

Meal Counting and Claiming



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2026 New Managers' Training
ALSDE CNP School Programs



BREAK *for a* PLATE SCHOOLS

Learning Code

Event Name: Summer 2026 New Managers'
Training

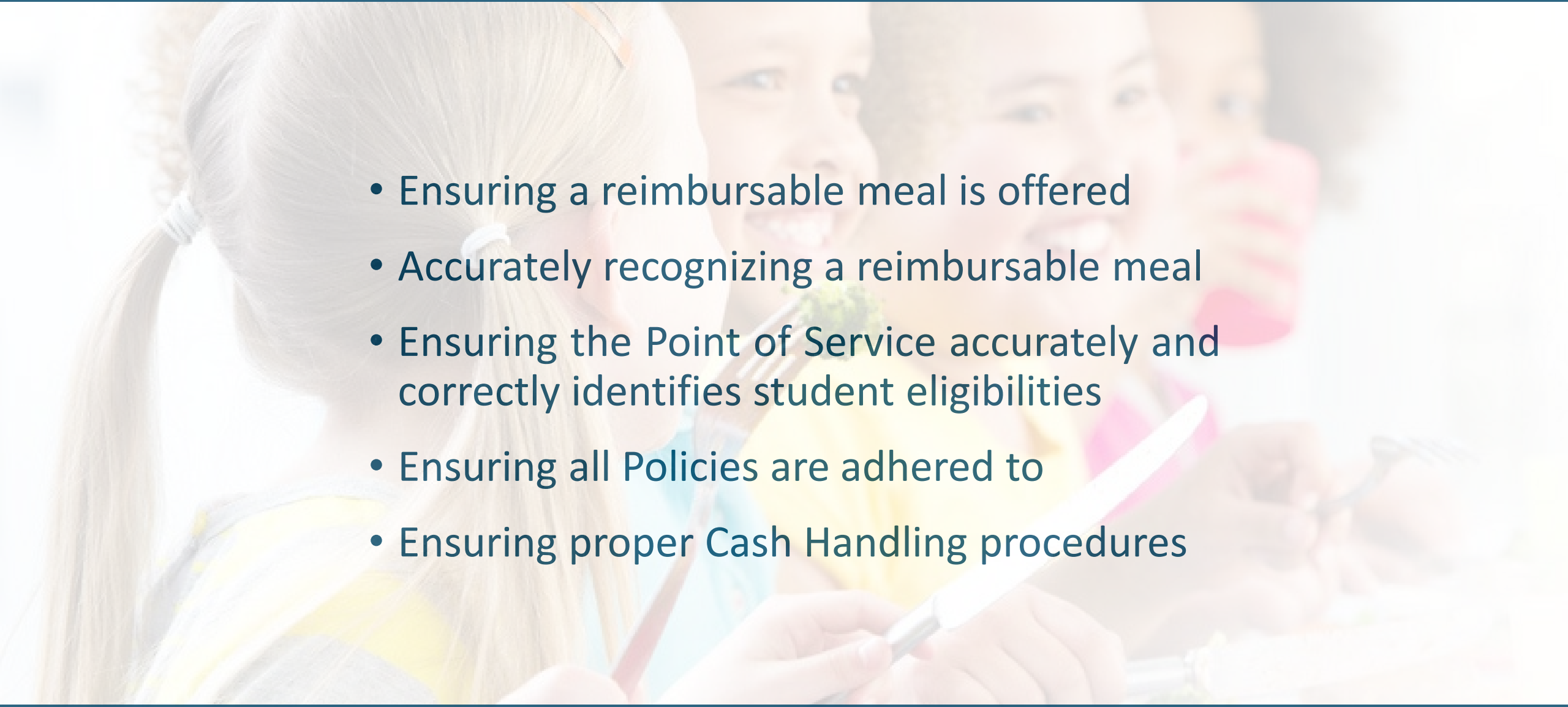
Event Date: July 7, 2026

Hours: .75

Professional Learning Code: 3310



What is Meal Counting and Claiming?

