

CELEBRATING HEALTHY SCHOOLS!

Resources, Stories, and Tips from Parents
in Celebration of National School Lunch Week

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Dear School Administrator:

Happy National School Lunch Week!! Parents across the country enthusiastically support healthy schools! We know that when students eat healthy foods, they perform better at school. Making good food choices and getting proper exercise now will set them up to have good habits for life.

We want to make sure our school is ahead of the game and we are here to back you up as we navigate the next era of healthy updates to the school day, including around Physical Education, water, Wellness Policies and marketing. We know that it truly takes a community to build healthy kids.

We are excited that the USDA has just finalized updates to Local Wellness Policies, which will address marketing in schools and have the potential spark greater community engagement through the Wellness Committees.

We're also eager to talk about water quality and access, from water fountains to water testing.

Finally, we're excited to support an active school day. We know that kids need one hour of activity every day, and PE and recess can help them get there. However only 4% of elementary schools, 8% of middle schools and 2% of high schools provide daily PE or its equivalent.

Here are our National School Lunch Week gifts to YOU:

- Testimonials from parents across the country on the importance of these topics.
- Helpful tips from experts on each of these issues, including how parents and schools can work together to ensure success.

We hope that this storybook serves as both inspiration and resource for your important work.

Again, thank you for all you do to help our kids succeed. Together, we can teach our children that healthy habits last a lifetime!

Sincerely,

Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner



Executive Director, MomsRising.org

WATER ACCESS & QUALITY

Clean water is the most important drink anyone can have, not sugary drinks.

– *Katherine, Martinez, CA*

All American schools have to have clean, accessible water in school. Otherwise, the students might get sick.

– *Sergio, Miami, FL*

Everyone should have access to clean water, especially children. Lead can be especially damaging to the brains of young children. I send my children to school expecting them to learn, not to come home with lead poisoning!

– *Ilene, Atlanta, GA*

This is a no brainer. We've seen what happened to children in Flint, MI. We want healthy children with healthy brain function. We want clean water for drinking and washing hands.

– *Sherlie, Chicago, IL*

First and foremost, water is a right. Kids need access to water during the day to stay hydrated and healthy. In our older schools it is vitally important that we

“Clean water should not be taken for granted. It is such an important factor for the health and growth of the body and mind.”

– *Andrea, Dublin, CA*

“Water should be safe anywhere and everywhere, but especially at schools. These children are our future. The water at every school should be tested to make sure that the water our children are drinking in their schools is safe.”

– *Janice, Riverton, NJ*

make sure the water is free of not only lead, but, increasingly, the toxins found in water near heavy fracking areas. Life-long health problems can occur from contaminated water.

– *Marianne, Des Plaines, IL*

All schools should have clean water not lead filled water!

– *C W, McHenry, IL*

All children, all people and beings rely on safe clean and accessible water to be healthy and to concentrate. Toxins damage the body.

– *Bonnie, Downers Grove, IL*

Without clean, accessible water in schools, students become dehydrated, and develop headaches. This impairs their ability to learn, and to do well on their assignments and tests.

– *Linda, Hyattsville, MD*

Clean water, free of lead, is necessary. Lead develops untreatable damage to developing brains. Too many recent news items mentioned newly discovered lead in school water fountains.

– *William, Bowie, MD*

Everyone is entitled to clean drinking water! It is a necessity of life! So important children aren't exposed to harmful things in their food, water, environment! They need the best to grow and develop the way they are supposed to!

– *Dianè, Grand Rapids, MI*

Water is crucial to life. Children need clean water throughout the day. And it needs to be free of chemicals and pollutants.

– *Margaret, Ava, MO*

Parents need to know that our children are in a safe environment when they are at school. That includes safe drinking water. If we don't test our water for lead, we could be causing serious harm to our children's development and our future. This is a MUST!

– *Jen, Raleigh, NC*

We need to be sure all schools are safe for our kids as water should be the top choice drink!

– *Christina, Portsmouth, NH*

Thankfully, our elementary school has a great water cooler/ fountain on the

main level for the kids. It would be better if there were 2-3 more of these in the building.

– **Janet, Portsmouth, NH**

Clean drinking water plays an important role in maintaining a child's overall health. However, most children do not consume enough water. Adequate water intake not only supports a range of positive health outcomes, but it can also positively impact academic performance. Access to clean drinking water in schools is vital to increasing consumption, since children spend a large portion of their day at school.

– **Trisha, Wenonah, NJ**

Children must have access to water free from toxins.

– **Tina, Salem, NY**

Water is so important for health. Having access to clean water encourages student to drink water instead of sugary drinks.

– **Sonya, Cleveland Hts, OH**

Water needs to be clean and free from lead and impurities.

– **Kim, Toledo, OH**

Without healthy clean water kids will be constantly sick and missing school, thus putting them further behind.

– **Ed, Oklahoma City, OK**

Additional Resources:

- The National Drinking Water Alliance website has great tips and resources on water quality and access: <http://www.drinkingwateralliance.org>
- Model Wellness Policy Language for Water Access in Schools, from ChangeLab: <http://moms.ly/2doBhWY>
- 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools, from the EPA: <http://moms.ly/2cPS9Ez>

The tainted water crisis in Flint is not an isolated event; this past spring lead was found in one of our local public school districts. You assume that your child is safe at school, but to learn that their health is being undermined and inadvertently poisoned is frightening. Even though my young daughter is not school-aged yet, I've been closely watching the developing news about lead tainted water and how local officials remediate and respond. Access to clean water is a basic right; we need to ensure that our schools continue to provide this for our children.

– **Sara, Tigard, OR**

Clean water is imperative for kids to wash their hands, and drink from the water fountain.

