

Positive Food Choices

Provide Healthy Food Choices

- Nutritious and appealing foods should be available, such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and low-fat grain products, wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered at school.
- School staff should take efforts to encourage students to make nutritious food choices.
- Healthy food choices should cost no more than less healthy alternative foods.
- Food and beverages sold or served on school grounds or at school-sponsored events should meet nutritional standards and other guidelines* set by the state/district/school health council/nutrition committee. This includes:
 - A la carte offerings in the food service program
 - Food and beverage choices in vending machines, snack bars, school stores, and concession stands
 - Food and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities
 - Refreshments served at parties, celebrations, and meetings

Positive Food Choices for Vending Machines

- ✓ Canned fruit
- ✓ Fresh fruit (e.g., apples and oranges) +
- ✓ Fresh vegetables (e.g., carrots)
- ✓ Fruit juice and vegetable juice
- ✓ Low-fat crackers and cookies, such as fig bars and gingersnaps
- ✓ Pretzels
- ✓ Bread products (e.g., bread sticks, rolls, bagels, and pita bread)
- ✓ Ready-to-eat, low-sugar cereals
- ✓ Granola bars made with unsaturated fat
- ✓ Low-fat or skim milk+
- ✓ Low-fat or nonfat yogurt+
- ✓ Snack mixes of cereal and dried fruit with a small amount of nuts and seeds++
- ✓ Raisins and other dried fruit
- ✓ Peanut butter and low-fat crackers
- ✓ Bottled water

+These foods are appropriate if the vending machine is refrigerated

++Some schools might not want to offer these items because these foods can contribute to dental caries

FOOD SALES

- The school food service program should manage the sale of all foods on school grounds, except foods sold as part of a fundraising activity.
- In middle and high schools, food and beverages should only be sold from vending machines or school stores 30 minutes after the end of the last lunch period unless they are part of the school food service program.
- A portion of the profits generated from sales of foods or beverages in vending machines or school stores should support the food service program/student organizations approved by whom.
- Pricing strategies that promote the purchase of nutritious foods should be implemented (e.g., selling fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and low-fat grain products at lower prices than foods high in fat, sodium, and added sugars – such as soda, candy, and fried chips).
- Organizations are encouraged to raise funds through the sale of items other than food. **
- If food is sold for fundraising, food items should be nutritious and appealing, such as fruits, vegetables, and low fat grain products; and should meet nutritional standards and other guidelines* set by the state/district/school health council/nutrition committee.
- Vending machines and/or student stores should not be part of the elementary school environment.

Drinking Water

Safe, good-tasting drinking water should be available for students as an alternative to soft drinks at no cost. Schools should encourage students to drink adequate amounts of water throughout the day.

Beverage and Food Contracts

School policymakers need to critically examine the details, and anticipate the consequences, of beverage and food vending sales contracts. Contracts should never include incentives for increasing students' consumption of foods or drinks that have little nutritional value. Contracts should specify that:

- 100 percent fruit juice or bottled water must compose a certain proportion of the beverage products offered for sale
- 100 percent fruit juice and bottled water are sold at attractive prices
- soft drink container sizes are moderate
- the vendor helps sponsor promotional materials and events to encourage healthy eating

Additional Suggestions for Promoting Positive Food Choices

Elementary and middle school students should not be permitted to leave school grounds during the school day to purchase food or beverages.

- Limit commercial advertising.
 - Partnerships between schools and business are encouraged, and business sponsorship of educational activities and materials shall be duly acknowledged.
 - However, such partnerships shall be designed to meet identified educational needs, not commercial motives, and shall be evaluated for educational effectiveness by the *school/district* on an ongoing basis.
 - Advertising or commercial practices in school, including exclusive beverage contracts, that seek to influence students' purchases and food choices towards unhealthy alternative foods***, should be discouraged.

* See suggested nutritional standards and guidelines for food and beverages sold or served on school grounds. Many states have adopted policies that, to a greater or lesser extent, go beyond the USDA regulations, including California, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, North Carolina, West Virginia.

http://www.nasbe.org/Educational_Issues/Articles/5_Spring2001/StateInnov.pdf

** Only student organizations and legally constituted, nonsectarian, nonpartisan organizations, approved by *whom* are permitted to engage in fundraising on school grounds at any time.

*** Unhealthy alternative foods include foods low in nutrient density and high in fat, sodium and added sugars - such as chips, candy, and soda pop.