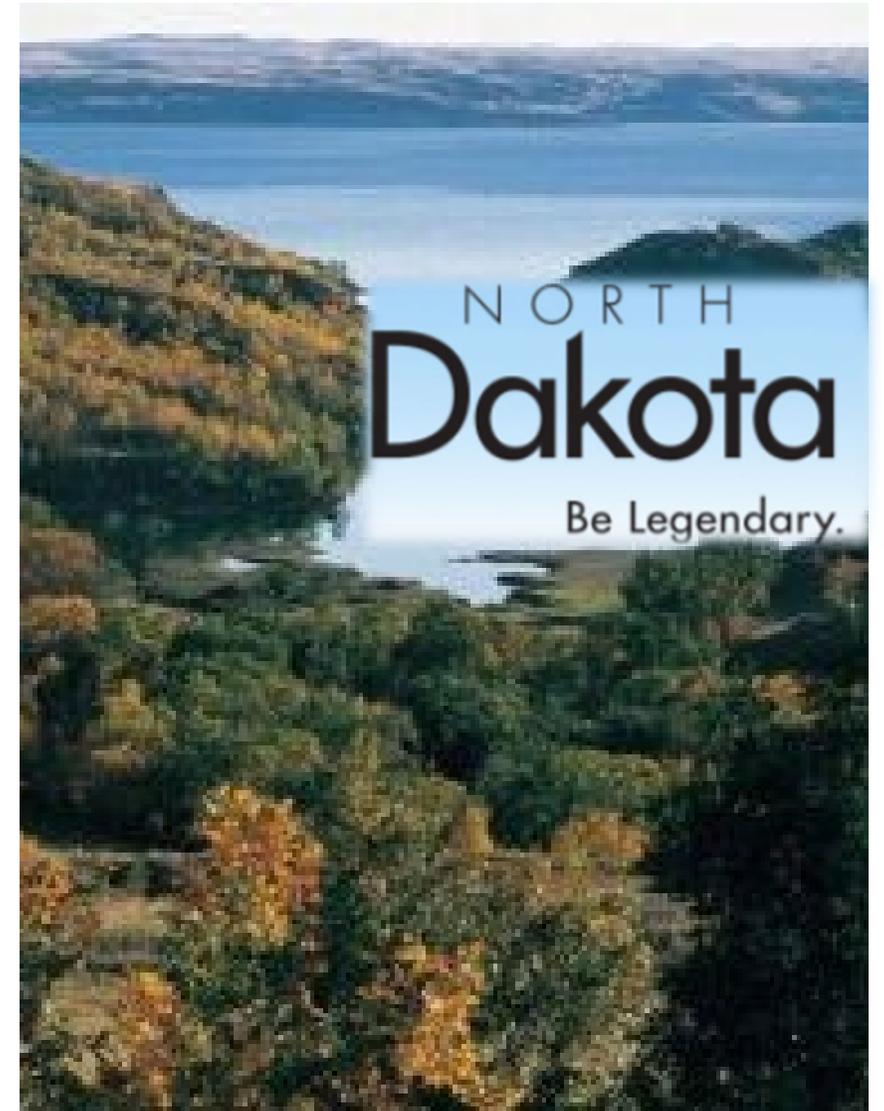




NORTH DAKOTA  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

# **ACROSS THE DESK**

February 2026



Lake Sakakawea

# AI Bot Rules for NDDPI Hosted Meetings/Webinars



“Please be advised that due to privacy concerns and potential legal implications, the use of external AI transcription tools is strictly prohibited in NDDPI meetings. If you wish to record a meeting for transcription purposes, please submit your request to the meeting organizer.”

