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# Back to School with the New Meal Pattern – Commonly Asked Questions and Answers

Wednesday, September 12, 2012

# Questions & Answers

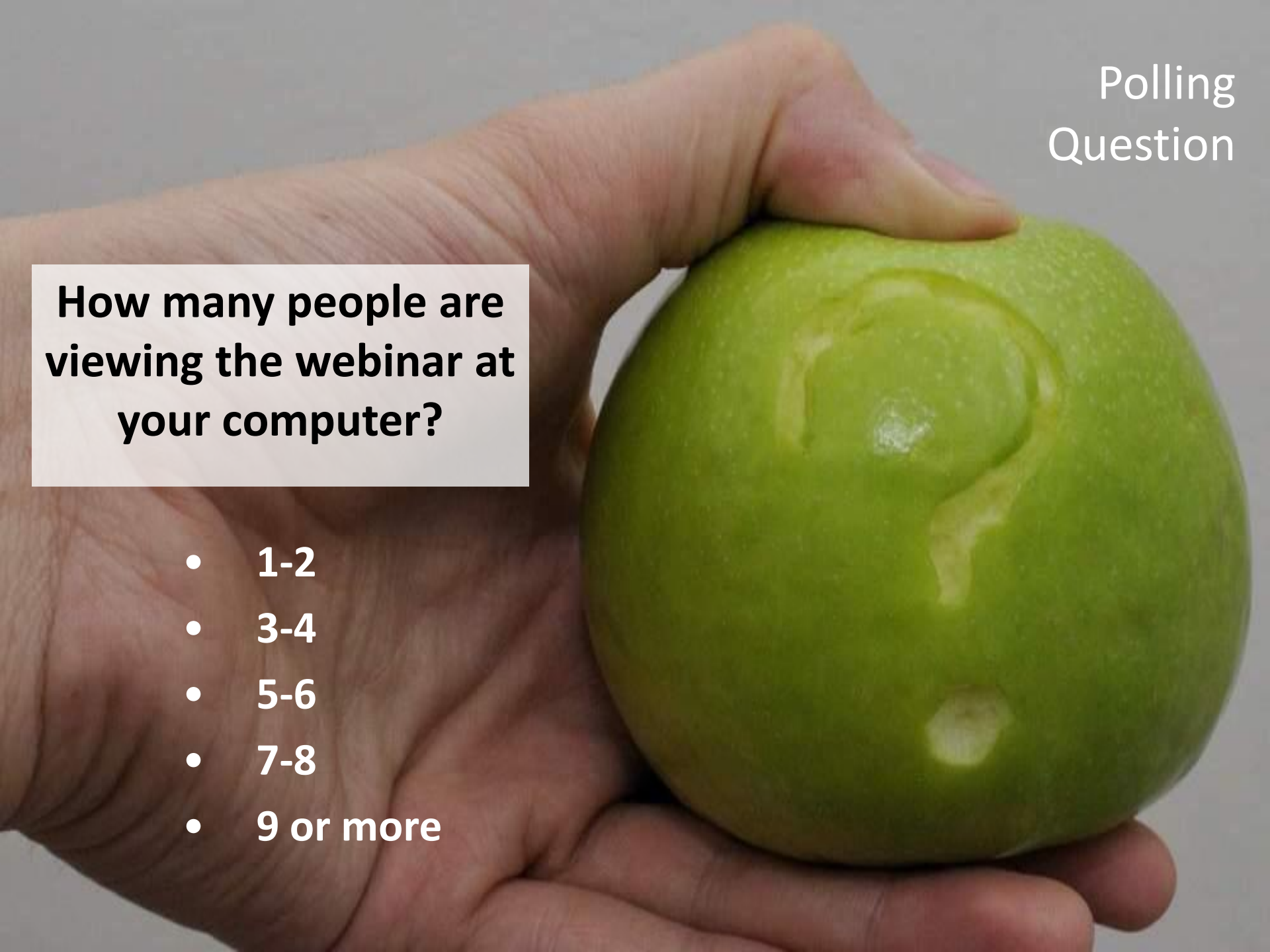
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# Today's Moderator



