



## Students Succeed with School Meals

# "Offer versus Serve"

### What is "Offer versus Serve"?

"Offer versus Serve" lets students turn down foods they do not plan to eat. This helps reduce waste by not making students take food that they don't like or won't eat. "Offer versus Serve" gives students flexibility. Meals still meet federal nutrition standards. Depending on how menus are planned in the school, a set number of food groups are offered. Students must select a certain number of food groups for a school meal. The number of food groups that are offered and the number the student can decline varies.<sup>1</sup>



### What are the Food Groups for School Meals?<sup>1</sup>

• Meats/Meat Alternates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each school meal is a combination of food groups.</li> <li>• School meals can also have items that include more than one food group.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ For example, pizza can have a meat or meat alternate, grain or bread and a vegetable.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
• Grains/Breads	
• Fruits and Vegetables	
• Milk	



### What is the difference between "Offer versus Serve" and "Choice"?

- "Choice" means there are several options within a food group.
- For example, from the Grain/Bread group, a student can choose between a roll, French bread or corn muffin.

"Offer versus Serve"	"Choice"
A student is <b>NOT</b> required to choose an item from each food group.	A student <b>MAY</b> choose one item from each food group, including milk.



### How does "Offer versus Serve" work?

- School meals are priced as a unit.
- The menu may have 5 items planned as part of the meal, but at least 3 items must be chosen in order to count as a school meal.
- The student can take 3, 4 or 5 of the items and be charged the same price.

### When is "Offer versus Serve" Used?

Type of School	National School Lunch Program	School Breakfast Program
Senior High	Mandatory	Optional <sup>2</sup>
Middle or Elementary	Optional <sup>2</sup>	Optional <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Food groups are used in Food-Based Menu Planning for school meals.

<sup>2</sup> The school system decides if it wants to implement "Offer versus Serve", when it is optional and in what grades, and how many items students can decline.

