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INDIANA DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Mike Braun, Governor
Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

School Nutrition Programs

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

This weekly newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is dedicated to providing education, training, and technical assistance opportunities to school nutrition professionals, helping to ensure seamless operations for those participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Child Nutrition Programs. If you are the food service contact for your school or facility, please be certain that everyone on your team has access to this important information.

Tip of the Week

Office Closure

State of Indiana government offices will be closed Monday, October 12, in observance of Columbus Day.

Important Updates

Happy National School Lunch Week (NSLW)

Celebrate the importance of healthy school meals that help students learn and thrive. This year's theme, "Cafeteria Circus: Where Healthy Choices Take Center Stage," highlights the creativity and dedication behind every school meal. While NSLW is observed Monday, October 12 through Friday, October 16, schools may celebrate any week that works best. Find promotional materials, graphics, activity ideas, and more on the School Nutrition Association webpage.

Want to share your school's celebrations? IDOE is compiling a scrapbook with school submissions. Please submit your photos with the school name and description to Jennifer Ress-Henry. Remember that photos of children's faces cannot be submitted without media release information on file.

Healthier School Meals Pledge Survey

This summer USDA announced an opportunity for States to pledge their commitment to serving healthier school meals to students across the nation. This directly aligns with Governor Braun's Make Indiana Healthy Again initiative, which focuses on improving access to fresh local food, removing harmful additives, and giving Hoosiers the tools they need to live healthier. Governor Braun urges all

Indiana schools to implement one or more of the recommended actions in preparation for the new nutrition standards. The six actions included in the pledge are allowable under current federal regulations and align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2025-2030. Please complete this short survey to indicate which actions you have already implemented or are able to implement during the 2026-2027 school year.

Take Survey

USDA Foods

USDA Foods Direct Ship (Brown Box) Allocations Have Begun

School Food Authorities (SFAs) may begin placing Direct Ship USDA Foods orders in CNPweb. Before ordering, please ensure the USDA Foods items appear under your SFA's Inventory tab. A minimum order of 10 cases per delivery site is required to avoid under-minimum case fees. For detailed Direct Ship ordering instructions, please visit IDOE's State Assigned Warehouse and Ordering Information webpage.

ProcessorLink Training to Indiana School Districts

ProcessorLink will offer virtual training for Indiana SFAs to familiarize Indiana school districts with key features and workflows. Participants will learn basic navigation, essential tasks, and best practices to ensure accurate and efficient use of the system. The training is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. ET. Join the webinar using this Microsoft Teams link.

K12 Foodservice On Target Forecast Planner Virtual Training

For SFAs with processors that report pound and balance information through K12 Foodservice, IDOE is hosting a virtual training for Recipient Agencies (RAs) on Wednesday, October 21, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET. K12Foodservice.com now offers a commodity planner that helps RAs identify needs, collaborate with partners, and track progress. The K12 On Target Planner provides real-time updates to improve entitlement use. Join the webinar using this Google Meet link.

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) Access and Ordering

If your school's representative has not completed the eAuthentication process, and Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) has not set up a FFAVORS account for the user and/or point of contact. The steps below must be completed before any orders can be placed.

1. Have your designated school representative complete the eAuthentication process.
2. After eAuthentication is finished, DLA will create a FFAVORS profile account for the user or point of contact.
3. Wait for confirmation that the FFAVORS login has been created.
4. Once both steps are complete, you may begin placing orders.

DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program: Enter Receipts

Schools must enter receipts in FFAVORS **within two calendar days** of delivery to avoid account suspension and ensure that vendors are paid. Schools should monitor and use DoD Fresh funds in FFAVORS to prevent sweeping or loss of funds. Funds must be used in full by June 30, 2027 and will not rollover.

USDA Foods Cancellations for School Year (SY) 2026-2027

Material Code	Item Description	Order Cancellation Date
1100256	Frozen Strawberry Cups	January-March 2027
100258	Frozen Apple Slices	Entire School Year - All Warehouses
110721	Sweet Potato Fries	Entire School Year - All Warehouses
110921	Frozen Chicken Fillet, Unbreaded	Entire School Year - All Warehouses
100309	Canned Carrots	Entire School Year - Gordon Food Service (GFS) Brighton and Clay only
100313	Canned Corn	Through December 2026 - All Warehouses
110846	Whole Strawberries (Frozen)	Entire School Year - All Warehouses
110860	Strawberry Slices (Frozen)	Entire School Year - All Warehouses
1111881	Pulled Chicken (Frozen)	Entire School Year - All Warehouses

Did You Know?

- Direct Ship USDA Foods orders must be placed through CNPweb for school year 2026-2027.
- Before ordering, confirm that USDA Foods are visible under their SFA's Inventory tab.
- A minimum of 10 cases per delivery site is required to avoid an under-minimum fee.
- Ordering instructions are available on IDOE's State Assigned Warehouse and Ordering Information webpage under Direct Ship USDA Foods Ordering Instructions.

USDA Foods Recipe Resources

Looking for recipes to use your USDA Foods? Check out these resources:

- Nutrition.gov
- Smart Swaps Recipes
- Wild Blueberry Recipes
- Recipes for Healthy Kids
- Recipes for Schools - Child Nutrition Recipe Box
- Team Nutrition Recipes

Procurement

Procurement Reminder

SFAs using Child Nutrition funds must follow federal procurement regulations (2 CFR 200.318–326). To assist in meeting these regulations, IDOE's Procurement website provides guidance on procurement thresholds, required procedures, equipment approvals, cooperative purchasing, and necessary templates. SFAs should maintain an up-to-date written procurement plan and be prepared for procurement reviews conducted alongside Administrative Reviews. Access information and resources at IDOE's Procurement website.

