

CREATING A HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FOR SEATTLE'S CHILDREN



Poor nutrition affects children's health and their ability to learn. Schools are uniquely positioned to model and reinforce healthy eating behaviors by limiting access to high calorie, high fat, and high sugar food and beverages. This includes providing healthy choices that are consistent with nutrition education messages and maximizing participation in the school meal program.

The availability of unhealthful food and beverages sold in competition with the federal school meal programs undermines the financial viability, effectiveness and quality of the school meal programs. Research shows that students who participate in school meal programs have higher intakes of key essential nutrients at lunch and over a 24-hour period.

The availability of non-nutritious food also undermines nutrition education efforts, encourages over consumption of foods high in fat and added sugar, teaches children to associate food with praise and teaches children to eat when they are not hungry. It also increases the potential for the development of eating disorders, food-borne illnesses and food-based allergic reactions.

Seattle Public Schools Competitive Foods Policy

It is the policy of the Seattle School Board that all food distributed to students on District property shall meet the nutritional standards set forth in policy H66.00 Distribution of Competitive Foods (revised Sept. 2004). The school Principal or designee shall assure compliance with established standards governing all food distribution that are not within the school food service facilities. Child Nutrition Services shall assure compliance within the school food service facilities.

What this means...

- ❖ Competitive foods are any food or beverage offered or sold to students other than what is served as part of the School Meal Program (this includes food or beverages sold from vending machines, student stores, or offered or sold by parent groups, student groups, teachers, or others).
- ❖ The sale of competitive foods and beverages are **not permitted** in Elementary and Middle Schools until the conclusion of the last lunch meal period.
 - Sales originating from vending machines, student stores, parent groups, student groups, teachers, or others are **not permitted** before meal periods (including breakfast), between meal periods, outside the cafeteria during meals periods or in the hallways, classrooms, playgrounds, or other common areas until after the last meal period concludes.
 - The sale of competitive foods and beverages are permitted at High Schools as long as nutrition and portion size standards are met (see below).



Competitive foods must meet the following *nutrition standards*:

- ❖ Total fat content must be less than or equal to 30% of total calories per serving (not including seeds and nuts)
- ❖ Saturated fat content must be less than or equal to 10% of total calories per serving
- ❖ Sugar content must be less than or equal to 15 grams per serving (not including fresh, dried or frozen fruits and vegetables)

Competitive foods must meet the following *portion size* guidelines:

- ❖ Beverages (except water or milk) – 12 oz. or less
- ❖ Snacks – 1.25 oz. or less
- ❖ Cookies/cereal bars – 2 oz. or less
- ❖ Bakery items – 3 oz. or less
- ❖ Frozen desserts – 3 oz. or less
- ❖ Yogurts – 8 oz. or less
- ❖ Other items should be no larger than the portions of those foods served as part of the school meal program

Beverages must meet the following guidelines:

- ❖ Contain less than or equal to 15 grams of added sugar per serving
- ❖ Contain no caffeine
- ❖ 100% fruit juice or products sweetened with 100% fruit juice are allowed as long as the portion size doesn't exceed 12 oz.
- ❖ Non-fat and 1% chocolate milk with greater than 15 grams of added sugar per serving is allowed with a portion size limit of 16 oz.

Class Parties and Celebrations

Policy H66.01 states that occasional class parties and celebrations are exempt from the above standards but strongly ***recommends*** that healthier options at these events be encouraged.

❖ *Please consider the following when planning events that include food:*

- At school and at home kids are frequently offered food as a reward for good behavior. Using food as a reward can be a quick, easy and inexpensive tool to bring about short-term behavior change. However, using this technique has negative consequences that go far beyond the short-term benefits of good behavior or performance.
- One disadvantage of using food as a reward is that it may interfere with kids learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety cues. As a result, kids learn to eat when they are not hungry as a reward to themselves, and this may contribute to the development of disordered eating.
- Additionally, using food as a reward can undermine nutrition education being taught in the school environment, encourage the over consumption of foods high in added sugar and fat, and may generally contribute to poor health.
- Foods used as rewards typically provide little for kids in the way of nutritional value and these foods (i.e. cookies, candy, popcorn) can contribute to health problems for children such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension and cavities.
- Food rewards also provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices.

Food-related Fundraisers

Schools encourage healthy eating habits by avoiding the cookie and candy bar sales as well as unhealthy food-related fundraisers. Student's lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. When unhealthy foods are sold "for a good cause," students may think that such foods are a healthy part of a balanced diet. However, cookies and candy bars have little nutritional value, and using them in fundraisers contributes to poor eating habits.

Resources...

- ❖ **Child Nutrition Services** 206-252-0675
Anita Finch, R.D., Director ajfinch@seattleschools.org
Wendy Weyer, R.D., Quality Control Supervisor weweyer@seattleschools.org
Kirsten Frandsen, STEPS Nutrition Educator kifrandsen@seattleschools.org
- ❖ **Healthy Snack Calculator** – Site allows you to enter information from a snack's food label to determine if it meets the Seattle School Districts Nutrition Standards.
www.seattleschools.org/area/nutrition-svc/calculator/calculator.dxml
- ❖ **Healthy Celebration, Fundraising & Reward Suggestions**
 - **www.publichealthadvocacy.org/resources/Fundraising.pdf**
A creative list of fund-raising ideas for schools.
 - **www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructive_rewards.pdf**
Constructive classroom rewards: promoting good habits while protecting children's health. This link includes food alternatives for rewards, like school supplies, eating outside for lunch; "no homework" passes, choosing class activities, reading the school-wide morning announcements, etc.
 - **www.phi.org/pdf-library/lean-pb3.pdf**
This document offers suggestions on fundraising including success stories around the nation. It also offers alternative fundraising ideas including auctions, brick sale with engraved donor names, spring clean up in the community where students are paid hourly to help community members and non-food sales.
 - **http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/snacks_summary.pdf**
The Center for Science in the Public Interest, with input from experts and parents, has developed two new resources with healthy snack ideas for parents, teachers, after school programs, and other caregivers. This is a 1-page version that can be used as a handout or model newsletter article. (Geared towards elementary age students)
 - **http://cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/healthy_school_snacks.pdf**
This is the more detailed document from the Center of Science in the Public Interest. (Geared towards elementary age students)
 - **http://depts.washington.edu/waschool/Background_Examples.html#Nutr**
This website was developed by a healthy schools team in Washington state to identify resources to help students, parents, schools and district officials, and community members work together to make it easier for children to choose health-promoting foods, be physically active and be ready to learn at school.
- ❖ **Success Stories**
 - **<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/Making-It-Happen/index.htm>**
Making It Happen – School Nutrition Success Stories (MIH) illustrates a wide variety of approaches that schools have taken to improve student nutrition. The most consistent theme emerging from these case studies is that students will buy and consume healthful foods and beverages – and schools can make money from healthful options.
 - **<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/pdf/facts.pdf>**
This link is a clear summary of facts related to nutrition and the health of young people by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Division of Adolescent and School Health.