# Agenda

- Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act
- 2026 Special Legislative Session
- Interdepartmental Communications
  - What should an Auth Rep be doing
- FSMC and Vended Meal Contracts
  - Does this include Daycares?
- Farm to School Updates
- SEBT Updates

# “Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, 2025”

- Amends the Richard B Russell National School Lunch Act revising requirements for milk
- May offer whole, 2%, 1%, fat free, lactose free, and nondairy beverages that are equivalent to milk (flavored or unflavored) at LUNCH
- May exclude the saturated fat from fluid milk when calculating the weekly average saturated fat requirement (not the calories though)
- Must still offer two options of fluid milk at lunch. Unflavored must be offered. Flavored milk must meet added sugar limit.
- No Changes to Pre-School meal Pattern (non co-mingled preschool students)

# Things to Consider

- Added sugars – Flavored Milk must have less than 10 grams of added sugar
- Will vendors have all of the options?
- Do you have storage room to move the whole or 2% out of milk cooler for breakfast
- Procurement – Check your bid.

# Updates to Fluid Milk Substitutes for Disability Accommodations

- Written statement stating a student whose disability restricts their diet can be from a licensed physician, parent or legal guardian
  - Must identify the disability that restricts the student's diet and that specifies the substitute for fluid milk
  - The written statement from the parent is only applicable to a fluid milk allergy
  - The written statement cannot be for "preference", only a disability
  - The written statement from the parent only applies to lunch

# Food Allergy Training Requirement

- Food service personnel must complete an annual training and receive annual certification.
- Still waiting on additional guidance from USDA
- ICN has training, but NDDPI will offer training/webinar in Fall 2026

# 2026 Special Legislative Session

- HB 1624 Bill for state to pay for free breakfast and lunch in school
- HB 1627 Bill to expand eligibility level to 300% of the poverty level
- Ballot Initiative coming
- Many Legislators are looking for information about school meals

# Summer EBT Update

- Students who receive Free/Reduced Meals will automatically receive \$120 benefit- Based on student eligibility at school level
- Review Data in Powerschool to make sure student addresses and contact info is updated
- SEBT STARS Eligibility Report
  - Contains all students indicated as eligible to receive the Summer EBT Benefit
  - Review report to ensure accuracy
- State 225 students do not qualify for Summer EBT Benefits
- Webinar Coming Soon

# Interdepartmental Communication

Key Areas of School Nutrition Program Management	School District Person and/or Department Ultimately Responsible for Success
Food Service Account and Financial Management	
Food Production and Operation Management	
Food Security, Sanitation and Safety	
Food Service Procurement and Inventory Management	
Human Resource Management	
Kitchen Facilities and Equipment Management	
Menu and Nutrition Management	
School Nutrition Program Management and Accountability	
School Nutrition Program Marketing and Communication	
Technology and Information Systems for School Nutrition Programs	

