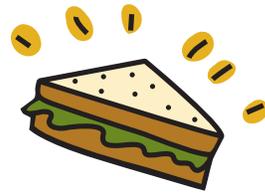




EAT SMART:
NORTH CAROLINA'S

Recommended Standards



For All Foods In School

AVAILABLE

Acknowledgements

Eat Smart: NC's Recommended Standards For All Foods Available In School grew out of a recommendation from the NC Healthy Weight Initiative's 100-member task force. "Set state standards for all foods and beverages available in school" was one of four policy and environmental recommendations presented in the task force report, *Moving Our Children Toward A Healthy Weight: Finding The Will And The Way*.¹ Several other North Carolina groups have also examined the issue. The following efforts were valuable in the development of the *Eat Smart School Standards*.



Partners

NC Department of Public Instruction
Division of School Business and Finance
Child Nutrition Services Section
NC Healthy Schools

NC Division of Public Health
Chronic Disease and Injury Section
Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch

Women's and Children's Health Section
Nutrition Services Branch
Nutrition Education and Training Program
Children and Youth Branch
School Health Initiative
NC Healthy Schools

NC Cooperative Extension Service
Department of Family and Consumer
Sciences

- The School Policy Work Group convened by the American Heart Association (AHA)—issue papers on nutrition standards and financial goals that promote optimal nutrition
 - NC Prevention Partners—policy briefs based on the aforementioned issue papers
 - NC Action for Healthy Kids—a working paper on nutrition standards for foods and beverages available in schools, developed with input from a number of school nutrition directors and nutritionists

In December 2003, North Carolina's Consensus Panel To Recommend Standards For All Foods Available In School* convened. The Panel of educators, nutritionists, physicians and public health professionals developed this document as a tool for parents, community leaders, educators, industry representatives and policy makers to help move the conversation and stimulate change around the important role of sound nutrition in a healthy school environment.

This document is one of many tools that support Eat Smart, Move More...North Carolina, a statewide initiative that promotes increased opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. *The Eat Smart School Standards* document is available at www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com.

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*Panel members listed on inside back cover

Eat Smart: NC's Recommended Standards For All Foods Available In School

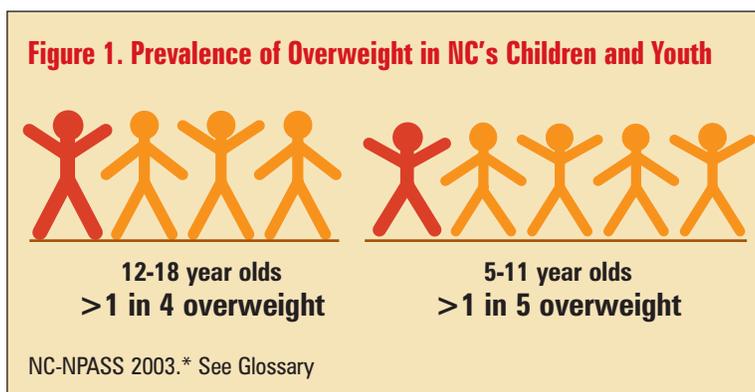
Childhood overweight and adult obesity have reached epidemic proportions nationally and in North Carolina, and are increasing in all age groups, among all races and ethnicities.² Between 1995 and 2000, the prevalence of overweight in North Carolina's children increased 40 percent in 5 to 11 year olds. More than one in five 5 to 11 year olds (23 percent) is overweight, while more than one in four 12 to 18 year olds (26 percent) is overweight.

The human, societal and economic costs of the overweight and obesity epidemic are staggering. Left unabated, this epidemic will soon overtake tobacco use as the leading cause of death in the United States.³ Currently, more than 400,000 deaths annually are attributed to unhealthy eating and physical inactivity, which are highly correlated with overweight and obesity. This represents an increase of 30 percent from 1990.

Overweight and obesity increase the risk for chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) scientists recently predicted that 30 percent of children born in 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetimes.⁴ The social stigmatization and low self-esteem often associated with childhood overweight is another serious consequence not to be overlooked.⁵

Childhood overweight is costly. The CDC reports that in one two-year period, U.S. taxpayers spent \$127 million on hospital costs associated with caring for overweight children and adolescents.⁶ This represents a three-fold increase in two decades. Together, childhood overweight and adult obesity cost North Carolina and its taxpayers \$2.14 billion annually in direct medical costs, which excludes lost productivity, disability and death.⁷

The epidemic of childhood overweight is a complex, multi-faceted problem that requires multi-level approaches to reverse the upward trend.⁸ Poor eating patterns and inadequate physical activity play a role in the rise of overweight and obesity. The *Eat Smart School Standards* are one strategy for improving the eating habits of North Carolina's children and teens in schools.



