



March 9, 2023

Michael Howard, Superintendent
Meadows Valley School District #011
500 North Miller Avenue
New Meadows, ID 83654

Dear Superintendent Howard,

On November 1, 2022, State Department of Education (SDE) Coordinator Lynda Westphal and Procurement Specialist, Kat Forstie conducted an Administrative Review (AR) of Meadows Valley SD for the following United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- USDA Foods
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

The site reviewed was the Meadows Valley School.

The State agency would like to thank, Carolyn Swanson, Claudia Bentz, Carol Whitney and the staff of Meadows Valley SD for their hard work operating the school nutrition programs.

OVERVIEW

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, amended by the addition of Section 201 to the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, requires a unified accountability system designed to ensure that participating school food authorities (SFA) comply with USDA requirements. The objectives of the AR are to:

- Determine whether the SFA meets program requirements
- Provide technical assistance
- Secure any needed corrective action
- Assess fiscal action and, when applicable, recover improperly paid funds

REVIEW FREQUENCY AND SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act mandates state agencies conduct an AR a minimum of one time during a variable-year cycle to evaluate Critical and General Areas of Review, including:

- Performance Standard 1: Meal Access and Reimbursement
- Performance Standard 2: Meal Pattern and Nutritional Quality

- General Areas of Review: Resource Management, Food Safety, Local School Wellness Policy, Smart Snacks, Civil Rights, Buy American, Professional Standards, and other areas of general program compliance

These were the SA determined findings and the SFA response to the findings:

FINDING AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

Finding 1 – Certification and Benefit Issuance

The school is using on-line applications, however the SFA staff needs training on the system. There were 10 students (4 applications) that were missing or determined incorrectly. This system should be implemented immediately as well as for claiming to ensure proper claiming for the school.

CAP: A list of the applications that needed to be researched was given to the school to investigate and submit to the SA.

Due Date for CAP Completion: November 21, 2022

CAP Response: The SFA uploaded the corrected application with three students on December 19, 2022. **This finding is now closed;** however, a Second Review of applications will be required until the next review even if the applications are on-line submissions.

Based on the administrative error of 8.33% associated with certification and benefit issuance, the SFA will be required to conduct a second review of applications beginning school year 2023-2024, and continuing until further notice. A second review of applications requires a re-evaluation by the Confirming Official of the eligibility determination made by the Determining Official, based on the information provided by the household on the application. Depending on the outcomes of this second review, the SFA may be required to complete this process until the next administrative review. A Second Review of Applications Report must be filed while this requirement is in place. Please reference the Independent Review of Applications section in the Eligibility Manual, a copy of which is available in MyIdahoCNP Download Forms.

Finding 2 – Civil Rights – REPEAT FINDING

The District Website and student handbooks do not have the Full USDA required Nondiscrimination Statement.

CAP: Update all with the full USDA nondiscrimination statement and send screenshot of website and handbook with changes.

Due Date for CAP Completion: November 21, 2022

CAP Response: The SFA uploaded the changed manual and a copy of the website with incorrect Civil Rights statements on January 5, 2023. The SA responded via email on January 9, 2023 with direction to change to the correct statement on both locations and included the statement to use. These were corrected on January 10, 2023. **This finding is now closed**

Finding 3 – Wellness Policy – REPEAT FINDING

The Local School Wellness Policy must be in compliance with the USDA Final Rule established in July 2016, including the requirements that report(s) on the progress towards goals stated in the wellness policy be publicly available. The final rule requires LEAs to fully comply with the requirements of the final rule by June 30, 2017. During the last review on April 16, 2019 the Wellness Policy was found out of compliance and had not been updated since 2006. The Board was supposed to update on May 14, 2019. This is now a repeat finding. Ensure the wellness assessment (e.g., Idaho Wellness Policy Progress Report) is available to the public; posting to the school /district website and/or in a school newsletter would support this requirement. TA given on the Wellness Policy and the Progress Report. A copy of a partially completed Idaho Wellness Policy Progress Report was given with some suggestions. MSBT Law 2017 OR ISBA Policies 8200, 8210, 8230, 8235, 8240, 8250, 2310, 2305, 2315, and 7310 encompass the wellness policy if all are adopted.

CAP: Upload a plan to bring the Wellness Policy into compliance. This must include dates to be adopted by the board and a plan to update the Board webpage to remove unadopted Wellness policies. This finding will not be closed until this is brought into compliance.

