



## SUCCESS STORIES AROUND THE STATE

### CASE STUDY

#### BENNETT ELEMENTARY (K-6), JACKSON, MICHIGAN

##### FUNDRAISING—OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL DAY

After developing policies regarding healthier food choices for classrooms, the Jackson school board and district wellness team chose another venue to model healthy choices: school fundraisers.

It took about a year to revamp the school fundraising policy, which was implemented during the 2007-08 school year. That year, Bennett Elementary switched from using the sale of food items with low nutritional value, such as candy, to the sale of “healthy” food and non-food items.

“The key is healthier options. It’s the right mindset for students and parents. We are encouraging students to eat healthy and be healthy—offering healthier options for fundraisers reinforces those messages. It’s very important to send consistent messages to students and parents.”

.....  
SCOTT HUTCHINS, PRINCIPAL OF BENNETT ELEMENTARY



The fundraising policy defines “healthy” foods using criteria for nutritional content including calories and sugar content. Non-food items include products such as wrapping paper, T-shirts, coffee mugs and cookbooks.

The fundraisers, which occur both during and after school, are approved by the school district. To apply for approval, teachers submit requests to the building principal who determines if the fundraisers meet the policy criteria. The principal then forwards acceptable requests to the district finance office for final approval.

Utilizing a variety of fundraising companies, Bennett Elementary has hosted several successful fundraising events such as book fairs, cookbook sales, school store movie night and Texas Holdem night. The proceeds help support educational assemblies, field trips and class projects.

Students took the changes in stride, however, there was initial resistance from several school faculty members and parents. In the past, candy was a popular fundraising item, and there was some concern that healthy food and non-food items would not sell as easily or bring in as much revenue. This concern disappeared after the success of the new fundraising method was evident: Several of the non-food items outsold previous bestsellers such as candy. All in all, the product switch did not result in a net change in fundraising revenue.

**“I think the new fundraising items are good,” says Lindsey Rigelman, co-chair of the Parent-Teacher Organization at Bennett Elementary. “It gets kids more motivated to think about healthy choices and to eat healthier. And more people are apt to buy products because of the different options. Last year’s cookbook sale was a big success.”**

The development of the new fundraising policy was a joint effort, involving the Coordinated School Health Team, administrative support and the Parent-Teacher Organization. For other schools interested in revamping a fundraising policy, this group recommends obtaining buy-in from key people in the school system and community.