- 
- Ensuring a reimbursable meal is offered
 - Accurately recognizing a reimbursable meal
 - Ensuring the Point of Service accurately and correctly identifies student eligibilities
 - Ensuring all Policies are adhered to
 - Ensuring proper Cash Handling procedures

Outline



- Meal Counting
- Reimbursable Meals
 - *Breakfast/Lunch/After School Snack
- Point of Service
- Eligibility
- Policies
- Meal Claiming
- Cashier Assessment
- Cash Handling
- Audit Questions

Ensuring A Reimbursable Meal is Offered

Managers and CNP Directors Must work together to develop menus that offer the required:

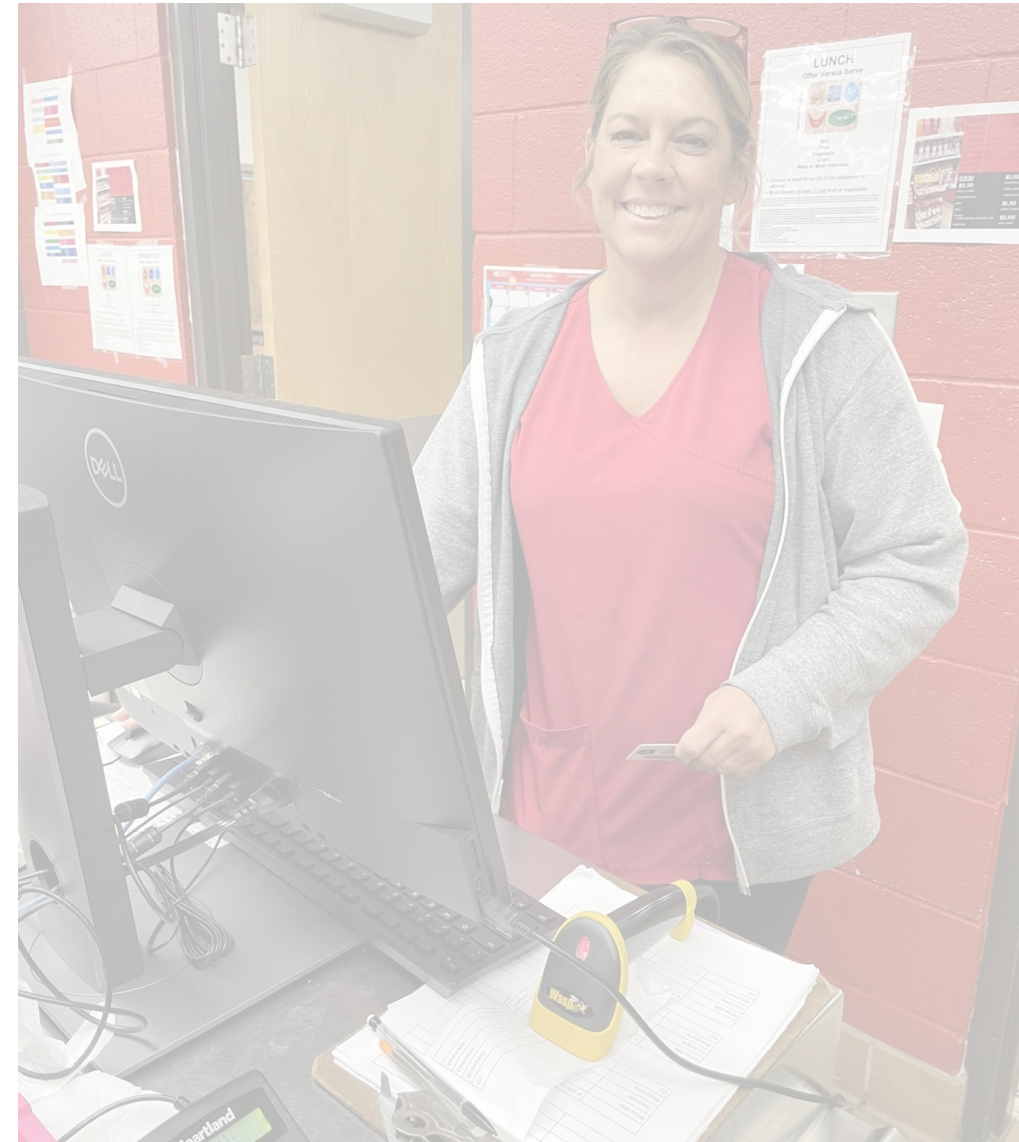
- Items/Components
- Quantity / Serving Size
- Meal Pattern by age/grade group
- Production Records
- APPEALING to the students

Recognizing a Reimbursable Meal

Cashiers will need to:

- observe the tray,
- determine if the food items equal a reimbursable meal, and
- finalize the transaction by ringing meal into the Point of Service (POS).

