

Healthy Choices in the School Food Environment (vending machines, snack bars, school stores, concession stands, and a la carte menu items)

WHEREAS, only 2% of school-age children meet the Food Guide Pyramid serving recommendations for all major food groups;⁴

WHEREAS, the percentage of children meeting the minimum number of daily food group servings specified in the Food Guide Pyramid are: 35% for fruit, 46% for meat, 45% for vegetables, 65% for grains, and 60% for milk;²

WHEREAS, in 93.6% of senior high schools, 83.5% of middle schools, and 58.1% of elementary schools in the United States students can purchase soft drinks, fruit and sports drinks (not 100% juice) from vending machines, school stores, canteen, or snack bars;⁹

WHEREAS, children age nine and older are heavy consumers of sodas. BY the time they are 14 years of age or older, 32% of young women and 52% of young men are consuming three or more servings of soda per day;^{1,2,9}

WHEREAS, consumption of soft drinks can displace healthier foods from children's diets like low-fat milk, which can prevent osteoporosis, and juice, which can prevent cancer;^{1,3,6,7}

WHEREAS, over the last two decades, rates of obesity have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents;^{1,6}

WHEREAS, whereas rates of type 2 diabetes in children have increased ten-fold in children over the past 10 years;^{1,6}

WHEREAS, convincing evidence has been reported concerning the hazards to dental health, particularly dental carries, from the consumption of sugar;⁵

WHEREAS, children aged 6 to 8 are at an important stage of dental development;⁷

WHEREAS, nutrition standards developed by the US Department of Agriculture requiring schools to plan menus that meet the 1995 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* do not apply to a la carte foods, foods sold in school snack bars, school stores, concession stands, or vending machines;⁶

WHEREAS, The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity 2001 recommends that "individuals and groups across all settings...adopt policies specifying that all foods and beverages available at school contribute toward eating patterns that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans";⁸

WHEREAS, Healthy People 2010 objective 19-15 calls for increasing the proportion of children and adolescents aged 6 to 19 years whose intake of meals and snacks at school contributes to good overall dietary quality;⁷ and

WHEREAS, Healthy People 2010 objective 21-1 calls for a reduction of the number of children and adolescents who have dental caries experience in their primary or permanent teeth.⁷

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the American School Health Association:

- 1) Supports schools in providing 75% or more healthy food choices that meet the dietary guidelines for Americans in the school food environment;
- 2) Supports schools in providing practical information to students, teachers, administrators, and parents about how to make healthy choices in the school food environment; and
- 3) Supports school initiatives in establishing healthy standards for competitive foods in the school food environment.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for school health programs to promote lifelong healthy eating. *MMWR* 1996; 45 (No. RR-9): pp. 1-3.
2. Gleason, P. and Sutor, C. Children's diets in the mid-1990's: dietary intake and its relationship with school meal preparation. Alexandria, VA: US Department of Agriculture: 2001. Report No.: CN-01-CD1.
3. Harnack, L., et al. "Soft Drink Consumption among US Children and Adolescents: Nutritional Consequences." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 1999, vol. 99, pp. 436-441.
4. NGA Center for Best Practices. (2003). Issues Brief: Preventing obesity in youth through school-based efforts. http://www.nga.org/center_
5. Ogden, C., et al. "Prevalence and Trends in Overweight Among US Children and

Adolescents, 1999-2000." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2002, vol. 228, pp. 1728-1732.

6. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Healthy Schools for Healthy Kids pp. 5-19,2003.

7. US Department of Health and Human Services. Health People 2010 2nd ed. With Understanding and Improving Health and Objectives for Improving Health. 2 Vols. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, November 2000.

8. US Department of Health and Human Services. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, 2001.

9. Wechsler, H., et al. "Food Services and Foods and Beverages Available at school: Results from the School Health Policies and Programs Study 2000." *Journal of School Health* 2001, vol. 71, pp. 313-324.

Revised: 2004

Year Adopted: 1979

© 2004

American School Health Association

7263 State Route 43 / P.O. Box 708

Kent, OH 44240

330/678-1601 (phone); 330/678-4526 (fax); asha@ashaweb.org (e-mail)

www.ashaweb.org