Ask North Carolinians what needs to be done to address the overweight and obesity epidemic and you will often hear, “Get the vending machines and fries out of schools.” NC’s Consensus Panel members agreed that vending machines and “fast foods” such as fries are a very important concern. However, the Panel concluded that the *Eat Smart School Standards*

How do we slow the trend?



“By the time you get through the line, you only have 5 minutes to eat.”

—Patrice, 5th grade

must be considered in a broader context that includes *all* foods available in school as well as feasible fiscal policy change that reduces reliance on profits from snack foods and beverages to supplement local school budgets.

The Consensus Panel’s recommendations reflect the understanding that obesity prevention requires a comprehensive approach. Schools cannot be expected to solve the problem alone, but they do have a strategic role to play.⁸ Providing a healthy school nutrition environment will not only influence students’ eating patterns, but will also influence families and communities. This multi-level change will help to prevent overweight, obesity and associated chronic disease, as well as reduce future health care costs.

Eat Smart: NC’s Recommended Standards For All Foods Available In School was developed within this context. The *Eat Smart School Standards* are voluntary, sequential and flexible. The *Eat Smart School Standards* outline four achievement levels consistent with the language used in the existing local school improvement process. Schools or school systems may choose their starting point and the achievement level they wish to pursue:

- **Needs Improvement:** Requires compliance with statutory requirements
- **Basic:** Requires adoption of a local policy with minimal standards
- **Proficient:** Requires a higher level of effort and outcome
- **Superior:** Requires what the Consensus Panel described as the best schools can achieve in the foreseeable future

The *Eat Smart School Standards* are also grade specific, reflecting the increasing level of knowledge and decision making skills that students may have as they mature. Standards are provided for Grades PreK-5, Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12. The *Eat Smart School Standards* do not preclude the service of foods prescribed for students with special health needs. Neither do they apply to foods brought from home for an individual student’s consumption, although parents are encouraged to consider the value of healthy food choices, and schools are encouraged to address foods brought from outside sources in local policy.

The competition between food, nutrition and finances

The *Eat Smart School Standards* are consistent with reports from the National Academy of Sciences, Healthy People 2010, the CDC, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other state and national organizations, which state that providing healthy food choices and wholesome meals for students should not be compromised by lack of funds, for-profit practices or fundraising.^{9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14} There are, however, significant barriers to implementation. An examination of local and state policies and a debate about priorities are needed.

The Child Nutrition Program is an important part of the instructional day, providing a wholesome breakfast, lunch and after school snack for many of North Carolina’s more than 1.3 million students. However, many Child Nutrition Programs are expected to be financially self-supporting and operate as a separate business within the school system. Child Nutrition Programs must generate revenue to cover the cost of food, supplies and equipment needed to prepare and serve meals, the cost of salaries and benefits for personnel, and any other costs needed to operate a non-profit program. In

the last two decades, many districts have begun requiring the Child Nutrition Program to pay a proportion of the district’s overhead expenses in indirect costs, totaling more than \$18 million annually statewide.¹⁵

The primary source of funds that support local Child Nutrition Programs is reimbursement provided by the USDA through the school’s participation in the School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the After School Snack Program (ASSP). These federal funds provide approximately half the revenues needed to operate local programs in North Carolina.¹⁵ Students and adults who pay for school meals provide another source of revenue.

In North Carolina, there are no permanent state or local mandated funds to support the Child Nutrition Program on a per meal basis, and the combination of federal funds and meal sales is not sufficient for program operations. To generate additional revenues, most programs make supplemental items, often called “a la carte,” available for students and adults on the cafeteria line and in vending machines.

“There are cookies, chips, pizza and fries and some drinks....”

—Sarah, 6th grade

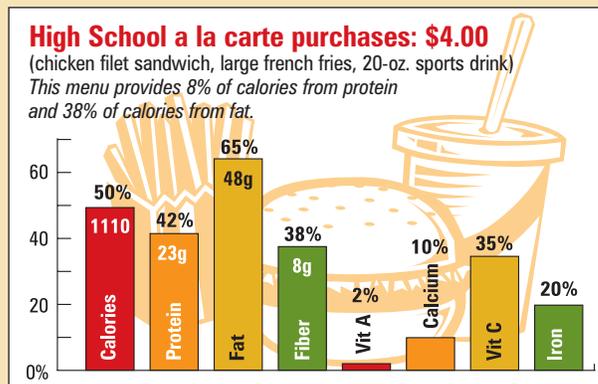
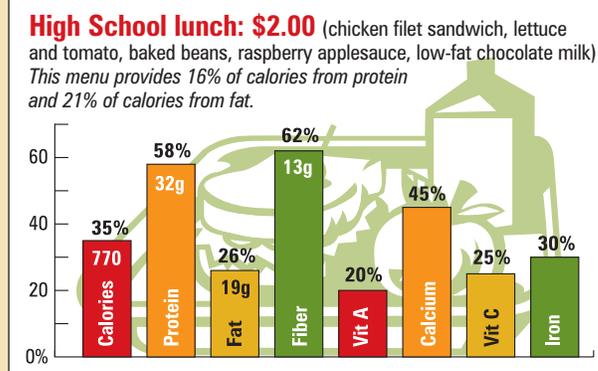
All of North Carolina’s public schools sell “a la carte” foods, which provide a significant portion of the child nutrition budget—approximately \$54 million annually statewide—to support program operations.¹⁵ In addition, some snack food and beverage companies provide free menu boards, signage and other materials. Without these sales and incentives, additional revenues from state or local sources, grant funding, or increased student meal prices, Child Nutrition Programs could not operate.