**Cindy Brooks**

Director

Seymour Public Schools

Seymour, CT

# Today's Panelists

**Dr. Janey Thornton**

Deputy Undersecretary

Food, Nutrition, and  
Consumer Services

USDA

**Cindy Long**

Director

Child Nutrition Division

USDA

**Julie Brewer**

Chief, Policy and  
Program Development  
Branch

Child Nutrition Division

USDA

**Bill Wagoner**

Chief, School Programs  
Section

Child Nutrition Division

USDA

# Today's Topics

- Learn about the latest information from USDA on the new meal pattern regulation.
- Participants will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions relative to the new meal pattern and the 6 cents certification.
- Participants will be provided with an overview of new USDA resources now available.

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# Implementation Resources

- “The School Day Just Got Healthier” Back to School campaign

[www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday](http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday)

- Download our we support badge
- Re-tweet the USDA Twitter “The School Day Just Got Healthier” campaign messaging

[@USDANutrition](https://twitter.com/USDANutrition)

[#schoolfoodsrule](https://twitter.com/schoolfoodsrule)

- Share your best practices on our Best Practices Sharing Center

[healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/best-practices](http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/best-practices)



# Fruits & Vegetables:

## Food Buying Guide

- FNS memo SP 37-2012
- Fruits and vegetables separated into two different sections
  - Revised vegetable subsection labels each vegetable with its appropriate vegetable subgroup to assist school food authorities with meeting the new meal pattern



# Fruit & Vegetable Juice

- Weekly juice limit (applied separately to fruit and vegetable components)
- Multiple daily fruit/vegetable *and* juice offerings
  - “Offering” defined as amount child able to select at a given meal, regardless of number of options/variety
  - Total amount of juice available at all meals over week then divided by total offering = weekly juice offering
  - Example: ½ c peaches, ½ c applesauce, ½ c oranges, and ½ c grape juice and student instructed to select a total of 1 cup of fruit (2 out of 4 choices)
    - Daily fruit offering = 1 cup
    - Weekly fruit offering = 5 cups
    - Weekly juice offering = 2.5 cups
    - Since 2.5 divided by 5 = 50%, school meets weekly juice limit



# Smoothies

- Fruit smoothies prepared in-house may now credit toward both the fruit and milk components
  - Cannot credit toward meat/meat alternate
- Commercial products may only credit toward fruit component
- All meal components must be offered in the required minimum amounts
  - Must still offer variety of fluid milk choices
  - Additional fruit offerings encouraged
- Refer to memo SP 36-2012, released 7/11/12



# Vegetable Blends

- SFAs can rely on manufacturer-provided information on content of vegetable blends
- Does not require monitoring that each individual portion contains the documented ratios
  - Example: A bag containing 25% carrots, 25% corn, 50% broccoli
    - 1 cup serving=  $\frac{1}{4}$  c carrots,  $\frac{1}{4}$  c corn,  $\frac{1}{2}$  c broccoli



# Non-Creditable Grains

- All grain ingredients must be either enriched or whole in order to be creditable
- Non-creditable grains
  - Oat/corn fiber, bran, germ, wheat/corn starch, modified food starch
  - Allowable only if less than 2% of product formula (or 0.25 oz eq) beginning SY 2013-14



# Identification of Grain-Based Desserts

- Schools may offer up to 2.0 ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts per week
- Refer to Exhibit A on FNS memo SP 30-2012
  - Some foods marked “sweet” and designated as desserts by footnotes 3 & 4
- Based on typical use in meal and consumption patterns
- Sugar in breads and other items not typically served as desserts is acceptable
  - No standard of identity for cookies vs. crackers





# Breading

- In SY 2012-2013 *only*, an SFA elects whether to count batter/breading grains toward the daily and weekly grains requirements.
  - Consideration of operator burden
  - Crediting information on breading may not be widely available yet
- Beginning SY 2013-2014, all grains equal to or greater than 0.25 ounce equivalents must be counted towards the weekly grains range (including battered and/or breaded products)



