

## **FAQ about the SFUSD Wellness Policy for Elementary and Middle Schools**

### **ABOUT THE NEW DISTRICT NUTRITION POLICY**

#### **1. Why is there a new district nutrition policy?**

In January 2003, the Board of Education voted to create a healthy-food policy in response to soaring childhood obesity and related deadly disorders.

- Childhood obesity has tripled since 1970.
- Rates of asthma, heart disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and other disorders in children have skyrocketed correspondingly.
- Some researchers say that the current generation of children may be the first in human history to live shorter life spans than their parents' generation.
- Obesity and related health crises are far more severe among African-American, Latino and economically disadvantaged children.

The new district policy prohibits the schools from selling junk food in their cafeterias or vending machines, as one way of addressing the rising obesity/Type 2 diabetes crisis. Others ways of addressing this problem will include more nutrition education and, as funding becomes available, more PE programs.

Because children learn from the adults around them, parents, teachers, and staff are all encouraged to model good eating habits for students, including providing nutritious food for lunches and school parties and events, and refraining from using candy as rewards or prizes. The average student sees over 10,000 advertisements per year for food, nearly all of it non-nutritious junk food, but research shows that children are more likely to be influenced by messages sent by the significant adults in their lives than by messages sent by the media. Modeling good eating habits for students can really make a difference in the fight against obesity.

#### **2. Why are fundraising food sales during the school day a concern?**

The federally subsidized National School Lunch Program (NSLP – see link at the end of this document) provides the "lunch-line" menus at all schools, offering free or reduced-priced lunch to low-income students. Other students pay full (though reasonable) price for those meals. The lunch-line meals must conform to federal nutritional standards (including federally mandated limits on fat content and requirements for vitamin, mineral, and protein content), and the menu is the same in all SFUSD schools at all grade levels. Greater participation in the lunch program could support higher-quality cuisine for all students.

"Competitive food" sales at lunchtime by parent and student organizations are common in high schools and some middle schools. Those sales drain money from the lunch-line operation, which then reduces the quality of those meals and drives more students to the

competitive operations in a downward spiral. When the lunch-line menus drop in quality because kids choose competitive foods instead, those who suffer are the younger children (since elementary schools don't have competitive sales) and children who can't afford the other foods being sold.

### **PARENT-RUN FUNDRAISING SALES (GRADES K-8)**

#### **3. When can elementary or middle schools sell soda, candy, and chips? When can't they?**

All food sold before or during the school day, or by students, must meet SFUSD nutrition standards. That means soda, candy, and chips may be sold only on limited occasions, during non-school hours, and only by parents. In elementary and middle schools, parents may sell food which does not meet district nutrition standards up to ten times per school year, as long as the sale takes place after 5:00pm on weekdays or anytime on weekends or school holidays. An annual Saturday carnival, an evening holiday concert, or a night-time science fair are all examples of the types of events where these foods could be sold.

All elementary and middle school food sales must take place before school starts or after school; no fundraising sales of any kind of food may take place during the school day, not even food which meets district nutrition standards. This rule helps support the NSLP (see question #2.) To clarify, teachers, parents, and students may not sell popcorn, nachos, bake sale items, or any other form of food or beverage during the school day, not even just once a week. Beverages and snacks on the district-approved list (<http://www.sfusdfood.org/approved.html>) may be sold before school or immediately after school. Any other food or beverages may only be sold after 5pm, only 10 times per year, and only by parents, not students. It is strongly urged that parents and school staff explore non-food based fundraising options, or those based on the sale of healthy food, like fruit baskets. Online resources are provided at the end of this document.

#### **4. Why only after 5pm? The kids will all be gone by then.**

A sale held earlier in the afternoon, when many students remain at school for sports, activities, clubs, or afterschool care, might encourage some kids to skip lunch and use their lunch money to buy high fat/high sugar snacks instead. Younger students are not always ready to make responsible food choices unsupervised by an adult, and many parents have objected to their children having access to soda, junk food, and sweets at school. After 5pm, most students attending a school event will be in the company of a parent or guardian, who can monitor their purchases.

#### **5. Can we still have bake sales?**

Yes. Elementary and middle school bake sales may be held up to ten times per school year, after 5:00 pm on weekdays or anytime on weekends or school holidays. Healthy foods are preferred at all food sales, and parents are encouraged to use recipes which minimize sweeteners and fats, and incorporate whole grain flour and fruits or vegetables, where appropriate (zucchini bread, whole wheat banana muffins, etc.) Parents are encouraged to also offer fresh fruit and bottled water for sale at any food fundraising event. Bake sales are not permitted during school hours or after school before 5pm

**6. We want to run a "snack shop" to raise money for a special field trip. Can we sell healthy snacks to the kids after school?**

Yes. Parent groups may sell snacks from the district-approved vending list (see question #3) before school starts or after school any day. Only foods from the approved list may be sold, and the sale must be by parents, not students. Parents are encouraged to also offer fresh fruit and bottled water for sale at any food fundraising event.

**PARENT-RUN EVENTS**

**7. Can we have soda and chips at our class holiday party? What about a classroom birthday party?**

No. Parents are encouraged to send nutritious treats for school parties. "Fun" beverages children like include fruit juice and nonfat chocolate milk. Popular party snacks include:

- cut-up fruit (orange quarters, melon slices, rounds of peeled kiwi), small bunches of grapes, or fruit salad
- whole wheat pita triangles and hummus dip
- deviled eggs made with fat-free mayonnaise
- celery sticks stuffed with low fat cream cheese
- small cubes of cheese with a pretzel stick stuck in the top (in place of a toothpick)
- baby carrots
- black olives

Cakes or cupcakes are allowed at birthday parties, but teachers are requested to schedule only one monthly party for all students with birthdays in that month, rather than separate parties for each student. Parents are urged to consider alternatives to birthday cake, including mini cupcakes (half the size of regular cupcakes), mini fruit muffins, oatmeal raisin cookies, animal crackers, banana or zucchini bread.

