



APPROACH 3 Make More Healthful Foods and Beverages Available

Aptos Middle School, San Francisco, California

- 860 to 900 students in San Francisco's most racially diverse middle school
- 36.5 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available
- Establish nutrition standards for competitive foods

Words of wisdom

“It’s not enough to have foods that aren’t bad for kids; we want foods and beverages to actually be good for them. Our motto is: No empty calories!!”

— **Dana Woldow**, Parent and Chair, Aptos Student Nutrition Committee

Key changes and results**Reported by Dana Woldow, Parent and Chair, Aptos Student Nutrition Committee**

As a pilot project for San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), Aptos Middle School has made significant changes in its vending and à la carte foodservice programs:

- All soft drinks have been removed from the vending machines located in the physical education (PE) department and replaced with bottled water. Students are buying more units of water than they used to buy soft drinks. Since the larger water bottles sell at a higher price, vending machine revenues in the PE department have increased since the change was made. [See article *Waistlines and Bottom Lines* at <http://pasaorg.tripod.com/nutrition/pdfs/science.pdf>.]
- Soft drinks have been removed from the à la carte line in the cafeteria and replaced with water, milk, and 100% juice (no more than 12 ounces per serving).
- Foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) and high-fat foods, such as French fries and nachos, have been removed from cafeteria meals. During the 2002-2003 school year, high-fat/high-sugar foods were also removed from the à la carte line and replaced with fresh, healthier options and more appropriate portion sizes.

- New food options include turkey sandwiches, sushi, homemade soup, salads, and baked chicken with rice.
- Since the changes, à la carte sales have remained similar to sales before the changes. Net revenues have increased, however, because food costs are lower for the healthier items. The Aptos cafeteria ended the 2002-2003 year with a surplus of \$6,000.
- Since the nutrition changes were implemented, administrators and teachers report better student behavior after lunch, fewer afternoon visits to the counseling office, less litter in the school yard, and more students sitting down to eat. Aptos Middle School also reported higher scores on standardized tests.
- The “Healthy Food, Healthy Kids” policy at Aptos won an award from the State of California.
- Changes made at Aptos have been implemented throughout the SFUSD for the school year 2003-2004.

Keys to success

- **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:** Many high level administrators are now aware of nutrition issues and are supportive of innovative solutions.
- **BUY-IN FROM STUDENTS:** It is essential to consider student customers and to educate them on what is realistic and possible—given the constraints of budget, space, and personnel.
- **PROVIDING POPULAR ITEMS:** When asked, students will identify nutritious foods that they want to buy and eat.
- **CAFETERIA STAFF:** They were willing to work hard at making creative changes. They reported a sense of relief at being able to serve more health-enhancing items.
- **ELECTRONIC MEETINGS:** E-mail communication united the parent-teacher committee. It increased participation and allowed the group to reach consensus quickly and easily.

Description

The impetus for change at Aptos Middle School came from a new principal, a new physical education department head, and a dedicated group of parent and teacher volunteers. Their efforts came together and with the support of the San Francisco superintendent of schools, became a pilot study for district-wide changes. [See school board resolution, page 281.]

According to parent volunteer Dana Woldow, Aptos principal Linal Ishibashi deserves most of the credit. Her vision for a new and improved nutrition program provided the motivation for other steps to take place. For example, the new PE department head decided to remove soft drinks from the machines in her department and replace them with water.

Ms. Woldow discussed the quality of cafeteria food with the SFUSD superintendent, who suggested that she write up a proposal for a pilot project. With strong support from the administration, a committee on nutrition composed of parents and teachers was formed to lead the changes. This group met electronically (via e-mail) to share concerns and data and to reach consensus on appropriate changes for Aptos Middle School. The committee conducted a student survey to find out what foods the kids wanted to see in à la carte lines. Their preferences closely matched the parents' vision of "more fresh foods." The most popular choices were submarine sandwiches, California roll (sushi), soup, pasta, and smoothies.

In close collaboration with a creative cafeteria supervisor, the committee researched products and ingredients to offer students healthful versions of the foods they wanted to purchase. This process presented both opportunities and challenges. In several cases, food suppliers and manufacturers were willing to adapt their products to meet the nutrition committee's standards (for example, sushi). However, it has not been possible, at least so far, to find some options with appropriate ingredients at an acceptable price (for example, smoothies).

Fruit options for students, beyond apples, oranges, and bananas, were expanded. Students were very receptive to kiwifruit, as well as grapes, strawberries, and melons. Jicama, raw broccoli, spinach, and romaine lettuce appeared in salads.

The sample plan used at Aptos has been implemented district-wide. All food served or sold in cafeterias (meal and à la carte) had to meet new standards by August 2003, while all vending machines, fundraising sales, and any other food sold outside cafeterias had to meet the standards by January 2004.

To implement the changes, the district formed a student nutrition and physical activity committee in spring 2003 to develop a plan to improve school foods by August 2003; several members of the Aptos nutrition committee were on the district committee. District-wide, the trend appears to be a move away from à la carte purchases and toward the National School Lunch Program.

Future plans

- The ultimate goal is to combine the à la carte line with reimbursable meal service to eliminate the stigma of “free lunch” and to improve overall nutrient intake.
- Another goal is to add more fruits and vegetables to à la carte options. Students want a salad bar, but concerns about food sanitation and food fights have kept this from becoming a reality.
- The plan is to phase out empty-calorie juice drinks by using exotic or blended juices (e.g., mango, passion fruit) as a way to help introduce more variety in whole fruits.

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Byfield Elementary School, Bristol, Rhode Island

- 186 students (K-3) on East Bay in southeastern Rhode Island
- 32 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available
- Adopt marketing techniques to promote healthful choices

Words of wisdom

“It’s important to look outside the box. Prior to initiating this program, people thought that students would never eat rice cakes or yogurt as a snack. After almost two years in our program, students cannot get enough of them.”