Federal law prohibits the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value in the cafeteria during meal times.¹⁶ Foods of minimal nutritional value include soft drinks, hard candy, water ices and chewing gum. Beyond this limited number of regulated foods and beverages, the myriad of a la carte foods available to students is not federally regulated, and state regulations are inadequate. As a result, students’ preferences, time available to eat and profit margins determine which a la carte foods will be sold.

This shift to a la carte foods and beverages affects nutrient and calorie intakes, and increases costs for students and their families. The price of a school lunch that meets NSLP standards ranges from \$1.15 to \$2.00.¹⁵ On the other hand, it is not uncommon for a high school student to choose to spend \$4 for an a la carte lunch of a chicken filet sandwich, French fries and a 16-ounce sugar sweetened juice drink in the cafeteria, or \$3 to \$4 for a candy bar, chips and a 20 oz. soft drink from vending machines outside the cafeteria.

The shift to a la carte

Figure 2. Nutrition for the dollar



Percentages based on 2200 calories per day

Source: Wake County Public Schools Child Nutrition Services, 2004.

Vending outside of the cafeteria

“I see a lot of students walk by all day with a soda in their hand.”

—Sandy, 10th grade

Child Nutrition Programs may offer a la carte foods in vending machines inside the cafeteria, but many school districts also have vending outside the cafeteria. Some school boards are opting to enter into exclusive contracts with soft drink companies, which impact what can be sold both inside and outside the cafeteria. These “pouring rights” contracts may offer large, up-front cash incentives, guaranteed profit margins and other non-monetary incentives to schools such as athletics scoreboards and free refreshments for meetings.¹⁷ The contracts tie revenue to total sales, putting pressure on schools to promote increased consumption by students. Funds generated from vending machine sales outside the cafeteria accrue to school organizations or departments other than Child Nutrition Programs and are used to supplement shrinking operating budgets. Many of the items and activities funded by these revenues and incentives are valuable additions to students’ learning opportunities. However, schools often operate these soft drink vending machines during meal periods, in violation of state statute. NC Statute 115C-264 prohibits the sale of soft drinks in elementary schools but allows their sale in secondary schools after the end of the last lunch period, with approval by the local board of education. Currently, the only penalty for violation of this statute is the federal authority to withhold federal funds for all meals served on the day an infraction is cited. This penalizes the Child Nutrition Program rather than the organization or school entity violating the statute.

Why should students choose school lunch?

School meals that are planned to meet federal guidelines promote health. They are nutrient rich in age appropriate portion sizes. School meals provide the best nutritional value for the dollar. Overall, students who eat school lunch have higher intakes of key nutrients than students making any other noontime choice, even meals brought from home.¹⁸ In 1995 Congress mandated nutrition regulations for the NSLP and SBP to reduce the amount of fat and saturated fat in school meals eligible for full or partial federal funding.¹⁹ A 1999 study showed that schools have made extraordinary progress in meeting the standards.²⁰ Students have the opportunity to choose a school lunch with less than 30 percent of its calories from fat in 82 percent of elementary schools and 91 percent of secondary schools. The study found that students who eat the school lunch eat more vegetables and grains, and drink more milk, while eating fewer sweet and salty snacks and drinking fewer sweetened beverages. Yet, the number of students eating the school lunch has declined dramatically in North Carolina as students increasingly choose other options that are available on the serving line or in vending machines. North Carolina’s NSLP participation rate has dropped 20 percentage points in the last two decades—the highest decline in the nation.²¹

The bottom line

Over the past 25 years, schools in North Carolina and throughout the nation have developed an over reliance on the revenues from a la carte sales to financially support the non-profit Child Nutrition Program. In addition, school organizations and academic departments are increasingly

dependent on revenues and incentives from the sale of foods and beverages of limited nutritional value. In the absence of state or local support, schools have had few options other than to offer supplemental sales or cease to operate a Child Nutrition Program.