If at all possible, many children (and teachers) would love to have a parent or family member come to school during party time (or any class celebration) and read a story aloud to the class. Parents of each month's birthday students are encouraged to pool their resources – one could provide healthy snacks, one could bring juice or milk, and one could plan to read a story or lead the class in a short activity or game. Children who wish to give out "party bags" after a classroom birthday party should to fill the bags with pencils, stickers, novelty erasers or notepads, rather than candy.

**8. What about food for our PTA potluck dinner, or our teacher appreciation luncheon?**

Any food provided to adults is acceptable if it is not being sold. Free refreshments at a PTA meeting or open house are not subject to district nutrition policy, but refreshments which are sold are subject to the policy. Teacher appreciation luncheons or breakfasts, are also exempt from district nutrition standards, so long as the food is shared at no charge, rather than sold.

However, all adults are asked to model healthy eating for students. We are all concerned about the childhood obesity crisis, but as adults, it is our job to set a good example for the

children. It sends a very conflicting message to the students when they learn about proper nutrition in health or science class, and are served only nutritious food in the cafeteria, but see their parents and teachers routinely serving mostly soda, chips, doughnuts, and cookies to each other at their school events. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy options at school events, including bottled water and fresh fruits and vegetables. Teachers might prefer an alternative to the traditional enormous sheet cake served at their “appreciation luncheon”: fruit salad and homemade cookies, for example. If many teachers or parents at a school are following a low-carbohydrate diet, parents may want to take this into account when planning food for events.

**9. Can we still hold our fundraising catalog sale, which offers candy as well as gift wrap? How about See’s candy, or cookie dough?**

Offsite catalog sales are at the Principal’s discretion. The sale cannot be held onsite, but if the Principal authorizes the fundraiser, then parents or students may sell these items off school property (ie – at the parent’s office, in their neighborhood, etc.) Parents and staff are strongly urged to plan fundraising activities which do not include the sale of non-nutritious food. Online resources are provided at the end of this document.

**TEACHERS AND STAFF**

**10. Can our school still have vending machines in the teachers’ lounge?**

Elementary schools may have vending machines so long as they are not ever accessible by students, including before and after the end of the regular school day. However, staff are urged to model healthy eating for their students and to provide a choice of nutritious items in vending machines.

Middle schools may have vending machines, but they may be stocked only with items from the district-approved list (<http://www.sfusdfood.org/approved.html>).

**11. Can teachers use food as rewards for classroom behavior or as academic awards?**

Yes, so long as they are not using candy or other foods of minimal nutritional value. Children also enjoy oranges (especially the tiny Clementines and seedless Satsuma tangerines available in midwinter), small boxes of raisins or other dried fruits, bags of pretzels, or fruit and cereal bars; see district list of approved snacks at <http://www.sfusdfood.org/approved.html>. Stickers and new pencils are also popular, as are colorful “award certificates” or “homework passes”, which allow a student to skip an assignment or turn it in a day late.

**12. Does the nutrition policy affect classroom cooking projects?**

No, but classroom projects should also model good nutrition habits for students, and offer an excellent opportunity for teachers to discuss proper nutrition, and demonstrate that often the sugar or fat content of recipes can be changed without altering the taste of the final product. Parents who volunteer to organize a classroom cooking project should be encouraged to choose recipes which feature nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and minimize reliance on added sugar and fat.

### **13. How will the district wellness policy be enforced?**

Student Nutrition Services is responsible for enforcement of the policy as it applies to food sold or served in the cafeteria and in SFUSD-run afterschool programs. The Assistant Superintendents (SOIS) will work with site administrators to make sure that the policy as it relates to parents and staff is enforced at each school.

### **AFTERSCHOOL CARE**

#### **14. Are the snacks served at the afterschool care program subject to the new policy?**

If the afterschool care is operated by the SFUSD, then the snacks are subject to USDA regulation, which sets limits on fat content and requires certain nutrients. If the afterschool program is operated by another entity (YMCA, Beacon, etc.) then the snacks served are not subject to USDA nutrition standards. In neither case do the SFUSD nutrition standards apply. However, all programs supplying snacks to children are strongly encouraged to provide only healthy nutritious food. Parents have indicated that they would prefer to have their children served more fresh fruit, vegetables, and milk as snacks, rather than canned juice and crackers.

**Afterschool care providers may not sell any kind of food to students anywhere on SFUSD property at any time, not even as a “fundraiser.”**

Links to information available online:

Information on the National School Lunch Program:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/>

Afterschool Snacks in the NSLP

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Afterschool/default.htm>

SFUSD approved vending list for beverages and snacks

<http://www.sfusdfood.org/approved.html>

Non-food based fundraising ideas

<http://www.nojunkfood.org/fundraising/todo.html>

<http://www.nojunkfood.org/fundraising/tosell.html>

[www.co.shasta.ca.us/Departments/PublicHealth/CommunityHealth/projlean/fundraiser1.pdf](http://www.co.shasta.ca.us/Departments/PublicHealth/CommunityHealth/projlean/fundraiser1.pdf)

[http://www.abcusd.k12.ca.us/dist\\_info/nutr/Nutrition%20Network/Fundraisers.html](http://www.abcusd.k12.ca.us/dist_info/nutr/Nutrition%20Network/Fundraisers.html)

If you still have questions which are not addressed in this FAQ, please contact Dana Woldow at [nestwife@owlbaby.com](mailto:nestwife@owlbaby.com).

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