For more details on procurement topics, see the Procurement Information Sheet. Questions about procurement? Visit IDOE's Procurement webpage or contact the SCN Procurement mailbox for assistance.

Training and Webinar Opportunities

Financial Management: A Course for School Nutrition Directors

This fall, in partnership with the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN), IDOE will offer two in-person sessions of Financial Management, a full-day course designed for school nutrition directors and business managers. This training provides practical tools, hands-on activities, and guidance to strengthen financial practices and support informed decision making within school nutrition programs.

Training dates and locations:

- Tuesday, October 27, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET at Kokomo Schools, Kokomo, IN
- Tuesday, November 17, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET at Bedford North Lawrence Schools, Bedford, IN

To register, please complete the Financial Management registration Jotform.

Culinary Skills for A+ School Meals: Fall 2026 Virtual Training Series

Join for free, interactive sessions featuring live chef demonstrations, practical recipes, efficient techniques, and nutritional insights. Each class earns one training hour and includes exciting giveaways!

Enhance your culinary skills and learn tips and tricks from school nutrition pros. Classes are held Thursdays, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET. For more details, visit Culinary Skills for A+ School Meals flyer to register.

- Thursday, October 8: Prep Like a Pro: Knife Skills for School Kitchens
- Thursday, October 15: Slice, Dice & Serve: Vegetable Cutting Skills for School Meals
- Thursday, October 22: Mastering Fruit Prep: Cutting Techniques for K12 Foodservice
- Thursday, October 29: Making the Most of USDA Foods in School Kitchens
- Thursday, November 5: Stirring Up Success: Soups Kids Will Love

Questions? Contact Cathy Powers for additional information.

Upcoming Webinars

Check out the upcoming webinar list, as new events are added regularly. Please use the Microsoft Teams event links below to find more details and to register.

- Verification in Action - Thursday, October 15, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET.
- VSR - Verification Summary Report - Thursday, November 19, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET.
- VSR - Verification Summary Report (Repeat) - Thursday, December 17, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET.

Farm to School

IDOE, in partnership with the Indiana Grown for Schools Network, hosts and shares several webinars and events to support school nutrition programs. Stay up to date on the upcoming events on the Indiana Grown webpage.

- Farm to School Office Hours - Wednesday, November 18, from 4 to 5 p.m. ET

Food Distribution Program (FDP)

Below is a list of upcoming training opportunities on FDP. Please use the links below to register.

- PrimeroEdge Applications Training - Wednesday, October 14, from 9 to 11 a.m. ET.
- The Future is in Forecasting - Wednesday, November 18, from 9 to 11 a.m. ET.
- Making the Most of Your USDA Foods - Wednesday, December 9, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. ET.
- PrimeroEdge Catalog Refresher Training - Wednesday, January 13, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. ET.
- FDP Office Hours for the Catalog - Wednesday, February 17, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET.
- FDP Office Hours for the Catalog - Wednesday, March 17, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET.
- End of Year Reminders - Wednesday, April 7, from 10 to 11 a.m. ET.

If there is a specific topic you would like to see covered, let us know by filling out this form!

Reminders

2026 National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grant

Indiana has received $443,185 from the USDA to award Equipment Assistance Grants to SFAs. To be eligible, an SFA must participate in the NSLP. Each SFA may request funding for up to three pieces of equipment, with a maximum award of $30,000. Applications will be accepted through Saturday, October 31, with announcement of awards by Friday, November 27. For more information, including the application, visit IDOE's School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Questions can be sent to SCNFinance@doe.in.gov. Please include “Sponsor Number/Equipment Grant” in the subject line.

Data Exchange: October Data Certification Sign Off

Each year, IDOE requires schools to submit enrollment data for every student, including individual free and reduced eligibility through the Pupil Enrollment (PE) Report. The October Data Certification window opened on Thursday, October 1 (Census Day) and will remain open until the end of day on Friday, October 9.

Schools should actively review and finalize all data submissions, ensuring that any errors, conflicts, exclusions, and warnings are resolved so data can be certified accurately. **Accurate and timely certification is essential, as this data feeds into a wide range of state and federal processes,**

ranging from funding to reporting purposes.

These data points are critical and used by IDOE for purposes, including but not limited to:

- Calculating E-Rate discount
- Title I allocations
- Analysis and public reporting on demographic percentages of students' enrollment for each school
- Federal reporting
- Grant applications, awards, and monitoring (particularly where socio-economic status is a component)

School data managers can monitor their latest validations in the Data Exchange Validation Portal and compare currently validated data against last year's certified data in the October Certification Dashboard.

If you have any questions or need support during the certification window, submit an IDOE help ticket.

Nutrition Nugget



Broccoli is Bursting with Vitamins and Minerals

Broccoli supports immune function, bone health, and overall well-being, a great source of vitamin A, vitamin C, and calcium for everyone who enjoys it.

Image: istockphoto.com

Updates from Our Partners

Professional Standards Revisions

To support school nutrition professionals, USDA has shared the following revised resources to include the most current policy guidance:

- Summary of Professional Standards Flyer
- Guide to Professional Standards for Nutrition Professionals
- Professional Standards Training Reward Badges

Upcoming Dates



Date	Event
Friday, October 9	Public Comment Deadline
Thursday, October 15	Initial Due Date for September Claim
Friday, October 30	Final Due Date for August Claim
Sunday, November 15	Verification Ends
Monday, November 30	Final Due Date for September Claim



Additional Resources

School Nutrition Programs Calendar
IDOE's Nutrition Webpage
CNPweb

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