



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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SUBJECT: Revised HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria (HUSSC)

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

The Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is announcing new criteria for the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSCC), a voluntary certification initiative that recognizes excellence in nutrition and physical activity. These new criteria reflect changes to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal pattern requirements as stated in 7 CFR Parts 210 and 220, while continuing to recognize schools that go above and beyond Federal requirements for school meals. Implementation of the new criteria will coincide with implementation of the new meal pattern requirements. All new applications submitted to the State agency on or after July 1, 2012, will be considered using the new criteria.

Please refer to the 2012 HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria Chart (attached) for the full criteria. Schools will continue to be recognized at four award levels: Gold Award of Distinction, Gold, Silver, or Bronze level. Major changes to the criteria include:

- **New Breakfast Criteria.** Under the 2012 criteria, schools must participate in the SBP and, for upper award levels, meet Average Daily Participation (ADP) criteria for breakfast. Schools must also meet criteria relating to fruits and/or vegetables, and whole grains. The addition of these criteria recognizes the importance of a nutritious breakfast to children's health and academic performance. Today, almost 90% of schools that participate in the NSLP also participate in the SBP.
- **New "Other Criteria for Excellence" Category.** Schools may meet criteria in this category by selecting from 20 options relating to program outreach, physical activity, nutrition education, and school and community involvement in wellness efforts. The number of options a school must accomplish varies by award level, ranging from two at the Bronze level to eight at the Gold Award of Distinction level.

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- **Updated Lunch Criteria.** The 2012 HUSSC criteria are updated to reflect NSLP meal pattern requirements, while continuing to encourage schools to offer a variety of vegetables, fresh fruit and whole grain-rich grains.
- **ADP Calculation Method Change.** Based upon feedback USDA has received from schools and States, the ADP criteria for the NSLP and SBP is based on attendance rather than enrollment. Calculating ADP in this manner is considered to be fairer to schools as it does not include children that do not eat lunch/breakfast (e.g., part-day kindergarteners) in the calculation.

The 2012 HUSSC criteria also include modifications to nutrition education requirements for elementary and middle schools and updates Local Wellness Policy criteria to be consistent with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 111-296. FNS is making no changes to the HUSSC criteria for Physical Education, Physical Activity, or Competitive Foods (i.e., foods sold outside of the meal program) at this time. Schools will continue to receive monetary incentives for meeting required criteria as described in the April 1, 2010, HealthierUS School Challenge-Monetary Incentives memo (TA 04-2010) available at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/hussc_incentives.pdf.

FNS plans to release a revised HUSSC application form, technical assistance materials, and training tools in Spring/Summer 2012. These resources will be made available at: <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/healthierus/index.html>.



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Attachment