—*Maggie Giunta, Foodservice Director, Aramark Food Services*

“Take baby steps, rather than trying to change everything at once. Start by adding one nutrient-rich snack at every event, like a fresh fruit tray at parent meetings. Involve students in any change you make, like sample days when kids can try out the healthier choices.”

—*Stewart Armstrong, Principal (2002-2003)*

Key changes and results

Reported by Stewart Armstrong, former Principal and Maggie Giunta, RD, LDN, Foodservice Director, Aramark Food Services, Bristol Warren School District

With the help of parents, teachers, and administrators, Byfield Elementary School focused on incorporating healthier snacks into their school nutrition environment.

- Classroom parties have switched to 100% juice or water, cheese/cracker trays, and vegetables with dip, as well as items such as animal and graham crackers, fruit cups, and multi-grain bars. Chips and sweetened drinks are no longer allowed at classroom events.

- Byfield School worked with its foodservice company to sell only 100% juice, water, and milk in all district elementary schools. The company holds “sample” days each year, a popular event, so students can try healthful items. They replaced water ices and ice cream with 100% juice freezes and frozen yogurt. All high-fat snacks have been replaced with bagel chips, popcorn, and animal crackers. The afterschool program now serves 100% juice, milk, fresh fruit, and air-popped popcorn.
- Each classroom has supplies of pretzels and/or animal crackers stored in a plastic container for any student without food at group snack time.
- Meetings and programs involving parents offer fresh fruits and vegetables and have featured a chef at the evening meetings. The school provides parents with suggestions for nutrient-dense snacks to send to school. Nutrient-rich snacks are encouraged with stickers and rewards.
- During the first year of the program, income from à la carte items did decrease \$5 to \$10 per day. However, the school felt that the benefit of a wholesome snack program (increased nutrition awareness, decreased fat and sugar intake, and overall healthier diets) outweighed the first-year deficit. During the second year, sales recovered and average daily revenue increased slightly above original levels. This higher level was maintained during the third year.

Keys to success

- **TEAMWORK:** Comprehensive school health committee providing multi-disciplinary commitment to improving the nutrition environment
- **COOPERATION:** Mutual support from the administration and school food director (contract company)
- **PARENT INVOLVEMENT:** Generous parent group in a small school community

Description

Over the past two years, Byfield Elementary has tackled snacking on many fronts. With support from parents, teachers, administrators, and the community, the school established a comprehensive school health committee to review current practices and make changes as necessary. After setting goals for a nutritious

snack program, an extensive marketing campaign was implemented, including new signs, health information on the backs of menus, Nutrition Month snack sampling events, and food advisory sub-committee meetings.

Recognizing the importance of school stakeholders in the process of improving nutrition, Byfield provided opportunities to educate and involve staff, parents, and students about healthier snacking. Here are some of the ways that the school reached out to key groups.

- **STAFF:** The opportunities for staff involvement included a Team Nutrition Wellness workshop, a presentation on “Healthy Eating Across the Curriculum,” and a health fair for the entire school.
- **PARENTS:** Family involvement in the healthy snacking program took place on multiple levels. Healthful options were offered at regular parent meetings and parents were invited to join the district food advisory council. Evening parent programs also featured nutrition: breakfast was the focus of a parent nutrition show at math/science night, and milk moustaches were part of a calcium promotion at family book night.
- **STUDENTS:** Physical education and nutrition activities are an integral part of all grade levels at Byfield Elementary. Special events and targeted programs have also become part of the regular curriculum, including a nutrition education curriculum called “Snack Attack” for grades 1 and 3, a Hispanic foods and nutrition unit for grade 3, and Jazzercise classes for grade 2.

Future plans

- Continue commitment to the comprehensive school health committee, the district-wide nutrition advisory committee, and to nutrition education in the cafeteria and classroom.
- Introduce a “Dairy Dollars” incentive program linked to the mathematics curriculum, featuring coupons redeemable for milk and yogurt (grant application in progress).
- Implement policies for food-related fundraising programs and healthy classroom snacks, along with a “Caught Eating Healthy” program with rewards.
- Increase options in school meals programs with grab-and-go breakfasts and soup-and-salad lunches, as well as a morning milk service in classrooms.

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Central Middle School, Whitefish, Montana

- 660 to 700 students in northwest Montana
- 25 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available

Words of wisdom

“You cannot put a price on the benefits of good nutrition. I have supported these changes in our school nutrition environment because I believe that this could be the missing link to a better learning environment and improved academic achievement. If we want our kids to do better on a regular basis, we need to offer them healthier choices.”

—*Kim Anderson, Principal*

Key changes and results

Reported by Kim Anderson, Principal

Over the past 3 years, Central Middle School has made substantial changes in its school nutrition environment, including major changes in school vending.

- All soft drinks have been removed from vending machines and replaced with bottled water and 100% juices. Candy has been removed from vending machines and à la carte sales. No candy is available for sale to students during school hours.
- The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) purchased a \$4,000 vending machine for the school’s foodservice program. The machine is stocked daily with milk, yogurt, pudding, string cheese, beef jerky, baked chips, and fruit. All profits go to the school’s foodservice program.
- Healthful à la carte offerings in the lunchroom now include homemade pretzels, bagels, and salads, as well as sandwiches, baked chips, and fresh fruit.
- The lunchtime recess schedule was changed in 2002-2003. All students now have recess before lunch, with noted improvements in afternoon academics.