– **Kelly, Plano, TX**

We've seen water quality become a scary issue in places like Flint, MI and areas of fracking such as PA and ND. We can no longer take safe drinking water for granted. Bottled water is a sham and should never be an option unless the taps are unsafe. Let kids stay hydrated. We know our brains need water to learn too!

– **Caitlin, Waterbury, VT**

Water is a necessity of life. Kids should be drinking mainly water throughout the day. They should be able to have access to clean safe water throughout the day.

– **Jess, Colchester, VT**

Clean water is as essential for kids as it is for everyone. Kids need access to water, not soft drinks and junk food.

– **Stephen, Waukesha, WI**

When my 11 year old daughter watched the news about the water in Flint, she became very worried about the water in her own school and wanted it tested. Turns out the school did do some testing (all schools in the district did) and a couple were found with higher lead levels, but not hers. She was so relieved. She's 11! She shouldn't be stressing out about such things!

– **Rosslyn**

Clean water should be accessible in school fountains and children should be able to drink water whenever they thirst.

– **Gloria**

“My son's favorite class was one with a water fountain in the room, so that students could drink when they were thirsty. It seems sensible to encourage water drinking by all students.”

– **Anne, Kensington, MD**

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & RECESS

As a former kindergarten and first grade teacher, all physical activities during the day serve to allow kids to expend some energy and take a break from the demands of focusing on academic curricula. Physical fitness is a life activity that needs to be made important from early childhood on.

– **Betsy, Cornville, AZ**

My son has Autism and gets very anxious at school with all the noise and fighting in his especially ed class. Exercise helps him to focus, not all the video games and video reading they do. There is far too heavy a focus on technology at the expense of our biological needs like exercise. In healthcare, we are now prescribing exercise to deal with diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, not to mention obesity.

– **Daphne, Roseville, CA**

Everyone performs better when they get exercise. If we want our kids to do better in school, PE must be required.

– **Nadya, Oakland, CA**

Children spend 8 hours a day in school. Sometimes more! Adults are not expected to sit at their desks working for that long; children should not be expected to do so, either! They need to get up and move around and burn off that excess energy so they can concentrate when they get back from recess. Also, it will help with our obesity epidemic.

– **Ilene, Atlanta, GA**

Physical education is extremely important as it helps a child burn off excess energy, as well as keeping their blood circulating properly. This helps the child start a lifetime of good exercise habits.

– **Patricia, Iowa Falls, IA**

As a retired PE teacher, I think it is very important. It's a time to get up & move around. A time to interact with other people & learn to work together in games. These are skills that can help you

EXERCISE THEIR MINDS

INCLUDE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The benefits of physical education ring clear as a school bell. With daily PE, we can keep kids' hearts healthy and their minds in gear to do their best at school. As states develop their education plans, required under the Every Student Succeeds Act, we need to send a clear message that PE must be included, as an essential part of every child's education.

Research shows **KIDS NEED ONE HOUR OF ACTIVITY EVERY DAY** & PE programs can help get them there

ONLY

4% of elementary, 8% middle and 2% of high schools provide daily PE or its equivalent for the entire year

95% OF PARENTS

with children under 18 think PE should be part of school curriculum for ALL STUDENTS, grades K-12

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

contributes to heart disease and type 2 diabetes

PE PROGRAMS IMPROVE JUDGMENT, REDUCE STRESS AND INCREASE SELF-ESTEEM

RACIAL INEQUITIES and SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES leave many schools without the resources for PE. BUT KIDS SHOULDN'T BE AT **GREATER RISK** DUE TO WHERE THEY LIVE.

PE ADDRESSES THE NEEDS OF THE WHOLE CHILD,

positively impacting their physical, mental, and emotional health

This is why we must **#IncludePE**

Get involved – visit voicesforhealthykids.org/PE

help you understand later in life.

– **C W, McHenry, IL**

PE is important on several levels. Many kids have a sedentary life style so gym can provide valuable cardio and muscle building activities. It also teaches kids how to work together on teams which is a skill carried over to higher education and the job market. It also gets them out of the classroom for a much needed change of focus and helps them let off energy.

– **Marianne, Des Plaines, IL**

Part of a well-rounded education is learning how to take care of your body as well as your mind. PE should be an integral part of any school curriculum. With that said, I would like to see students have many options for exercising - a recognition that there are many ways to work your body is as important as requiring exercise in schools. This way, students can experiment and find out what type of exercise they enjoy, and will be more likely to stick with exercising over the long haul!

– **Anne, Kensington, MD**

Exercise is vital to a healthy life. P.E. provides opportunities for students to try different sports, and methods of movement. It also teaches the importance of exercise. Students need to be active during the day, and not sit for hours, in order to think more clearly, and do their best academically.

– **Linda, Hyattsville, MD**

Children need activity! They need to use their muscles and develop! So important it is done on a daily basis. Too many kids getting into trouble and playing video games. Exercise is good for your brain as well as your emotional state.

– **Dianè, Grand Rapids, MI**

PE should be an everyday activity. Kids need to be exposed to a variety of fun ways they can keep active even if they are not on sports teams.

– **Stephanie, St. Louis, MO**

As an elementary substitute, kids LOVE PE as its fun learning about being healthy in mind and body.

– **Robyn, Knightdale, NC**

BIG IMPROVEMENTS IN P.E. FOR NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS

NEW YORK CITY is big by any standard — population, geographic spread, density and even vertical reach. With more than 1700 schools spread across its five boroughs, it is also the largest school district in the country, serving more than 1 million students. New York City has often led the way on innovative public health policies. But when it came to the next generation of New Yorkers, the city struggled to provide enough effective

physical activity during the school day. In 2010, the American Heart Association's Advocacy Committee began exploring why schools couldn't expand the time spent on physical education, only to quickly realize schools were not able to comply with the existing state standards for PE class time which fall below national benchmarks.

