditable food: A food or beverage that can be counted toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal or snack in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans: A federal document that provides science-based advice for Americans ages 2 and older to promote health and reduce risk for chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture jointly publish the *Dietary Guidelines* every five years. This document forms the basis of federal food, nutrition education, and information programs. For more information, visit the [Dietary Guidelines](#) webpage.

dietary specifications: The USDA’s nutrition standards for meals in the NSLP and SBP. The dietary specifications include weekly calorie ranges, and limits for saturated fats and sodium. In addition, Nutrition Facts labels and manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fats per serving for all food products and ingredients used to prepare school meals. For information, see section 5 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

edible portion: The portion of a food that can actually be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed, for example, cooked, lean meat without bone, and fruit without seeds or pits.

endosperm: The soft, white inside portion of the whole-grain kernel. The endosperm contains starch, protein, and small amounts of B vitamins.

enriched grains: Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have some vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the FDA, and include thiamin (B₁), riboflavin (B₂), niacin (B₃), folic acid, and iron. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#).

enrichment: Adding back nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) originally present in a food that were lost during processing. Enrichment nutrients are added back in approximately the same levels as were originally present in the food. For more information, see “enriched grains” in this section.

entree: See “main dish” in this section.

extra foods: See “noncreditable foods” in this section.

flour: Finely ground and sifted wheat or other grains such as rye, corn, rice, or buckwheat.

food components: The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the NSLP (milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains) and the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts in the SBP (grains with optional meat/meat alternate substitutions, fruits with optional vegetable substitutions, and milk). For more information on the individual food components, see the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

food item: A specific food offered within the food components that comprise reimbursable meals in the USDA school nutrition programs. A food item may contain one or more food components or more than one serving of a single component. For example, an entree could provide 1 oz eq of the grains component and 1 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component, and a 2 ounce whole grain or enriched bagel could provide 2 oz eq of the grains component.

fortification: Adding nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) that were not originally present in a food or beverage, or adding nutrients at levels that are higher than originally present. Fortification is used for naturally nutrient-rich products based on scientifically documented health needs (such as fortifying milk with vitamin D to increase the body’s absorption of calcium), or to enhance the perceived nutritional value of products with little or no natural nutritional value, e.g., fortifying “energy” bars made from processed flour with multiple vitamins and minerals. Fortification nutrients are added to products in varying amounts, from small percentages up to amounts greater than recommended intakes.

full component: The daily quantity designated by the menu planner (no less than the established minimum) to meet the required weekly ranges.

full serving: See “full component” in this section.

full-strength fruit or vegetable juice: An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state or as an ingredient in a recipe. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.” For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

germ: The vitamin-rich sprouting section of the whole-grain kernel. Germ is not a whole grain. Germ does not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. It must count toward the limit for noncreditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

grade groups: See “age/grade groups” in this section.

lactose: The naturally occurring sugar found in milk. Lactose contains glucose and galactose. For more information, see “simple carbohydrates (sugars)” in this section.

meal pattern: The required food components and minimum serving sizes that schools and institutions participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children. For more information, visit CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

meals: See “reimbursable meals” in this section.

meat alternates: Foods that provide a similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products, cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans or peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut, and coconut), yogurt, soy yogurt, commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein in a 1/4-cup (2.2 ounces) serving, and tempeh. For more information, see “Meat/Meat Alternates Component” in section 3, and the CSDE’s handouts, *Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP*, *Crediting Legumes in the NSLP and SBP*, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP*, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP*, and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP*.

menu item: Any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk that is part of the reimbursable meal. Menu items consist of food items. For more information, see “food item” in this section.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP): The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. It was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [National School Lunch Program](#) webpage.

noncreditable foods: Foods and beverages that do not contribute toward the meal patterns for the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. Noncreditable foods and beverages are either in amounts too small to credit (i.e., foods and beverage that do not provide the minimum creditable amount of a food component) or they do not fit into one of the meal pattern components. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

noncreditable grains: Grain ingredients that do not contribute toward the grains component. Examples include fiber, bran, germ, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*, and section 3 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

nutrient-dense foods: Foods that provide substantial amounts of naturally occurring vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients with relatively few calories. Nutrient-dense foods include lean sources of protein and/or complex carbohydrates that are low in total fat and saturated fats. Examples include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, eggs, and beans. Foods and beverages that are not nutrient dense supply calories (from fat, added sugars, and processed carbohydrates), but relatively small amounts of nutrients (and sometimes none at all), unless fortified.

nutrient-rich foods: See “nutrient-dense foods” in this section.

