



Bozeman High School, Bozeman, Montana

- 1,800 students in the Gallatin Valley just north of Yellowstone National Park
- 7 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Limit student access to competitive foods
- Influence food and beverage contracts
- Make more healthful foods and beverages available
- Adopt marketing techniques to promote healthful choices

Words of wisdom

“When school administrators and community members focus on what is the best thing for kids’ health and well-being, solutions to financial demands can be met and new educational opportunities are created.”

—*Katie Bark, RD, Parent and Montana Team Nutrition Coordinator*

Key changes and results

Reported by Katie Bark, RD, Parent and Montana Team Nutrition Coordinator

- As of September 2003 carbonated soft drinks are not sold during the school day in vending machines or the student-run store. All vending signs promote the more nutritious beverages that are in the machines.
- Water, fruit juice, sports drinks, and bottled teas have replaced carbonated soft drinks in the vending machines. The cafeteria vending machines also sell flavored milk and nutrient-rich food items such as fruit, bagels, yogurt, string cheese, and sack lunches.
- The student store now sells healthier items such as locally produced bagels, beef jerky, and drinks such as water, fruit juice, and sports drinks.
- It is too early to assess the effects of these changes on beverage vending sales. Food vending sales in the cafeteria are increasing slowly; yogurt, milk, and small sandwiches are outpacing all other choices. Most sales occur before noon each day.

- Anecdotal reports suggest that students are reducing their soft drink consumption. Teachers have also reported that students seem calmer and more attentive. Additional data collection will be needed to verify these observations.

Keys to success

- **CONCERNED CITIZENS:** Parents, health professionals, community members, and a school board willing to address and discuss the “health versus profits” and “personal choice” issues related to the sale of non-nutritious beverages in schools
- **MEDIA COVERAGE:** A local newspaper willing to cover the story in depth and to publish national wire-service stories on the issue throughout the year
- **SUPPORTIVE ADMINISTRATION:** School administrators willing to back changes in vending and student store offerings
- **FLEXIBLE VENDORS:** A beverage vendor willing to allow the school board and administration to change what was sold in the machines, even with an existing, exclusive vending contract

Description

In spring 2002, a local dietitian asked the school board to modify the exclusive vending contract (scheduled to be re-bid in July 2002) to improve access to, and promotion of, nutritious beverage options. In July, the district awarded a 3-year exclusive contract to a local distributor with the stipulation that the issue would be brought back to the board to discuss ways to better promote nutritious beverages in the vending machines.

Throughout the 2002-2003 school year, local nutritionists, physicians, parents, business owners, and community members educated the board on health concerns related to excessive consumption of carbonated soft drinks by using USDA's *Changing the Scene* and NASBE's *Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn*. The local newspaper, the *Bozeman Chronicle*, ran several articles on the problem of childhood obesity, health consequences related to obesity, and current eating habits of Americans.

After much debate about the fiscal ramifications, the administration decided that it was not reasonable for the school district to engage in the sale of carbonated soft drinks to students. At the March 2003 school board meeting, the superintendent recommended that the nutrition policy be revised to eliminate the sale of carbonated soft drinks to students. The beverages in question would not be banned from campus but would not be sold during the school day. They could continue to be sold at school sporting events and other activities after school hours.

The school board voted five to three to accept the recommendation, as a resolution. There were not sufficient votes to pass a new policy. The issue applies only to Bozeman High School; the school district has never allowed carbonated soft drinks to be available to kindergarten through 8th grade students. The resolution adopted by the school board on March 24, 2003, called for the "elimination of the sale of carbonated beverages to students during the school day and that administration procedures be developed to promote the availability of foods that are both healthy and appealing to the student consumer."

As of the start of the 2003-2004 school year, all vending machines are stocked with some nutritious beverages and all signs on the machines promote lower-sugar options. Only nutritious beverages are sold in the student-run store.

Future plans

- Addition of a "snack food cart" with nutritious lunchtime options for students who choose not to go to the cafeteria
- Development of a nutrition advisory council to address food-related issues at all the schools in the district
- Future training for the school staff on nutrition education and "best practices" concerning school nutrition policies and practices

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Bozeman School District

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Cambridge School District, Cambridge, New York

- 1,120 students, just north of Albany in upstate New York
- 32.2 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Limit student access to competitive foods
- Make more healthful foods and beverages available

Words of wisdom

“...my plan is to teach them when they are young, and they will learn a valuable lesson about healthy eating for many years to come.”