Fueled by questions related to why schools were struggling to meet existing PE standards, the American Heart Association conducted a survey in 2012 to better understand the obstacles faced by school administrators. The survey data further demonstrated the call-to-action for lawmakers, school officials, parents and advocacy groups to mobilize efforts. Entitled, "Physical Education in New York City: Ignoring the 800 lb. gorilla" the survey found that the vast majority of students weren't receiving the recommended minutes of PE, PE classes were commonly not taught by certified PE instructors and that nearly half of the city's schools lacked adequate space for physical activity. Coupled with similar research achieved by the City Comptroller, the Women's City Club and other partners, the findings became a wakeup call for New York City policymakers and a rallying point for the community.

As a result of this effort, the city's Phys Ed 4 All Coalition was formed. Joining with like-minded partners from education, social justice, immigrant rights and other circles, the new group mobilized quickly to change the reality in city schools. The coalition worked to pass a law in November 2015 requiring school reporting on PE throughout the city. The report card, the first of which will be issued in August 2016, will be housed on the city's website, allowing parents and community advocates to better understand the limitations of PE in their schools.

As a result of this increased awareness for effective PE, the city has now devoted significant funding to help improve the quality of physical education for all students. In FY 16, City Council dedicated a \$6.6M appropriation that helped create the PE Works program which marked the city's first ever allocation dedicated to hiring more physical education staff. And this year, Mayor de Blasio earmarked \$9M in the FY 17 budget to begin hiring certified PE teachers for all elementary schools currently without one.

See another great example from Naperville, IL in the appendix!

As a pediatrician and mother, I see the importance of PE class from both perspectives. Physical activity is critical for healthy bodies and minds. And for children living in at-risk neighborhoods where it's not safe to spend time outside, PE programs provide critical opportunities for exercise and active play. Additionally, children learn important lessons in PE - how to learn new skills, that learning something new takes patience and multiple attempts, how to cooperate as a part of a team, how to be a gracious winner and loser.

- **Kimberly, Kansas City, MO**

Exercise for kids is critical: for higher thinking skills, more focused after exercising, and creating a lifelong habit. ADHD kids are not as hyper.

- **Susan, Jackson, MS**

Brain research proves that kids need to move around and exercise! By providing PE class, we are scaffolding how important structured and unstructured physical movement activities add to the health of life. ONLY focusing on reading/writing/etc. is NOT modeling a healthy life.

- **Heather., Weaverville, NC**

Kids need to move. It helps their hearts, muscles and brains! And it helps them to focus on their lessons in class. It's a win-win!

- **Jen, Raleigh, NC**

Gym is essential for all kids and should be inclusive so that all children can participate - would love to see gym more that 1 x per week.

- **Christina, Portsmouth, NH**

Physical Education is more important now than ever. Many children go straight home from school, not able to play after school. They're sitting & playing video games, not getting exercise that is so important for their health. PE in school is such a powerful tool in children's physical health as well as helping their mental health.

- **Janice, Riverton, NJ**

Physical exercise is important to our children's health and well being. Research has shown that children need

“As a third grade teacher and a mom, I know how much kids need to MOVE in order to LEARN!”

- **Caitlin, Waterbury, VT**

to stay active. Regular exercise helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles. It helps reduce the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and colon cancer and it reduces feelings of depression and anxiety and promotes psychological well-being.

- **Trisha, Wenonah, NJ**

Some children don't have the chance to exercise out of school depending on their home situation and the neighborhoods they live in. I was fortunate to have a lot of time to be with my son outside playing in a nice neighborhood and participate in extra-curricular activities. Also kids can't sit still too long, they need a break. Gym class also encourages team participation.

- **Laurie, Liverpool, NY**

Given how sedentary our society is, PE is very important for getting kids up and moving as well as helping kids learn how to exercise and move in a safe way.

- **Sonya, Cleveland Hts, OH**

Through my work, I've learned that today's children may be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. This is a horrific trend, and one of the reasons why I am committed to supporting physical activities for my pre-school aged daughter and her daycare.

- **Sara, Tigard, OR**

I always looked forward to PE as a child. It gave me a chance to relax and talk more as well as get rid of pent up energy from sitting at a desk all day. If my son didn't get PE 3 times a week he wouldn't have a chance to learn lots of sports skills. I don't have the time & money to sign up for a lot of leagues every few months. His PE teacher is great he encourages sportsmanship and allows kids creativity in creating their own rules for some games.

- **Cindy, Charlottesville, VA**

PE/gym is very important to enable kids to be strong, flexible, and confident in controlling their bodies. It is essential for their health and well-being.

- **Julie, Sequim, WA**

Many children live in neighborhoods where it is unsafe to play outdoors. Plus studies have been done that show that students do better in school when they have recess and PE breaks

- **Donna, Loganville, WI**

PE is so important for children! They need to move their bodies and get their energy out. Exercise helps them learn better too.

- **Marie, Franklin, WI**

Kids need P.E. every day and the curriculum for P.E. should be provided by a credentialed teacher. The team, social, and emotional skills learned through sports and physical activities are integral to academic and social skills.

- **Gloria**

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES

Most school districts already have a Local Wellness Policy (LWP), but many of these policies need updating.

LWPs should address a variety of important issues: alignment with the updated nutrition standards for school meals and snacks; classroom celebrations and rewards; nutrition education; marketing of unhealthy food and beverages; physical activity; and physical education.

LWPs work best when parents, teachers, and community members come together to provide input on the school

policy, coupled with school of cials ensuring the LWP is readily available and transparent to parents, and schools are accountable for implementing the policies.

What's new?