- Net proceeds from vending and à la carte sales have stayed the same, or increased slightly. Total sales dollars have decreased. However, the higher profit margins for healthier items (as compared to candy and soft drinks) mean that the net proceeds to the school's foodservice program are higher than before the changes were made.
- Lunchroom discipline problems have decreased—from 183 per year (before changes) to only 36 in the first 8 months of the 2002-2003 school year.
- After-lunch referrals to the principal's office (for classroom and other behavior problems) have also decreased—from 96 referrals (in 2001-2002) to just 22 referrals in the first 8 months of the 2002-2003 school year.
- Teachers report improved student behavior and attentiveness during fifth period classes (immediately after lunch). According to one teacher, "Students are now rested, relaxed, and ready to learn." One math teacher reports that she has "gained 10 minutes in instruction time" per class period (equal to 30 hours per year).

Keys to success

- **DATA COLLECTION:** Collected evidence (garbage) and data (numbers of discipline and behavior problems reported in the lunchroom and after lunch)
- **INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY:** Built awareness and involved stakeholders (parents, foodservice staff, and students)

Description

According to Principal Kim Anderson, "It all started with the garbage." While looking into concerns about trash on the school grounds, Anderson realized that Central students were consuming large amounts of candy, chips, soft drinks, and snacks instead of eating the nutritious school breakfast and lunch meals served in the cafeteria.

Around the same time, Mr. Anderson was introduced to the Healthy School Nutrition Environment concept at a Team Nutrition presentation. He saw the link between nutrition—what students were, and were not, eating and drinking—and school behavior: discipline issues, classroom management, and the overall learning environment.

As principal, Mr. Anderson first introduced parents to *Changing the Scene* by building awareness. He involved the PTA in identifying the problem (foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value) and providing a solution (purchase of a vending machine to be stocked with positive choices by Central's foodservice program).

Over the past 3 years, there has been a complete overhaul of Central Middle School's nutrition philosophy and environment. The changes include healthful options in vending machines and à la carte lines, active promotion of breakfast, recess before lunch, and a cafeteria recycling program (to solve the garbage and trash problem).

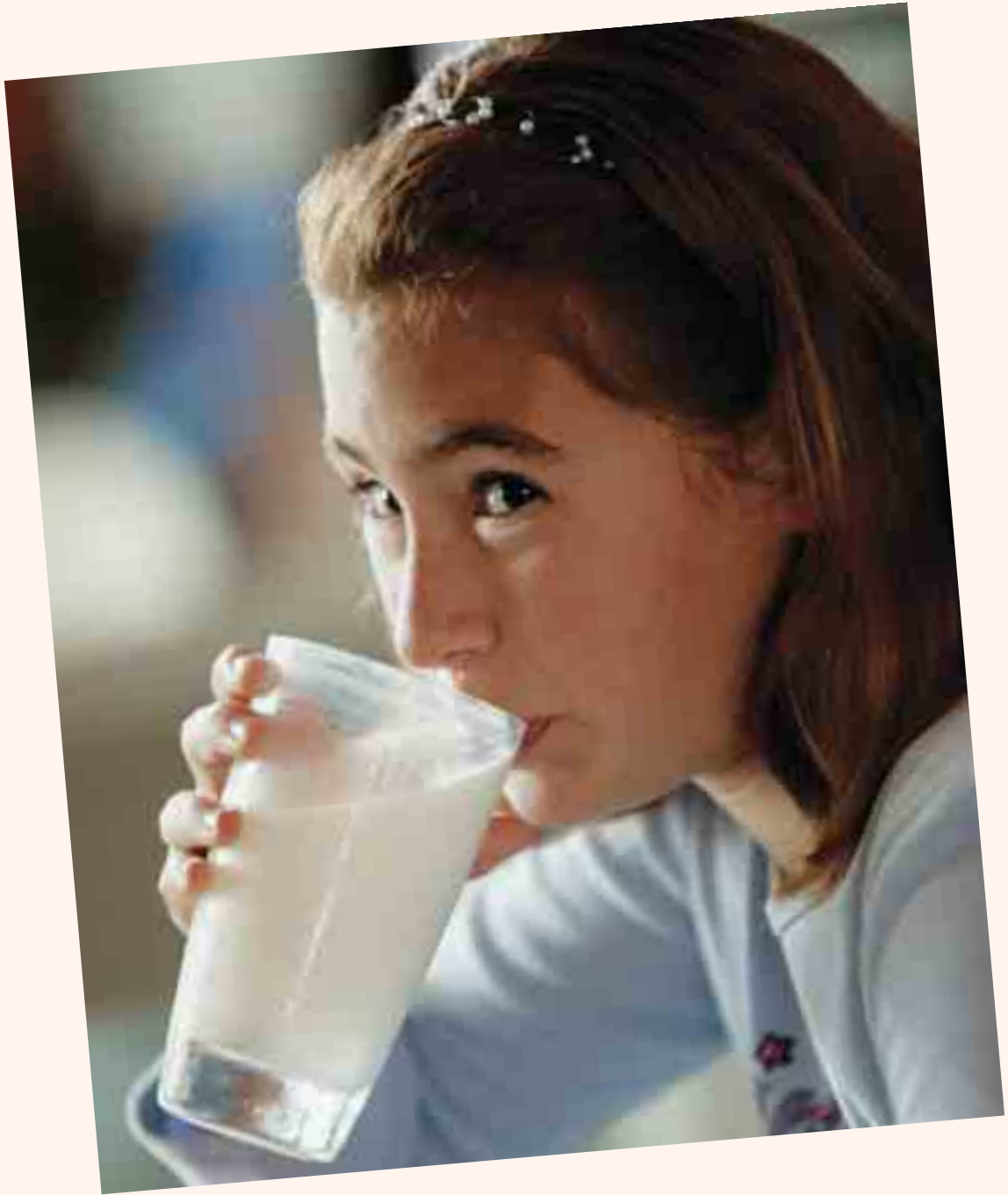
Mr. Anderson recognizes the importance of developing written policies and standards to ensure a healthy school nutrition environment. He notes that changes cannot be based on the leadership of just one person or the commitment of a few parents and staff: "It has to become part of who you are as a school community."

