



Healthy Foods and Healthy Finances: How Schools Are Making Nutrition Changes That Make Financial Sense

Dozens of schools—large and small, urban and rural—have created more healthful school environments by improving food and beverage options in vending machines, à la carte lines, classroom activities and fundraisers.

Food and beverage contracts and sales have become a revenue source for discretionary spending for many school districts. Recently, schools throughout the U.S. have successfully implemented innovative solutions—maintaining or increasing revenue levels with more healthful options.

- Foodservice in the Folsom Cordova Unified School District in Sacramento, **California**, no longer operates in the red. It upgraded offerings with a focus on healthy eating and now has a \$400,000 reserve; the annual budget increased 105% due to increased food services revenue.
- Iowa City, **Iowa**, schools partnered with Swiss Valley Farms to introduce milk in its water and sports drink vending machines, resulting in an increase in sales of 42% while soda sales dropped 58%. The district's Nutrition Task Force also installed cheese and yogurt vending machines.
- The Vista (San Diego, **California**) Unified School District's Child Nutrition Services program consolidated the district's vending sales and began managing contracts. They offered bagels and cream cheese, yogurt, nuts, cheese and crackers, and fresh fruit. Sodas are offered in only 20% of vending slots compared to the previous 66% of vending slots. The majority of slots offered water, milk, 100% juice drinks and sports drinks. CNS controlled pricing and kept prices lower than local stores. During the first year of this arrangement, Vista High School generated \$200,000 more in sales than in previous years.
- Jefferson County Schools in Louisville, **Kentucky**, are replacing soft drinks and non-nutritious snacks sold in vending machines with lower-fat foods and fruit drinks. They expect that by keeping healthier vending machines on all day the sales will offset any losses of the \$1 million generated annually from vending.
- Madison, **Wisconsin**, was among the first school districts to sign an exclusive soda contract in 1997 and was also among the first to cancel it. They now maintain multiple vendors and offer a variety of 100% juice drinks and milk flavors. Now that the students have choices, school officials report that they struggle to keep up with the demand for milk sold in colorful and resealable bottles.
- Whitefish Central School in **Montana** replaced junk foods and soda with fruit, bagels, 100% juice beverages, water and milk. According to Principal Kim Anderson, profits remained the same.
- Officials at North Community High School in Minneapolis, **Minnesota**, installed vending machines selling bottled water, juices and sports drinks, and limited soft drinks to just one machine. This arrangement resulted in lowered soda sales offset by growth in the sales of water and sports drinks with overall vending profits increasing by \$4,000.
- When Fresno (**California**) Unified School District's Sequoia Middle School eliminated junk food and sodas, sales increased because students were given a choice and were involved in the selection of replacement foods and drinks.

Success stories show that children will buy healthy foods.

- Students **will buy — and consume — healthful foods and beverages** when these options are tasty, easily accessible and priced right.
- School foodservice and vending programs **can continue to make money** while offering healthful food and beverage options to students.
- Some schools have actually **made more money from healthful options** than from their usual offerings.
- Students, parents and communities **support healthy school nutrition environments**, and are willing to get involved in making changes.