Due Date for CAP Completion: November 21, 2022, extended to January 6, 2023, extended to February 15, 2023

CAP Response: The SFA uploaded a new Board approved Wellness Policy on December 19, 2023, which was missing measurable goals. Per email on January 6, 2023 a new Wellness Policy to be adopted by the board was submitted to the SA for review prior to the Board meeting. Changes were made by the SA and sent back to the SFA on January 6, 2023. The updated compliant policy was adopted by the Board on February 14, 2023. **This finding is now closed**

Finding 4 – Meal Counting and Claiming

Using the hand count sheet is resulting in an inaccurate claim as calculated by the SA for September 2022. The original e-mail presented to the SA during the review with count of students sent to the Business Manager did not match the submitted claim. The SA validated 634 breakfasts and 1090 lunches for September 2022. The e-mail adjusting the free, reduced and paid counts was not presented at the time of review resulting in a discrepancy of the meal counts versus the claimed amounts. There was no notation in the file on why the numbers entered on the copy of the September claim shown to SA staff were different than the numbers in the e-mail from the kitchen manager presented as backup. The resulting e-mail was found after the reviewers left and still resulted in discrepancies in the submitted claim. This resulted in the claims being recalculated for September and October and will need to be validated before claiming by the district. The electronic POS system was implemented in January 2023 to ensure claims are being submitted accurately. The February claim was compared to the report and matched.

CAP: Upload a description of how this will be corrected from the review forward. The October claim with the backup must be submitted to the SA to be validated using this new method.

Due Date for CAP Completion: November 21, 2022

CAP Response: Per email from the SFA Food Service Director, the automated system was started in January 2023. The January 2023 claim with backup from this system was used to validate the January 2023 claim entered on February 16, 2023. The February claim with backup sheet was presented on March 3, 2023 and matches the manual count. **This finding is now closed.**

Finding 5 – Professional Standards – REPEAT FINDING

The United States Department of Agriculture has established minimum Professional Standards for school nutrition professionals who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, effective July 1, 2015. The standards provide annual training requirements for all school nutrition professionals. It is required that some form of documentation be kept on file to show Professional Standards compliance; options include the FNS online tracking tool and two Professional Standards tracking resources available under Download Forms. This was a finding during the 2019 review with assurances that a tracking log would be used for everyone required to have training. See the Technical Assistance section for staff training requirements.

CAP: Develop a plan for tracking training hours in order to comply with the Professional Standards requirements. Explain this plan and the frequency of the tracking (monthly, quarterly, etc.) system to the SA in writing (an email will suffice) and upload the tracking form that will be used.

Due Date for CAP Completion: November 21, 2022

CAP Response: The SFA uploaded a Professional Standards procedure on January 11, 2023 with a blank tracking log. **This finding is now closed**

Finding 6 – Food Safety – REPEAT FINDING

Each SFA must have a written food safety plan for compliance with Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) program criteria found in 7 CFR 210.13(c). During the last review in 2019, a compliant HACCP Manual was uploaded as corrective action for the SFA, however the manual could not be located during the current review. SFAs are required to have HACCP-based food safety programs to cover any facility where food is stored, prepared, or served for the purposes of the NSLP, SBP, or other FNS programs. [A sample food safety manual is available in Download Forms.](#) Ensure that employees who have food service duties are trained annually and as needed. Keep a record of trainings for three years plus the current year.

CAP: Upload a site-specific food safety manual and documentation of food safety training.

Due Date for CAP Completion: November 21, 2022

CAP Response: The SFA uploaded the ICN HACCP manual customized to the school on December 19, 2022. **This finding is now closed**

Failure to complete Corrective Action or request an extension by the due date of November 21, 2022 resulted in claim payments being withheld until all Corrective Action was completed on March 7, 2023.

COMMENDATIONS

- The Food Service Director (FSD) was receptive to SA recommendations and proactive in ways to improve the child nutrition program.
- The SA appreciates the assistance from Claudia in the front office for supplying needed documents to help with the review process.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA)

Certification and Benefit Issuance

- The staff should be trained on the electronic system to understand the reports needed for the on-line applications. This system has a claiming function that is not being utilized and should be used to correct the claiming errors above.

Verification

- Two applications were sent notices on 10/4/2022 with a due date of 10/18/22. A second notice was sent to both on 10/26/2022, however copies were not kept. Technical assistance was given that copies of all documents must be kept. Since Verification was late, a requirement of Verification Corrective Action will be to upload a copy of the application and check stubs, or a new benefit issuance list showing that the benefits were terminated. If a family that was selected reapplies, Verification must still be completed prior to the family receiving benefits. Copies of check stubs and letters were uploaded 1/01/23 – Both families did not provide complete documentation moving them to paid status (3 children).

