



FAMILY MATTERS: ENGAGING STUDENTS AND PARENTS

INVOLVING PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Getting feedback, buy-in and support from students and parents can make your job as a Food Service Director or manager easier. Students and parents can help you identify healthy foods that meet the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* that students like to eat, and to find the best way to inform others about your school's efforts to implement the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

Parents, students, school staff, and school foodservice can work together to make implementing the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* run smoothly and successfully. Are you ready to get started? Try these suggestions:

FORM A NUTRITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A nutrition advisory committee (NAC) can be composed of school foodservice personnel, parents, students, school staff and community members. The NAC can help gather data and recommend changes on what foods, and how foods are offered and served at school.

A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL NUTRITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE...

- Is usually spearheaded by school foodservice.
- Meets regularly, at least four times a year.
- Contains parents, students, school staff and others.
- Sets goals and works toward achieving them.
- Understands and follows the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.
- Respects each other's opinions and responds to suggestions.
- Educates school staff, parents and students about changes in school food before any changes are made.

INVOLVE STUDENTS

STUDENTS CAN HELP GET OTHER STUDENTS INVESTED IN AND EXCITED ABOUT THE CHANGES YOU ARE MAKING IN SCHOOL FOOD. STUDENTS CAN...

- Sit on the Nutrition Advisory Committee.
- Assist with taste-testing events or food demos in the cafeteria.
- Survey students, formally or informally about food preferences;
- Suggest new kinds of food and beverages that kids like to try.
- Generate excitement among fellow students about school food.
- Help educate others (parents, school board members, the community) about food served at school and the new *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.





INVOLVE PARENTS

PARENTS CAN...

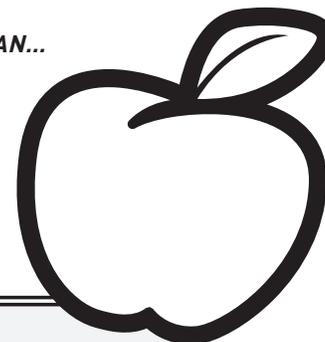
- Join the Nutrition Advisory Committee and help market and promote school meals and foods served at school.
- Help conduct taste-testing events or food demos in the classrooms and the cafeteria.
- Taste-test and rate foods served at school on parent participation day.
- Provide healthy foods that fit the standards for classroom parties, parent events, picnics, and celebrations.
- Survey other parents about what kinds of food they would like to see more of at school.
- Educate other parents and school groups e.g. the athletic boosters, sports teams, or band boosters, about the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* and the nutrition quality of school meals and other food and beverages sold and offered at school.



WHOLE SCHOOL

TEACHERS AND OTHERS WHO WORK AT THE SCHOOL CAN HELP SUPPORT *MICHIGAN NUTRITION STANDARDS* AND SCHOOL FOODSERVICE. THEY CAN...

- Create and set up healthy eating displays that support the standards in the classrooms, hallways or school cafeteria.
- Create a suggestion box for students, parents and school staff to use to make suggestions for foods served and offered at school.
- Create, conduct, and collect written or e-surveys and summarize the results for the foodservice director.
- Write articles or news stories for the school web site, or the school or local newspaper about the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* and changes that are being made.
- Use ideas from Fuel Up to Play 60.
- Conduct kitchen tours for students, families, and community members, promoting new and healthy foods being served.
- Organize a poster contest that advertises new foods that meet the standards that are being sold in school stores, vending machines, on the a la carte line, and at concession stands.
- Invite the Food Service Director or manager into the classroom to obtain and document student input about school meals and foods served at school.



IMPORTANT!

National School Lunch Program regulations require that each School Food Authority obtain student and parent input on a yearly basis and to keep that input on file and be prepared to show it. There are many different approaches that a district can use to obtain input that will help make the district the healthiest—it can be.

Adapted from *Compliance Guidance for Student and Parent Input* and *USDA Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals—Chapter 8 Marketing Your Product*