As North Carolina's schools transition to implement the *Eat Smart School Standards*, there is potential for a loss of revenue, particularly in the short term. Other state and/or local funds will be needed to offset the financial loss and keep Child Nutrition Programs in the business of preparing and serving healthy meals to children. On the other hand, there is opportunity to work with food and beverage companies to alter the foods and beverage offerings in vending machines and on the cafeteria line to be consistent with the *Eat Smart School Standards*. And, encouraging more students to participate in school breakfast and lunch would increase federal reimbursement, helping to offset lost revenues.²²

The Consensus Panel is fully cognizant of the financial pressures that have led to decisions in some schools that create substantial barriers to healthy eating opportunities for students. However, the Panel believes that the consequences of overweight on children's health and self-esteem far outweigh any short-term financial gains. The Panel recommends that a mechanism for enforcing existing statutes and policies be developed, and that the *Eat Smart School Standards* be used to raise the level of public discourse and action surrounding these nutritional and fiscal decisions.

Ideally, schools will begin to work immediately to develop and implement local policies that support the implementation of the *Eat Smart School Standards*. Such policies should consider all aspects of implementing the *Eat Smart School Standards*, including, but not limited to, availability of funds, personnel and food products; staff and community involvement; classroom and community nutrition education; and strategies for monitoring compliance with the policy.

While some schools may quickly implement many of the recommended *Eat Smart School Standards*, others will need to make gradual changes in order to achieve long-term success. The Panel agreed to adopt a voluntary timeline for implementation by schools and school systems. However the Panel recommends:

- **Grades PreK-5 achieve the Superior rating by no later than 2009**
- **Grades 6-8 achieve the Superior rating by no later than 2011**
- **Grades 9-12 achieve the Superior rating by no later than 2014**

This timeline will enable all school systems to realistically address and resolve potential barriers to implementation.

The *Eat Smart School Standards* are also available for consideration by policy makers and policy advocates as they address overweight and obesity issues. Financial incentives tied to particular levels of performance will enhance the speed and the quality of implementation.



"There should be healthier choices, more fruit."

—Jeanne, 10th grade

Proposed implementation

Eat Smart Nutrition Standards: GRADES PreK-5



	Needs Improvement	Basic	Proficient	Superior
VENDING Beverages	Not in compliance with NC Statute 115C-264 that prohibits the sale of soft drinks in elementary schools	In compliance with NC Statute 115C-264 that prohibits the sale of soft drinks in elementary schools	No beverage vending available to students	No beverage vending available to students
VENDING Snack Foods	Not in compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 that prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value where school meals are served or eaten during meal periods	In compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR210 and 220 that prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value where school meals are served or eaten during meal periods	No snack vending available to students	No snack vending available to students
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS	All beverages and snacks in after school programs meet the minimum NSLP component guidelines, regardless of funding source	In addition, snacks on 2 days of the week meet the following standards: ≤ 35% total calories from fat, excluding nuts and seeds ≤ 10% total calories from saturated fat ≤ 35% added sugar by weight	In addition, snacks on 3 days of the week meet the following standards: ≤ 35% total calories from fat, excluding nuts and seeds ≤ 10% total calories from saturated fat ≤ 35% added sugar by weight	In addition, snacks on all days of the week meet the following standards: ≤ 35% total calories from fat, excluding nuts and seeds ≤ 10% total calories from saturated fat ≤ 35% added sugar by weight
SCHOOL EVENTS Classroom Events, Celebrations, Class Snacks, Meetings, Parties, Concessions, Intramural Events, Fundraisers, Extracurricular	No local policy	Local policy developed by school/community committee guided by sound nutrition principles* implemented for 2 event categories	Local policy developed by school/community committee guided by sound nutrition principles* implemented for 4 event categories	Local policy developed by school/community committee guided by sound nutrition principles* implemented for 6 event categories
SCHOOL MEALS National School Lunch Program School Breakfast Program	Not in compliance with USDA School Meals Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220	In compliance with USDA School Meals Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220. In addition, school meals will include: Three fruits (some fresh) and/or vegetables (not fried) offered for lunch Foods containing whole grains offered 3 days a week One reimbursable lunch and breakfast offered daily has no more than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat Milk choices meet requirements of 7CFR 210	In compliance with USDA School Meals Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220. In addition, school meals will include: Four fruits (some fresh) and/or vegetables (not fried) offered for lunch Foods containing whole grains offered 4 days a week Two reimbursable lunches and breakfasts offered daily have no more than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat All milk choices, except whole milk, allowed	In compliance with USDA School Meals Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220. In addition, school meals will include: Four fruits (some fresh) and/or vegetables (not fried) offered for lunch—at least one is raw Foods containing whole grains offered daily Every reimbursable lunch and breakfast offered daily has no more than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat Must serve unflavored low fat milk May serve flavored low fat milk May serve unflavored and flavored non fat milk
A LA CARTE All other food and beverage items sold in school cafeteria or in other locations where School Meals are served or eaten	No local policy	If local policy allows a la carte food sales, the following options may be sold: The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP Fruit (some fresh) or vegetables (not fried) Yogurt Any milk offered in NSLP/SBP meals that day Water 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 8 oz.	If local policy allows a la carte food sales, the following options may be sold: The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP Fruit (some fresh) or vegetables (not fried) Yogurt Any milk offered in NSLP/SBP meals that day Water	If local policy allows a la carte food sales, the following options may be sold: The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP that meets the following: ≤ 35% total calories from fat, excluding nuts and seeds ≤ 10% total calories from saturated fat ≤ 35% added sugar by weight Fruit (some fresh) or vegetables (not fried) Yogurt Any milk offered in NSLP/SBP meals that day Water