POS: computer, roster, or other approved meal counting procedures



Recognizing a Reimbursable Meal



Breakfast

Plan and Offer 3 Components

- **Not Offer versus Serve**
 - 3 components on tray
- **Offer versus Serve**
 - Offer 4 food items from 3 Components
 - Student must select at least 3 food items and 1 item has to be $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit

Recognizing a Reimbursable Meal



Lunch

Plan and Offer 5 components

- **Not Offer versus Serve**
 - 5 components on tray
- **Offer versus Serve**
 - At least 3 of the 5 components on tray with one of which must be $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit or vegetable

Recognizing a Reimbursable Meal

Snack

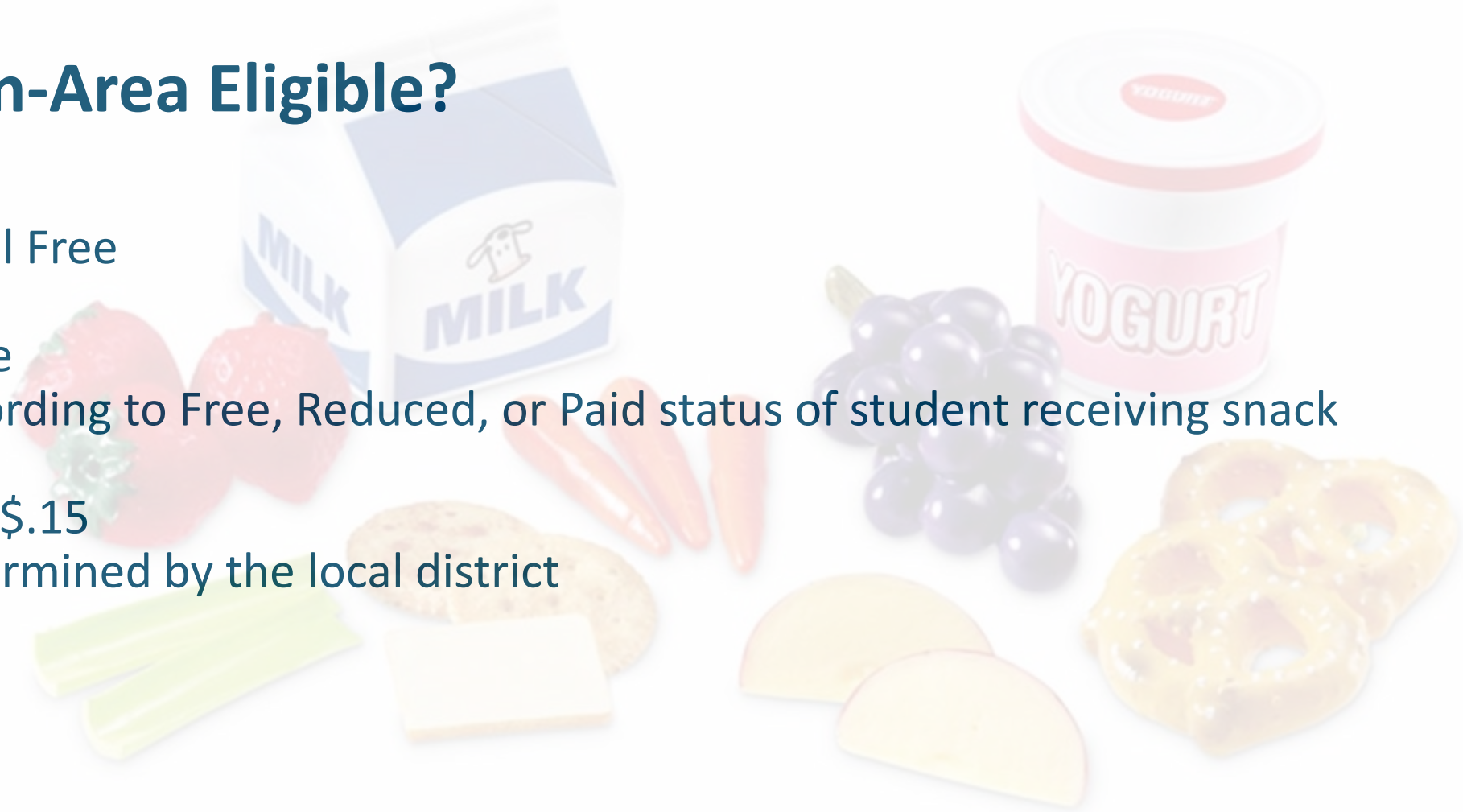
- Plan 2 components
- **Must take 2 components to be reimbursed as a snack**



Claiming After School Snacks

Is it Area or Non-Area Eligible?