Future plans

- Develop a written nutrition policy to be included in student handbooks distributed to every family at the beginning of the school year.
- Develop nutrition standards for vending and à la carte options.
- Possible purchase of more vending machines (based on sales and market analysis).

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Cortland Enlarged City School District, Cortland, New York

- 2,859 students in central New York State, south of Syracuse
- 38 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available
- Limit student access to competitive foods
- Establish nutrition standards for competitive foods
- Adopt marketing techniques to promote healthful choices

Words of wisdom

“Nutritional messages throughout the entire school environment must be consistent. Dissonant nutritional messages lead to disregard of the health messages. This means that everything from foodservice to vending machines to fundraisers must broadcast the same message. The only way this can be achieved is through ongoing teamwork.”

—*Jeanette Dippo, Health Education and Wellness Coordinator*

Key changes and results

Reported by Jeanette Dippo, Health Education and Wellness Coordinator

- In 2001, the board of education approved the district’s first comprehensive nutrition policy. The policy includes provisions in support of nutrition education, a healthy school nutrition environment, staff development on nutrition issues, quality of school meals, parent and community involvement, and school-based screening, counseling, and referral for nutrition-related problems. [See Nutrition Policy, page 285.]
- Improvements have been made in the quality of snacks and vending machine fare available in all district buildings. For example, pretzels, trail mix, and granola bars have been substituted for chips. Milk machines with low-fat items will be available to students at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year.

- Fruit and Veggie Sampling Days are available in all elementary schools and to participants in Club PED programs, a walking club for secondary students who do not participate in other school activities.
- The foodservice program posts the nutritional value of meals and snacks and provides fresh fruits and veggies for the Wednesday Wellness Wagon offered to elementary students. A section of the cafeteria at the secondary school, named the Health Bar, is reserved for more nutritious fare.
- None of the elementary schools have student vending machines, and most limit student access to high-fat/high-sugar snacks in their buildings, such as limiting ice cream to one day per week. Elementary teachers provide lists of healthier choices for parents to consider when sending snacks to school.
- Students developed a color-code system for identifying healthful and less healthful snacks.
- Students display nutrition-related projects from their junior and senior high health classes in display cases outside the cafeteria.
- A school nurse and a social worker in the secondary building were specially trained to work with students with nutrition-related problems such as eating disorders.
- The District Wellness Team offered weight management programs to staff all year round.
- Cortland Schools believe that improving physical fitness goes hand in hand with a sound nutrition program. On-going programs include Club PED, community walking programs, Jazzercise and yoga classes for staff, family fun nights in the elementary schools, and fitness room facilities for staff and students.
- The district is partnering with the State University of Cortland in a research project funded by the National Institutes of Health to provide an accurate picture of the K-6 population in New York State regarding problems of weight.
- In 2004, the district, in partnership with the Parent Teacher Awareness Group prepared a position paper and PowerPoint presentation on "Improving School Foods and Beverages". [See excerpts from the position paper, page 291.]
- The Healthy School Teams in all schools completed their second school report card (conducted every three years) on the district-wide Comprehensive School Health and Wellness Program, using the Mariner Model planning system

(www.marinermodel.com). From 2000 to 2003, the district's overall score on its efforts to improve nutritional choices improved 19 points or 27 percent. The school foodservices score improved 15 points or 21 percent during the same time period. Efforts to promote physical fitness and wellness improved 17 points or 19 percent. [See Health Report Card, page 287.]

- Cortland received an Eat Well Play Hard Award from the New York State Department of Health for increasing the consumption of 1% or less milk for low-fat dairy products, increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among students, and increasing developmentally appropriate physical activity.

Keys to success

- **Vision** of a coordinated school health program
- **Administrative support** from the board of education, superintendent, and principals
- **Partnerships** with community agencies, staff, parents, and students
- **Teamwork** in each building and district-wide
- **Baseline data** to demonstrate improvements upon repeat assessment
- **Financial support** through mini-grants such as the Healthy Heart Coalition

Description

In 1999, the district's health coordinator participated in the National School Health Coordinator Leadership Institute, a training program sponsored by the American Cancer Society. This training cemented the district's commitment to a coordinated school health program in which the school and community worked together to help young people avoid risky behaviors and become better learners and higher achievers. The vision was further developed using CDC's *School Health Index* as an assessment tool and NASBE's *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn* for sample policies.

The key changes and results described above indicate the impact that the coordinated school health program has had on nutrition policies and practices across the district. In addition to district-wide changes, specific schools have implemented their own programs:

- Third grade students from one school visit a culinary arts program to observe how meals are planned and prepared. They simulate eating in a fine restaurant,

ordering from the menu, taste testing a variety of items, practicing table manners, and while dining, discussing the whole experience.

- Another elementary school implemented a student hydration program that provides water bottles to all students. The school also limits snacks of minimal nutritional value, offers only 1% or skim milk, and uses whole-wheat bread for all sandwiches.

Future plans

- Expand fitness/walking programs for students and staff.
- Complete the CDC's *School Health Index*.
- Install low-fat milk vending machines and promote with a "Got Milk?" campaign.
- Offer workshops so staff can analyze their own dietary and activity levels just as students do in health classes.
- Consult with Cornell Cooperative Extension and Cortland Memorial Hospital dietary services to continue enhancing Cortland schools' foodservices programs.

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Ennis Public Schools, Ennis, Montana

- 370 students, northwest of Yellowstone National Park on the Madison River
- 28 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available
- Adopt marketing techniques to promote healthful choices

Words of wisdom

“Kids come first and whatever benefits their learning activity should be a priority.”

—*Doug Walsh, Superintendent*

“The kids are our customers. Our goals are to keep them happy, to help them learn how to eat healthier, and to feed their bodies so that their minds can grow. No one can learn on an empty stomach.”

