

Healthy Fundraisers: Food Sales During and After School



When schools promote healthy foods and beverages to fuel their student scholars, artists and athletes, they send a strong, positive message about how much they value student health and success. Food and beverage sales to students during the school day, outside of the school meals program, or after school at family or athletic events, are usually designed to raise funds by different school groups to support specific student needs and activities.

All competitive foods and beverages sold to students on campus during the school day must meet the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Smart Snacks in School* standards.* The standards do not cover items served or shared at school (such as celebrations, snacks or rewards), nor do they cover evening, weekend or community events (such as family events or concessions at sporting events).

How Can You Support Healthier Food Sales?

Even if your school is meeting the national standards for competitive foods, there is still a lot of variation in the nutritional quality of allowable items. Consider the *Smart Snacks* standards to be the base or "floor" upon which to build your school's own healthy guidelines for all food sales during and after school.

- Review the *Smart Snacks in School* rule, your school or district wellness policy and any state guidelines. Keep in mind that if your state or district standards are stricter in some areas, those would take precedence. Use your district wellness policy as a platform to build change.
- Survey what snacks and beverages are currently being sold. Find out where and when the sales are taking place, and determine who is responsible at each location. A la carte lines are usually operated by district nutrition services. Concessions, vending machines, snack carts and school stores may be run by the school administration, nutrition services, PTO/PTA, student groups, booster clubs, a sports program or another group.
- Approach groups in charge of the food sales in a friendly and professional manner to discuss the possibility of offering healthier choices. Build consensus by talking about the changes required, and offer to help find products. Cooperative purchasing between groups – and even through the district nutrition services – may be possible if groups develop a plan together.
- Work with the school or district business office to identify which contracts need amending and begin collecting contact information for vendors. Talk to your vending companies about trading less healthy options for more nutritious ones. Contract with companies that offer a wider variety of healthier choices. Cooperative purchasing between neighboring school districts may also be a way increase variety and purchasing power.

The Smart Snacks in School rule defines the "school day" as the period from midnight before, to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

What are competitive foods?

Sold in schools outside of meal programs, "competitive foods" compete for student dollars with nutritionally regulated breakfast and lunch programs. Foods and beverages sold through vending machines, a la carte lines (foods sold individually in the cafeteria), snack carts, concessions, school stores and other fundraisers are considered competitive foods.

**State agencies may set a number of infrequent food or beverage fundraisers that are exempt from the standards as long they do not take place in direct competition with breakfast or lunch programs in the food service area during meal service.*



Healthier Food Sales

Tips for Success

Many schools and school groups across the country are switching to healthier food sales (or non-food fundraisers) without negative financial implications. Consider these strategies to increase your chances for success.

- Involve students in the selection of new choices. Taste testing and new product promotions for students, staff and parents will build excitement for the new foods and beverages on campus. Communicate the changes with students, staff and parents to keep them updated, and gather feedback when possible.
- Restrict the hours that school stores and vending machines are open and available. Many schools do not allow access during breakfast and lunch service times; others block access to less nutritious items during the entire school day.
- Price healthy items cheaper than less nutritious options. Studies have found that lowering the price of fruits, vegetables and low-fat snacks resulted in a significant increase in the sales of these foods without a decrease in total revenue. (See CDC resource below: *Strong Nutrition Standards for Schools: Financial Implications*)
- Talk with local public health experts about grants or other ways to fund healthy changes.
- Convince school and community members that the changes are win-win: concessions and competitive foods will continue to make money, and students will be consuming healthier food and drink options!

HealthierUS School Challenge

Demonstrate your school's commitment to student health by taking the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSC). A voluntary certification initiative established in 2004 by the USDA, the Challenge recognizes schools that have created healthier school environments through the promotion of nutrition and physical activity. Certified schools receive recognition and monetary incentives at four award levels:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/>

Action for Healthy Kids® partners with teachers, students, parents, school wellness experts and more to fight childhood obesity, undernourishment and physical inactivity by helping schools become healthier places so kids can live healthier lives. Our programs, tools and resources make it possible for everyone to play their part in ending the nation's childhood obesity epidemic.

ActionforHealthyKids.org

The websites listed in this document are provided as a service only to identify potentially useful ideas and resources for creating healthier school cultures. Action for Healthy Kids is not responsible for maintaining these external websites, nor does the listing of these sites constitute or imply endorsement of their content.

Resources

USDA Smart Snacks in School:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks>

Smart Snacks tools from the School Nutrition Association and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation:

<http://www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks>

"Strong Nutrition Standards for Schools: Financial Implications" - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/nutrition/pdf/financial_implications.pdf

"Controlling Junk Food and the Bottom Line" - University of Illinois at Chicago and Illinois Public Health Institute:

<http://iphionline.org/center-for-policy-and-partnerships/controlling-junk-food-and-the-bottom-line/>

Action for Healthy Kids Wellness Policy Tool: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/WPTool>

Game On – Step by step guide to a healthier school includes "Eat Better" and "Move More" challenges and healthy fundraising ideas: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/GameOn>

For a comprehensive list of resources related to healthier food sales at school, visit our **Resource Clearinghouse**:

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/resource-clearing-house>

