




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program

FROM: John D. Frassinelli, Chief 
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: January 28, 2019 — *email from CSDE*

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum No. 05-19
Process for Submitting the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Statement for
School Year 2019-20

This memo summarizes the requirements for submitting the 2019-20 HFC Statement to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). It also provides information on the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS), HFC resources, and state beverage requirements.

Annual HFC Statement

Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) requires that each local board of education or governing authority for all Connecticut public school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must take action annually to certify whether all food items sold to students separately from reimbursable meals will or will not meet the CNS. This includes all public schools, regional educational service centers, the Connecticut Technical High School System, charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, and endowed academies.

For school year 2019-20, the HFC period is July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020. All public school districts participating in the NSLP must submit the online Healthy Food Certification Statement (Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)) by July 1, 2019. The vote by the board of education or governing authority on whether to participate in HFC must occur by July 1, 2019, or the district is ineligible for HFC during school year 2019-20.

HFC Application Process for 2019-20

The annual HFC Statement will be completed online in the CSDE's Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System), as part of the district's 2019-20 application module for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs. The 2019-20 module is expected to be available in the CNP System in May 2019. The CSDE will notify sponsors when the module is open and the HFC application module becomes available.

In the meantime, public school sponsors of the NSLP must follow the procedures below to ensure timely submission of the 2019-20 HFC Statement by the deadline of July 1, 2019.

1. Schedule the HFC votes at a meeting of your board of education or governing authority that occurs before June 30, 2019. The board of education or governing authority for each public school that participates in the NSLP must vote "yes" or "no" on whether to

implement the healthy food option, i.e., follow the CNS for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals. **The motion and meeting minutes for the healthy food option should include the specific criteria for the healthy food option required by C.G.S. Section 10-215f, as indicated below.**

- **Healthy food option:** Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

If the board of education or governing authority votes “yes” for the healthy food option above, the board of education or governing authority must also vote on whether to allow food exemptions. **The motion and meeting minutes for food exemptions should include the specific criteria for food exemptions required by C.G.S. Section 10-215f, as indicated below.** Note: If the board of education or governing authority votes “no” for the healthy food option above, a vote on whether to allow food exemptions is not required.

- **Food exemptions:** The board of education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held.

For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools*.

2. Conduct the HFC votes at the scheduled meeting of the board of education or governing authority. **Maintain a copy of the meeting minutes** indicating the results of the HFC votes for the healthy food option and food exemptions, as outlined in step 1.
 - The meeting minutes must indicate whether the board of education or governing authority voted “yes” or “no” to implement the healthy food option, and must include the specific language for “Healthy food option” in step 1.

- If the board of education or governing authority voted “yes,” for the healthy food option, the meeting minutes must also indicate whether the board of education or governing authority voted “yes” or “no” to allow food exemptions, and must include the specific language for “Exemption for food items” in step 1.
3. In **May 2019**, when the CSDE notifies districts that the HFC application module is available, complete the online HFC application module and upload the meeting minutes indicating the results of the HFC vote. **Note:** The CSDE will e-mail school nutrition programs when the 2019-20 HFC application module of the CNP System is available. Instructions on how to access the HFC application module will be provided at that time. **Please do not access the CNP System prior to receiving this notification from the CSDE.**

For additional guidance on the HFC application process, review the CSDE’s presentation, Application Procedures for HFC, and visit the “Apply” section of the CSDE’s HFC webpage.

Interschool Agreements for HFC Schools

A public school or district (recipient site) that receives meals under contract from a HFC district (providing sponsor) can choose to certify for the healthy food option and follow the CNS for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals. This must be indicated in section 3 of the Full-service Interschool Agreement Form between the recipient site and the providing sponsor district.

In order for the providing sponsor to receive HFC payments for any recipient sites, the interschool agreement must be submitted to the CSDE by **July 1, 2019**. If the CSDE receives the interschool agreement **after this date**, the CSDE will **not** include the recipient site’s lunch counts in the total number of reimbursable lunches used to determine HFC payments for school year 2019-20. For more information, see CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 4-19: Interschool Agreements for School Year 2019-20.

Schools must submit **hard copies** of the interschool agreements to the CSDE. Interschool agreements are not submitted through the CNP Online System. The interschool agreements for school year 2019-20 are available in the “Interschool Agreements” section of the CSDE’s Forms for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS)

The CSDE did not make any changes to the CNS for school year 2019-20. For a summary of the CNS, see the CSDE’s handout, *Summary of Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools*. Additional information on the CNS is available on the CSDE’s CNS webpage. The CSDE’s HFC webpage provides numerous resources to assist districts with implementing HFC including:

- Complying with HFC (Presentation);
- Ensuring District Compliance with HFC;
- Guide to Competitive Foods in Schools;
- Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Food and Beverages;

- Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Public Schools Choosing HFC;
- Requirements for Food and Beverages in Vending Machines in Public Schools Choosing HFC; and
- Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in Public Schools Choosing HFC.

State Beverage Requirements

As a reminder, the beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q apply to **all public schools**, regardless of whether the district certifies for the healthy food option of HFC under C.G.S. Section 10-215f. This includes all public school districts, interdistrict magnet schools, charter schools, endowed academies, and the Connecticut Technical High School System. Additional information on the beverage requirements is available on the CSDE's Beverage Requirements webpage.

C.G.S. Section 10-221q addresses requirements for the sale of beverages to students in public schools, and allows exemptions if beverage sales meet specific conditions. Beverage exemptions are not part of the annual HFC Statement, which applies only to food sales. If a public school district chooses to allow beverage exemptions, the CSDE recommends that the board of education or governing authority conducts the vote on beverage exemptions at the **same time** as the HFC vote. If the district does not have a beverage exemption in place, noncompliant beverages can never be sold to students on school premises.

The motion and meeting minutes for beverage exemptions should include the specific criteria for beverage exemptions required by C.G.S. Section 10-221q, as indicated below.

- **Exemptions for beverages:** The board of education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The "school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools*.

For questions or additional information, please contact Susan Fiore at 860-807-2075 or susan.fiore@ct.gov or Teri Dandeneau at 860-807-2079 or teri.dandeneau@ct.gov.

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Important: This is a numbered Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) operational memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain in a binder for future reference. All CSDE operational memoranda are posted on the CSDE's Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs webpage.