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Ingredient Guide Helps Schools Purchase Better, More Nourishing Foods

School food professionals, registered dietitians, and various nonprofits, including the Life Time Foundation, collaborate on a science-based tool to improve the overall quality, nutritional value and safety of food served in schools

CHANHASSEN, Minn., Nov. 9, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- The [Life Time Foundation](#), in collaboration with the [Center for Science in Public Interest](#) and more than 10 school nutrition professionals and groups from across the country, have released the latest updates to the [Ingredient Guide for Better School Food Purchasing](#). The Ingredient Guide builds upon the work of these great organizations dedicated to helping schools provide more nutritious meals, ensuring every school across the nation has access to resources enabling them to provide the healthiest meals possible to students.



The Life Time Foundation, which partners with schools to eliminate meals containing highly processed and artificial foods in favor of wholesome, real food alternatives, already has worked with more than 35 school districts to benefit 3,634 schools, 1.7 million students and 264 million meals nationwide. Now, with the addition of this Ingredient Guide, every school food professional in the country can incorporate the document into their food purchasing practices that improve the overall quality, nutritional value and safety of food provided to students. The Guide is expected to be extremely impactful on the food supplier industry's offerings, as the purchasing power of K-12 schools is immense with 29.6 million school lunches served daily in the United States.

"The ingredient guide 2.0 was long overdue, and its revised content reflects the collaborative work of school food service directors and nonprofit organizations," said Bertrand Weber, Director of Culinary and Wellness Services at Minneapolis Public Schools. "I'm grateful that we finally have a single guiding document for schools and manufacturers that has the endorsement of so many organizations. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that children across the country regardless of their economic status are provided with the best quality, fresh whole food options."

The new edition, an update of the 2014 version developed by school nutrition leaders from

seven school districts in the upper Midwest, the nonprofit School Food FOCUS, and the Center for Science in the Public Interest, is intended to be a living document, with updates to be released regularly based on new scientific research and learnings from school nutrition leaders and authoritative organizations. It includes a list of ingredients to avoid—such as those with artificial colors—and a list of ingredients to lessen the use of, which are frequently found in highly processed foods of lower nutritional quality.

"We are already receiving positive feedback from school districts across the country, proving this guide is needed to accelerate access to the most nutritious food possible," said Valeria La Rosa, Senior Program Manager at the Life Time Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit which collaborates with K-12 school districts across the country to remove highly processed ingredients from school food menus and accelerate scratch cooking practices in schools. "It was an honor for the Life Time Foundation to join this collaborative effort and we look forward to continuing to support districts as they work to keep highly-processed food out of meals, while increasing the amount of fresh and simply prepared foods."

FoodCorps, in partnership with Center for Science in the Public Interest, facilitated the working group while school nutrition and wellness professionals drove the creation of the guide's content and recommendations. Project contributors for the Ingredient Guide include:

- Bertrand Weber, Director of Culinary and Wellness Service at Minneapolis Public Schools
- Tammy Yarmon, Director of Nutrition Services at Omaha Public Schools
- Angela Richey, MPH, RD, SNS, Director of Nutrition Services at Roseville Area and St. Anthony / New Brighton Schools
- Jeanne Reilly, Director of School Nutrition at RSU 14 Windham Raymond Schools
- Debra Brunner, RD, CD, Supervising Dietitian at Milwaukee Public Schools
- Linley Danner, MS RD, Dietitian at Austin Independent School District
- Amanda Ocegüera, Manager of Nutrition Services at Houston Independent School District
- Nicole Scarangelo, Director of Menu Management at NYC Department of Education
- Megan Flynn, MPH, RD, Nutrition Project Manager at Life Time Foundation
- Adam Kesselman, former Executive Director at Center for Ecoliteracy
- Jill Kidd, MS, RD, SNS, Procurement Director at Urban School Food Alliance
- Valeria La Rosa, Senior Program Manager at Life Time Foundation
- Lisa Lefferts, MSPH, Senior Scientist at the Center for Science in the Public Interest
- Alexa Norstad, Director of Programs at the Center for Ecoliteracy
- Niisoja Torto, Emerson Hunger Fellow at Congressional Hunger Center
- Ashley Nitzkowski, RD, Dietitian, Culinary and Wellness Services at Minneapolis Public Schools
- Jillian Dy, Director of Supply Chain Engagement at FoodCorps

The full Guide is a free resource and is available to all school food professionals and manufacturers alike [online](#).

To learn more about the Life Time Foundation and its efforts to support school food visit www.ltfoundation.org. For more information about becoming a school partner email foundation@ltfoundation.org or call 952.229.7226.

About Life Time Foundation®

As a public charity created by Life Time (NYSE: LTH), the Life Time Foundation is committed to helping children grow up strong, smart and loved. We believe that for children to reach their full potential, they must have access to nourishing meals. We partner with schools to eliminate foods containing highly processed and artificial foods in favor of wholesome, real food alternatives. As of August 2021, the Life Time Foundation has benefitted more than 35 school districts, which impact 3,634 schools and 264 million meals served to 1.7 million students annually. 100% of every dollar donated to the Life Time Foundation directly supports its mission because all administrative costs are contributed by Life Time, Inc. For more information, visit www.ltfoundation.org.

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