



## THE MONITOR

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### **NEW STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL MEALS**

January 30 2012

On January 25, 2012 The United States Department of Agriculture unveiled new standards for school meals that will result in healthier meals for kids across the nation, according to a USDA press release. New requirements will raise standards for the first time in over fifteen years, and improve the health and nutrition of nearly 32 million kids that participate in the school meal programs every school day. The healthier meal requirements are a key component of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.

The final standards make the same kinds of practical changes that many parents are already encouraging at home, including:

- Ensuring students are offered both fruits and vegetables every day of the week;
- Substantially increasing offerings of whole grain-rich foods;
- Offering only fat-free or low-fat milk varieties;
- Limiting calories based on the age of children being served to ensure proper portion size; and
- Increasing the focus on reducing the amounts of saturated fat, trans fats and sodium.
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To read the full press release, visit:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/PressReleases/2012/0023.htm>

### **Tips for Local PTA Action**

- Consider planning a discussion of the new standards with parents at your next PTA meeting;
- Invite a food service manager/staff member to discuss new menus that will be served in your cafeteria;
- Ask school personnel (administrator, food service staff) how the PTA can help educate parents, teachers and students on the new standards; and
- Consider providing students with information about the new cafeteria menus and good nutrition.