

School Meals are Changing - New School Meal Requirements

You may have heard that there will be new requirements for school meals. The new requirements are great news for our students! The new requirements will help the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District build on the work we are already doing to provide more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthier entrees in our school cafeterias.

Some of the New Requirements Include:

- Increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables
- Reducing the sodium in meals over the next 10 years
- Setting calorie limits for the first time
- Increasing whole grains
- Limiting the amount of meat/meat alternatives and grains

Students will now be required to have ½ cup of fruit or vegetable on their tray for it to count as a full meal. Anything less than a full meal will be charged at as individual items. We plan to offer a variety of fruits and vegetables daily to give students more options in the hopes that choosing fruits and vegetables will be easy.

Schools are now limited on how much meat/meat alternate and grains that can be offered. This means that some of the main dishes may not be as large as they have been in the past. Remember, though, there will be more fruits and vegetables available, to fill out the meal and ensure students have plenty to eat!

In the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District, we have already made progress toward meeting the new requirements.

What we are doing:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables are served every day.
- Sandwiches are served on whole wheat buns.
- All pasta served is whole grain.
- Milk that is available is only low-fat or fat-free.
- Main dishes have been changed to reduce sodium.
- Dark green and orange vegetables are served on a weekly basis.
- Dried beans have been incorporated into some of the recipes.
- Salad bars are available every day that include romaine lettuce and spinach.

We'll face some challenges to meet the new requirements on a tight budget, but our school nutrition program will work hard to make these healthy changes for our students and make each meal something our students will enjoy!

How Can You Help?

The school nutrition program needs the support of parents to succeed! Parents can support this effort by encouraging your child to give the healthier meals a try, joining your child for lunch and talk about the healthy options, or simply introducing your child to these healthy changes at home. You are your child's primary role model, when they see you choose healthy foods they are more likely to choose them as well.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us. We are here to help!

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