- School districts will need to address marketing of u healthy food and beverages in the school space.
- School districts must regularly share with the public their progress on improving children's nutrition, physical activity, and overall wellbeing.

Additional Resources:

- **Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010: Summary of the Final Rule:** <http://moms.ly/2dq70nm>
- **Model Local School Wellness Policy:** <http://moms.ly/2dpHJKU>
- **School Wellness Committee Toolkit, from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation:** <http://moms.ly/2dpGETd>
- **Tips for your School Wellness Team, from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation:** <http://moms.ly/2dGSoms>

Healthy Fundraising Ideas

Fundraisers can contribute to a healthy school environment. Check out these fun options!

- Auctions/silent auctions
- “Bakeless” bake sales (Parents donate the money to the school that they otherwise would have spent at a bake sale; no baked goods are sold.)
- Book fairs
- Bottled water and fruit sales
- Calendars, cards, picture frames, candles, ceramics
- Car washes
- Clothing, jewelry, accessories and personal care products
- Cookbook fundraisers
- Fun runs, walk-a-thons, bowl-a-thons, sporting events, skating
- Grocery store fundraisers (Grocery stores give a percentage of community members' purchases to designated local schools.)
- Holiday decorations/ornaments, novelties, wrapping paper
- Magazine subscriptions
- Plants, flowers, seeds, and bulbs
- Raffles
- Recycling of clothing, cell phones & printer cartridges
- Safety and first aid kits
- Scratch cards, discount cards (Participants scratch dots on cards to designate a donation amount. In exchange for the donation, they receive discount coupons from local businesses.)
- Scrip, gift checks, and coupon books (Gift cards for use at local grocery stores or other retail stores that sell non-food items or healthy food options. Schools purchase scrip at a discount and parents purchase the scrip for full face value from the schools, which keep the difference.)
- Spices
- Sporting equipment, toys and games that promote physical activity (yoyos, jump rope s, balls, etc.)

Ideas courtesy of the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity

MARKETING IN SCHOOLS

As a pediatrician and mother, I strongly oppose the marketing of junk food in schools. The mission of school is to help our children, our most precious resource, build strong minds and bodies. Junk foods do nothing to help further this mission. Marketing junk foods sends the wrong message to our children about what they should be consuming, and how they should reward themselves.

– *Kimberly, Kansas City, MO*

Kids need strong food to learn and grow. Keep the sugar and processed foods to a minimum!

– *Caitlin, Waterbury, VT*

Junk food should never be something that is encouraged! Encourage kids to eat and sell snacks that are healthy!

– *Dianè, Grand Rapids, MI*

Schools should promote healthy eating; they have no business raising funds using junk food for fundraisers, or as incentives. Schools should not provide vending machines filled with junk food, or soft drinks either. Schools should lead by example. Eating junk food leads to the development of dental caries, obesity, and obesity related diseases.

– *Linda, Hyattsville, MD*

Junk food contributes nothing to a child's diet. An occasional "treat" such as potato chips or cupcakes is acceptable. A steady diet of these "treats" can contribute to hyperactivity, sluggishness, weight gain and a host of other problems.

– *Sherlie, Chicago, IL*

Selling candy and sweets for school fundraising is a modern tradition that consistently brings in cash. While the funds

Read more from the Rudd Center about Look Alike Snacks in Schools at the end of this booklet.

“Look-alike” Smart Snacks in Schools

Can you tell the difference?

Look-alike Smart Snacks sold in schools	Regular versions sold in stores
	
	
	

Selling look-alike Smart Snacks in schools confuses students and parents. Companies can still promote their junk food brands to students in schools



To learn more and take action, visit:
UConnRuddCenter.org/LookAlikeSmartSnacks

benefit our children, the cost is actually much higher when you consider not just the consumption of the goods by our children and families in “support”, but we perpetuate a culture of junk food under the guise of helping out our community. Yes, candy sells, but we end up normalizing junk food instead of treating it like a true treat.

– **Sara, Tigard, OR**

Junk food should no longer be used as incentives or rewards. The same result could be obtained in other ways. Schools are a perfect place for young children to learn about good, healthy food choices.

– **Janice, Riverton, NJ**

Junk food shouldn't be used but many fund raisers sell it. It should be limited. There are other things that can be used.

– **C W, McHenry, IL**

Junk food should not be sold in schools, teachers should not give candy as a reward. Children should not be turned into salesmen of overpriced junk food for fundraising.

– **Tina, Salem, NY**

Junk Food needs to be toned down. Healthy and non food options need to be offered in all areas.

– **Kim, Toledo, OH**

The effects of marketing and brainwashing on children as an incentive or as fundraisers are damaging. The marketing of unhealthy products should be prohibited.

– **Gloria**

Junk food affects how we feel and the ability to focus. Offering junk food for sale, as incentives for hard work, or as a fundraiser is promoting the consumption of junk food.

– **Andrea, Dublin, CA**

Junk food affects how we feel and the ability to focus. Offering junk food for sale, as incentives for hard work, or as a fundraiser is promoting the consumption of junk food.

– **Kelly, Plano, TX**

Its bad enough that students are expected to sell items to raise money for their

JOIN US TO TALK ABOUT HEALTHY KIDS, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

GOOD FOOD FORCE

#FoodFri tweet chat every Friday at 1pmET on Twitter
Facebook Group: http://moms.ly/GFF_Facebook
Good Food Force updates: moms.ly/JoinGFF

schools, but it is far worse when what they are selling is unhealthy.

– **Anne, Kensington, MD**

Personally, our family chooses not to participate in these types of fundraisers and instead gives a monetary donation to our school. But my children always feel left out, even though they know we do not believe in marketing junk food to raise money. We are sending mixed messages to our children that while we want them to eat healthy, it's ok to use junk food to fundraise for our schools.

