ARE WE ON TARGET? A *MICHIGAN NUTRITION STANDARDS* CHECKLIST

FAMILIES: Check out your school! Use this checklist to determine whether or not your child's school is serving food and beverages that meet the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL MEALS

QUESTION	ANSWER	RECOMMENDATION
1. DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE VENDING MACHINES THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE TO STUDENTS?	Yes	Do the food and beverages all meet the *Nutrition Standards*? *If yes, go to question 2. *If no, work with the group responsible for the machine to help change to products that do.
	No	
2. DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE A LA CARTE, SNACK LINE OR SNACK CART AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS?	Yes	Do the food and beverages all meet the *Nutrition Standards*? *If yes, go to question 3. *If no, work with the group responsible for the school store to help change to products that do.
	No	
3. DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE A SCHOOL STORE THAT SELLS FOOD AND BEVERAGES TO STUDENTS?	Yes	Do the food and beverages all meet the *Nutrition Standards*? *If yes, go to question 4. *If no, work with the group responsible for the school store to help change to products that do.
	No	
4. DOES THE SCHOOL OFFER FOOD AND BEVERAGE FUNDRAISERS LIKE BAKE SALES DURING THE SCHOOL DAY TO STUDENTS?	Yes	Do the food and beverages all meet the *Nutrition Standards*? *If yes, make sure they are not sold 30 minutes before or after a meal time and go to question 5. *If no, work with the group responsible to change the offerings and make sure they are not sold 30 minutes before or after a meal time. Non-food items can be sold during meal times.
	No	
5. DO STUDENTS RECEIVE FOOD OR BEVERAGES AS A REWARD FOR A JOB WELL DONE IN PLACES LIKE CLASS, THE PLAYGROUND, OR THE BUS?	Yes	Schools are encouraged to create healthy habits by offering non-food rewards.
	No	

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

QUESTION	ANSWER	RECOMMENDATION
6. DO STUDENTS RECEIVE FOOD REWARD PARTIES FOR "WINNING" OR GOOD BEHAVIOR?	Yes	Schools are encouraged to create healthy habits by offering non-food rewards.
	No	
7. DO STUDENTS RECEIVE A SNACK PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL EVERY DAY (NOT BROUGHT FROM HOME)?	Yes	Does the policy request that food and beverages all meet the *Nutrition Standards*? *If yes, go to question 8. *If no, work with the group responsible for providing the snack and provide suggestions.
	No	
8. DOES THE SCHOOL OR CLASSROOM HAVE A SNACK POLICY?	Yes	Do the food and beverages in the policy meet the *Nutrition Standards*? *If yes, go to question 9. *If no, encourage a healthy snack policy to be created using the GO! for Healthy Snacks handout.
	No	It is encouraged to create a healthy snack policy using the GO! for Healthy Snacks handout.
9. DOES THE SCHOOL OR CLASSROOM CELEBRATE STUDENT BIRTHDAYS WITH FOOD AND BEVERAGES?	Yes	Do at least half of the food and beverages meet the *Nutrition Standards*? *If yes, go to question 10. *If no, suggest ways to create a healthy party.
	No	If the school or classroom wants to continue to celebrate with food, consider having a party once a month or less and make sure to honor the child on their day in other ways.
10. DOES THE SCHOOL OR CLASSROOM HAVE PARTIES OR CELEBRATIONS WITH FOOD AND BEVERAGES?	Yes	Do at least half of the food and beverages meet the *Nutrition Standards*? *If yes, thanks for completing the checklist.
	No	*If no, go to the GO! for School Parties handout for ideas to put focus on fun and food ideas.

FAMILIES: Use this checklist for breakfast, lunch and afterschool snack menus to see how they are meeting the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

SCHOOL LUNCH CHECKLIST

All answers should be **yes** for the lunch menu to meet the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

ITEM	YES	NO
Are whole grains offered at least one half the time? Check with the Food Service Director as grain products may not be listed as whole grain on the menu.		
Are at least two dark green vegetables offered a week?*		
Is at least one deep yellow/orange/red vegetable offered a week?*		
Are legumes offered as a vegetable or meat/meat alternate at least twice a week?*		
Is 100% juice offered as the fruit choice no more than one time per week?*		
Are lower fat (less than 40% of calories from fat) entrée choices offered at least four times per week?		
Is only skim and 1% flavored or unflavored milk offered?		

**Does the school have a fruit and vegetable bar? Foods on the bar count toward this requirement. Many schools are using romaine and/or spinach, which are considered dark green vegetables, as their salad lettuce.*

SCHOOL BREAKFAST CHECKLIST

All answers should be **yes** for the breakfast menu to meet the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

ITEM	YES	NO
Are whole grains offered at least three times per week?		
Is there a fruit or vegetable serving every day?		
Are there at least three whole fruit or vegetables offered instead of juice?		
Is juice offered no more than 2 times a week as the fruit or vegetable serving?		
Is only fat-free and 1% flavored or unflavored milk offered?		
Are there either two grains or one meat/meat alternative and one grain offered daily?		