*See Glossary

Eat Smart Nutrition Standards: GRADES 6-8



	Needs Improvement	Basic	Proficient	Superior
VENDING Beverages	<p>Not in compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 that prohibits the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value where school meals are served or eaten during meal periods and/or NC Statute 115C-264 that prohibits the sale of soft drinks during meal periods</p> <p>No local policy</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 and NC Statute 115C-264</p> <p>In addition, if local policy permits vending to students, contents may only include the following: Water—any size Low fat or non fat milk, flavored or unflavored—any size ≤ 360 calories 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 12 oz</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 and NC Statute 115C-264</p> <p>In addition, if local policy permits vending to students, contents may only include the following: Water—required, any size Low fat or non fat milk, flavored or unflavored—any size ≤ 360 calories 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 8 oz</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 and NC Statute 115C-264</p> <p>In addition, if local policy permits vending to students, contents may only include the following: Water—required, any size Low fat or non fat milk, flavored or unflavored—any size ≤ 360 calories</p>
VENDING Snack Foods	<p>Not in compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 that prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value where school meals are served or eaten during meal periods</p>	<p>50% of choices are items that have no more than 200 calories per portion</p>	<p>75% of choices are items that have no more than 200 calories per portion</p>	<p>100% of choices are items that have no more than 200 calories per portion</p>
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS	<p>All beverages and snacks in after school programs meet the minimum NSLP component guidelines, regardless of funding source</p>	<p>In addition, snacks on 2 days of the week meet the following standards: ≤ 35% total calories from fat, excluding nuts and seeds ≤ 10% total calories from saturated fat ≤ 35% added sugar by weight</p>	<p>In addition, snacks on 3 days of the week meet the following standards: ≤ 35% total calories from fat, excluding nuts and seeds ≤ 10% total calories from saturated fat ≤ 35% added sugar by weight</p>	<p>In addition, snacks on all days of the week meet the following standards: ≤ 35% total calories from fat, excluding nuts and seeds ≤ 10% total calories from saturated fat ≤ 35% added sugar by weight</p>
SCHOOL EVENTS Classroom Events, Celebrations, Class Snacks, Meetings, Parties, Concessions, Intramural Events, Fundraisers, Extracurricular	<p>No local policy</p>	<p>Local policy developed by school/community committee guided by sound nutrition principles* implemented for 2 event categories</p>	<p>Local policy developed by school/community committee guided by sound nutrition principles implemented for 4 event categories</p>	<p>Local policy developed by school/community committee guided by sound nutrition principles implemented for 6 event categories</p>
SCHOOL MEALS National School Lunch Program School Breakfast Program	<p>Not in compliance with USDA School Meals Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA School Meal Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220.</p> <p>In addition, school meals will include: Three fruits (some fresh) and/or vegetables offered for lunch—at least 2 are not fried Foods containing whole grains offered 3 days a week One reimbursable lunch and breakfast offered daily has no more than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat Milk choices meet requirements of 7CFR 210.</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA School Meals Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220.</p> <p>In addition, school meals will include: Four fruits (some fresh) and/or vegetables offered for lunch—at least 3 are not fried Foods containing whole grains offered 4 days a week Two reimbursable lunches and breakfasts offered daily have no more than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat All milk choices, except whole milk, allowed</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA School Meals Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220.</p> <p>In addition, school meals will include: Four fruits (some fresh) and/or vegetables offered for lunch—none are fried Foods containing whole grains offered daily Every reimbursable lunch and breakfast offered daily has no more than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat Must serve unflavored low fat milk May serve flavored low fat milk May serve unflavored and flavored non fat milk</p>
A LA CARTE All other food and beverage items sold in school cafeteria or in other locations where School Meals are served or eaten	<p>No local policy</p>	<p>If local policy permits a la carte items to be sold, they are limited to the following every day The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP</p> <p>Fruit (some fresh) or vegetables (not fried) Yogurt Nuts and seeds ≤ 1 oz. Water 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 12 oz Any milk offered in NSLP/SBP meals that day</p>	<p>If local policy permits a la carte items to be sold, they are limited to the following every day The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP</p> <p>Fruit (some fresh) or vegetables (not fried) Yogurt Nuts and seeds ≤ 1 oz. Water 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 8 oz. Any milk offered in NSLP/SBP meals that day</p>	<p>If local policy permits a la carte items to be sold, they are limited to the following every day The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP that meets the following: ≤ 35% total calories from fat, excluding nuts and seeds ≤ 10% total calories from saturated fat ≤ 35% added sugar by weight Fruit (some fresh) or vegetables (not fried) Yogurt Nuts and seeds ≤ 1 oz. Water Any milk offered in NSLP/SBP meals that day</p>