—*Tammy Wham, Foodservice Supervisor*

Key changes and results

Reported by Doug Walsh, Superintendent

In the summer of 2002, the Ennis School Board made a decision to improve its school nutrition environment by removing candy and soft drinks from vending machines.

- At the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year, candy vending machines were removed from all school buildings. Soft drinks were removed from beverage vending machines, which were then stocked with water and juice.
- All vending machine signs were changed to remove soft drink company logos and to highlight generic pictures of active kids.
- School meals have also been improved by making them more appealing to students and by offering a wider variety of healthful choices, such as homemade

pasta, taco, and salad bars. The school foodservice program has focused on promoting a friendly, customer-oriented environment in the cafeteria.

- Since the changes were made, high school student participation in the school lunch program has increased, and students and parents report greater satisfaction with the foodservice program. Students are happier and more at ease in the cafeteria. Parents feel confident that their children are getting a wholesome, delicious meal.
- Although the revenue from the vending machines is less than in the past (due to the absence of the candy machine), the overall revenue from the school nutrition programs has grown substantially. This increase is due to greater participation in school breakfast and lunch programs.

Keys to success

- **COMMITMENT:** The school board did not entertain any other options regarding changes in the contents of vending machines. Thus everyone, including teachers and staff, knew that soft drinks and candy were out.
- **ROLE MODELING:** Adults “walk the talk” in terms of positive behaviors.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:** The superintendent was a champion for school meal programs.
- **EXCELLENCE IN FOODSERVICE:** The foodservice program used a four-point plan to achieve change:
 1. Kids are involved; ask them what they would like.
 2. Offer nutritious choices.
 3. Have a fun atmosphere.
 4. Make the kids feel welcome and wanted.

Description

In the summer of 2002, the Ennis School Board decided to remove soft drink and candy machines from Ennis schools. Their action was based on the connection between student achievement and nutrition. The school board asked the question: do high-fat/high-sugar, caffeine-containing foods and beverages contribute to the learning process? Since the answer was “no,” the board decided to remove them from Ennis schools.

At the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year, candy machines were removed from all Ennis schools. Beverage vending machines were stocked with water and juice, and machine signs were changed to remove brand logos. The board decided not to replace the candy machines because they wanted to promote participation in the school nutrition programs and the candy machines were in direct competition with that effort.

The Ennis school foodservice program took the initiative to offer exceptional school meals to their students. With the goal of providing more healthful choices, they wanted to go beyond the “ordinary” choices and to focus on creative, appealing, kid-friendly options. The reason is obvious: “Kids eat with their eyes first,” says Tammy Wham, foodservice manager.

At Ennis schools, students are now offered choices on daily food bars, including a deli bar where students can make their own fresh sandwiches; a salad bar that looks like it is “out of a gourmet magazine” (no iceberg lettuce in a bag here!); and a specialty bar on Fridays (e.g., taco bar, soup bar, pasta bar). At breakfast a fruit bar is offered daily. There are no fried foods in the Ennis cafeteria. Everything is baked fresh daily, including sandwich rolls, dinner rolls, buns, and homemade desserts.

The Ennis cafeteria is focused on the needs of its customers. Foodservice employees are friendly and attentive to students’ needs. They ask for student input on menu items while kids are going through the line—so that students know their feedback is important and taken seriously by the staff.

Future plans

- Increase fresh fruit and vegetable options.
- Continual self-assessment for continual improvement.

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APPROACH 3 Make More Healthful Foods and Beverages Available

**Green Bay Area Public School District,
Green Bay, Wisconsin**

- 20,000 students district-wide in northeastern Wisconsin
- 39 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available
- Adopt marketing techniques to promote healthful choices

Words of wisdom

“Foodservice departments are many times hesitant to stop serving ‘junk’ à la carte items because there is the misconception that these are the only foods that bring in revenue. When appealing, healthful alternatives are offered, students do purchase these items, which contribute revenue to school meal programs. When à la carte options are limited, students have a greater incentive to participate in the school meal program, which can bring in significant revenue to school foodservice operations and enhance student nutrition.”

—**Sara Schmitz, RD, Quality Assurance Specialist, Green Bay Public Schools (GBPS)**

Key changes and results**Reported by Sara Schmitz, RD, Quality Assurance Specialist, GBPS**

- To enhance the school nutrition environment, the Green Bay foodservice department has incorporated many nutrient-rich options into their offerings. Low-nutrient items have been removed from à la carte lines and replaced with healthful alternatives such as fresh fruit and veggie trays, baked chips, and bagels. At the same time, à la carte space has been turned into additional school lunch lines with an increased emphasis on nutritious, appealing school meals.
- All foods sold in the cafeteria (school meals and à la carte) have been analyzed for nutrient content. Nutrition fact cards have been created for all items served and

are posted on the serving line. Students can easily access this information while making food choices. Nutrition lessons were presented to students to educate them about using the fact cards and to encourage them to make smarter choices.

- Deep-fat fryers have been removed from all middle schools. High school menu items are prepared by baking instead of frying whenever possible.
- The central kitchen introduced whole-wheat flour blends in baked products to increase student intake of fiber and unrefined carbohydrates.
- When low-nutrient foods were removed from à la carte lines and replaced with healthful alternatives, daily à la carte revenue decreased by an average of 18 percent. However, the decreased emphasis on à la carte sales prompted a 15 percent increase in school meal participation! The revenue generated by the additional school meals more than **doubled** the lost à la carte revenue. Therefore, bottom-line dollars for school foodservice have increased overall.
- Students have been observed using the nutrition cards to make positive food choices in the cafeteria. Foodservice workers report student remarks such as *"I'm not going to choose this as often because it has more fat in it"* or *"Today I'm picking a food with a few more calories because I'm playing in a basketball game tonight."*
- A pilot project using a refrigerated vending machine in one high school sells sandwiches, salads, wraps, fresh fruits and vegetables, yogurt, bagels, and milk. Depending on the level of sales, such machines may be introduced to all secondary schools.
- The foodservice department partnered with a local hospital and other community partners to fund "The Opera of Health," a nutrition education assembly program, for 20 elementary schools.
- Fifty percent of employees participated in a staff wellness challenge for the school foodservice department. The challenges included eating five fruits and vegetables per day, drinking eight glasses of water, eating breakfast, walking 10,000 or more steps per day, and exercising. The program has become a model program for all staff members in the Green Bay Public School District.