- Area Eligible
 - Claimed as all Free
- Non-Area Eligible
 - Claimed according to Free, Reduced, or Paid status of student receiving snack
 - Snack Price
 - Reduced \$.15
 - Paid determined by the local district



Claiming After School Snacks

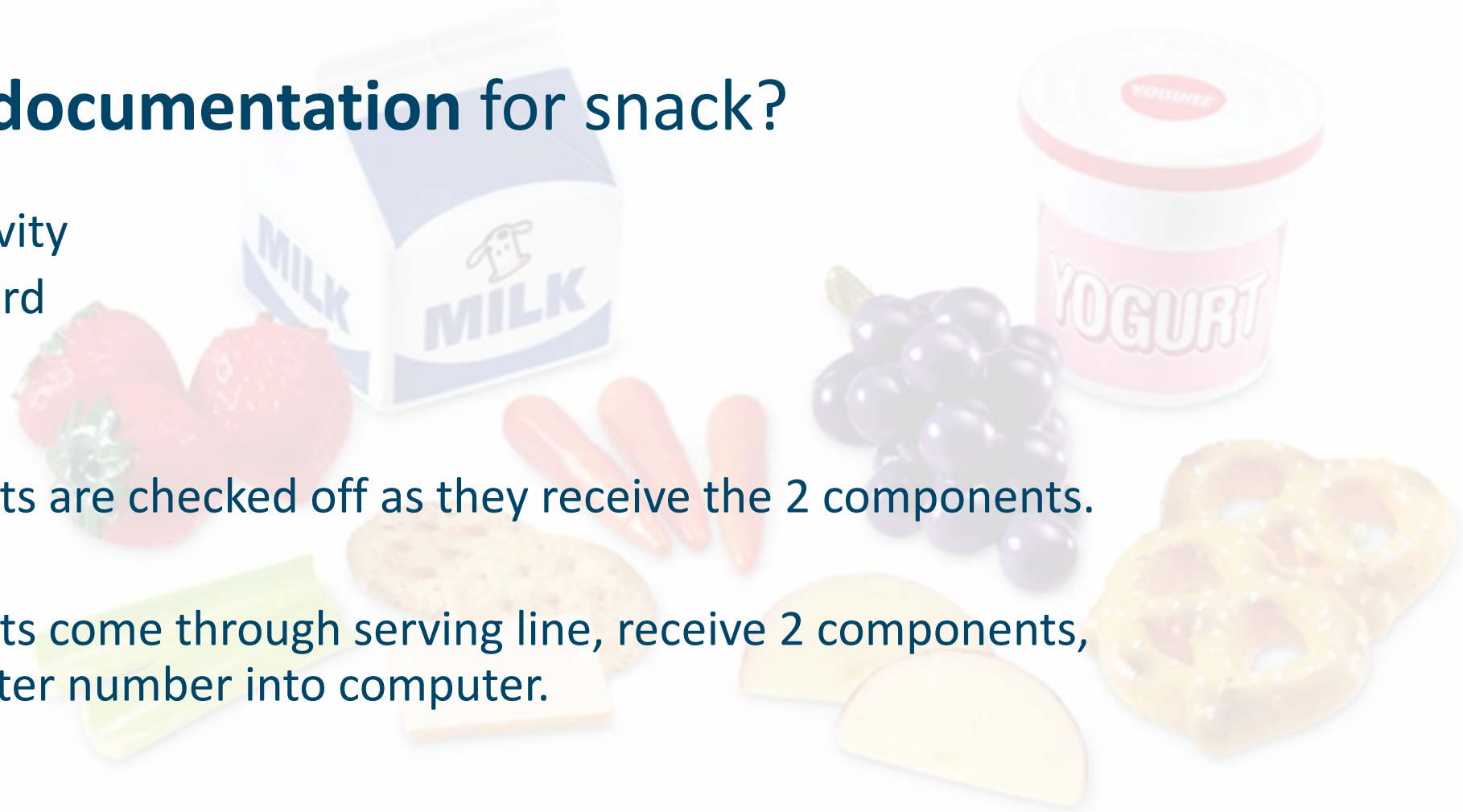
What is your **documentation** for snack?