# Milk

- Program-specific requirements
  - NSLP and SBP
    - Fat (1% or less), flavor (nonfat milk only) and variety (2 or more choices daily) requirements apply
    - RCCI exception for safety
  - NSLP Snack Service
    - Flavor and fat restrictions only
  - Special Milk Program
    - Milk fat restriction only



# Age/Grade Groups

- All three grade groups overlap at breakfast
- Overlap for K-5 and 6-8 meal patterns at lunch
  - A single menu can meet both patterns
    - 8-9 oz eq grains and 9-10 oz eq meat/meat alts/week
    - Average daily calorie range 600-650
- No single correct way for 6-8 and 9-12 menu planning
- Some SFA suggestions:
  - Start with overlapping components, with minor adjustments to increase calories for 9-12 students (2 oz eq grains, 2 oz eq m/ma for all students)
  - Post signage near beginning of serving line (e.g. “8<sup>th</sup> graders: 1 fruit choice, 9<sup>th</sup> graders: 2 fruit choices.”)
  - Additional suggestions in revised memo SP 10-2012



# Age/Grade Groups

- A school may not adjust the meal pattern to meet the needs of students who are in the correct age/grade group for school meals
  - These students must be offered the same meal as their peers
  - Example: a school may not offer more calories to certain students, such as athletes and pregnant teens
- Schools may, on a case-by-case basis, offer age-appropriate meals to individual students in unique situations
  - Example: a 16-year old teen with developmental issues placed with age/grade group K-5
  - State may require the school/SFA to seek permission prior to deviating from the required meal pattern, to promote proper implementation of the meal requirements



# Age/Grade Groups: RCCI exception

- FNS memo SP 38-2012
- Allowance to serve one meal pattern for multiple age/grade groups
- Must meet 3 criteria:
  - A juvenile detention or correctional facility
  - Consist of more than one age/grade group
  - Legitimate safety concerns or State juvenile justice laws/regulations related to offering meals with varying amounts of food within the same meal period
- Subject to State agency approval



# Existing Inventory

- Schools may have products currently in inventory or on order with large portion sizes that may not easily fit into the weekly m/ma, grain or calorie limits
- Strongly encourage SFAs to make use of all food which has been purchased for school meal programs
- FNS memo SP 39-2012 offers suggestions/tips for three different scenarios:
  - Existing on-site inventory
  - Inventory at processor/orders submitted but not yet processed
  - Orders to be placed in the near future but not yet purchased



# Extras, Seconds & Leftovers

- Offering extra food not part of the reimbursable meal
  - Any extra food offered to children who purchase a reimbursable meal, even if not creditable, must be included in the weekly nutrient analysis
- Offering second servings of reimbursable foods
  - Foods must be counted toward the daily and weekly component contributions, as well as the weekly nutrient analysis
  - If seconds sold a la carte, do not count toward meal pattern
- Using leftovers at another meal service
  - Occasional, small quantities of leftover food served on another day will not count toward the meal components
  - If served to students on same day as initially offered, considered as seconds



# Updated Portion Sizes and Calories

- New meal patterns designed to meet the needs of most school children
  - School meals are “right-sized” and reflect the right balance between food groups- based on their age, students are getting the right portions
  - Updated to reflect current nutrition science
    - Consistent with Dietary Guidelines for Americans
    - Reflect IOM recommendations
  - Meal pattern focuses on nutrient-dense meals that provide children more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains than specified by the previous meal patterns
  - New school meals offer adequate amounts of nutrients and the level of calories is appropriate for most school children
    - Multiple options for addressing needs of highly active students





# Updated Q&As

- Most new Q&As were addressed today, others soon to be released:
  - Recognizable foods
  - Innovative school programs
  - Salad bars
  - Additional information on non-creditable grains and meat/meat alternates





# Questions<sup>?</sup>

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# Thank You

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