offer versus serve (OVS): A provision that applies to menu planning and the determination of reimbursable meals for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP. OVS allows students to decline a certain number of food components or items in the meal. The SFA must offer the required meal components to each student. In the NSLP, students must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full portion (minimum serving size) of at least two other components. In the SBP, students must select at least three food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered). OVS must be implemented in senior high schools for lunch but is optional for breakfast. For junior high, middle schools and elementary schools, OVS is optional for both breakfast and lunch.

ounce equivalent (oz eq): A weight-based unit of measure for the grains component and meat/meat alternate component for the NSLP and the SBP meal patterns, that takes into account dry versus cooked grains and variations in meats/meat alternates. An oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food's density and nutrition content. The amount of a grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. An oz eq of the grains component is less than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as pretzels, bread sticks, and crackers), equal to a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as bagels, biscuits, bread, rolls, cereal grains, and RTE breakfast cereals), and more than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as muffins, pancakes, cookies, granola bars, and grain-based desserts).

point-of-service (POS) meal count: The point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid lunch has been served to an eligible child.

product formulation statement (PFS): An information statement obtained from the manufacturer that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's meal pattern requirements, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. SFAs must check the manufacturer's crediting information for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable meals. For more information, see the CSDE's handouts, *Product Formulation Statements* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation*.

reimbursable meals: Meals or snacks that meet the requirements of the USDA regulations for Child Nutrition Programs.

residential child care institution (RCCI): RCCIs include, but are not limited to homes for the mentally, emotionally or physically impaired, and unmarried mothers and their infants; group homes; halfway houses; orphanages; temporary shelters for abused children and for runaway children; long-term care facilities for chronically ill children; and juvenile detention centers. A long-term care facility is a hospital, skilled nursing facility, intermediate care facility, or distinct part thereof, which is intended for the care of children confined for 30 days or more.

School Breakfast Program (SBP): The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The SBP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free breakfasts to children each school day. The program was established under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to ensure that all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [School Breakfast Program](#) webpage.

school food authority (SFA): The governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and has the legal authority to operate the USDA school nutrition programs, e.g., National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Afterschool Snack Program, and Special Milk Program.

school nutrition programs: The USDA’s school nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP (SSO): The USDA’s federally assisted summer feeding program that combines features of the NSLP, SBP, and SFSP, and serves meals free of charge to children ages 18 and younger from low-income areas. School districts participating in the NSLP or SBP are eligible to apply to the CSDE to participate in the SSO. SSO meals follow the meal patterns of the NSLP and SBP. For more information, visit the [Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP](#) webpage.

serving size or portion: The weight, measure, number of pieces, or slices of a food or beverage. Schools must provide the minimum serving sizes specified in the USDA meal patterns for meals and snacks to be reimbursable.

Special Milk Program (SMP): The USDA’s federally assisted program that provides milk to children in schools and child care institutions that do not participate in other federal meal service programs. The SMP reimburses schools for the milk they serve. Schools in the NSLP or SBP may also participate in the SMP to provide milk to children in half-day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs where children do not have access to the school meal programs. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Special Milk Program](#) webpage.

Glossary

surimi: Pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood usually made from pollock (fish). A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component.

tempeh: A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component.

trans fats: A type of unsaturated fat that is structurally different from the unsaturated fatty acids that occur naturally in plant foods, and therefore has different health effects. Trans fats increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. Most trans fats are artificially made as the result of “hydrogenation.” This manufacturing process transforms liquid vegetable oils into a solid (saturated) fat to increase shelf life and enhance the flavor and texture of food products. Sources of trans fatty acids include partially hydrogenated vegetable oils used in processed foods such as desserts, microwave popcorn, frozen pizza, some margarines, and coffee creamer. Trans fats are also present naturally in foods that come from ruminant animals (e.g., cattle and sheep) such as dairy products, beef, and lamb.

USDA Foods: Foods available to the USDA Child Nutrition Programs through the CSDE’s Food Distribution Program. For more information, visit the USDA’s [Food Distribution Programs](#) webpage and the CSDE’s [Food Distribution Program](#) webpage.

whole grain-rich: For grades K-12, whole grain-rich foods must contain at least 50 percent whole grains, any other grain ingredients must be enriched, and any noncreditable grains must be less than two percent (1/4 oz eq) of the product formula. To comply with this limit, the combined total of all noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams for groups A-G (baked goods) or 6.99 grams per serving for groups H (cereal grains) and I (ready-to-eat breakfast cereals) of the USDA oz eq chart. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

whole grains: Grains that consist of the entire kernel, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. All grains start out as whole grains, but many are processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes many of the nutrients. Whole grains are nutrient rich, containing vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and health-enhancing phytonutrients such as lignans and flavonoids. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, brown rice, whole rye, whole barley, wild rice, buckwheat, and bulgur (cracked wheat). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#).



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