

HEALTHY CHANGES TO 2012-2013 SCHOOL LUNCH REGULATIONS



A chicken teriyaki noodle bowl is one new menu item available to students this year.

The National School Lunch program has changed its regulations for the upcoming year, and students will see new menu items with numerous health benefits outlined by federal nutrition standards. The improved meals will provide healthy, well-balanced, trans-fat free options that have all the nutrients students need to succeed at school.

One new change is fruit and vegetable servings have increased. Previously, fruit servings were $\frac{1}{3}$ cup and now they are a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. Vegetables will range from a $\frac{1}{2}$ to a full cup serving. In addition to portion sizes increasing, students will have the ability to select more items, meaning instead of only being allowed one cup, they can have a maximum amount of two cups fruits and/or vegetables.

“We have been doing some of this already, but students will see more vegetable subgroups, so each week we will have orange vegetables, dark green leafy vegetables, and more beans and legumes on the menu,” said Lauren Hummel, director of food services in District 211.

In previous years, each meal had a calorie minimum it had to meet. However, these limits didn't include a maximum amount of calories per meal. New regulations mandate that each complete school lunch meal is between 750 to 850 calories. Guidelines are designed to meet $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for students age 14-18.



More fresh greens, fruits, and vegetables will be available for students to choose from.

Another change is elimination of two percent milk from menu options. All options are one percent or skim. District 211 removed two percent milk from their menus last school year and will now be switching from one percent flavored milk to skim flavored milk. The meals are also shifting toward using whole grain options in their meals, which include using brown rice and whole grain pastas. In addition to already having whole grain buns, the District is adding more whole grain options to their menus.

“Our goal is to be 100 percent whole grain by 2014,” Hummel said. “For the upcoming school year, we will be at about 75 percent.”

One final change that will be phased in is having reduced sodium options. New regulations require that the ultimate target be met by 2020 with gradual changes phased in each year. The District has started incorporating reduced sodium items, and many of the new menu items will be featured on the menu this year, as well.

The District wants to maintain tasty offerings that are also nutritious, which is why it has also added new menu items that meet the new nutrition standards. The options, which were also reviewed by a sample of Schaumburg High School students, include a chicken teriyaki noodle bowl, whole grain Italian pasta salad, and a chicken burrito bowl with cilantro lime brown rice and beans among others. These offerings have fresh produce and lean protein, and can be paired with options of different salads, fruits, vegetables, and milk to make a complete meal.

For more information about District 211’s healthy school meals, visit [food services website](#).