

## **Testimony**

**Kathleen A. Corrigan, MBA, RD**

**Education and Labor Committee**

**House of Representatives**

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Greetings to the Members of the Committee and especially to Chairman Miller. I am the Director of Food and Nutrition Services from Mt. Diablo Unified School District in Concord, California. My name is Kathleen Corrigan and there are some exciting things I want to tell you about Mt. Diablo's schools.

We believe breakfast is critical for **every** student in order to start the day ready to learn. For the past few years we've had a focused plan to increase the number of students who eat breakfast. We started with a presentation to district administrators reviewing the impact of breakfast on - learning, test scores and student behavior.

Next we began to offer breakfast a second time at recess or midmorning for the students who can't quite get there early enough for the first breakfast service. We have expanded the number of high quality, nutritious menu offerings to include more fresh fruit, whole grain cereals and breads, and low fat dairy products. Two years ago we expanded our summer lunch service to include breakfast **and** after school snacks.

We serve breakfast at 35 of our 47 schools. While I am an absolute believer in breakfast, it is prohibitively expensive to operate small breakfast programs. The additional staff time could cost just a little over \$3000/year and that's manageable. However, in **addition** extending the hours of the current employee would require adding health benefits with a cost of almost \$15,000/year. That requires serving a whole bunch of bagels!

I want to try automated vending machines to serve breakfast at small schools. If we can vend a nutritious and fun breakfast that appeals to our student customers, this would be a way to limit additional staffing at each site. We have applied for funding from California to purchase such vending machines for three schools and we're hoping our grant will be funded.

Our breakfast efforts have been successful. We served 6.8% more breakfasts in the 2005/2006 year and 7.3% more last year. Our breakfast service so far this year has increased by another 12.1% over last year and we are **thrilled** with these results!

I am also very excited to be part of Mt. Diablo's Coordinated School Health team. Coordinated School Health is a planned, integrated program designed to enhance the health of children and adolescents. The real payoff for districts comes with the accompanying improvements in both academic performance and attendance.

Coordinated School Health includes eight interrelated components and those are health education, physical education, health promotion for staff, parent and community involvement, health services, psychological services, nutrition services, and a healthy and safe school environment. Most of these components are in place in Mt. Diablo at different levels of implementation and enthused representatives serve on the district team.

There **is** a piece still missing from our Coordinated School Health plan - - - I believe that children will become like the people who teach them - - - Children spend the majority of their young lives at home and at school. The people that teach them are also at home and at school. Until **these** powerful teachers **model** the positive health habits we want to see in our students, our problem of childhood overweight will continue.

Since the children will become like the people that teach them, my next goal is to find funding to develop a wellness program for school staff **and** parents in Mt. Diablo. This remaining piece of our Coordinated School Health plan will begin to create and encourage positive health habits in parents and school staff – because these behaviors **must** become habits. When our most critical role models are modeling healthy habits for kids, change will happen - - - and not until then.

I also want to mention California's Senate Bill 12 that went into effect in July 2007. This bill imposed nutrition guidelines on ALL foods and beverages sold on campus during the school day, **including** fundraisers by student and adult groups. Top leadership in my

district embraced the intent of this legislation. Working with the superintendent and his assistants we called together **countless** site personnel and involved them in its implementation. This was a career moment for me - I never dreamed I would see such a **massive** change in district practices. The nutrition standards **have** been applied to all groups districtwide – so it **can** be done.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you some of the things I am most excited about.

Kathleen A. Corrigan, MBA, RD  
Director, Food and Nutrition Services  
Mt. Diablo Unified School District  
1936 Carlotta Drive  
Concord, CA 94519  
925.682.8000 x 4124  
[corrigank@mdusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:corrigank@mdusd.k12.ca.us)