

School Nutrition Update

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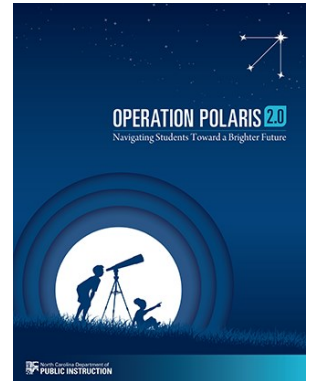
Program Operations Information

Learn about Operation Polaris 2.0

State Superintendent Catherine Truitt recently announced Operation Polaris 2.0, with new focus areas while continuing to press for progress along a number of key fronts, from pandemic recovery to strengthening student literacy. Developed in collaboration with the N.C. State Board of Education and the N.C. General Assembly, Operation Polaris 2.0 focuses on opportunities to optimize systems and introduce policies that drive improvements in K-12 education across North Carolina. Seven strategies are detailed in the updated plan, with an emphasis on transformational reform to strengthen faith and trust in the state's educational system, rebuild the future teacher talent pipeline, and prepare students for success in an ever-changing world.

The 44-page plan covers these seven key focus areas, including discussions of progress to date and next steps to be achieved:

- Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration
- Office of District and Regional Support
- Strengthening Literacy
- Prioritizing Student Support Services
- Redesigning Testing and Accountability
- Piloting Competency-Based Education
- Transforming the Human Capital Pipeline

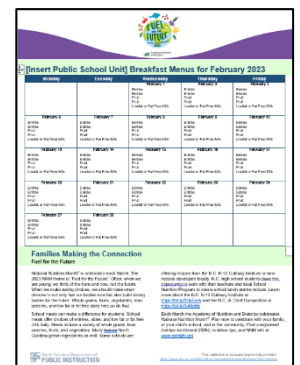


Student support services, including nutrition, are among the plan priorities. Access and read the Operation Polaris 2.0 plan from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) [website](#).

Check out February-July 2023 Menu Templates

Menu templates are available from the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition for School Food Authorities (SFAs) for the second half of the 2022-23 school year (February-July 2023) to use to promote school meals. National Nutrition Month, National School Breakfast Week, N.C. Summer Meals, N.C. Farm to Summer, and locally grown foods are featured. The menu templates can be downloaded from the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition [website](#). As you review, share, and use the menu templates, please note the following:

- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d) requires that electronic and information technology of Federal agencies and agencies that receive Federal funding is accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public. The updated/new menu templates have been designed to comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- The menu templates were created in Word to allow for ease of use for adding in local contact and menu information. You may choose to share the menu templates in Word or PDF format, or both, with your school community. After you have added in your local contact and menu information and before you share the menu



templates, please run an accessibility check using tools available within Word or Adobe software to make sure the menu templates are still compliant and will work with visual reader software. If you have access to visual reader software, you may wish to run an accessibility check using the software as well.

- The menu templates are created for two audiences – elementary for parents/families and middle/high for students.
- The menu templates are two pages in length – one page for your breakfast menu and one page for your lunch menu – to allow enough room to list all your available menu choices. If you can fit your breakfast and lunch menu choices within the blocks for each day, feel free to use only one page of the menu template and update the title at the top of the page accordingly.
- For your convenience, alternate text has been included for the image header, month table, and footer with NCDPI logo and nondiscrimination statement. Please do not remove the alt text.

For more information regarding Section 508 compliance, please visit the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Office of Government-wide Policy (OGP) Section 508 [website](#). If you have questions regarding the menu templates, please reach out to your Zone teams or Tracey Bates, School Nutrition Promotion Specialist, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov.

Encourage Participation in the 2023 N.C. Jr. Chef Competition!

For the 2023 N.C. Jr. Chef Competition (NCJCC), teams of 2-4 high school students (grades 9-12) currently enrolled in a North Carolina public school that participates in the National School Lunch Program are encouraged to work with an Adult Team Supervisor (School Nutrition Administrator or Public School Educator – Ag, Family and Consumer Sciences, Math, Science, etc. Teacher) to create a school lunch entrée recipe that adheres to National School Lunch Program regulations, features at least two North Carolina grown ingredients and one USDA Foods item, and appeals to students. Student members of the top three teams will win scholarships to attend Sullivan University.



This year, teams will work together at their schools to develop and test their recipe, complete competition requirements, and submit required materials. Based on applications and recipes submitted, up to eight finalist teams will be selected to compete in the virtual cook-off. Finalist teams will participate virtually in interviews with a panel of evaluators and a recognition ceremony.

- February 3 – Teams must submit the online submission form with application, recipe, recipe photo, cost and nutrient analysis, and permission forms.
- February 20 – Finalist teams will be notified.
- March 10 – Finalist teams must submit the online submission form including final applications with recipe, recipe photo, cost and nutrient analysis, video of the team preparing and plating their recipe, and a work plan for completing the dish within the 90-minute time limit.
- March 28 or 29 – Finalist teams will participate in live interviews with a panel of evaluators.
- March 30 – Finalist teams will participate in virtual ceremony. All finalist teams will be recognized, and the competition results will be announced.

The NCJCC first-place team will advance to the Southeast Jr. Chef Competition at Sullivan University in Kentucky May 11-12. Competition info and materials are posted on the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition [website](#).

School Nutrition Spotlight

Combating Food Insecurity

School gardens offer a variety of benefits, including a strategy in combating food insecurity. Through school garden education, students can learn how to grow food for their family. Educators can collaborate with and connect students and families to local community gardens. Through establishing and maintaining a school garden, students can cultivate strategies for creating, expanding and/or sustaining gardens in their community. Harvest from the school garden can be shared with students and their families and/or with local organizations working to alleviate food insecurity. Learn more in a recent [EdNC article](#), highlighting strategies and tools from Wake County Public Schools.