*See Glossary

Eat Smart Nutrition Standards: GRADES 9-12



	Needs Improvement	Basic	Proficient	Superior
VENDING Beverages	<p>Not in compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 that prohibits the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value where school meals are served or eaten during meal periods and/or NC Statute 115C-264 that prohibits the sale of soft drinks during meal periods</p> <p>No local policy</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 and NC Statute 115C-264</p> <p>In addition, if local policy permits vending to students, contents may only include the following: Water—any size Low fat or non fat milk, flavored or unflavored—any size ≤ 360 calories 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 12 oz Sports drinks that contain no more than 100 calories If sodas are allowed outside of meal periods, they are no larger than 12 oz.</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 and NC Statute 115C-264</p> <p>In addition, if local policy permits vending to students, contents may only include the following: Water—required, any size Low fat or non fat milk, flavored or unflavored—any size ≤ 360 calories 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 12 oz Sports drinks that contain no more than 100 calories</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 and NC Statute 115C-264</p> <p>In addition, if local policy permits vending to students, contents may only include the following: Water—required, any size Low fat or non fat milk, flavored or unflavored—any size ≤ 360 calories 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 8 oz Sports drinks that contain no more than 100 calories</p>
VENDING Snack Foods	<p>Not in compliance with USDA regulation 7CFR 210 and 220 that prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value where school meals are served or eaten during meal periods</p>	<p>50% of choices are items that have no more than 200 calories per portion</p>	<p>75% of choices are items that have no more than 200 calories per portion</p>	<p>100% of choices are items that have no more than 200 calories per portion</p>
SCHOOL EVENTS Classroom Events, Celebrations, Meetings, Parties, Concessions, Intramural Events, Fundraisers, Extracurricular	<p>No local policy</p>	<p>Local policy developed by school/community committee guided by sound nutrition principles* implemented for 2 event categories</p>	<p>Local policy developed by school/community committee guided by sound nutrition principles* implemented for 4 event categories</p>	<p>Local policy developed by school/community committee guided by sound nutrition principles* implemented for 6 event categories</p>
SCHOOL MEALS National School Lunch Program School Breakfast Program	<p>Not in compliance with USDA School Meals Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA School Meal Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220. In addition, school meals will include: Three fruits (some fresh) and/or vegetables offered for lunch—at least 2 are not fried Foods containing whole grains offered 3 days a week One reimbursable lunch and breakfast offered daily has no more than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat Milk choices meet requirements of 7CFR 210</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA School Meal Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220. In addition, school meals will include: Four fruits (some fresh) and/or vegetables offered for lunch—at least 3 are not fried Foods containing whole grains offered 4 days a week Two reimbursable lunches and breakfasts have no more than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat All milk choices, except whole milk, allowed</p>	<p>In compliance with USDA School Meal Initiative 7CFR 210 and 220. In addition, school meals will include: Four fruits (some fresh) and/or vegetables offered for lunch—none are fried Foods containing whole grains offered daily Every reimbursable lunch and breakfast offered daily has no more than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat Must serve unflavored low fat milk May serve flavored low fat milk May serve unflavored and flavored non fat milk</p>
A LA CARTE All other food and beverage items sold in school cafeteria or in other locations where School Meals are served or eaten	<p>No local policy</p>	<p>If local policy permits a la carte items to be sold, they are limited to the following every day The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP</p> <p>Fruit (some fresh) or vegetables (not fried) Yogurt 50% of snack choices are items that have no more than 200 calories per portion Water 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 12 oz Sports drinks that contain no more than 100 calories Any milk offered in NSLP/SBP meals that day</p>	<p>If local policy permits a la carte items to be sold, they are limited to the following every day The same portion size of any food item served that day in the NSLP or SBP</p> <p>Fruit (some fresh) or vegetables (not fried) Yogurt 75% of snack choices are items that have no more than 200 calories per portion Water 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 12 oz. Sports drinks that contain no more than 100 calories Any milk offered in NSLP/SBP meals that day</p>	<p>If local policy permits a la carte items to be sold, they are limited to the following every day The same portion size of any food items served that day in the NSLP or SBP that meet the following: ≤ 35% total calories from fat, excluding nuts and seeds ≤ 10% total calories from saturated fat ≤ 35% added sugar by weight Fruit (some fresh) or vegetables (not fried) Yogurt 100% of snack choices are items that have no more than 200 calories per portion Water 50-100% juice with no added sweeteners ≤ 8 oz Sports drinks that contain no more than 100 calories Any milk offered in NSLP/SBP meals that day</p>



*See Glossary

Moving the *Eat Smart School Standards* from paper to practice will not be easy and it will not happen overnight. Families, school and community leaders as well as policy makers bring different perspectives to this issue. However, all share the common goal of providing a healthy future for children. All can work together to create change.

