The Road Ahead: Building Back Better with School Meals

USDA and the Biden Administration are committed to supporting nutrition security – consistent access to nutritious foods that promote good health – through the federal nutrition assistance programs. School nutrition professionals have made incredible strides in strengthening child nutrition over the past decade; research shows school meals are the healthiest meals children eat in a day! The next step is to update school nutrition standards based on the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans. USDA is committed to ensuring these updated standards work. We want to hear from all our stakeholders and will be seeking opportunities to listen to a diverse range of voices throughout this process.

USDA will take a multi-step approach to help schools build back even better from the pandemic and give kids the best chance at a healthy future.

**Transitional Standards Rule**
In February 2022, USDA published a rule that will serve as a bridge, giving schools the support they need as we work together to build back from the pandemic. The rule establishes transitional standards for school years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 in three key areas – milk, whole grains, and sodium.

**Proposed Rule**
In fall 2022, USDA will issue a proposed rule on long-term school nutrition standards based on the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans and feedback from our many partners.

**Final Rule**
In time to plan for the 2024-2025 school year, USDA plans to issue a final rule establishing practical, implementable, science-based school meal standards that work for schools, industry, and – most importantly – the more than 30 million school children that rely on the school meal programs every day.

**Stakeholder Feedback**
Throughout the process, USDA will work hand-in-hand with schools, industry, children, parents, and others to gather input, including formal comment periods, conferences, listening sessions, and more.