

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }



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Studies have shown that eating better helps students perform better in school.¹ And forming strong nutritional habits early will help lead to a lifetime of better eating habits.

Let’s make food choices an “easy A” by implementing local policies that enforce national standards for school foods. Below are some facts about “Smart Snacks in Schools.”

- Nearly one in three American children is overweight or obese. This puts our youth at risk for serious health problems such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes and stroke.
- Children and adolescents consume up to half of their daily calories at school—and while at school they’re often exposed to a variety of unhealthy foods,² usually found in places like school vending machines, snack bars and à la carte cafeteria lines.
- At the end of June 2013, the USDA released nutrition standards for all foods sold in schools other than those provided as part of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.
- These standards, called “Smart Snacks in School,” require foods to have whole grains, low fat dairy, fruits, vegetables, or protein foods as their main ingredients.
- Even small changes to students’ school-based diets—such as replacing a candy bar with an apple—may reduce their risk of tooth decay, obesity, and chronic illness through decreased calorie, fat, and sugar intake.³
- It’s not just students who benefit from nutrition standards: schools benefit financially when these types of policies are enacted. Research shows that on average food service revenue increases or remains flat when guidelines are applied.⁴

“Smart Snacks in School” are the healthy standards our students need—but it will take reinforcement at the state and local level to make sure implementation reaches every school across the country. Please support policies that help fully implement the “Smart Snacks in School” program.

SOURCES

¹ Hollar D, Messiah SE, Lopez-Mitnik G, Hollar TL, Almon M, and Agatston AS. “Effect of a two-year obesity prevention intervention on percentile changes in body mass index and academic performance in low-income elementary school children.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(4):646–553, April 2011.

² Story, Mary. “The Third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study: Findings and Policy Implications for Improving the Health of US Children,” *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 109, no. 2 (2009): S7–S13.

³ *Out of Balance: A Look at Snack Foods in Secondary Schools across the States*. Rep. The Pew Charitable Trusts and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Kids Safe and Healthful Foods Project, Oct. 2012. Web. 11 Oct. 2013.

⁴ *Snack Facts: Raising the Bar for Nutrition Standards in Schools*. The Pew Charitable Trusts and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Kids Safe and Healthful Foods Project, 20 June 2013. Web. 11 Oct. 2013.