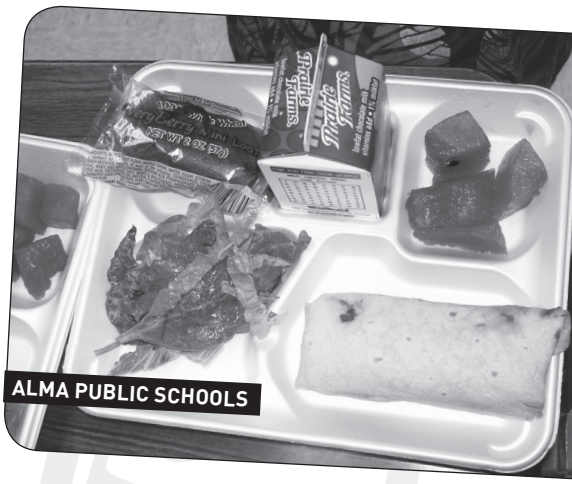
AFTER SCHOOL SNACKS CHECKLIST

All answers should be **yes** for the afterschool snacks to meet the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

ITEM	YES	NO
Are there at least two components (meat/meat alternate, grains/breads, fruits/vegetables, milk) offered daily?		
Is at least one whole grain offered per week?		
Are at least one half of the fruit/vegetable servings the whole fruit/vegetable instead of juice?		
Is only fat free or 1% flavored or unflavored milk offered?		

NOTES:

SCHOOL MEALS 101: WHAT FAMILIES SHOULD KNOW


ALMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

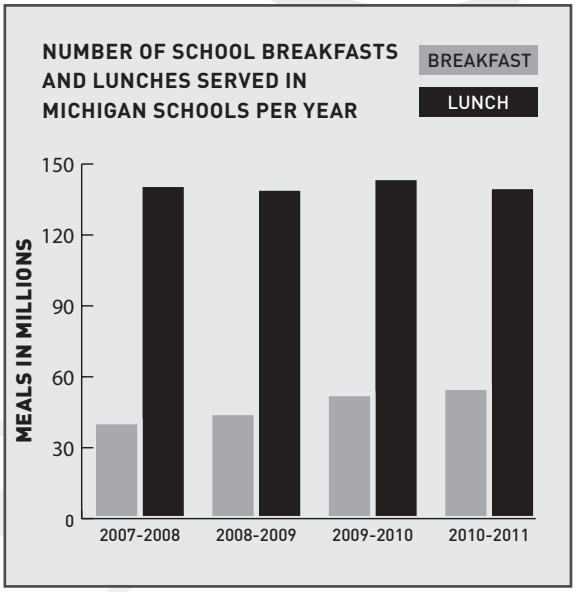
The goal of offering healthy, appetizing meals is shared between families and school nutrition professionals. School meals are often in the "hot seat" with families for not being healthy. School meals have changed a lot over the years and learning more about them can help ease a parent's mind about what is being served at school.

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- Children who eat school meals are more likely to consume milk, fruit and vegetables and less likely to eat desserts and snack items than children who do not.[31]
- There is no evidence that either the school breakfast or lunch program is contributing to rising rates of childhood obesity.[31]
- Students are less likely to gain weight during the school year when in school than during the summer when school is out.[32]

WHAT ARE THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NSLP) AND SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM (SBP)?

The NSLP and SBP are federally assisted meal programs for school children through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Schools that participate in the NSLP and SBP get cash reimbursement for free, reduced and paid meals and receive USDA foods. School lunches and breakfasts must meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and meet nutrient standards. While school lunches must meet federal requirements, decisions about what specific foods to serve and how they are prepared are made locally. Local schools set their own prices for full-price meals but must operate a nonprofit lunch program. Schools are monitored by the Michigan Department of Education for compliance with the federal guidelines.



QUALIFICATIONS FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICED MEALS

Any child at a school participating in the NSLP may purchase meals. However, children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-priced meals. For the period July 1, 2011—June 30, 2012, the income limit to qualify for free meals for a family of four is $29,055 and the income limit for reduced-priced meals for a family of four is $41,348. To receive free or reduced priced meals a family must submit an application available at their local school district. Contact the school Food Service Director for more information.

SCHOOL MEALS FUNDING

School food service programs receive their funding through federal reimbursements for free, reduced and paid meals, state supplemental funding, and revenue from meals and a la carte. Schools also receive credit for meals served to use towards USDA foods.

For the 2010-2011 school year, the basic reimbursement rates were:

- **FREE LUNCH:** $2.72
- **REDUCED PRICE LUNCH:** $2.32
- **PAID LUNCH:** $0.26

In addition to cash reimbursements, schools are entitled to receive USDA foods at a value of 20.25 cents for each meal served in School Year 2010-2011. Schools can also get "bonus" commodities if available from agricultural surplus.

A school lunch program is required to offer five food items at a lunch from the following components—fruit & vegetable, grain, meat or meat alternate and milk.

