November 1, 2012

Dixon Unit School District #170
1335 Franklin Grove Road
Dixon, IL 61021

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child's school day recently got healthier! School lunches now include more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain-rich foods; only fat-free or low-fat milk; "right-size" meals with portions designed for a child's age; and less saturated fat, trans fat and sodium. The changes in school meals, the first in 15 years, are based on the latest nutritional guidelines.

Here are some important facts about the new school meals:

- The new school lunch provides 1/3 of the *average* daily calorie needs for kids by age.
- Some highly active students, like athletes, may need more calories. A second carton of milk may also be an option. Schools can also operate after-school snack and supper programs. Students and/or sports teams can also bring food from home.
- In practice, many students are being served the same amounts of protein as before under the new standards.

Your child can learn good habits for life by making healthy food choices and getting proper exercise now. This year is a transition year as schools implement these new standards and work together with parents, to ensure that every child, in every community across America, has access to healthy and nutritious meals. Encourage them to try new foods and eat the healthy food offered. Reinforce healthy eating by offering similar new foods at home.

Keep updated on the changes at www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday or www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/healthierschoolday/default.htm.

Regards,
Dixon Unit School District #170

David P. Blackburn

David P. Blackburn,
Business Manager

New Nutrition Standards for School Meals

What your children can expect from their healthy school meals this year.

Illinois State Board of Education
Nutrition & Wellness Programs Division

What is the National School Lunch Program?

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in over 101,000 public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions.

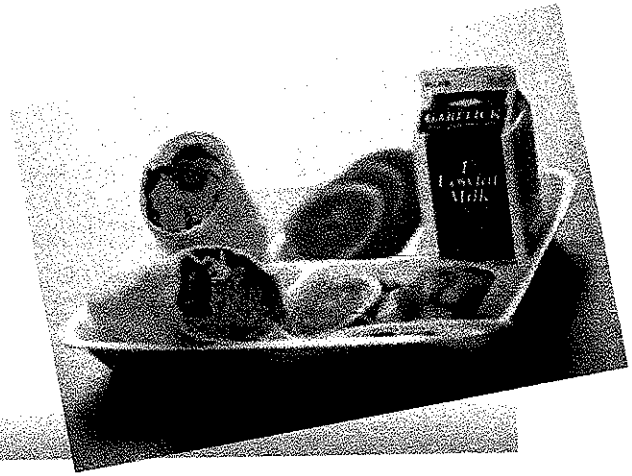
Participating school districts receive cash subsidies and donated foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve.

The lunches must meet Federal requirements and are a healthy option for all students.

What's included in my child's lunch?

The United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) has implemented some new improvements to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). These updates are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 and recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine and are intended to enhance the diet and overall health of school children. The NSLP meals will include the following food items each day:

* Milk (fat-free flavored or unflavored OR low-fat 1% unflavored milk)
* Fruit
* Vegetable
* Grains
* Meat/Meat Alternate



Changes to the school meals:

* Foods must be trans fat free.
* Appropriate serving sizes are defined by grade groupings, K-5, 6-8 and 9-12. For the meat/meat alternate , grains and milk there is a minimum and a maximum serving size for each grade grouping. The serving sizes for fruits and vegetables provides a minimum but no maximum, so children are able to have larger servings of the nutrient dense fruits and vegetables.
* The choices for milk include fat-free or low fat milk. Any flavored milk that may be offered at your child's school must be fat free.
* There are calorie minimums and maximums as well, this allows for the lunch meal to account for approximately 1/3 of the recommended calories for each grade grouping.
* A variety of vegetables must be served. To assist schools in meeting this requirement, they must serve a variety of different colors and types of vegetables over the week: dark green, red/orange, beans/peas, starchy and other.

School Meals are a Healthy Choice!

School Meals serve more of the healthy foods students need:	
Whole Grains	Whole grains are a great source of nutrients such as iron, magnesium, selenium, B vitamins, & dietary fiber.
Fruits and Vegetables	A fruit & vegetable must be offered to students daily. Fruits & vegetables contribute a wide range of nutrients from folate to potassium & vitamins A, C, & K. Consumption of fruits & vegetables is associated with reduced risk of many chronic diseases.
Low-fat and Fat-free Milk	Milk provides calcium, vitamin D & potassium to the diet. Consumption of milk products is associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, & lower blood pressure.
Legumes	Beans & peas are excellent sources of protein. They also contain iron, zinc, dietary fiber & folate. Beans & peas are a great source of protein & often lower in fat & calories than some other protein sources.

All forms of fruits and vegetables (canned, fresh, frozen, 100% juice and dried) can have a place in your diet and can count towards your daily recommended amount. Fruits and veggies are healthy only if they are eaten and are a far better choice than foods that have a high calorie and low nutrient profile. Be sure to read the Nutrition Facts panel and the ingredient statement on food packages for sodium/salt, fiber, and nutrient levels; be on the lookout for added salt, sugar or fat to these products.

Sodium is an essential nutrient and is needed by the body in small quantities. It is recommended that sodium intake should be limited to 2,300 mg per day and further reduced to 1,500 mg per day for those 51 & older or those with hypertension, diabetes, or kidney disease.

The human body is composed of 60 percent water and can only survive four to six days without water. The Institute of Medicine actually recommends different daily amounts of water consumption for men and women: 3 liters for men and 2.2 liters for women.

Low-fat and fat-free milks offer as many nutrients as the high-fat milks, but are lower in fat and cholesterol.