Katherine Powers, Foodservice Manager

Reported by Kay Powers, Foodservice Manager, Cambridge Central School

With strong support from the Cambridge School District (CSD) superintendent, faculty, and staff, foodservice director Kay Powers and the foodservice staff have made several changes to improve their school nutrition environment. Five years ago, they established a deli bar for 5th, 6th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students. The deli meal, also available as a reimbursable lunch, includes made-to-order deli sandwiches, pretzels, fresh fruit, and milk. The program was initially started with three grades; two more grades were added after the success of the first year. The deli bar now serves over 100 students per day from the five grades.

CSD has also changed its policy for vending beverages and snacks. The only beverage machine on all day is a milk machine (for high school students only). Juice and snack machines are available during school hours. According to the district's snack policy, snacks are not available to kindergarten students, and students in grades 1 through 4 can purchase only one snack per day. Although foodservice revenues have decreased with fewer snack sales, the department is still operating in the black. The foodservice director attributes the successful changes in the Cambridge School to the strengths within the department: a positive attitude, the willingness to change, and an ability to take risks, along with flexibility and organization.

Future plans

- CSD will introduce “Choose Sensibly” in September 2004. This campaign was launched in 2003 by the New York State School Food Service Association and is designed to educate students about nutritious choices and help foodservice staff market these choices more effectively (See www.nyssfsa.org/indnews_item.cfm?itemid=3246).

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Nash-Rocky Mount Schools, Nash County, North Carolina

- 18,190 total students in eastern North Carolina
- 55 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals

Approaches

- Limit student access to competitive foods
- Make more healthful foods and beverages available

Words of wisdom

“We have made gradual changes over time with success. As Edna Strickland, a school nurse and member of our Healthy School Nutrition Environment Team, said after working on the team for two years – don’t go into a china store like a bull!”

—Patty Green, RD, LDN, Child Nutrition Supervisor

Key changes and results

Reported by Patty Green, RD, LDN, Child Nutrition Supervisor

In spring 2002, the Child Nutrition Department of Nash-Rocky Mount Schools began looking for ways to create healthier school nutrition environments. Departmental efforts have included trainings for school staff using both CDC’s *School Health Index* and USDA’s *Changing the Scene* kit.

Careful monitoring of portion sizes has been one key to success in the Nash-Rocky Mount Schools. Nutrition staff noticed that some cafeterias were serving enormous desserts. In some cases, the homemade cookies were as big as an adult’s face. The child nutrition staff implemented a policy for the 2002-2003 school year requiring that all dessert portions be appropriate for the ages of the students being served.

To ensure the success of the policy, the nutrition department met with all cafeteria managers and staff during back-to-school training. The training session began with an educational component on the importance of nutrition for students and a discussion of the childhood obesity epidemic. The staff was reminded that school

meals may be the only meals available for some students and were asked, “Shouldn’t we make these meals as nutritious as possible?” The nutrition staff was provided with sample containers depicting appropriate dessert portion sizes. Subsequently, staff adopted the new policy. Periodically throughout the year, the child nutrition administrative staff checked desserts to make sure the portion sizes were appropriate in all schools.

Nash-Rocky Mount Schools also looked closely at the products offered via the à la carte service and the Child Nutrition vending program. The schools eliminated several products for the 2003-2004 school year and replaced them with healthier options and smaller portion-sized items—using the North Carolina Winner’s Circle Healthy Dining Program snack criteria (www.ncwinnerscircle.org or www.winnerscirclehealthydining.org). [See Winner’s Circle Nutrition Criteria, page 339.] For example, à la carte items available to students now include 100% fruit juices, water, flavored water, vitamin-fortified fruit beverages, flavored milk, baked chips, pretzels, and other low-fat products such as pudding, brownies, cookies, and yogurt.

For more information, contact:

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NOTE:

State Departments of Education, local school districts, as well as State Departments of Health have the opportunity to use the Winner's Circle program, materials, name, and logo by participating in a training Institute, and paying an annual fee for rights to use the program. The program is available through NC Prevention Partners. For information about opportunities and the ready to use Winner's Circle kit, contact NC Prevention Partners:

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Snack Criteria



- less than 30% fat
- less than 480 mg sodium
- no more than 35% sugar by weight (keep in mind that fruit qualifies under side item)
- For dairy snacks, 4 oz servings must have at least 120 mg Calcium, 6 oz servings must have at least 150 mg Calcium, 8 oz servings must have 245 mg Calcium and must adhere to above guidelines for fat, sodium, and sugar





Making Change
East Middle School, Great Falls, MT

Learning to count change is one of the skills students learn when they sell items such as jerky, one of the most popular snacks in the East Middle School Store, and fruit cups, shown here.