Enrichment Activity

Production Record

Point of Service

- Roster
 - Students are checked off as they receive the 2 components.
- Computer
 - Students come through serving line, receive 2 components, and enter number into computer.



Point Of Service: Meal Count Review

Meals must be counted:

- Student walks through line with all required components on their tray.
- The computer recognizes students' ID number and correctly identifies their eligibility.

Ensuring the Point of Service Correctly Identifies Student Eligibility

Rosters:

The roster must have an identifier for Free, Reduced, and Paid next to the enrolled students' names.

The identifier must not overtly identify a student:

F=free, R=reduced, and P=paid shall not be used

101=free, 102=reduced, and 103=paid would be acceptable

Computer System:

As with the roster the system must identify the student's eligibility, but not overtly identify the student on the screen.

The **POS** must be able to ensure only one reimbursable meal per student and a second meal that must be charged to the student.

When is a student eligible for free or reduced meals?



- Free and Reduced application
- Direct certification, homeless, runaway or migrant list
- CEP
- Provision 2
- Universal Breakfast

How do you accept payment from students, teachers, and staff members?

- At the register?
- Before a meal?
- Online?
- Others?

Do you know your district policies?

- Charging Meals
- Bad Check
- Change Cash/Fund



POLICY
MANUAL

What is Meal Claiming?



- Daily Counts taken at each school site.
- Monthly counts for individual school site consolidated.
- Monthly Meal counts for all school sites sent to district office.
- District office sends consolidated and verified meal counts by school site, electronically to state department.
- State Department validates totals and issues a reimbursement check to district.

ACCEPTABLE Meal Counting System

All meal counting and claiming systems must provide an accurate point of service count of the following:

1. Reimbursable Meals – Meet the meal pattern
2. One reimbursable meal per child per meal type
3. Second meals are counted as a la carte at an established meal price

All meal counting and claiming systems must provide an accurate point of service count:

1. By Category
2. Each day for each meal
3. Without revealing student eligibility



UNACCEPTABLE Meal Counting System

- Counts taken in the morning, in the classroom or any other location before the meal is served
- Attendance counts
- Tray or plate counts
- Adults are not paying for their meals or being claimed as reimbursable meals
- Count the number of tickets/tokens **SOLD**
- Count the number of meals paid for in advance
- Use the number of Free and Reduced-Priced eligible students instead of the number of meals actually served

UNACCEPTABLE Meal Counting

- Subtract the count of one category from a total count to obtain another eligibility category count
- Counts taken that make a student's eligibility category obvious.
- Roster System using an outdated roster.
 - Rosters should be printed weekly.
- Counts taken at the beginning of the serving line without checking that the components on the tray count as a reimbursable meal.
- Any count of meals served by category that is not accurate.

Delivery Counts of Meals

- The number of meals delivered to a school is not necessarily the number of meals actually served.
- The number of snacks prepared for after-school snack program is not necessarily the number of snacks actually served.

Ways to Ensure an Acceptable Meal Counting System

Daily Evaluations

Daily Edit Checks from POS system

Free count $\leq$ free count on file

Reduced count $\leq$ reduced count on file

Paid count $\leq$ [daily attendance – (free + reduced)]