Keys to success

- **STAFF SUPPORT:** Willingness of head cooks to offer new menu items
- **PRODUCT INNOVATION:** Proactive response from food and beverage vendors developing alternative products to meet student needs (favorable taste profile PLUS nutritious)
- **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:** Backing of administration and principals
- **STUDENT INVOLVEMENT:** Input from student advisory boards

Description

In planning for the 2002-2003 school year, the Green Bay school foodservice department decided to revise its mission statement to state that “positive nutrition habits have a direct impact on both student health and student learning.” Its mission now includes serving healthy meals, as well as “providing all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make life-long and enjoyable food choices.” To live up to this statement, personnel needed to make some key changes in the foods served and to provide education that teaches students how to make smart food choices.

They started by making small changes, using one middle school as a pilot. Working with student advisory boards gave them an opportunity to explain the reasons for making food and beverage choices and to solicit input from students. Their biggest concern was that the removal of high-fat/high-sugar à la carte items would result in a significant loss of revenue.

However, through monitoring of meal participation and à la carte sales, they were able to document an **overall increase** in school foodservice revenue. The students benefited from healthier choices—and the foodservice program benefited from a healthier bottom line. Now, the changes are in effect in all nine secondary schools throughout the district.

The on-going changes in Green Bay schools are supported by a number of key players, including the foodservice staff, who are working through changes in food and beverage offerings and providing insights on how and what to serve; student leaders, who provide suggestions for potential menu items and explain cafeteria changes to their peers; administrators, who support the decision to improve the school nutrition environment and encourage students to make good choices; and parents, who help to model these positive eating behaviors at home.

Future plans

- Track quantitative data to assess the impact of the improved school nutrition environment on student behavior and academic performance.
- Collaborate with administrators to promote positive eating experiences (e.g., enough time to eat lunch, appropriate ways to control noise, recess before lunch).

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Nutrition Cards

Cinnamon Raisin Bagel	
Portion	1
Calories	290
Fat	3 g
Carbohydrates	57 g
Fiber	3 g

Chicken Fajita Salad	
Portion	1
Calories	172
Fat	5 g
Carbohydrates	16 g
Fiber	2 g

Chili	
Portion	8 oz.
Calories	216
Fat	7.5 g
Carbohydrates	21 g
Fiber	4 g



Hampden Academy (public high school), Hampden, Maine

- 740 students, just south of Bangor in eastern Maine
- 10 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available

Key changes and results

Reported by Chris Greenier, MS, RD, LD, Food Service Director and John Plourde, School Health Coordinator

The school health coordinator and foodservice director collaborated to incorporate healthier vending options at the Hampden Academy. They began in spring 2002 by making a presentation to administrators. Their next step was to work with student council representatives as a “taste test” panel, using samples provided by local vendors from a list of healthier snacks and beverages. This process was fun for the students and beneficial for developing an appealing product line for the entire student body.

All candy, fried snacks, and soft drinks were eliminated from vending machines at the beginning of the 2002 school year. Machines now feature bottled water, 100% juices, sport drinks, baked chips, multigrain bars, raisins/dried fruit, canned fruit, fresh fruit, and yogurt. Although sales decreased initially, they have returned to the same level as previous years. There has been no negative feedback from students or staff on the nutrition changes made at Hampden Academy.

For more information, contact:

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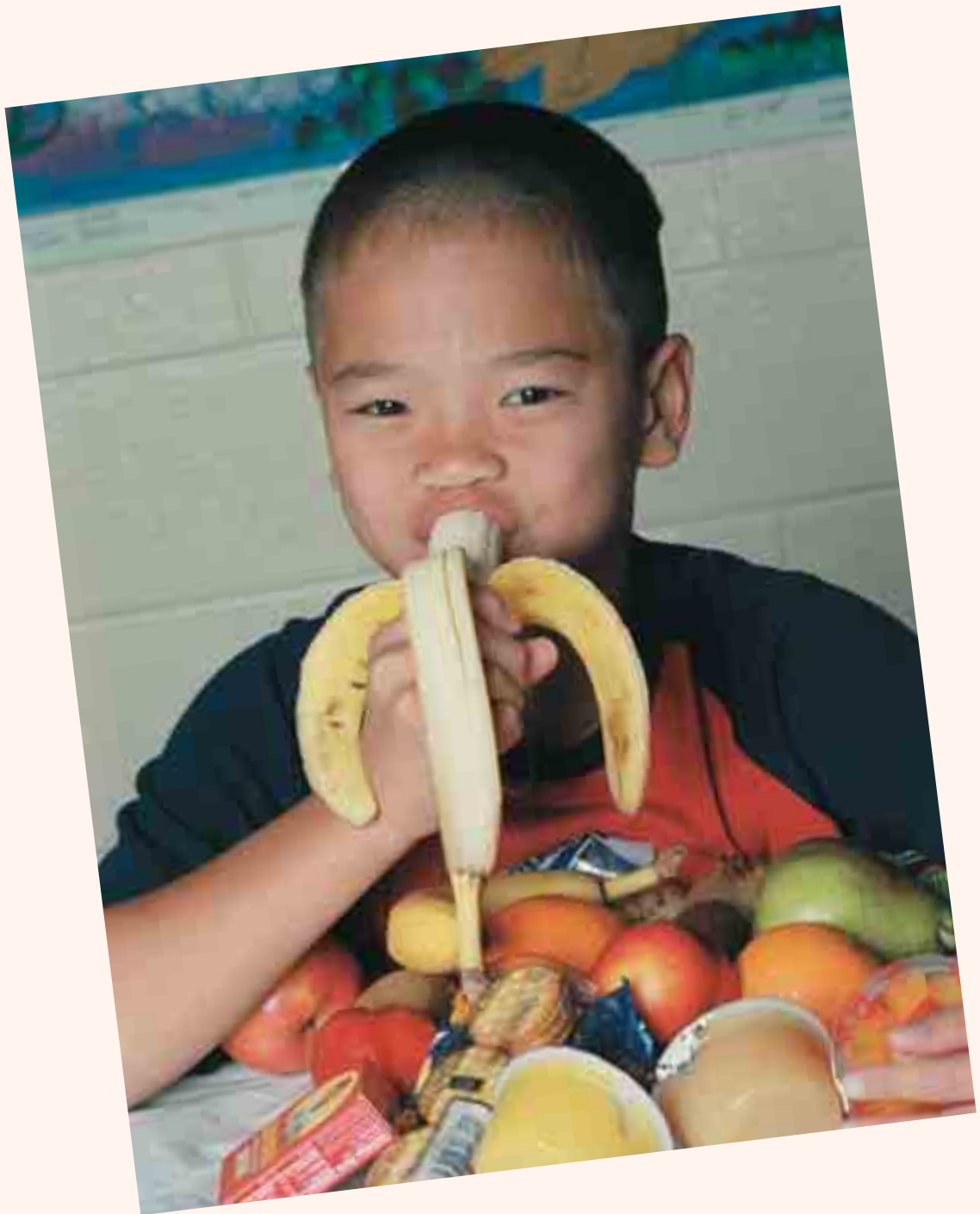
MSAD #22