USDA FOODS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS USDA COMMODITY FOODS)

USDA FOODS:

- Are foods USDA purchases and makes available to schools
- Help food service programs stretch their budgets to provide nutritious, well balanced meals
- Make up approximately 15 to 20 percent of the food served in each school lunch.
- Provide a variety of healthy food choices, including fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, dairy, and grains.
- Include a selection of more than 180 nutritious food items—fresh, frozen, packaged, canned, dried, and bulk.
- Meet rigorous food safety standards set by Federal regulatory agencies and USDA's two purchasing agencies—the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Farm Service Agency.

BUILDING A MEAL

A school lunch program is required to offer five food items at a lunch from the following components—fruit & vegetable, grain, meat or meat alternate and milk. A student must take three of the five components for the meal to qualify for reimbursement. Schools must build their menus to meet the federal guidelines. These include minimum weekly amounts for each component that must be offered to students. The current federal guidelines have calorie minimums that schools must follow. For example, an elementary lunch must have at least 664 calories but there are no maximums set. These calorie guidelines will change when the new national nutrition standards in the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 go into effect. With the new guidelines, the calories will need to be between 550-650 for an elementary lunch. Keep these things in mind when you look at your school's menu. Just like in homes, schools have to play a balancing act to create nutritious, student appealing meals that meet the federal guidelines and stay within their food and labor budget.

NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL

The current federal school meal guidelines are under revision to meet the current nutrition needs of students. This revision is taking place because of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. The proposed school meal guidelines will include calorie maximums as well as minimums, maximums for sodium, fat, and saturated fat. In addition to the calorie guidelines, there are also minimum amounts for foods with health benefits such as dark green and deep yellow/orange/red vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. The new federal meal guidelines are expected to go in effect during the 2012-2013 school year.

Adapted from: USDA—National School Lunch Program fact sheet; MDE School Meals in Michigan; and USDA—USDA Foods: Healthy Foods for Our Schools

COMMUNITIES CAN! GAINING SUPPORT FOR THE STANDARDS

You've probably heard the expression, "It takes village to raise a child." Community support, whether it's from individuals or businesses and organizations, is vitally important to successfully implement the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* in schools. Regardless of whether or not you have children attending school in your district, you can help support the standards and encourage others to do the same. Try these suggestions:

INDIVIDUALS CAN...

- **LEARN ABOUT THE STANDARDS.** If you don't know what they are, contact your school district foodservice director or superintendent or go to: www.michigan.gov/schoolnutrition for a copy.
- **VISIT THE SCHOOL.** Find out what's being offered or served in school vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and tour the cafeteria. Be sure to make an appointment first. Many schools do not allow walk-in visitors.
- **SUPPORT HEALTHIER FUNDRAISERS** that focus on non-food items such as wrapping paper, car washes, raffles, or contests.
- **JOIN THE COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM,** or Local Wellness Policy Committee if you have time and talents to share.
- **BE A HEALTHY ROLE MODEL.** Eat healthy food that meet the standards and be active yourself.

BELDING AREA SCHOOLS

BUSINESSES CAN...

- **LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STANDARDS.** Ask yourself: *Is there a way through my business I can support the standards?* Be creative.
- **DONATE OR OFFER LOW-COST ITEMS** (stickers, pencils, etc.) for schools to use as rewards for students instead of food.
- **OFFER A PERCENTAGE OF A PURCHASE** (e.g. 10% on dry-cleaning) to help schools raise funds without selling unhealthy food and beverages.
- **LABEL 3-5 OF THE BEST CHOICES.** If you are a grocery store or other store that sells food, place healthy items that meet the standards where consumers can easily find and purchase them.
- **INCREASE YOUR EFFORT** to better market healthy food and beverages such as fresh fruits and vegetables, low fat dairy, and whole grain snacks if you sell them. Limit advertising of unhealthy food and beverages.
- **OFFER LOW-COST, NON-FOOD FIELD TRIP EXPERIENCES** to schools such as touring a radio station or a printing business or going bowling or roller skating.
- **PUT HEALTHY MESSAGES** that support the standards on your business marquee.
- **PRODUCE A GOOD** that meets the standards and offer it to schools, e.g. a low-fat fruit or vegetable muffin.
- **BE PRESENT AT HEALTH FAIRS AND OTHER SCHOOL EVENTS.** Show community members that your business supports community health.

ORGANIZATIONS CAN...

- **BE PART OF THE COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM,** or Local Wellness Policy team. Contact your school district superintendent to find out if this is a possibility.
- **TAKE PART,** as a team or committee member, in completing the Healthy School Action Tools (HSAT) and other health-related community and school assessments.
- **HELP SCHOOLS LINK BETTER WITH LOCAL FARMERS** and food producers to offer local foods that meet the standards in schools.
- **HELP CREATE A SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN** to educate citizens about the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*. Make best use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter.
- **LEAD BY EXAMPLE.** Offer healthy food and beverages at meetings, implement a worksite wellness challenge, conduct a health fair, or distribute healthy messages to employees of your organizations and partners.