Point of sales (POS) = school data daily

Transfers

Withdrawals

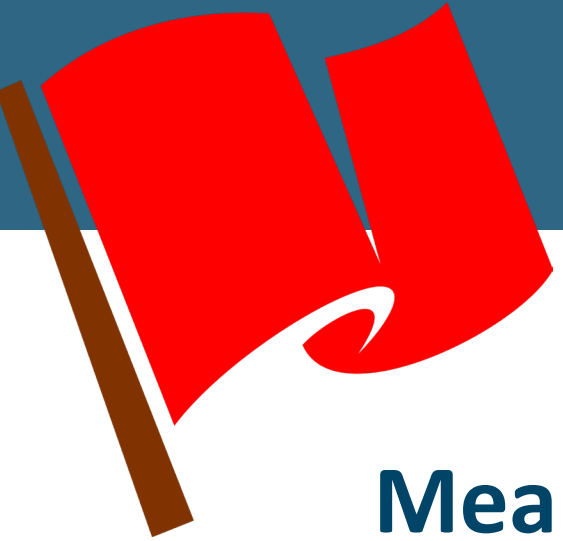
New students

Ways to Ensure an Acceptable Meal Counting System

Record Keeping

- Daily sales reports
- Daily edit checks from POS system
- Roster totals, cash register tapes, ticket/token count
- Backing up computer system
- Daily bank deposit slips

Edit Check Problems (Red Flags)



Meal Counts

- Exceeds the number of eligible students in attendance same every day.
- Maximum number of eligible students eat every day same as the number of meals delivered every day.
- Adult meals sold but not showing up on the days end report.

Example: In school suspension students/ alternative schools or Food Service Management Company

Something's

not right

Recommended at the School Cafeteria

Compare:

- Free, Reduced, and Paid Eligible to Actual Meal Counts for Free, Reduced, and Paid
- Breakfast Counts from day to day
- Lunch Counts from day to day
- After school snacks from day to day

Cashier Assessment

Can the cashier:

- a. identify a reimbursable meal?
- b. review the menu before the meal service?
- c. leave the cashier station unattended?

Is a trained backup cashier available?

Does the cashier know the procedures for handling:

- a. Misplaced IDs, Forgotten Numbers
- b. Visiting student meals
- c. Adult meals
- d. Second meals
- e. Charging meals

Cash Handling Procedures

Currency	Count	equals	Total
\$100s		=	
\$50s		=	
\$20s		=	
\$10s		=	
\$5s		=	
\$1s		=	
		=	
Coins	Count		Total
50		=	
25		=	
10		=	
5		=	
1		=	
Total Cash		=	
Total Checks		=	
Total Drawer		=	
Signature		signature	
Date:			

Cashier

- Remove change cash/fund
- Counts drawer
- Records coins and bills
- Counts checks
- Totals money

2nd Person

- Counts drawer
- Records coins and bills
- Counts checks
- Totals money

Enter into Computer

Depositing Cash Procedures

Manager (or designated person)

- Combines money from drawers
- Counts money
- Fills out deposit slip with checks
- Puts money, checks, & deposit slip into bank bag

Bank depositor

- Are they bonded by the district?
- Takes money to bank daily to ensure timely deposit

Manager

- Monitor bank date stamp on deposit slip to match day of deposit
Example: Tuesday January 14 stamp matches Tuesday cash deposit on daily report



1. Does the cashier have a change cash/fund?

- If not, how does the cashier give change?
- If not, where does the money come from?

2. Does the breakfast cashier close out and balance the cash drawer before lunch?

- Strongly recommended that the breakfast cashier close out and balance the cash drawer before lunch.
- If not, make sure the cashier for lunch was the same one for breakfast. Two different people cannot handle the same drawer even in the middle of meal service.
- Shortages/overages easier to identify.

3. Do you charge for extra portions?

4. Is there an a la carte price list?

5. What is your charge policy and is it enforced with EVERY student and staff member?
Is it the same as the board policy?



It is a red flag to the auditors if it is exact everyday. You expect to have some overage/shortage.

6. Does your bank deposit equal cash indicated on daily report?

7. With an emergency situation, what happens if the computer freezes, power goes out, or computer crashes?

Is a current eligibility list printed and maintained weekly?

Breakfast

- By Alphabetical/Bus Number

Lunch

- By Numerical
- By class or when meal periods are scheduled

8. What is the procedure when a child does not have any money and they are at the register with their tray?

- Does the cashier pull money out of her pocket?
- Allow the child to charge?
- Take the tray and offer alternative meal?



Systems for “Checks & Balances”



- Eligibility Documentation is correct and current
- Meal Counting is accurate
- Computerized POS counting (data entry is accurate) – program checks are in place
- Daily reports are accurate
- Daily edit checks are accurate
- Accurate claim consolidation
- Cash Reconciliation Report (Overage/Shortage)

ASK US