– **Trisha, Wenonah, NJ**

Junk food in schools is terrible for kids. Don't allow predatory companies to peddle their products laden with salt, fat, and sugar to kids in schools.

– **Stephen, Waukesha, WI**

Junk food, including junk beverages like soda, should not be sold or marketed in schools. Having cupcakes and cake and cookies nearly every day in the classroom as birthday celebrations is unhealthy, this practice should end. There are other ways to celebrate special days.

– **Stephanie, St. Louis, MO**

I think there should be less incentives to buy junk food and a whole lot of incentives to serve fresh food including fresh produce.

– **Toby, Springfield, IL**

There's better ways to reward schools and children without giving them junk food as a reward. Think OUTSIDE the box!

– **BrendaLee, Tallahassee, FL**

When I was a teacher, I got in big trouble for speaking out against “McTeacher’s

Night” where the Kinder teachers were paid \$100 to work behind the counter at McDonald’s selling food to their students. The district got a few bucks for it, and all the kids were encouraged in the school packet to go to McDonald’s that night.

– **Rebecca, San Francisco, CA**

Kids bring an appalling amount of junk food to school as both snacks and lunch. The marketing of junk food as convenience for parents needs to be slowed to a trickle. NO junk food should be allowed to be marketed in schools! In my high-poverty school junk food is all some of these kids really even know about. They need opportunities to learn how to eat healthy, if not from home, then at school!

– **Cindi, Hardwick, VT**

Nutritious eating early in life often leads to nutritious eating later.

– **Robert, Columbia, MO**

Marketing of junk food in schools is wrong because children need to be eating goods, even snacks, which are nutritious. Healthy snacks presented as incentives, winning a contest or fund-raising would represent a better model for students to develop good eating habits!

– **Tennie**

School should set the standard for the ideal in nutrition. For some kids this may be where they become aware of this for the first time.

– **Betsy, Cornville, AZ**

I disapprove of all junk food ads at school, as they will promote unhealthy eating habits for children whose bodies are still developing and requiring all

A clear call for healthy snacks at school.

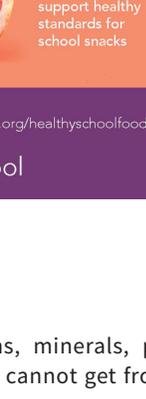
JOIN THE MOVEMENT FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOODS.

Schools that offer healthier snacks can help students

CONSUME FEWER CALORIES

After California set strong standards for school snacks high school students consumed

158 fewer calories/day.¹



If kids across the U.S. eliminated 64 excess calories per day, we would achieve federal goals for reducing obesity rates by 2020.

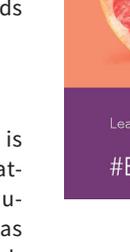
AND REDUCE UNHEALTHY WEIGHT GAIN

In states with strong standards for school snacks, students gained less weight^{2,3} between 5th and 8th grade, and students who were overweight or obese in 5th grade were less likely to be so by 8th grade.



without snack standards with snack standards

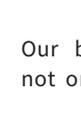
Parents are on board



72% of parents⁴ nationwide support healthy standards for school snacks

Schools win with healthy snacks

MEAL PARTICIPATION RISES
Student participation in school meal programs increased on average by

2.6 

SCHOOL REVENUE INCREASES^{5,6}
Total food service revenue increased on average by

4 

Learn more at www.rwjf.org/healthyschoolfoods

#BackToSchool



necessary vitamins, minerals, protein, and iron that they cannot get from junk foods.

– **Kathy, Trumann, AR**

Marketing junk food is detrimental to the health and fitness of kids. It is a greedy, unacceptable business practice and should be banned in every way possible.

– **Julie, Sequim, WA**

Our bodies need fresh whole foods, not ones laden with preservatives and

chemicals. For the health and well being of our children, junk food should not even be an option. This must be mandatory!

– **Marie, Franklin, WI**

Junk foods, full of salt & sugar should NOT be given to children. Including soda, which is full of high fructose corn syrup, which has been associated with the doubling of obesity, since the 1970’s!

– **Stephen, Asbury Park, NJ**

“Junk food has no place in our schools – we are trying to instill healthy habits in our kids, so they will feel better and do better in school.”

– **Nadya, Oakland, CA**

“Look-alike” Smart Snacks in schools

August 2016

In 2013, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) established nutrition standards for snack foods sold in schools to encourage the sale of healthy snacks such as fruit, nuts, and yogurt. In response, food companies reformulated popular brands of chips and sweet snacks to meet Smart Snacks standards. While many of the reformulated products are only sold in schools, they are often packaged to look similar to the widely available less-nutritious versions. Selling these “copycat” or “look-alike” versions of junk food—such as Cheetos, Pop-tarts and Fruit Roll-ups—in schools confuses students and raises concerns about schools selling them.

The study

Middle- and high-school students and parents participated in an online experiment. They viewed information about a hypothetical school that was considering selling one of four different types of snacks to students. Participants then rated the individual snacks being considered for sale and the school selling them. Four options were tested:

New USDA Smart Snacks standards have improved the nutrition quality of snacks sold in schools. But look-alike Smart Snacks may limit schools’ ability to teach children about good nutrition.

School 1: Look-alike Smart Snacks	School 2: Regular unhealthy snacks	School 3: Repackaged Smart Snacks	School 4: Healthy brands
			
			
			

Key findings

- Selling look-alike Smart Snacks in schools confuses students and parents. It also allows junk food brands to promote their products to students in schools.