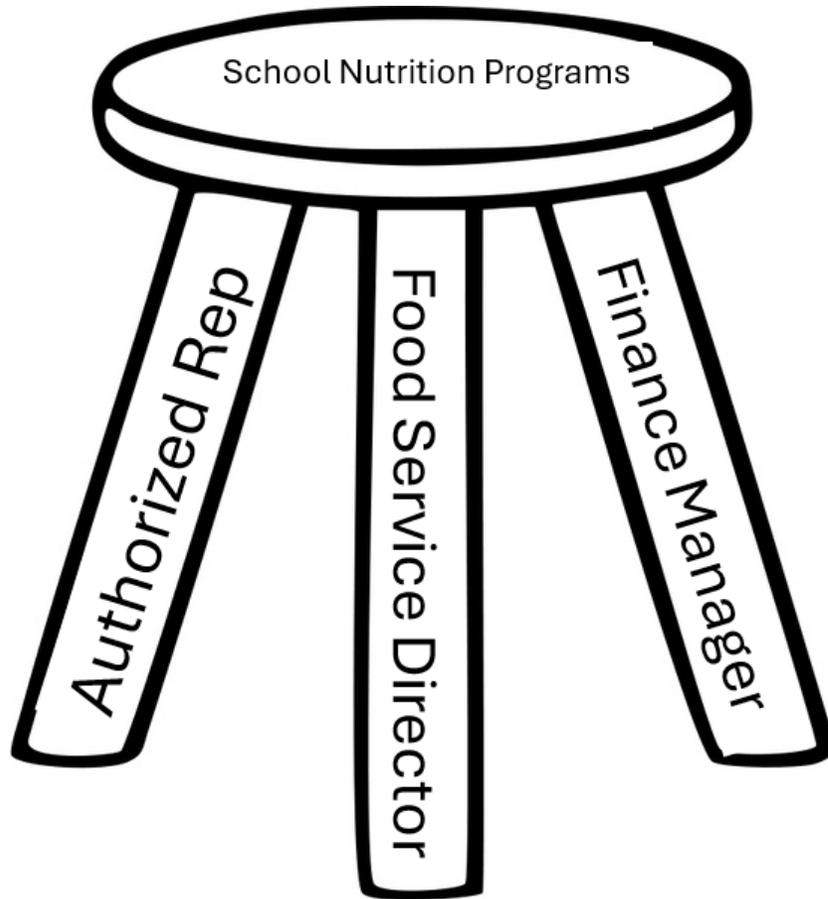


# Interdepartmental Communication

Every NSLP sponsor must have the following in roles:

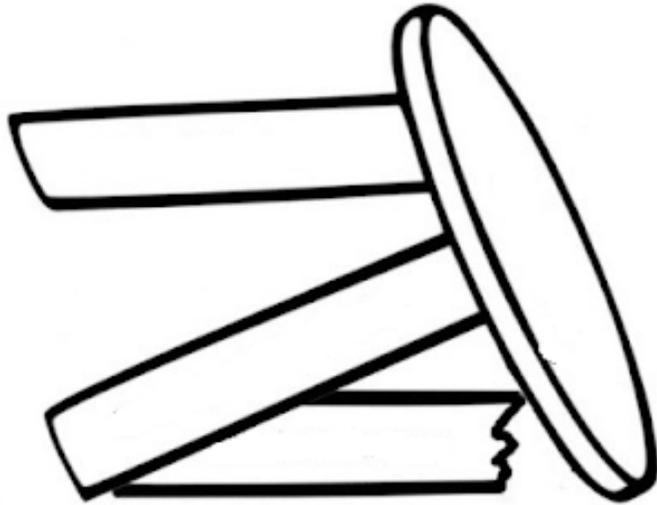
- Authorized Representative
- Business Manager
- Food Service Director: Education/ Experience requirement
  - Professional Development = 12 hours annually
  - Food Safety certification

# Best Practices



- Budget
- Procurement
- Student Participation
- Meal Modification

# Site Monitoring Checklist



- For Multi Site Districts
- Due Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>
- Not just a checklist

Breakfast		Lunch	
Yes	No	Yes	No

Is the Food Safety plan implemented, and is a written copy available in the kitchen?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**General Observable Areas Corrective Action Plan:** *For any "No" answers from above, identify how the area will be brought into compliance.*

Date Corrective Action(s) will be implemented by:  
and by whom:

Follow-up Visit Date: *(Must be within 45 days if corrective action is required.)*

Was corrective action implemented and successful in resolving identified issues?

Breakfast			Lunch		
Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A

# Food Service Management Companies (FSMC)

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>FSMC</b>	<b>Self-Operated Program</b>
<b>Administrative Burden</b>	FSMC handles procurement & reporting	School manages all operations
<b>Cost Control</b>	Bulk purchasing power, negotiated vendor pricing, labor contracts	Limited purchasing leverage, higher unit cost
<b>Compliance</b>	Expert knowledge of USDA/state regulations	Requires in-house expertise and training
<b>Menu Variety</b>	Professional chefs, dietitians, innovative menus	Limited resources for menu development
<b>Technology</b>	POS systems, analytics, forecasting tools	May lack advanced tech solutions
<b>Staff Training</b>	Ongoing training provided by FSMC	Training responsibility falls on school

