



State of Arizona
Department of Education



Health and Nutrition Services Division

HNS# 25-2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

From: Melissa Conner, Associate Superintendent
Arizona Department of Education, Health & Nutrition Services Division

Original signed

Date: June 22, 2018

RE: HNS Response to School Meals Flexibilities for School Year 2018-2019
SP-18-2018

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Local Education Agencies (LEAs) information of extended authority to Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) regarding memo SP-18-2018 School Meals Flexibilities for School Year 2018-2019.

An interim final rule published on November 30, 2017 (82 FR 56703) provides Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators targeted flexibilities for sodium, milk, and whole grains requirements. CNP operators are only required to request an exemption for whole grains. This memorandum summarizes the flexibilities that will be effective July 1, 2018.

Sodium: Sodium Target 1 will continue as the regulatory limit in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). Approval is not required for CNP operators to exercise this flexibility.

Milk: Operators in the NSLP and the SBP will have the option to offer flavored, low-fat (1 percent fat) milk as part of a reimbursable meal for students in grades K through 12. Flavored, low-fat (1 percent fat) milk may be provided to Special Milk Program (SMP) and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) participants 6 years of age and older. A demonstration of hardship will not be required. Additionally, schools will also be able to offer flavored, low-fat milk as a competitive beverage for sale. Approval is not required for CNP operators to exercise this flexibility.

Whole grains: HNS will offer exemptions for the whole grain-rich requirements in the NSLP and SBP. Exemptions are allowed for any type of grain product(s) (for example, pasta, bread, brown rice, etc.) and for one or more different products. When an exemption is granted, the SFA must ensure menus comply with the SY 2013-2014 Whole Grain-Rich requirement to offer at least half of the grains as whole grain-rich products each week.

Diane M. Douglas, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The School Food Authority (SFA) may request an exemption for a specific product through SY 2018-2019. The product exemption will be granted based on the SFA's ability to demonstrate hardship in procuring, preparing, or serving specific whole grain-rich products that are not accepted by students.

All prior whole grain-rich exemption requests approved by HNS are superseded by this memorandum. SFAs must complete a SY 2018-2019 "*Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Request Form SY 18-19*".

HNS will review new specific product exemption requests submitted by SFAs using the attached form titled "*Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Request Form SY 18-19*". This form requires the SFA to provide details of the alleged hardship(s) as well as efforts made to find products that meet the whole grain-rich requirement and are accepted by students. When an exemption is granted, the SFA must ensure weekly menus comply with the SY 2013-2014 Whole Grain-Rich requirement to offer at least half of the grains as whole grain-rich products.

When evaluating an exemption request, HNS will consider the written justification or other documented evidence (e.g. photos, meal count records) submitted by an SFA. Hardships that may be considered by HNS include, but are not limited to: financial hardship, limited product availability, unacceptable product quality, and poor student acceptability. The exemption request form is also available on the HNS webpage at <http://www.azed.gov/hns/nslp/mealpattern/>. All completed exemption request forms should be submitted to the SFA's assigned School Nutrition Programs Specialist.



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Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Request Form SY 18-19

LEA Name: _____

School Food Authority Contact: _____

Product for which the exemption is requested: _____

Whole Grain-Rich Products

Hardship(s) experienced in procuring acceptable whole grain-rich product (Check all that apply)

- Financial hardship (Attach documentation showing increased cost)
- Limited availability (Include documentation from vendors, with specific product names)
- Unacceptable quality (Include photos and specific product name)
- Poor student acceptability (Include meal counts/production records documenting at least 5 percent decrease in participation when whole grain-rich product is offered).

Describe in detail the hardship(s) you indicated above.

Describe the efforts you have taken to find products that meet the whole grain-rich requirement and are accepted by students.

Describe the efforts you will make to meet the whole grain-rich requirement for all grains by School Year 2019-2020.

- Check here if you are requesting an exemption for more than 2 products.
- I understand that this exemption request only applies to the product identified above. I also agree that approval of this exemption does not exempt the entire menu from meeting the 50 percent whole grain-rich requirement.

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

For Office Use Only:	
Date Received: _____	Approved: Yes No Specialist Signature: _____