



HEALTHY FOOD = HEALTHY SCHOOL: IMPLEMENTING THE STANDARDS OUTSIDE THE CAFETERIA

ABOUT THE STANDARDS

The *Michigan Nutrition Standards* provide the guidance for food and beverages offered and sold at school—in the cafeteria and anywhere else—and at school-related functions. They define what is considered “healthy.” When a district implements the standards, it is the responsibility of all school staff and not just the food service staff to create a supportive and healthy environment for everyone to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

THE REASON FOR STANDARDS OUTSIDE THE CAFETERIA:

Extra calories over a day, a month, or a school year add up and can contribute to childhood overweight. It is very easy to get 100 extra calories a day from non-nutrient dense, high-calorie foods that are offered or served to students at classroom parties, as rewards, or as fundraisers. For example:

- 1 piece of full sugar chewing gum has more than 50 calories and 3 ¼ tsp of sugar
- 1 roll of flavored chewable candies or a hard candy has 25 calories and 1 ½ tsp of sugar
- 1 regular sized candy bar has approximately 260 calories, almost 3 Tablespoons of sugar and 1 tablespoon of fat or oil.

**FOR ADULTS, JUST 100
CALORIES A DAY CAN ADD UP
TO AN UNWANTED WEIGHT
GAIN OF 10 POUNDS A YEAR!**

SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTING NUTRITION STANDARDS

Three school districts in Michigan piloted the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* in 2010-2012. They indicated that knowledge about the standards and consistency among all school staff is important for success.

Pilot districts reported that students adapt well to the new standards and the changes were made because of them. They also reported that the adults (school staff and parents) had a more difficult time making the changes. It was reported that with time, consistency, and regular communication adults support the changes.



For links to the underlined resources,
go to the on-line toolkit at
www.michigan.gov/nutritionstandards



FOOD FROM HOME: MEETING THE STANDARDS

WHAT THE STANDARD SAYS: Encourage parents to send in healthy snacks and lunches.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- **Develop and follow a healthy snack policy in the classroom.** Share with parents, coaches, etc. throughout the year, via your school or classroom newsletter, a list of healthy snacks that fit the policy for parents, caregivers, coaches and volunteers.
- **If the classroom has group snacks brought in, create a parent sign up calendar.** Write in specific healthy snack assignments that fit the standards such as graham crackers, yogurt cups, low fat string cheese, fruit, vegetables, etc.
- **Hold a Healthy Snack Bingo Challenge for the building.** This is for students that bring snacks from home. Create a bingo card with different fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy products, whole grains and lean proteins. When 5 students bring that snack on the same day you can cover that square. The first classroom to fill up the card wins a prize, such as a banner for outside the classroom, extra recess or “special” class, coupons for local physical fitness (rollerskating, bowling, YMCA), front row at next school assembly, etc.
- **Check out the GO! for Healthy Snacks handout.** Provide it to families for ideas of food and beverages that fit the policy.

“At first it was hard. We got used to it and then it became second nature.”

 PILOT DISTRICT

CLASSROOM PARTIES, BIRTHDAYS, AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

WHAT THE STANDARD SAYS: Classrooms are encouraged to minimize food as a method of celebration. If classroom parties include food and/or beverages, at least half of the items offered will meet the standards.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- **Communicate with families** early in the school year, and often, about how the school and district is handling birthday parties. Parents may be resistant at first. Bring them on board early in the year and ask them to come up with a solution together. This gives ownership to the families and staff support to say the plan was developed with families. Assure them the parties will still be fun—and good for their child!
- **Celebrate birthdays once a month** (i.e. all September birthdays) together with a fun game and a healthy snack. This will increase the amount of instruction time students get and will take the pressure off of parents that might not be able to supply a snack.
- **Make activity the focus of the party** instead of the food. Get kids moving—play games, listen to music, do crafts, or invite someone with a special talent such as guitar playing to share their talent and join in the fun.
- **Give parties a “make over”** by including mainly healthy foods. A typical party of a cupcake, frosted cookie, chips & dip and a fruit drink contains 760 calories (almost ½ of the daily needs of a 9 year old) and doesn’t provide any of the key nutrients for health. Have students plan the party as a nutrition lesson. Tell them they must include healthy snack foods from at least three of the main food groups.
- **Consider celebrating birthdays without food** but still honor the child’s special day. Check out the GO! for Birthday Celebrations staff and families handouts. For holiday celebration ideas check out Fall Celebrations, Winter Celebrations, and Valentine Celebrations.

