

Menu Core Philosophy

Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) Nutrition Services (NS) values whole, natural, nourishing foods. Since 2015, NS has worked to remove ingredients that adversely affect health, and serve more wholesome foods in their place. This is a commitment that remains a work in progress. Our commitment is the foundation of our menu philosophy.

Absolutely No	Sometimes No
<p>Artificial Flavors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Synthetic Flavors <p>Flavor Enhancers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GMP ● MSG <p>Artificial Preservatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Benzoates ● BHA/BHT/TBHQ ● Nitrates/Nitrites <p>Artificial Sweeteners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-Nutritive Sweeteners <p>Partially Hydrogenated Fats</p> <p>Artificial Colors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Synthetic Food Dyes ● Carmel Color CL 3-4 <p>Unnecessary Flour Conditioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bleached Flour ● Bromated Flour ● Azodicarbonamide 	<p>Artificial Preservatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Propyl Gallate ● Sorbates ● Sulfates/Sulfites ● EDTA <p>Binders and Fillers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carrageenan ● Isolated Vegetable Proteins and Hydrolyzed Vegetable Proteins (In Meat and Poultry Production) ● Inter-esterified oils <p>Natural Flavors</p> <p>Added sodium</p> <p>Added sugar*</p>
<p>Why: Strong evidence supports an association between these ingredients and increased health risks; may cause hypersensitivities in certain individuals; and/or indicate the absence of wholesome ingredients .</p> <p>*Added sugar is covered in more detail throughout this summary.</p>	

The Process

Every menu is a collaborative culinary art that must:

- Include culturally relevant and appealing foods, with a focus on scratch cooking.
- Be conscientious of food allergies, sensitivities, and intolerances.
- Provide locally sourced agricultural products.
- Reflect environmentally sustainable choices for food and supplies.
- Meet or exceed United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements set forth in the Healthy Hunger-free Kids Act (HHFKA).
- Reflect Nutrition Service’s (NS) dedication and commitment to fiscal responsibility.



Each menu is compared to our menu philosophy to identify potential foods of concern. Things we are striving to avoid:

- A published meal pattern that customers could reasonably perceive as unhealthy.
- A published meal pattern that would reasonably exceed recommendations for added sugar.
- A published meal pattern that lacks good sources of protein for vegetarians and omnivores.
- A published meal pattern that lacks a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- A published menu that exceeds our fiscal targets.

No new foods or ingredients are added to our recipes or menu that do not meet our menu philosophy. Any items that fall on the “Sometimes No” list, must be vetted by the culinary team. The culinary team must answer:

- Is the ingredient of concern a functional ingredient?
- Is there a similar or alternative item on the market?
- If this item is served, will SPPS students exceed the recommended daily intake (or a scientifically referenced limit) when they consume a typical breakfast and lunch at school?
- Should this food be replaced or removed?

The Guidelines

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act

Legislative requirements of 2010 that required the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to update federal nutrition standards for school meals. The changes include meal pattern requirements and nutrition standards for:

- Fruits and vegetables
 - Minimum serving sizes
 - Daily and weekly offerings
- Whole grains
 - Limits on enriched grain products
 - Proportion of whole-grain foods
- Calories
 - Minimum and maximum calorie limits
- Sodium limits
- Unhealthy fats
 - No added trans-fats
 - Maximum percentage of calories from saturated fat.
- Milk
 - Variety of milk and flavored milk
 - Minimum serving sizes
- Water
 - Access to water

The meal patterns for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) include menu planning parameters that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines For Americans (DGAs) and the USDA food guidance system known as MyPlate. The amounts of foods included in the meal pattern were carefully determined through an extensive review and assessment to meet 24 nutrient targets. NSLP and SBP nutrition standards may continue to change as we learn more about health and nutrition.



USDA Dietary Guidelines

The main purpose of the DGAs is to inform the development of Federal food, nutrition, and health policies and programs. The DGAs are a critical tool for professionals to help Americans make healthy choices in their daily lives to help prevent chronic disease and enjoy a healthy diet.

SPPS Nutrition Standards

At SPPS, we believe in an evidence-based foundation for nutrition standards. As this summary states, our menu choices are driven to meet or exceed menu and nutrient standards. In addition, our team works diligently to stay abreast of current research, which is translated into the ingredients we rate as “absolutely no” and “sometimes no”. Added sodium and sugar are two ingredients we watch carefully.

- **Added Sodium-** our approach to whole, natural, nourishing foods is the first defense against added sodium. In addition, our menu standards ensure the following targets are met:
 - **SBP**
 - Grades K-5: ≤540 mg
 - Grades 6-8: ≤600 mg
 - Grades 9-12: ≤640 mg
 - **NSLP**
 - Grades K-5: ≤1,230 mg
 - Grades 6-8: ≤1,360 mg
 - Grades 9-12: ≤1,420 mg
- **Added Sugar-** in order to adhere to the American Heart Association’s recommendation for children between the age of 2-19 to consume no more than 25 grams of added sugar per day, NS plans each menu within the following parameters:
 - **Monitor and work to limit to 4 teaspoons (16 grams) per day as an average meal pattern.**
 - **Never added to fruits or vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried, pureed, canned).**
 - **Never added to foods unless it is a functional ingredient for baking or texturizing.**
 - **Generally includes the following food choices:**
 - No more than 6 added grams sugar in cereal
 - No sugar or salt added to whole-grains like rice, bulgur, oatmeal, barley, pasta, or noodles
- **Naturally Occurring Sugar-** is also considered throughout the menu planning process to ensure balance, variety and moderation are applied to our menu philosophy. Some specific foods we limit include:
 - 100% Juice
 - No more than 6 oz/day in elementary schools
 - No more than 8 oz/day in secondary schools
 - Plain or flavored yogurt
 - No more than 40 grams total sugar per 1 cup (plain or flavored yogurt)

References

Fact Sheet: Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act: <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2014/05/20/fact-sheet-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act-school-meals-implementation>

Nutrition Standards For School Meals: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>

USDA Dietary Guidelines For Americans: https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/2015-2020_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf