

Introduction

Children's food choices and eating habits are shaped by many sources, but one of the most significant sources is the school they attend. The school environment plays a large role in teaching and modeling eating and health behaviors. For many children, foods consumed at school provide a major portion of their daily nutrient intake.

The USDA is currently working with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to revise the school meal patterns and nutrition standards and has requested that all State agencies begin proactively implementing the applicable recommendations for the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* into Child Nutrition Programs. In response to the USDA's request, the Idaho State Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs office (CNP) took the proactive step to form a panel in 2008 and develop *New Nutrition Standards for Idaho School Meals*.

Schools have a responsibility to model and reinforce healthy eating habits by teaching and modeling appropriate health behaviors.

The *New Nutrition Standards* for Idaho School Meals were developed with input from a variety of school foodservice directors – from districts large and small as well as schools with different menu-planning methods. The new standards

will help every school to instill healthy eating habits in students by reducing sugar, sodium and high-fat foods and increasing healthy food items like whole grains and fruits and vegetables.

CNP recommends all School Food Authorities (SFAs) fully implement the New Nutrition Standards for Idaho School Meals standards into their programs starting August 2009. This will allow school foodservice departments time to adjust their menus and gradually incorporate new recipes and food items into the meals currently served before the USDA enforces stricter guidelines. All School Meals Initiative (SMI) Reviews conducted after August 2009 will include a review of compliance with the Nutrition Standards for Idaho School Meals.

To assist schools with the *New Nutrition Standards for Idaho School Meals*, CNP has created a web site with a detailed explanation of the new standards, guidance on menu planning, sample recipes and tips for communicating with parents, teachers, students and the community. Please visit www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cnp/nutritionStandards/ to learn more.

Federally reimbursable meals provided through the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) should meet all current Federal meal requirements AND the more stringent Nutrition Standards for Idaho School Meals discussed in this booklet.

All of the Nutrition Standards for Idaho School Meals are based off of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, USDA HealthierUS Challenge, and/or the Institute of Medicine (IOM).

If you have any questions about these new standards, please feel free to visit www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cnp/nutritionStandards/ or call (208) 332-6821.