Meal Components and Quantities

- Independent contractor CN Resource completed the menu review and provided the following results of the menu review to the sponsor in a detailed Menu Review Results Report. Recommendations were included to bring all areas into compliance. All menus served must meet all daily and weekly meal pattern requirements for the specific grade group. The sponsor was encouraged to provide training as needed to ensure

compliance. Please note that per USDA guidance any repeat menu findings in future Administrative Reviews, may result in fiscal action.

- Serving sizes did not always match what was actually offered, per communication with the sponsor. The portion size is often listed in weight measurements. This can be very confusing. List the fruit and milk portion size in volume measure (cups) or each (3 each French Toast Sticks, 1 cereal bowl pack, or 2 each sausage links) to avoid any confusion.
- A standardized recipe is a recipe that has been carefully adapted and tested to ensure that it will produce a consistent product each time it is prepared. The recipes submitted were not always written in standardized format with complete information.
 - Standardize the recipes so that true yields and portion sizes can be determined. To be standardized recipes must include at a minimum the following:
 - All ingredients in the recipe.
 - Correct volume or weighted measure of each ingredient.
 - Serving/portion sizes for each grade group.
 - The true yield made by the recipe.
 - Clear and complete preparation steps and directions.

The eggs served per the production records was 1/2 cup. The clarification provided said that students were served about 1/8 cup liquid eggs.
Create a standardized recipe for the scrambled eggs.
- The Child Nutrition (CN) Label provided for the sausage patty was an official label; however, this label is from 2015. Manufacturer's often change formulas for products. Secure an updated CN label to maintain on file.
- Production records with planned numbers for each item should be accessible before each meal service. Served numbers and leftover numbers need to be recorded at the end of meal service to ensure accuracy.
- The planned numbers for milk were not listed on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the review week.
- The federal regulations require menus to be planned that meet the minimum daily 2-ounce equivalent grain requirement for grades 9-12. This requirement was not met on two days.
 - The hamburger bun used only credits at 1.75 oz. eq. This was served twice this week on Monday with the cheeseburger and Wednesday with the chicken sandwich.
Replace the hamburger bun with a larger bun that weighs at least 57 grams per serving for grades 9-12.

Another option is to serve an additional grain item to grades 9-12 such as a whole grain-rich cookie (1.2 oz. minimum) or other grain such as hard pretzels.

- The federal regulations require weekly minimum amounts of grains to be served. The weekly requirement of 8 oz. eq. was not met for grades 9-12. The menu offered a minimum of 7.5 oz. eq. of grain throughout the week.
By following the suggestions outlined to meet the daily grain requirements, the weekly grain requirement will also be met.
- Serving sizes did not always match what was actually offered, per communication with the sponsor.
 - Sliced cheese served with cheeseburger is listed on the production record is 21 grams. But the label shows that one slice is 14 grams.
 - The portion size for French fries was different on two separate records.
Clarification was provided to confirm the accurate portion.
- Production records with planned numbers for each item should be accessible before each meal service. Served numbers and leftover numbers need to be recorded at the end of meal service to ensure accuracy.
 - Green beans were listed on the menu but not on the original planned records. New records provided did show green beans were planned for the day.
 - Production records for salad bar should include the portion size planned for each menu item as well as the total amount planned for the day.
 - The recipe for the chicken quesadilla should be updated to show exactly how this item is prepared. Per the recipe, the total meat/meat alternate for the menu item is 3.5 oz.
 - Recipe is needed for Teriyaki Chicken to indicate the measure for each ingredient along with the yield and serving size.
 - Secure a Child Nutrition (CN) Label for the fajita chicken used for the Teriyaki Chicken. The spec sheet submitted included a meal pattern crediting statement but was not an official CN Label or PFS. Reference the link below for more information. Note that the USDA label provided states to locate and secure the label for the actual product to insure the proper meal crediting is used.
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling-program>
- Please note that per USDA guidance any repeat menu findings in future Administrative Reviews, may result in fiscal action.

Food Safety (HACCP)

- Independent contractor CN Resource provided the following TA:
For the dry storage compartment, the following storage violations were noted: Product is either not all dated when received or removed from the container. For the walk-in freezer and refrigerator compartments, boxed products were not

dated when received, nor dated when removed from original box. Technical assistance provided to ensure product in boxes is dated and visible to school nutrition staff as well as product that is removed from boxes to ensure that all food items are used in a “first-in, first-out” method.

