

FAQ about the SFUSD Wellness Policy for High 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.

FUNDRAISING FOOD SALES (GRADES 9-12)

3. When can high 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 high schools, parents may sell food which does not meet district nutrition standards at school events such as performances or sports, so long as the sale does not begin before 4pm. There is no limit to the number of such sales which parents may hold.

4. When can students sell food?

The California Code of Regulation allows students to sell food in two different ways. First, high school students may hold four food sales per year; any number of groups or clubs may sell food on those four days, but the sales must be held on the same four days for every group or club. Food sold may include entrees prepared at home or brought in from a restaurant; beverages and snacks must meet district nutrition standards (this means no candy, soda, or chips.) The sale on those four days may (at the discretion of the Principal) run throughout the day, including during the lunch period. All such sales must be authorized by the Principal.

Second, at the discretion of the Principal, students may sell food from the district approved list before or immediately after school, but the sale must conform to the following rules (per the California Code of Regulation):

- only one group or club may sell per day
- all groups or clubs must be given an equal chance to sell (i.e. – the option to sell cannot be limited to just Student Council or just one or two clubs; if any one group is allowed to sell, then all groups must be given the same number of selling days over the course of the school year)
- the sale must be limited to no more than three types of items (for example, beverages; packaged snacks; fresh fruit)
- all food and beverages sold must be from the district-approved list (<http://www.sfusdfood.org/approved.html>)
- an Administrator at the school must be willing to take responsibility for ensuring that student sales comply with these rules, including responsibility for ensuring fairness in the scheduling of sale days among the various groups who wish to sell.

5. Why does the new policy place restrictions on student-run food sales?

This is a state law, contained in the California Code of Regulation, not a result of the new policy.

6. What about other food sales during the school day?

Apart from the four student-run sales per year, all other high school food sales must take place

before school starts or after school; no other 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 and school staff, parents, and students *may not* sell popcorn, nachos, candy, 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 at school events after 4pm, 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.

7. Can we still have bake sales?

Yes. Parents may hold high school bake sales at school events after 4:00 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 4pm.

8. Parents 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 #6) 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 (for student-run sales, please see #4, above). Parents are encouraged to also offer fresh fruit and bottled water for sale at any food fundraising event.

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 nonnutritious food. Online resources are provided at the end of this document.

PARENT-RUN EVENTS

10. Can students have soda and chips at their class party?

No. Parents are encouraged to send nutritious treats for school parties, including fresh fruits and vegetables, cheese and crackers, mini bagels and cream cheese, pita bread and hummus, pretzels, trail mix, or any homemade food.

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

Any food served 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. 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 each other mostly soda, chips, doughnuts, and cookies 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.

TEACHERS AND STAFF

12. Can our school still have vending machines?

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

13. 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. Students also enjoy oranges, small packages of raisins or nuts, bags of pretzels, or fruit and cereal bars; see district list of approved snacks at <http://www.sfusdfood.org/approved.html>

14. 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.

Links to information available online:

Information on the National School Lunch Program:

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

SFUSD approved vending list for beverages and snacks

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

Non-food based fundraising ideas

www.pasasf.org

<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.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.

SFUSD Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee

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