

***Talking points, if you do not intend to adopt most or all of the changes:***

1. As always, ***our primary job in (Name of your department) is to make sure that our students are well-fed, so they can learn well in school and live healthy lives.***
2. You may have heard that some nutrition requirements for school meals have been reduced or relaxed, but ***our program has been successful in implementing the original requirements, our customers have adjusted, and we do not intend to make the changes that are now being allowed.***
3. Some background: several years ago, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, which oversees the School Meals programs across the country, put in place the most sweeping changes to our regulations in the 70-plus year history of the program. Saturated fat and sodium were decreased; whole grains, fruits, and vegetables were increased; calorie maximums per average meal were established; and many, many other changes, large and small, were put in place. ***In our district, we'd already been doing many of these things for years,*** but for the first time the USDA regulations codified what qualifies as good nutrition for our kids.
4. This month (December 2018) USDA announced several adjustments to the regulations: ***the whole grain requirement has been relaxed, sodium targets have been pushed back, and what had been a temporary adjustment to allow 1% lowfat flavored milk has been made permanent.***
5. I also want to emphasize that ***the requirement to include at least one fruit or vegetable serving has not changed and is still in place, as are the calorie maximums.***
6. Again, despite these more flexible rules, ***our program does not intend to make the changes that are now being allowed.***

7. So, ***all or nearly all of our grains will still be whole-grain rich***, rather than 50%.
8. We will still endeavor to ***meet the existing sodium targets***. Our local cooking is already within the targets, and we will continue working with ***our processed-food providers to meet the sodium targets***.
9. ***And we will continue to serve flavored milk that is fat-free***. Our kids have already adjusted to the fat-free option so we feel like we're meeting the key objective which is to make sure they drink the milk we serve so they get the protein and calcium.
10. The bottom line is that these changes will not affect our program at this time. ***We feel we can continue to follow the existing regulations and still make sure that our students are well-fed and can learn well in school and live healthy lives.***