Buy American Provision

- Per 7 CFR 210.21 (d) Sponsors must purchase, to the maximum extent practicable, domestic commodities and products for use in the NSLP.
 - A domestic commodity or product is an agricultural commodity produced in the US and a food product that is processed in the US using substantial; agricultural commodities.
- Applies to all food/beverage products purchased using funds from the non-profit food service account.
- Limited exception (to be used as a last resort with documentation)
 - When a product is not produced or manufactured in the US in sufficient and reasonable quantities of satisfactory quality
 - When competitive quotes, bids, or proposals reveal the cost of a US product is significantly higher than the foreign product
- Observed:
 - Oranges from Peru,
 - Bananas and green chilis from Mexico,
 - Canned pineapple from Indonesia and Mandarin oranges from China
- The SFA should be checking the order when the delivery is made and asking for the back-up from the vendor to show the country of origin and the reason the product is not in compliance with Buy American. The SFA does have Buy American exception forms but there is no back-up. The SFA can use the AMS market news report to download where produce is coming into the U.S. if no domestic product is available. Canned items need to have back-up from the vendor if they are not USDA Foods procured with entitlement, and they are not a product of the U.S.

Offer versus Serve (OVS)

- Train staff on OVS annually. All staff training should include an agenda and sign-in sheet, and training documentation should be maintained on file at the SFA for three years plus the current year. OVS training is available through the State agency training portal and a training log is available in MyIdahoCNP Download Forms. During lunch it was observed that someone was handing out milk to all. TA that milk is not required if doing OVS was provided.

Professional Standards (Information for above finding)

- Training standards apply to all school nutrition program employees, regardless of student enrollment in the school district or size of the Local Educational Agency (LEA). Note: If hired January 1 or later, an employee must only complete half of the required training hours.
 - Directors – must complete at least 12 hours of annual continuing education/training. These required hours are in addition to the food safety training required in the first year of employment.
 - Managers - must complete at least 10 hours of annual continuing education/training.
 - Staff working an average of at least 20 hours per week - must complete at least 6 hours of annual continuing education/training.
 - Part time staff working less than 20 hours per week - at least 4 hours annual continuing education/training, regardless of the number of part-time hours worked. (7 CFR 210.30 Professional Standards Regulations)
- The Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Employees brochure was provided.

Reporting and Recordkeeping

- During the review the new Food Service Director could not locate the previous year's production records or labels. Records must be retained for three years plus the current year per USDA regulations.

School Breakfast Outreach

- SFAs must inform eligible families of the availability of reimbursable breakfasts served under the School Breakfast Program (SBP). At the beginning of the school year, the SFA must send all households informational packets with Free and Reduced Meal Applications. In addition, schools must send reminders regarding the availability of the SBP multiple times throughout the school year. (7 CFR 210.12 (d)).
- There is a webpage for the district, however this is not an intuitive way of finding food programs information. You must click on the Elementary teachers and then look for the teacher with a newsletter that mentioned the F/R application and posts the menus. The last newsletter was 9/29/2022 that the reviewer could find. This is the only notification of the Child Nutrition Programs. There was no news release sent out. Technical assistance was given that copies of these types of announcements must be kept by the Food Service director for ease of locating.

Resource Management Comprehensive Review

- Paid Lunch Equity

- The required weighted average price for a lunch is \$3.31. Meadows Valley's current average weighted paid lunch price is \$2.45. **The site application was updated to reflect the current prices.**

Procurement

- A procurement review was also conducted. Please follow the guidance provided November 21, 2022 by Procurement Specialist Kat Forstie in a separate closure letter.

FISCAL ACTION

Due to benefit issuance errors and claim errors, total fiscal action results in \$891.57. This is broken out to \$223.17 for breakfast and \$668.40 for Lunch. However, since the amount for breakfast amount falls under the \$600 threshold, the breakfast fiscal action will be disregarded and only the \$668.40 will be withheld from future claims.

YOUR REVIEW IS NOW CLOSED.

Should you wish to appeal the fiscal action please follow the appeal procedures on the State Agency Appeal Procedures document located on [the SDE web page](#).

If you wish to discuss any of these findings, please contact me at (208) 332-6825.

Thank you for your continued support of the Child Nutrition Programs.

Sincerely,



Lynda Westphal, MHS, SNS
NSLP Director

cc: Lynda Westphal, MHS, SNS, Director, Idaho Child Nutrition Programs
Carolyn Swanson, Child Nutrition Director, Meadows Valley SD

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

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