



10 REASONS TO IMPLEMENT THE MICHIGAN NUTRITION STANDARDS

Support and Promote the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*

Schools today are facing demands at an unprecedented rate: demands to operate with reduced funding, demands to implement new curriculum, demands to improve students' test scores and more. With "bigger fish to fry" some schools put student health on the back burner, or on the "nice to do" list instead of the "must do" list. There are plenty of reasons why schools should move nutrition up on the list and implement the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

Refer to the top ten list below to educate parents, school staff, students, and community members about why the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* are important and why they should be implemented, and to quickly reenergize and refocus your school wellness team.

WHEN SCHOOLS IMPLEMENT THE MICHIGAN NUTRITION STANDARDS...

1. They will be ready for the National School Meal

Nutrition Standards. The school lunch nutrition standards, outlined in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, will start at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. The school breakfast standards will start in the 2013-2014 school year. The national standards are similar to the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*. Schools that are already implementing the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* will have a head start, and therefore an easier time, implementing and adjusting to the new national standards.

2. School meals will be the best they can be.

School foodservice directors work diligently to make school meals nutritious, great-tasting, and affordable. The *Michigan Nutrition Standards*, and the supporting materials in the *Michigan Nutrition Standards Toolkit*, allow schools to create and improve on the meals they serve by adding more whole grains, serving healthy beverages such as low-fat and fat-free milk, and offering fewer processed and more whole fruits and vegetables prepared in ways kids enjoy.





3. Good nutrition leads to academic achievement.

Research supports that healthy eating is directly connected to academic achievement. When students eat healthy food at school that meets the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* they will be better equipped to behave well in school and to succeed academically.

4. Students receive consistent healthy eating messages—everywhere in the school.

The standards include recommendations for all food and beverages served while at school, not just food offered or served in the school cafeteria. Students will “get the message” about what’s healthy wherever they go: the a la carte line, classroom celebrations, school stores, vending machines, athletic events and more.

5. School staff can work together. It takes a team to successfully implement all the components of the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*. School staff members want students to do well in school and in life. Making sure students eat healthy so they can be at their best to learn is one way to ensure that. The *Michigan Nutrition Standards* bring all school staff together as healthy role models around a common set of guidelines that are easy to follow and understand.

6. Parents become partners with the school.

There are many ways parents can get involved in helping to implement the standards. Organizing healthy classroom celebrations, being part of a school wellness team or committee, chairing a healthy fundraising event and more give parents a chance to make sure the standards are adhered to everywhere, so that students receive clear and consistent messages about healthy eating.

7. Food marketing and competition between healthy and unhealthy food is limited and/or eliminated.

The standards have guidelines and supporting resources that limit the marketing of unhealthy food to students. When competition is limited or eliminated, healthy becomes the easy choice for students.

8. The community gets involved. Schools don’t operate in a vacuum; they’re an integral part of the community. There are many ways community members and organizations can get involved in the planning for and implementation of the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* so the process runs as smoothly as possible. Community members can be valuable team members and partners when they are trained on the standards. They can help support and promote the standards through community awareness-raising events, media announcements, and more.

9. The Michigan Nutrition Standards Toolkit makes it easy. The resources in the *Michigan Nutrition Standards Toolkit* provide step by step assistance on how to implement the standards through a thoughtful, sequential process. From start to finish, you can find planning and organizational tools, sample timelines, background research, and time-saving handouts, presentations, tips and tools that will help you implement the standards whatever your role may be. You can find the entire toolkit at www.mihealthtools.org.

10. It’s the right thing to do. Implementing the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* is good for students, school staff and the community. A healthy school environment enables students to learn and teachers to teach so that everyone can reach their full potential.

