

“What is a Meal?”

Synopsis of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act

In January, 2011, the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs received a “make over” to align them with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The new rules require schools to increase the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat free and low-fat fluid milk in school meals; reduce the levels of sodium, saturated fat, and trans fat in meals; and meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The improvements to the school meal program are expected to enhance the diet and health of school children, and help mitigate the childhood obesity trend.

Understanding the definition of a **food component** is important before explaining “What is a Meal?”

- A food component is one of the five food groups which make up the **reimbursable school lunch**, i.e., meat/meat alternate (M/MA), vegetables (V), fruits/juice (F), milk (M), and grains/breads G/B); or one of the four available food groups which make up the **reimbursable school breakfast**, i.e., meat/meat alternate and grains/breads, fruit/juice, milk.
- NOTE: a meat alternate is a plant or dairy based protein, i.e. peanut butter, yogurt, a veggie patty, cheese or barilla plus pasta, etc...

Based on that definition we’ll explain how a student’s food choices make up “a complete meal”:

- For **lunch** a student can choose from all of the 5 components which could be as many as 7 choices in HS when counting 2 vegetable and 2 fruit servings - or 6 choices in Elementary and Middle School when counting 2 vegetable and 1 fruit servings.
- Students **must** choose a fruit or vegetable serving for lunch.
- The minimum number of *different* components required is 3, which could mean that just 3 choices could make a complete meal, so long as one of them is a fruit or vegetable.
- A limit of one 4 ounce juice is allowed as part of the 2 fruit component choices at HS level.
- For **breakfast** a student must choose 2 G/B choices (or 1 G/B and 1 M/MA) plus 1 or 2 other components. Some items count as 2 choices like the breakfast sandwich (M/MA+G/B) or a whole bagel or mini waffles (2 G/B).

This is the lunch flyer that will be posted on the lines in our cafeterias:

Elementary & Middle Schools

LUNCH

YOU MUST HAVE A MINIMUM OF 3 COMPONENTS ON YOUR TRAY INCLUDING AT LEAST 1 SERVING OF FRUIT OR VEGGIE.

You may choose 1 Meat / Meat Alternate.

You may choose 1 Bread / Grain item.. some may be part of the entree; like chicken patty on a bun, taco on a tortilla, the crust on pizza, cornbread w chili, bread stix w soup

You may choose up to ANY 3 Vegetable, Soup, Bean, Potato, **** Up to ANY 4 @ HS**
Tossed Salad, Fruit or Juice items (ONLY 1 can be Fruit Juice)

You MUST choose at least 1 Fruit or Vegetable item.

You may choose 1 Milk.

All Extra Items will be Charged A La Carte

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Most School Districts in the GST BOCES Region have been implementing these nutritional changes (recommendations before this time) in our student meals, including added whole grain choices, reduced sodium in our recipes, a greater variety of fruits/vegetables and more vegetarian options. Due to these prior changes, transition to the new USDA meal pattern requirements should be smooth for our districts.

Here are some examples of how choices or countable items are determined:

Main Items	Components			Student Choices (Countable Items)
	M/MA	G/B	V or F	TOTAL Choices
ENTRÉE				
Asst. Sandwiches (Hot and Cold)	1	1		2
Assorted Subs	1	1		2
Assorted Wraps (Hot and Cold)	1	1		2
** Exception: <u>Sub and Salad Bars</u> must account for each ½ C serving of Veggies on Salads, Subs & Wraps – and each 1 Cup serving of leafy greens				
Baked Meats (Chicken, Ham, Etc)	1			1
Casseroles – Macaroni & Cheese / Chicken Primavera / Mexi Mac and Cheese	1			1
Cheese Stick with 4 oz. Yogurt	1			1
Chef Salad and all dinner salads, although the Taco salad actually does include the extra bread serving	1	(1 w nacho chips)	2 V	3 (or 4 with the nacho chips)
Chicken Nuggets / Tenders / Popcorn	1			1
Chicken Teriyaki and Sweet and Sour	1	1 if w rice	1 V	2 or 3 with rice
Soft Chicken Taco / other Taco	1	1		2
Fish Sticks or Fish Sandwich	1	1 if sandwich		1 or 2
French Toast Sticks / Mini Waffles / Mini Pancakes - with sausage or ham	1	1		2
Italian or Pizza Dunkers	1	1		2
Lasagna Rollups	1	1		2
Nacho Grande	1	1		2
Pizza (ALL)	1	1		2
Pasta (Barilla Plus) / Meatballs / Meat Sauce / Mozzarella Sticks / Beef Stroganoff	1	1 if w bread or brd stick		1 or 2
Turkey Fricassee / Turkey with Gravy	1	1 w bread		1 or 2
Entrée Soups, Pasta Fazool (Pasta e Fagioli) / Turkey Noodle / Chili	1	1 w bread stick or cornbread		1 or 2
Fruit and Cottage Cheese (or other protein) Plate	1	1 (bun)	2 F (1 in EI/MS)	3 or 4
Hummus w veggies and Chips	1	1	2 V	4
Yogurt Parfait	1		1 F	2

To complete the meals, sides can be added to the above choices based on the above explanations. Those include the fruit, vegetable and milk components.

ALL CHOICES ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT ALL SCHOOLS