- Students believed that look-alike Smart Snacks and the less-nutritious versions of the brands sold in stores were similar in healthfulness and expected them to taste the same.
- Parents and students reported that they had seen four out of five of the look-alike Smart Snacks in stores, even though they are not widely available outside of schools.
- Students believed that they could still purchase the majority of the less-nutritious versions of these brands in their schools.
- The snacks sold in schools *matter*: selling look-alike snacks undermines schools' ability to teach good nutrition.
 - Both parents and students believed that schools selling look-alike Smart Snacks were less concerned about students' health and well-being than schools that only offered clearly more-nutritious snacks, including Smart Snacks in different packaging and only healthy brands.

At a minimum, marketing of look-alike Smart Snacks should not be allowed in schools.

Take action

School food service directors, school administrators, teachers, parents, school health professionals and food manufacturers have an opportunity to further improve the nutrition and food marketing environment in schools.

- School food service directors can work with vendors to increase the availability of nutritious snack foods, such as nuts, fruit, and yogurt in schools.
- School districts can strengthen local wellness policies to not allow marketing or sales of look-alike Smart Snacks in schools.
- Parents and public health advocates can demand that food manufacturers also offer Smart Snacks versions of their products for sale outside of schools, package these products to clearly differentiate them from less-nutritious versions of their brands, and stop targeting marketing for less-nutritious snacks directly to children and teens.

The Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at the University of Connecticut is a multi-disciplinary research center dedicated to promoting solutions to childhood obesity, poor diet, and weight bias through research and policy. For more information, visit www.UConnRuddCenter.org.

RESOURCES:

Harris JL, Hyary M, Schwartz MB (2016). Effects of Offering "look-alike" products as Smart Snacks in schools. *Childhood Obesity*. www.UConnRuddCenter.org/LookAlikeSmartSnacks

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation's [Smart Food Planner](#) contains a product search function that includes a wide variety of healthy foods and beverages that fit Smart Snacks guidelines.

Snack FACTS: Evaluating snack food nutrition and marketing to youth (2015). http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/files/Pdfs/SnackFACTS_2015_Fulldraft03.pdf



Improving Access to Drinking Water in Schools

Water consumption is important for students' cognition, dental health, and physical health.¹⁻³ The availability and promotion of free water during the school day has been shown to increase water consumption^{4,5} and may prevent school children from being overweight.³

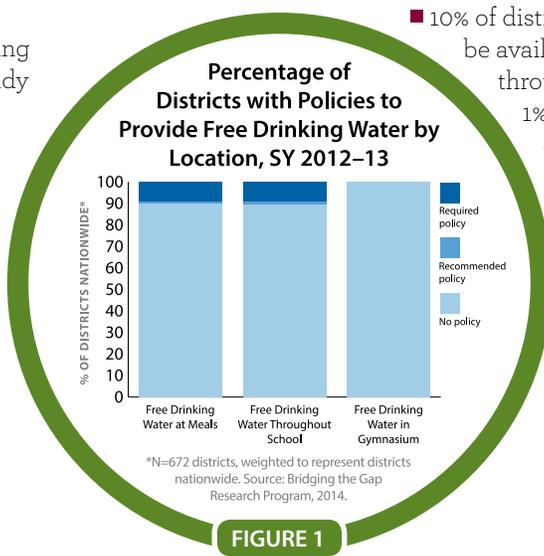
The Institute of Medicine recommends making free, potable water available as a means to decrease sugar-sweetened beverage consumption by children and adolescents.⁶ National organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommend that districts provide students with access to free drinking water throughout the school day.⁷ Furthermore, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires that schools participating in the National School Lunch Program make free, potable water available during meals in places where meals are served. Schools must also make drinking water available during the School Breakfast Program when breakfast is served in the cafeteria.⁸

This brief highlights areas where local school wellness policies (i.e., wellness policies) address water accessibility and where policy opportunities exist. It summarizes policy actions taken by public school districts from 2012–2013 school year from the Bridging the Gap (BTG) study. All policies were collected and coded by BTG researchers using a standardized method based on evidence-based guidelines and recommendations from expert organizations and agencies.^{9,10} Complete details about how these data were collected and compiled are available in the companion methods documentation.¹¹

WHAT ACTIONS HAVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TAKEN?

Few wellness policies addressed water accessibility in schools (Figure 1). During the 2012–2013 school year, the BTG study found that

- Only 9% of districts *required* that free drinking water be available in places where meals are served, and approximately 1% of districts *recommended* free drinking water be available where meals are served.
- Approximately 90% of school districts do not have a policy for access to free water on the school campus.



- 10% of districts *required* that free drinking water be available throughout the school day and throughout the school campus. Less than 1% of districts *recommended* that free drinking water be available throughout the day on school campuses.
- No districts *required* or *recommended* that free drinking water be available in the gymnasium.

FIGURE 1



What Can You Do?

IMPROVE ACCESS TO WATER

There are a number of evidence-based strategies and expert recommendations that can help improve access to drinking water in schools.^{6,12,13} The actions below can help you implement these strategies and recommendations. See the Resources section at the end for links to documents and Web sites that provide additional information.

STATES

- Work with districts to ensure that free, clean, and safe drinking water is available throughout school campuses.
- Help districts secure funding to improve the condition of water fountains.
- Strengthen building codes that affect the availability of drinking water.

- Encourage school districts and schools to promote water consumption by using marketing campaigns and practices that make water easily accessible (e.g., allowing students to bring water bottles into classrooms).

SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS

- Include language about drinking water access in the district wellness policy.
- Offer free drinking water during lunch periods.
- Ensure that water fountains are clean and functioning properly.
- Consider installing drinking fountains in locations where students can easily access

them including school cafeterias, gymnasiums, and throughout hallways.