Healthy eating patterns do not just happen—they are developed through a lifetime of exposure to foods and eating experiences. Providing environments that support healthy choices—from policies to role-modeling—is a challenge for schools. However, it is also an opportunity to promote change toward more supportive environments at home and other places families eat away from home. Two recent national polls show remarkable agreement between parents and teachers on what schools should do to be part of the solution to obesity.²³ More than 90 percent of parents and teachers surveyed favor converting the contents of vending machines in schools to healthy foods and beverages. North Carolina parents said in a recent study that they prefer nutrition education be taught in the classroom.²⁴ Teachers, parents, students, school nutrition staff, educators, business and industry, and community leaders can collaborate to assess the school’s eating environment, develop a shared vision and action plan, evaluate the plan’s success and problem-solve to find solutions that work for the good of all students.

From paper to practice



Schools have an opportunity to provide classroom health and nutrition education supplemented by learning laboratories in the many venues where food is offered or served. Cafeterias, school stores, vending, parties and after school events offer opportunities for schools to reinforce the message that making healthy food choices means a healthier body and a sharper mind.

Fun, interactive, culturally-sensitive, age-appropriate nutrition education taught as part of a comprehensive, K-12 health education curriculum such as the Healthful Living Standard Course of Study, provides opportunities to teach the value of making healthy choices.²⁵ Integrating nutrition education and physical activity into all curriculum areas can maximize the effectiveness of teaching these important life skills. The cafeteria-classroom connection allows elementary students the opportunity to be exposed to new foods and begin developing skills in making healthy food choices. This connection also allows middle and high school students the opportunity to deflect negative social pressure and practice personal responsibility and decision-making skills in a positive, supportive environment. While nutrition education is part of the Healthful Living Standard Course of Study, it is not consistently taught across the curriculum in all schools.

Learning and practicing healthy eating

Adults learning to lead

Training opportunities for teachers, staff and parents would raise the level of knowledge and commitment these groups share in supporting a healthy school environment. Teacher and staff training should focus on innovative teaching strategies in the classroom and the cafeteria. Training should also equip adults with the skills to evaluate and improve their own eating habits, enhancing their ability to serve as role models. Likewise, parental and community involvement through School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs)²⁶ participation in school activities, parent-teacher organizations or local board of education meetings can ensure that consistent messages about the role of good nutrition and active lifestyles in health and learning are provided and reinforced at home and at school.

School personnel as role models

School personnel who are committed to their own health and well being are a valuable asset to the school, both as role models and as advocates. When school personnel embrace health, they act as role models for healthful living, reinforcing the “Eat Smart, Move More” message for children and families.²⁷ “Adults as positive role models for children” is a recommendation of the NC Healthy Weight Initiative’s Task Force.¹ School personnel who make healthy choices are likely to advocate for school environments that promote healthy eating and increased physical activity for students. This role as advocate can take many forms. Seeking alternative revenue for projects and activities currently funded by vending sales, voicing support for adequate time to eat school breakfast and lunch, speaking out against violations of current statutes and policy, and advocating for nutrition education in classrooms may be appropriate. Healthy adult role models may also seek alternatives to food as a reward and work with peers to develop other options for celebrations and special events.

Families as the foundation



Schools are places of extraordinary influence on student behavior and the development of lifelong eating patterns. The support of healthy eating patterns cannot, however, stop with the school. Families have a large role to play. Families are the foundation of the solution to childhood overweight and adult obesity. They provide the child’s first learning environment and have the potential to make that environment supportive of healthy eating and physical activity. Families can influence children’s eating practices by ensuring availability and accessibility of foods in appropriate portion sizes. They can influence children’s eating patterns by establishing meal structures that reflect the importance of eating away from TV or other distractions and learning to enjoy the social aspects of eating together as a family as often as possible. They can learn to avoid feeding practices that may encourage overeating or eating disorders. And they can commit to “walking the talk”—eating healthy meals and snacks, and balancing food intake with physical activity to improve their own health and provide an example for children. Families can also influence opportunities for children to make healthy choices by being advocates for environmental and policy change to support healthy eating outside the home and by making thoughtful decisions when selecting places to eat away from home.