28a Main Road South

Hampden, Maine 04444

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SUCCESS STORY





Ronan School District #30, Ronan, Montana

- 1,352 students on the Flathead Indian Reservation
- 64 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available

Words of wisdom

“Use what is given to you the best way that you can. Children eat with their eyes, so provide foods that are colorful and fun for them. Serve fresh fruits and vegetables in a way that children will enjoy them.”

—*Marsha Wartick, Food Service Supervisor*

Key changes and results

Reported by Marsha Wartick, Food Service Supervisor

- By using commodity food dollars to purchase fruits and vegetables through the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Purchasing Program, Ronan schools have been able to offer a wide variety of nutritious options to elementary, middle, and high school students.
- A fresh fruit bar at breakfast and a salad bar at lunch are now served daily at the middle and high schools.
- Ronan students, especially those in middle and high school, have dramatically increased their fresh fruit and vegetable intake. After signing up for the program, Ronan schools initially received small amounts of produce, but they have increased their orders as demand by students has increased.
- The students are very enthusiastic about the changes. For example, since the inception of the breakfast fruit bar, participation in the Breakfast Program has increased about 10 percent (a total of 300 to 475 students eat breakfast daily). The number of students taking fruit each day has increased from around 25 to around 150, with middle and high school students accounting for most of the increase.

- Recent improvements in the cafeteria serving line allow students to select their own food. Allowing students this freedom of choice has decreased average daily food waste from 30 percent to 10 percent.
- Because of the high percentage of free and reduced-price meals, the Afterschool Snack Program is free to all students in Ronan schools, and approximately 150 to 200 children participate each day. Healthful snacks—such as 1% milk, yogurt, cheese, apple wedges, and banana bread—are now offered daily.

Keys to success

- **USDA PROGRAM:** Ability to use commodity dollars for fruits and vegetables
- **CUSTOMER FOCUS:** Involving the students in the changes, asking for their input, and providing them with the opportunity to make their own choices
- **STAFF SUPPORT:** Encouragement and support from administrators and teachers

Description

Before the inception of the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Purchasing Program, middle and high school students who participated in the Breakfast Program took fruit only 10 to 20 percent of the time, whereas elementary students ate fruit 70 percent of the time. Older students, who wanted their food “to go” since they rarely had time to sit and eat, did not like the canned fruits eaten by the younger children.

The foodservice staff decided to address this issue by providing more options. Fresh fruit is served every morning, either as whole fruit (apples, oranges, bananas) or in a 4-ounce soufflé cup (kiwi, pineapple, pears). Fruit is arranged in baskets or on baking sheets. Special care is taken to ensure that the fruit is attractively arranged using different colors and shapes. Fruit that turns brown when cut and exposed to air (e.g., apples and pears) is dipped in a solution to maintain its fresh appearance longer.

At lunchtime, Ronan added a third service line for students with a reimbursable meal in the à la carte format. This line is designed to better serve the high percentage of Ronan students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals and

provide them with the same opportunity that other students have to enjoy the à la carte program. The new option gave students an extra incentive to stay on campus to eat.

In the Afterschool Snack Program, children are provided with a snack during the “power hour” when students read or study. Afterschool menus are varied, but 100% juice or 1% milk is offered almost every day. Student favorites include frozen yogurt, homemade chocolate chip muffins, pretzels with a peanut butter cup, homemade banana bread, branded peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and apple wedges with cheese sticks.

Ronan’s Afterschool Snack Program relies on a balance of no-cost, low-cost, and high-cost items to control expenses. Ronan uses commodities whenever possible, including fresh fruits and vegetables, salsa, trail mix, and peanut butter. Banana bread and homemade muffins are also low-cost options, especially when leftover bananas and commodity flour are used. Using lower-cost items makes it possible to provide some higher-priced favorites such as the branded peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

The Ronan School District encourages the community to become involved with the Afterschool Snack Program by having special events that include parents, teachers, and other interested community members. These events raise community awareness and support for the program. The Afterschool Snack Program allows the district to provide children with essential nutrition to get through the long wait from lunch to dinner. It also offers sustenance to the many students who might not otherwise receive a balanced meal after their school lunch.