- Offer nonfountain sources of water (e.g., dispensers, pitchers, coolers) in areas where drinking fountains are not feasible.
- Consider providing cups at drinking fountains and other nonfountain sources of water to encourage students to drink more water.
- Allow students to bring water bottles into classrooms.
- Promote water consumption by using marketing campaigns.
- Limit the availability of sugar-sweetened beverages that compete with and displace water consumption.
- Encourage school staff to model healthy behaviors, including water consumption.

RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Adolescent and School Health. Water Access in Schools. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/npao/wateraccess.htm>.
- USDA Team Nutrition. Local School Wellness Policy. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>.
- ChangeLab Solutions, National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity. Drinking Water Access in Schools. http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/documents/WaterAccess_FactSht_FINAL_20111026.pdf.
- ChangeLab Solutions, National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity. Water Access in Schools: Model Wellness Policy Language. <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/wellness-policy-water>.
- Water in Schools. <http://www.waterinschools.org/index.shtml>.
- Bridging the Gap Research. School district wellness policy-related reports and materials. http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org/research/district_wellness_policies.

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- ⁸National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Interim Rule, 78 Fed. Reg. 39068-39120 (June 28, 2013) (to be codified at 7 C.F.R. Pt. 210 and 220).
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- ¹¹Bridging the Gap Research Program. *Methods Document for the CDC and Bridging the Gap Local School Wellness Policy Briefs*. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/policy/pdf/methodsforwellnesspolicybriefs.pdf>.
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Suggested citation: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bridging the Gap Research Program. *Strategies for Improving Access to Drinking Water in Schools, Update for the 2012-13 School Year*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2014.



Naperville Central High School's Learning Readiness P.E. program has been engaging students in meaningful physical activity since 2003.

Paul Zientarski, the former LRPE coordinator at the school uses scientific evidence to show students and others that physical activity positively affects cognition.

Naperville Central

Level: High School

Enrollment: 2,947

Low Income: 6.5%

- 75% White
- 13% Asian
- 5% Black
- 5% Hispanic

(ISBE School Report Card)

Learning Readiness P.E.

Naperville Central High School appears to be an average public high school in an upper-middle class community; however, the school's physical education program is not so average. Since 1992, Naperville Central has been utilizing heart rate monitors during P.E. in order to ensure students are working in their targeted heart rate zones and maximizing the benefits of P.E. Since then, major strides have been made by the school and district with the ultimate goal of running a P.E. program that truly benefits their students' overall health, wellness, and learning readiness.

In 2003, Naperville Central determined that some of their students were not performing at grade level because of poor reading skills. The school formed an academic reading class for these students and created a before-school or zero hour P.E. class so that students taking the elective reading class could still participate in P.E., as mandated by the state of Illinois. This became Learning Readiness P.E. (LRPE), a class designed based on research that indicated students who were physically active and fit were more academically alert.

Paul Zientarski, who was the first LRPE Coordinator at the school, saw this zero hour as an opportunity to test whether or not physical activity could have an impact on the academic performance of his students. Thus began his school's journey towards enhanced P.E.

Physical Activity is Brain Food

Data consistently show that since the inception of the program, students who participated in LRPE increased their literacy and math capabilities. The LRPE program emphasizes the importance of staying active and uses a variety of facilities to encourage

that—such as climbing walls, kayaks, ropes courses, dance rooms, and weight training; it isn't your average gym.

More exceptional than the P.E. resources is how Zientarski has applied current scientific knowledge to his program. Neuroscience research shows that the more fit a student is, the better his or her academic performance. Therefore, every P.E. class includes a cardio work out of some kind for at least twenty minutes, coupled with the use of heart rate monitors to ensure that students are reaching their targeted heart rate zones. The district has also ensured that their students understand the emphasis they place on fitness and wellness. As Zientarski says, "Since we understand how exercise helps the brain function, we want to make sure that the high school students understand how and why it helps them academically."

Another huge focus of LRPE is foregoing larger teamed sport games for small-sided games (i.e. 4 on 4 soccer) instead—the goal, after all, is to have students engaging in more moderate to vigorous physical activity.

"Since we understand how exercise helps the brain function, we want to make sure that the high school students understand how and why it helps them academically."

-Paul Zientarski

**Former LRPE Coordinator
Naperville Central High School**

“Physical education is more than a few baseball bats and basketballs. You need to arm physical education teachers with the proper technology, like heart rate monitors and software to track their students’ fitness.”

–Paul Zientarski,
Former LRPE
Coordinator,
Naperville Central
High School



Paul Zientarski (above)

Begin With Professional Development

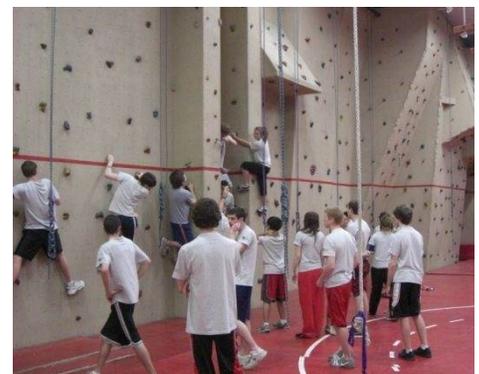
Beginning in the mid-1980s, Zientarski and the Naperville District Coordinator, Phil Lawler, began to brainstorm ways they could improve their P.E. curriculum. Zientarski and Lawler had a vision of collective professional development that quickly grew into a one day conference held in DuPage County for P.E., Health, and Driver’s Education teachers. The annual conference is recognized nationally and averages an astonishing 1200+ attendees.

The Path to Change

Heart rate monitors were the first investment the school made in enhancing P.E., money for which came from a local fundraiser. District P.E. coordinator Lawler recognized that when his students played regular gym sports like football, they were not reaching their targeted heart rate. “These monitors really gave us the evidence that things needed to change, and now we have Pass Ball, a form of ultimate Frisbee with a football that requires students to spend a lot more time running.” said Zientarski.