# Food Service Management Companies (FSMC)

<b>Aspect</b>	<b><u>Downside of contracting with a FSMC</u></b>
<b>Loss of Local Control</b>	Schools may have less flexibility in menu planning, staffing, and operational decisions.
<b>Profit Motive</b>	FSMCs are businesses; their goal is profitability, which may conflict with school priorities like scratch cooking or local sourcing.
<b>Reduced Community Engagement</b>	Less opportunity to involve local vendors, farmers, or tailor menus to cultural preferences.
<b>Contract Complexity</b>	FSMC contracts can be long and require careful review to avoid unfavorable terms.
<b>Staff Impact</b>	Existing school food service staff may face job changes, layoffs, or reduced benefits.

# Food Service Management Companies (FSMC)

- FSMC can run the entire foodservice or any level in between
  - Cannot be the sponsor
  - Formal procurement using State template
- Vended: Meals are prepared by another School and delivered for service.
  - Does not need to be a competitive procurement, encouraged if options are available
  - Does need to be a written contract, renewed each year
- Key Requirement:
  - Both procurement & subsequent contract for either type must be approved BEFORE signing by NDDPI-CNFD
  - This will be a part of the Renewal Process.

# Food Service Management Companies and Vended Meal Contracts

## Process:

1. **Identify the need – meals only, labor, other program administration**
2. **Procurement**
  - a) Use NDDPI-CNFD template
  - b) 21-day menu by SFA, not FSMC
  - c) SA approval of both solicitation and contract before sending/signing
  - d) First year plus (4) – 1-year rollovers
  - e) “Your final contract will only be as good as your solicitation was written”
3. **Multiple Monitoring of FSMC by SFA – Weekly/Monthly**

# Food Service Management Companies and Vended Meal Contracts

## Website Resources:

- USDA resource: “*Contracting with FSMC, Guidance for School Food Authorities*”, July 2016
- Process for Approval in North Dakota
- FSMC solicitation
- FSMC contract
- Vended meal contract
- Monitoring worksheet for Contract

# SP 16-2006 Record Keeping Requirements for Procurement

Adequate procurement methods are a prerequisite for receiving funds.

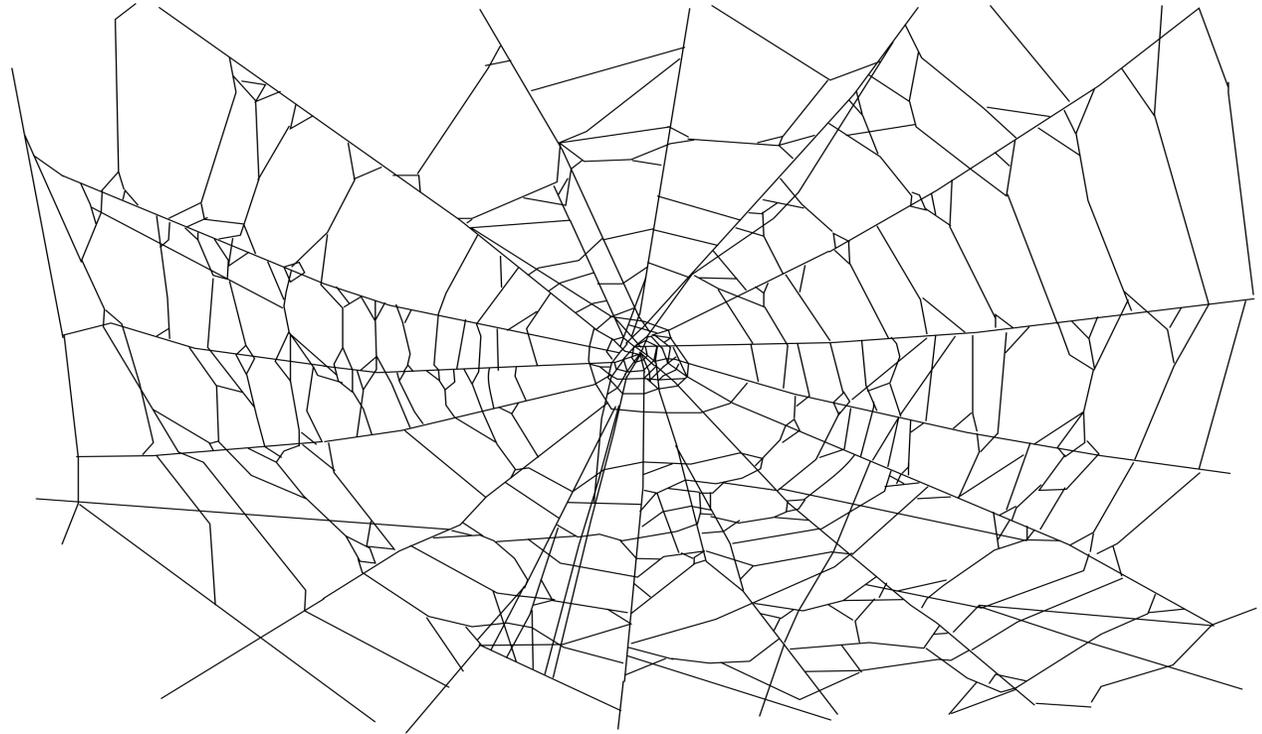
Examples of such records include:

- A copy of the Request for Proposal or the Invitation For Bid;
- The bidding and negotiation history;
- The basis for contractor selection;
- Approval from the state agency to support a lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained;
- The basis for award cost or price;
- The terms and conditions of the contract;
- Any changes to the contract and negotiation history;
- Billing and payment records;
- Any history of contractor claims or breaches.

# Food Service Management Company? Yes or No

*“A school foodservice program is a complex web of federal, state, and local laws and policies to which a district must conform.”*

*School Foodservice – Outsource or Self-Op,  
Barry Sackin, SFNS  
SNA magazine*



# Tray of the Month

This fun activity aims to highlight school nutrition and the amazing work you do to feed children. It's a fun way to showcase the delicious meals you serve. This is an optional activity. Please participate if you feel inspired.

• **Theme:** February is *Soup and Stew Month*. Pictures due February 27.

## Photo Criteria:

- Full lunch or breakfast tray (all components + milk).
- Close-up, well-lit photo.
- If students are visible, ensure photo release forms are signed.
- **Submission:** Email your photo to [amolson@nd.gov](mailto:amolson@nd.gov).
- **Optional:** Participate if you feel inspired!

**January Winner  
West Fargo Public  
Schools**



# School and Childcare Garden Grant

## Eligibility:

- All **school districts** in the National School Lunch Program
- **Childcare facilities** operating CACFP

## Awards:

- \$1,000 per award
- 9 awards reserved for school districts
- 9 awards reserved for CACFP sites

## Allowable Expenses:

- Supplies, materials, and equipment for **indoor or outdoor gardening**, including:
  - Soil, compost, raised beds
  - Seeds, plants, fruit trees
  - Tools, watering/irrigation systems
  - Indoor growing systems
  - Gardening learning supplies
  - **Required to submit receipts and ledger for claims.**

**Opens:** Friday, February 13 in Web Grants – email will be sent on Friday with details about the funding opportunity.

- **Application Deadline:** March 13

Be prepared to answer questions regarding the sustainability and project plans with your school or CACFP garden.  
-How do you plan to include students or young children?  
-How will the harvest be used?



