BRIDGES CHARTER SCHOOL

CHILD NUTRITION STANDARDS

Bridges Charter School is a sponsor of the National School Lunch Program. It is our responsibility to make available to all students a nutritious meal program. The National School Lunch Act mandates that school meals safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children. Participating schools must serve lunches that are consistent with the applicable recommendations of the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans including: eat a variety of foods; choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables and fruits; choose a diet moderate in sugars and salt; and choose a diet with 35% or less calories from fat, less than 10% of calories from saturated fat and contain no trans-fat. Age appropriate sodium limits are also in place.

Standards were set in place by the Healthy, Hungry Free Kids Act of 2010. These standards have been modified many times over the past ten (10) years. Grain products were initially specified as 50% whole grain-rich, gradually becoming 100% whole grain-rich. Sodium reductions were to take place over several years, however they remain at <540 mg for breakfast and <640 mg for lunch. Milk products were restricted to nonfat flavored milk and nonfat or low-fat unflavored milk. Students must take one serving of fruit and/or vegetables with each lunch and one cup of fruit with breakfast.

On May 1, 2017, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Sonny Perdue issued a Proclamation announcing several menu planning flexibilities that underscore USDA's commitment to assisting school in serving healthy and appealing school meals. In his Proclamation, Secretary Perdue specifically directed the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), to begin the process to amend the regulations for the school meal programs with respect to sodium, whole grains, and flavored milk. Fruit and vegetable requirements remain in place.

On May 5, 2017, Congress enacted the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31; the Appropriations Act). Section 747 of the Appropriations Act provides flexibilities related to whole grains, sodium, and flavored milk for school year (SY) 2017-2018.

Based on the Appropriations Act, schools will be considered compliant if at least half of the grains offered weekly are whole grain-rich; schools will be permitted to continue to meet the Sodium Target 1; schools may offer low-fat flavored milk as well as nonfat flavored milk.

These changes were based on public feedback that included: a significant decrease in milk sales since implementation of the current meal patterns; declining milk sales; a food waste study indicating significant waste of fluid milk; significant negative feedback from parents and students regarding lack of availability of low-fat, flavored milk; and significant feedback from students regarding the palatability of fat-free, flavored milk.

Our Child Nutrition Department welcomes the flexibility that is now permitted and will continue to offer at least 50% whole grain rich items and meals that are low in sodium. As our students have accepted the non-fat, flavored milk, we do not plan to add 1% flavored milk.