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SUCCESS STORY

Ronan School District #30, Ronan, Montana



Ronan fruit and vegetable choices.





Southington School Lunch Program, Southington, Connecticut

- 6,500 total students between Hartford and New Haven
- 7 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available
- Adopt marketing techniques to promote healthful choices

Words of wisdom

“The way students eat today will set the precedent for the quality of health/life they will have as adults.”

—*Nya Worth, School Lunch Director*

Key changes and results

Reported by Nya Worth, School Lunch Director

Southington High School has improved the nutritional quality of foods and beverages offered to students in several ways.

- The school installed a milk vending machine in the cafeteria, with low-fat and fat-free choices, stocked by the vending company. The Child Nutrition Program keeps 20 percent of monthly sales, thus providing extra income without any added labor costs.
- At the end of the 2003 school year, the school was winding down orders of snack cakes and planned to eliminate them for the 2003-2004 school year.
- The school offers baked chips and corn chips, sunflower seeds, low-fat yogurt, trail mix, and an expanded variety of fresh fruit on the à la carte line.
- Changes occurred without financial loss and were well accepted by students.
- In 2004-2005, Southington High School and Derynoski Elementary School will participate in a Healthy Vending and Snack Pilot organized by Connecticut’s Team Nutrition Program. The goal is to promote healthier snacks without negatively impacting school revenue (www.endhungerct.org/Vending%20Policies%20Announcement.pdf).

South End Elementary School promotes vegetable consumption by using a guessing game. The foodservice director purchases different vegetables at a local farm. A vegetable is displayed in the cafeteria, and students guess its identity. The vegetable is cooked, and samples are served to students and staff. The foodservice director reports that they have stumped many adults and children and that students are more apt to try something new like kale, because it is presented in a fun way.

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APPROACH 3 Make More Healthful Foods and Beverages Available

Stratford Public Schools, Stratford, Connecticut

- 7,567 total students near Bridgeport in southwestern Connecticut
- 23 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Make more healthful foods and beverages available
- Adopt marketing techniques to promote healthful choices

Words of wisdom

"Collaboration and 'buy-in' of students and staff helped foster changes and sparked enthusiasm. This helped encourage students to try new and healthy food items."

—*Robin Rivet, General Manager, Sodexo School Services*

Key changes and results

Reported by Robin Rivet, General Manager, Sodexo School Services, Stratford Schools

As part of a comprehensive effort involving a foodservice contractor and others, Stratford Schools has made the following changes to enhance the nutrition environment:

- In secondary schools, students are buying the new items on the à la carte lines: premade salads, granola/yogurt parfaits, whole-grain breads at deli bars, vegetable pizzas, and a full line of baked chips.
- Secondary schools offered a successful program, "salad creations," where students customize their salads by choosing their toppings and dressings.
- One secondary school replaced a soft drink machine with a water and juice machine, and all beverages in the district have been reduced to 12-ounce portions.
- In elementary schools, snacks are now limited to nutrient-rich options. Carrot and celery sticks with ranch dressing were added to the menu, and special promotions were used to increase the intake of fruits and vegetables.

Keys to success

- **COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH COMMITTEE:** This committee, of which the foodservice company hired by the school is a member, has been an effective example of doing more together. The group meets monthly to share ideas and provide support for positive changes.
- **FOODSERVICE COMPANY RESOURCES:** Corporate resources have been used to augment local efforts, including a visit by a corporate chef to local schools, colorful nutrition and physical activity banners and posters, and nutrition/activity tips on every menu.
- **MATERIALS FROM USDA TEAM NUTRITION AND CONNECTICUT CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM:** Free resources from these agencies, such as posters of produce and the Food Guide Pyramid, have provided marketing and educational tools.

Description

After a training session offered by the Connecticut Child Nutrition Program, the Stratford public schools formed a comprehensive school health committee. Members include the health department director, community health service administrator, director of school nursing, director of public health nursing, high school nurse, high school health educator, director of the school-based health facility, physical education teacher, dairy council nutrition specialist, and school foodservice director. One of the committee's goals has been to limit student access to high-fat/high-sugar foods in the school setting.

As part of efforts to create healthier nutrition environments, a chef from the foodservice company spent a day at each high school demonstrating nutritious meals and introducing new menu and à la carte items to students. The event featured a grilled veggie wrap with fruit cobbler and introduced premade salads (e.g., chicken Caesar, chef), a fruit/granola/yogurt parfait, and pizza with vegetable toppings. New items are now on the à la carte line, whole-grain breads are now offered at the deli bar, and all beverages have been reduced to 12-ounce serving sizes.

In the Stratford elementary schools, snacks are now limited to healthier, lower-fat choices, such as a wide variety of baked chips. During March 2003, one elementary cafeteria conducted a fruit and vegetable challenge. Each teacher kept a running tally of the fruits and vegetables that kids ate during lunch.

According to the foodservice director, “The enthusiasm among the kids was more than I could have ever imagined. On some days, we sold eight times the usual numbers of apples! This program was the most successful that I have ever seen. I hope that it will have a lasting impact on students.”

Future plans

- Reevaluate vending and explore vending options for milk and healthier snack items. Work with athletic departments to reduce, or eliminate, availability of soft drinks in secondary schools.
- Form a committee of secondary students to discuss school cafeterias and to serve as a focus group for evaluating new menu and vending options.
- Repeat the fruit and vegetable challenge at a minimum of two elementary schools.
- Introduce a nutrition education CD-ROM to elementary schools.
- Bring the corporate chef to middle schools to promote nutrient-rich combo meals—grab-and-go items such as soup and salad, sandwich and soup, or yogurt and sandwich.
- Continue working with the school health committee to plan improvements in food offerings and to educate parents with such events as a forum on childhood obesity.

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