Follow/Like Us on Social Media

Did you know you could find the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition on social media? Follow or like our pages - @NCSchoolMeals and @Ray4NCKids on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Share Your School Nutrition Photos

The NCDPI, School Nutrition Division wants to highlight the appealing, wholesome, quality meals our School Nutrition Programs across the state offer to students each day. Share your beautiful photos of serving lines and complete school breakfast or school lunch meals with us. Please send to Tracey Bates, NCDPI School Nutrition Promotion Specialist, at tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov. Make sure to include the school and district info so we can aim to credit the source. Be on the lookout for photos of school meals from across the state on social media.



Franklin County Schools

Send in Articles or Topics of Interest for the School Nutrition Update E-letter

If you have a resource, grant, job opportunity, continuing education event, award announcement, shout out or other news item for the School Nutrition Update, please send a brief article (250 words or less) to Tracey Bates, tracey.bates@dpi.nc.gov, by 12 pm on the Wednesday prior to when the SN Update is sent out the following week. Please include “**SN Update**” in the email subject line. If there are topics of interest you would also like to see included, please share as well.

Job Opportunity

Apply for Nash County School Nutrition Supervisor Position

Nash County Schools is seeking applicants for an open School Nutrition Supervisor position. A bachelor’s degree with a major in food and nutrition, food service management, dietetics, family and consumer sciences, nutrition education, culinary arts, or a related field or at least 5 years’ experience in School

Nutrition Programs with at least 3 years in a management or supervisory role is required. Applicants must have completed a food protection manager certification recognized by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services no more than 5 years prior to starting date or must complete training and certification within 30 days of hire date. [Learn more and apply.](#)

Work with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools – SN Supervisor Opening

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is seeking applicants for a Supervisor, School Nutrition Inventory and Procurement. This position is responsible for performing a variety of duties related to the acquisition and distribution of food, supplies, and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) donated commodity food ensuring compliance with all federal and state regulations. [Learn more and apply.](#) Contact CMS School Nutrition Executive Director, Catherine Essick, catherinem.essick@cms.k12.nc.us, with questions.

Nutrition Education & Promotion

Cooking Matters at Home

The Carolina Hunger Initiative (CHI) is offering free, online cooking and nutrition education classes to share information about buying healthy, affordable foods that families can prepare and eat together at home. The online classes will be held on Wednesday nights at 7 pm, beginning January 18. Learn more, download promotional materials and register for the classes on the CHI [website](#).

Continuing Education

Incorporate Music with Learning in the School Garden – 1/18, 2 pm ET

Join the next session of the Growing School Garden Summit Webinar Series hosted by the School Garden Support Organization Network. This session will demonstrate how to incorporate multi-sensory musical experiences into your school garden curriculum. Symon Hajjar of Hot Toast Music Co. will share songs and lesson ideas, lead activities, and facilitate discussion about how to take advantage of the integrated learning opportunities found in a garden. [Learn more and register.](#)

Explore Seasonal Maintenance of Fruit & Vegetable Crops – 1/24, 12 pm ET

Join Melissa Bell, Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS), and John Lyttle, N.C. Cooperative Extension - Durham County, for a webinar to learn about seasonal maintenance of major fruit and vegetable crops for your garden. They will focus on four common summer crops and fall/winter crops. They will discuss varieties, trellising options, pruning for plant health, and dealing with disease control and some common pests. [Learn more and register.](#)

Register for the 2023 N.C. Child Hunger Leaders Conference – 2/22

Registration is now open for the 2023 N.C. Child Hunger Leaders Conference, an annual day of celebration and inspiration for anyone invested in making sure kids have access to healthy food. The one-day event, presented by the Carolina Hunger Initiative at the University of North Carolina, will take place at The Friday Conference Center in Chapel Hill on February 22, 8 am-4 pm ET. Attendees will have a chance to connect with other child hunger leaders from across the state, learn about new strategies and success stories, and leave reenergized to continue the fight against child hunger. More details on the agenda are forthcoming. Speakers in recent years have included State Superintendent Catherine Truitt, the N.C. Teacher and Principal of the Year, and Governor Roy Cooper. [Learn more and register.](#)



Learn About the End of FNS Emergency Allotments – 3/2 and 3

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced households that have been receiving emergency allotments through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), referred to as the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Program in North Carolina, each month since March 2020 or after will see a reduction in benefits because of a federal change that ends emergency allotments for all states. In North Carolina and nationally, February 2023 will be the final month for FNS emergency allotments due to COVID-19.

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) wants to help FNS beneficiaries and community stakeholders in our state understand the impacts of this change and steps they can take to support families who may need additional food assistance when FNS emergency allotments end. Join NCDHHS for a Food & Nutrition Security Summit 2023 on March 2 or March 3 to bring together stakeholders across the state to collaborate and strategize on solutions to promote food security for families in North Carolina.

- March 2, 2023 from 1:00-4:00 PM – [Register to participate.](#)
- March 3, 2023 from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM – [Register to participate.](#)

Access Virtual Training Opportunities

The Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) has compiled [resources to help prevent the spread of the Coronavirus](#). Online food safety/HACCP training is available on the NCDPI, School Nutrition [website](#) and the ICN [website](#). Additional continuing education resources are available on the School Nutrition [website](#) from NCDPI, ICN, the School Nutrition Association and other agencies and organizations. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics offers [continuing professional education resources](#) for Registered Dietitians/Nutritionists (RDNs) and Dietetic Technicians, Registered (DTRs).

Questions

If you have any questions regarding these updates, please reach out to your regional consultants.

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained [online](#), from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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