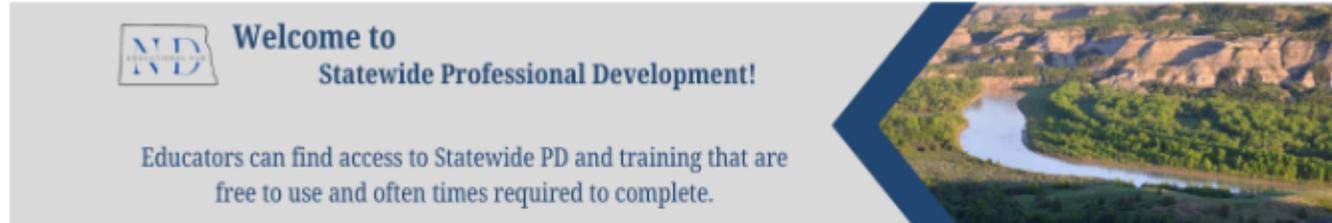
**Questions?**



# Other Training/Resources

North Dakota  
Educational Hub:

*Myndeducational.hub.org*



The sub-catalogs below are located under the “Statewide Professional Development” catalog. The courses listed under each sub-catalog are live and ready for enrollment. Click on the course name to enroll and begin learning today!

<p><b>Child Nutrition:</b> School Nutrition Professionals can access virtual training related to federal child nutrition programs in this catalog.</p>		
<a href="#">Financial Management</a>	<a href="#">Recipe Standardization</a>	<a href="#">Meal Pattern: Overview</a>
<a href="#">Meal Pattern: Bread-Grain</a>	<a href="#">Meal Pattern: Fruit</a>	<a href="#">Meal Pattern: Vegetable</a>
<a href="#">Meal Pattern: Meat/Meat Alternative</a>	<a href="#">Meal Pattern: Milk</a>	<a href="#">Kitchen Efficiencies</a>
<a href="#">Production Record Training: Paper or Excel</a>	<a href="#">Offer vs. Serve Activity</a>	<a href="#">USDA Foods In North Dakota</a>
<a href="#">Production Record Training: Electronic via PrimeroEdge</a>	<a href="#">Dominio del Menu: Desglose del regimen alimenticio</a>	<a href="#">Production Record Upload for Approval</a>

 (701) 328-2294

# Kitchen Counter Conversation

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each Month  
2 p.m. Central Time

Registration for each KCC is in the last  
Newsletter

Next: Tuesday, February 17, 2026  
Promoting Your Program



Jarrett J. Krosoczka's "Lunch Lady"

# NDDPI BRIDGE UPDATE

BRIDGE – Building Reports Informing Data-driven Growth in Education

- Listen to the latest update on the transition to Infinite Campus
- Ask questions about how Free/Reduced eligibilities are recorded
- Talk about POS/Online app capabilities

**Reminder: HB 1013**  
Online App needed by  
**July 1, 2026**



# Across the Desk

2nd Tuesday of each Month  
2 p.m. Central Time  
Registration for each KCC is in  
the last Newsletter

MARCH 10<sup>TH</sup>

- A look at CEP
- Discussion on Buy American
- Other Updates



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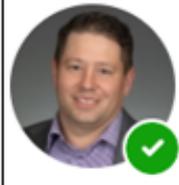
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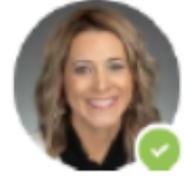
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**Phone:** 701-328-2294  
**Website:**

[www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/ChildNutritionFoodDistribution](http://www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/ChildNutritionFoodDistribution)



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# Questions & Discussion

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[WWW.ND.GOV/DPI](http://WWW.ND.GOV/DPI)



[DPICNFD@ND.GOV](mailto:DPICNFD@ND.GOV)



(701) 328-2260



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Nov/Dec  
Complete  
RFP

January  
Submit  
for ONPS  
approval

February  
ONPS  
approves  
release!

February  
Public  
Release

**Timing of  
RFP  
Process**

March  
Site Visit

June  
Submit  
signed  
contract  
to ONPS

May  
Award  
Contract

April  
Proposal  
Due