



## CASE STUDY

## PARKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL, JACKSON, MICHIGAN

## STUDENT ACCESSIBLE VENDING—STOCKED BY DISTRICT

When a la carte sales dropped at Parkside Middle School after a switch to healthier food offerings, the Coordinated School Health Team searched for another way to provide students with healthy choices while generating income. A healthy vending machine was the answer.

“Gradually, the school food service staff replaced the less healthy choices. A gradual change is easier for adults and kids.”

LAURA QUINN, PARKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL  
ENGLISH TEACHER AND MEMBER OF THE  
COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM

In the fall of 2009, the school food service department installed a cold vending machine at Parkside Middle School in order to offer healthy snacks for students after school.

To select the most appropriate products to vend, the food service staff considers nutrition information and price, and refers to the competitive food nutrition standards from the Institute of Medicine and the district’s wellness policy.

The healthy vending machine offers fresh-made sandwiches, fresh fruit cups, yogurt parfaits, and packaged healthy snacks. In addition, the school’s beverage vending machines offer only water, milk and 100% fruit juice. The food service department stocks the healthy vending machine three times a week and receives the revenue from product sales which paid for the cost of the machine and also helps offset the additional cost of purchasing fresh products.

Students and staff are pleased. Instead of purchasing “less healthy” snacks from convenience stores, students utilize the healthy vending machine. “The students are enjoying the snacks and the school feels good about teaching healthy choices by example,” said Laura Quinn, Parkside Middle School English teacher and member of the Coordinated School Health Team.

“Improving the school nutrition environment is a process,” explained Quinn. “We started by sending out surveys to staff and students to ask what they wanted. We also invited students to our health team meetings to involve them in the process. It’s important to bring everyone on board and get everyone’s opinion. Often, people want healthy choices.”

And that’s exactly what happened. Students and staff requested fresh fruits and vegetables and healthier sandwich choices. The students had the opportunity to taste test options and provide input.

The soft drink machines are gone now, along with the candy and gum. “We’re also trying to increase the amount of beverages kids are drinking: water and 100% fruit and vegetable juices,” said Quinn. “We provided students with water bottles with the Parkside logo, which they’re allowed to bring into the classrooms.”

Additional changes to the school nutrition environment at Parkside Middle School:

- Before- and after-school program offering breakfast/cereal bars and beverages for students who arrive early or stay after school to receive help with homework
- School breakfast program offered every day
- Healthier choices on the school lunch menu
- Sack lunches provided to students attending the after school program
- Summer school program that offers breakfast and lunch