“Instead of pizza and ice cream sundaes on Valentine’s Day, we had a heart healthy party with many red and white healthy snacks for students to taste. We also incorporated music and movement. The kids and adults had a blast!”

 PILOT DISTRICT



FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES ON CAMPUS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

WHAT THE STANDARD SAYS: Fundraising activities using food and/or beverages will meet the standards. Fundraisers selling food and/or beverages cannot be held less than 30 minutes before the first lunch period starts, or less than 30 minutes after the final lunch period ends. Alternate revenue generating sources should be encouraged.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- **Communicate early in the year** with groups about the new school fundraising rules and the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*. Have someone from your Coordinated School Health Team go in person to talk to all fundraising groups. Be ready for some resistance.
- **Make sure, if the school or any group is selling food, that those foods** fit the standards. Don't sell food at times that directly compete with school meal sales.
- **Get a fundraising team together.** Brainstorm ways you can raise money without selling food. Think creatively about using other activities or events to replace food fundraisers. Check out the [GO! Fundraising](#) handout.

One school replaced popcorn sales during the school day with a read-a-thon. The read-a-thon required little effort to plan and the school made \$2,891.96!!! A little out of the cupboard thinking netted this school a 535% increase in revenue.

REWARDS OR DISCIPLINE

WHAT THE STANDARD SAYS: Food and beverages should not be used as rewards or discipline for academic performance or behavior unless the reward is an activity that promotes a positive nutrition message (i.e. guest chef, field trip to a farm or farmer's market). Withholding food and beverages should never be used as a disciplinary measure as it encourages unhealthy associations between food and behavior.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- **Find other ways to reward students that are NOT food.** 100 extra calories every day over 180 days can alter a child's growth pattern and contribute to an unhealthy weight. Check out the [GO! for Rewards Staff](#) and [GO! for Rewards Families](#) handouts for more information and ideas.
- **Take a poll and ask students what a good reward would be.** Write down all the ideas. You'll be surprised at what they come up with.
- **Work with area businesses and organizations** to see if they have low-cost non-food items that they would donate that could be used as a reward. They could also donate paperback books, a field trip, movie passes, or bowling games.

Remember: Rewarding students with food can really add up. Ask yourself: Are the students really hungry or just excited to celebrate their achievements?

"We have students put their name in a jar and on Fridays I draw out five names for extra credit. I got a lot more participation. The extra credit didn't do much to their grade...but they still fight for it. They like having their name called on Fridays."

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PILOT DISTRICT



FACULTY LOUNGES

WHAT THE STANDARD SAYS: Faculty members are encouraged to be role models and set a healthy example for students. Vending machines accessible to faculty at all buildings should meet the food and beverages standards for high schools.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

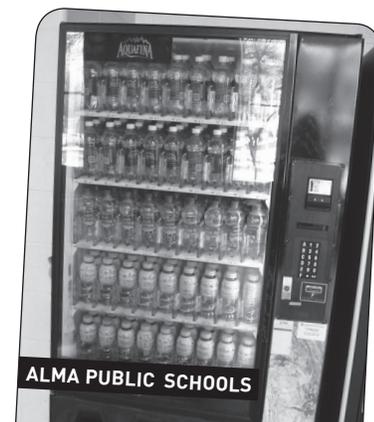
- **Read the standards.** Make sure you understand what they are.
- **Talk to the distributors** who stock your faculty lounge vending machines. Tell them what the standards are and request items you would like to see in the machines.
- **Be a healthy role model for students.** It does no good to hide your soda in a coffee cup while the students are drinking low-fat milk. Check out [GO! for Role Modeling](#) for ideas.

"By focusing on the nutrition standards we made healthy changes for ourselves; at school and at home."

PILOT DISTRICT

START AND WORK WITH OTHER STAFF MEMBERS TO CHAMPION SCHOOL STAFF WELLNESS INITIATIVES SUCH AS:

- Healthy lifestyle challenges
- Fitness classes on site
- Staff only time for fitness rooms
- Walking/running clubs
- Monthly employee wellness recognition



FOOD MARKETING

WHAT THE STANDARD SAYS: Marketing of food, not meeting the standards, should be minimized or eliminated.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- **Take a look around the building** to make sure wall displays, cafeteria signs, bulletin boards and marquees reflect healthy habits and are consistent with the standards.
- **Don't pass out unhealthy food coupons** in back-to-school bags, athletic events, parent nights, or other school-based activities.
- **Look at the front panel of beverage vending machines.** Make sure they depict the healthy choices in the machine. If they don't, contact the vendor and have them change the fronts to promote the healthy beverages sold in the machines.
- **Utilize** the [54321GO! promotional materials](#) available.