These changes didn’t come without resistance; students who were typically seen as athletic realized that they also had to put work into their P.E. class to maintain their targeted heart rate zone, which vary from student to student based on their personal fitness.

The administration’s support of the P.E. department was instrumental in securing the school’s Carol White Physical Education Program grant that funded a new climbing wall and ropes courses. The LRPE curriculum, which was developed by Lawler and Zientarski in house, aligns P.E. class with a student’s specific learning needs, for instance, by scheduling P.E. before math or reading class for low performing students. Technology like heart rate monitors and TriFit software, used for data collection and analysis, has been used extensively in Naperville. “Physical education is more than a few baseball bats and basketballs. You need to arm physical education teachers with the proper technology, like heart rate monitors and software to track their students’ fitness,” Zientarski said.



Students Engaging in LRPE



Resources

Learning Readiness

P.E.

www.learningreadinesspe.com

TriFIT Software

www.polar.com

FITNESSGRAM®

www.fitnessgram.net

Dr. John Ratey

www.johnratey.com

Enhance P.E. Task Force

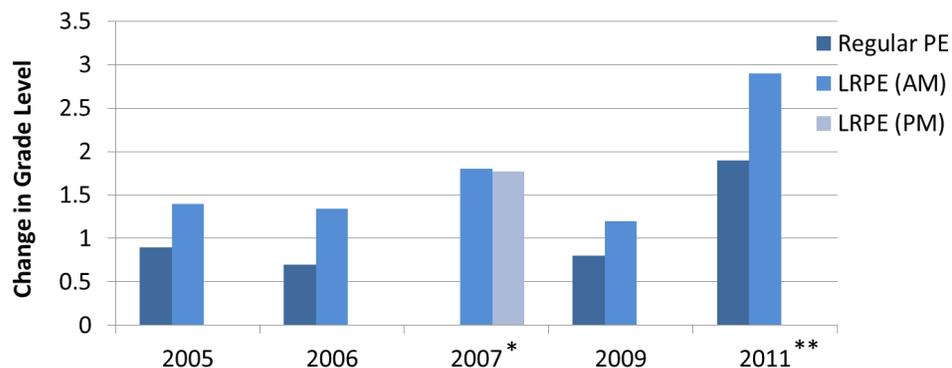
www.isbe.net/EPE/html/EPETF.htm

The Community Guide

www.thecommunityguide.org



Figure 1. P.E. and Literacy Improvement

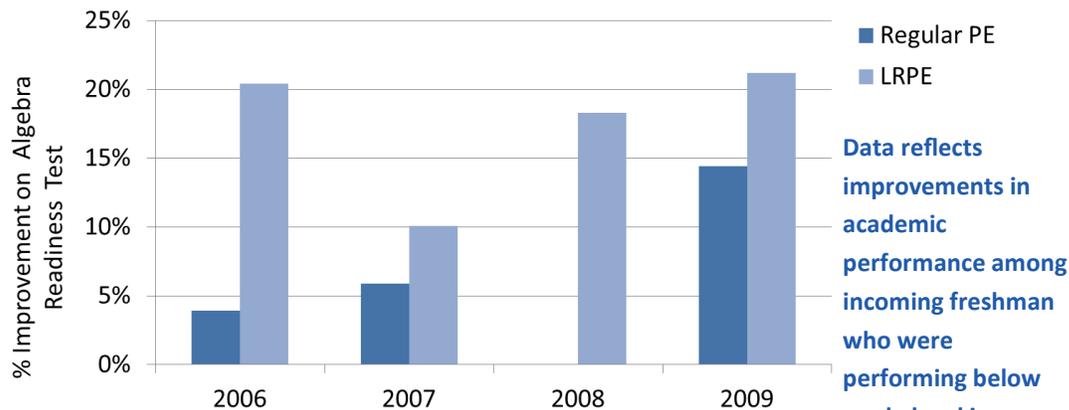


Reading level evaluated using the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test*

*No students permitted to opt-out of LRPE in 2007

** 2011 data includes students from Naperville North High School

Figure 2. P.E. and Algebra Improvement



Math skills evaluated using the *Algebra Readiness Test*

No regular P.E. was held in 2008

Data reflects improvements in academic performance among incoming freshman who were performing below grade level in reading and math.

Showing the Connection

Zientarski and the Naperville administration recognized early on that LRPE helps students academically (Figures 1 and 2). Naperville Central employs FITNESSGRAM® so that both teachers and students can track individual fitness progress. The success of Naperville's LRPE program is largely due to the community of supportive parents. Zientarski specifically attributes the visit Dr. John Ratey, professor of psychiatry at

Harvard Medical School who first conceptualized LRPE, to the publicity that created awareness and ongoing support from the community. Although Zientarski and Lawler are now retired, the current P.E. coordinator Neil Duncan continues their legacy and hopes the school can further improve its program by enabling parents to track the comparison between their student's academic performance and physical fitness.



For more information, contact Paul Zientarski
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www.iphionline.org

MomsRising.org is an online and on-the-ground grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all families in the United States.

MomsRising is working for paid family leave, flexible work options, affordable childcare, and for an end to the wage and hiring discrimination which penalizes so many others. MomsRising also advocates for better childhood nutrition, health care for all, toxic-free environments, and breastfeeding rights so that all children can have a healthy start.

Established in 2006, MomsRising and its members are organizing and speaking out to improve public policy and to change the national dialogue on issues that are critically important to America's families. In 2013, Forbes.com named MomsRising's web site as one of the Top 100 Websites For Women for the fourth year in a row and Working Mother magazine included MomsRising on its "Best of the Net" list.