Eat Smart: NC's Recommended Standards For All Foods Available In School represents the best thinking of the Consensus Panel on how schools can help change eating patterns of students in school and influence change in families and communities. The *Eat Smart School Standards* do not address all the important contributors to eating patterns in schools. Among these other important issues are:

- Universal availability of school breakfast
- Adequate time to eat
- Lunch periods scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible
- Appropriate supervision and pleasant and comfortable eating environments
- Nutrition education of sufficient quality and quantity to enhance decision-making skills
- Marketing and advertising to students
- Stigma and peer pressure for students who eat the school meals while their friends choose expensive a la carte foods

The Consensus Panel did not make specific recommendations for foods served at special school events. Instead, the Panel recommends that a committee of school and community members, including parents and students, develop a local policy. Such involvement may promote greater understanding and implementation of the *Eat Smart School Standards*. The policy may include such issues as:

- Alternatives to using food as an individual reward
- How often food will be part of a group celebration
- What other celebration options are available
- What kind and amount of foods will be provided for all special school events

Finally, the Consensus Panel chose to keep the *Eat Smart School Standards* as simple as possible, using measures such as portion size, calories, types of food and preparation methods that will make significant differences in the development of healthy eating patterns. The *Eat Smart School Standards* build on other efforts, including the USDA's *School Meal Initiative*⁹ and NC Prevention Partner's *Winner's Circle Healthy Dining Program*,²⁸ which have been accepted by many child nutrition directors. The schools' success in meeting the School Meal Initiative's standard for meals averaged over a week will be a strong foundation for moving toward the availability every day of meals that have no more than 30 percent of calories from fat and less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. The promotion of Winner's Circle options will give schools a head start on implementing the *Eat Smart School Standards*, and Winner's Circle marketing will strengthen acceptance of increasing numbers of healthy foods. The *Eat Smart School Standards* may be thought of as "*Winner's Circle Plus*," building on the strength of *Winner's Circle* criteria for meals, side dishes and snacks.

Beyond the Eat Smart School Standards



"We have to split our lunch time and activity time. We only get 21 minutes to eat and 21 minutes for activity."

—Antonio, 7th grade

The *Eat Smart School Standards* do not use an “all or nothing” approach. Rather, they call on schools and communities to assess current practices and evaluate the school and community’s level of readiness to change, their commitment to investing in children’s short and long term health, and their willingness to find fiscal solutions.

Tools addressing ways to implement specific standards will be developed to assist local implementation. Partners in the *Eat Smart School Standards* project will develop some of the tools; however other organizations and individuals concerned about the health and well-being of children are encouraged to also provide their expertise and support. Implementation of the *Eat Smart School Standards* has not been pilot tested. It is recommended that an expert panel be convened at the end of three years to study the success and the difficulties of implementation and to make any modification that may be deemed necessary.

CALL TO ACTION

Childhood overweight is a health crisis in North Carolina and throughout the United States. The epidemic begins with unhealthy eating and physical inactivity patterns, established when children are very young. All segments of society have a role to play in solving this extraordinarily complicated health issue. *Eat Smart: NC’s Recommended Standards For All Foods Available In School* is only one part of the solution. However, these *Eat Smart School Standards* can become a highly visible part of the solution and have far reaching effects on what students eat in school and how change occurs in families and communities. Students and families who improve eating patterns are also likely to increase physical activity, another important contributor to obesity prevention. Effective action will require vigorous support by families, school and community leaders, and policy makers.

Be Part OF THE Solution

Students, families, teachers, child nutrition staff, superintendents and school board members each play a role in making school a place that supports healthy eating.

- Students:**
- Eat smart and move more to look, feel and do your best
 - Get informed and involved
 - Set goals for yourself
 - Serve as a role model to younger students
 - Eat the school breakfast, school lunch and healthy snacks

- Families:**
- Eat smart and move more—children are watching you
 - Support school meal programs—eat breakfast and lunch at school
 - Learn how Child Nutrition Programs are financed and discuss it with others
 - Advocate for healthy school meals and nutrition education
 - Provide healthy snacks or fun physical activity for parties and events

- Teachers:**
- Teach and role model good nutrition and physical activity
 - Coordinate nutrition education with cafeteria staff
 - Teach life skills—not just the facts
 - Eat with students—support school meal programs
 - Use non-food rewards

- Child Nutrition Staff:**
- Provide tasty, appealing and healthy meals
 - Market healthy meals well
 - Coordinate classroom and cafeteria activities
 - Eat smart and move more—children are watching you
 - Provide nutrition information to students and families

- Principals:**
- Support a healthy eating environment and tell others about your commitment
 - Establish school policy and enforce district and state policy
 - Seek alternative sources of revenue for your school
 - Schedule recess before lunch and adequate time to eat
 - Provide continuing education opportunities for staff on nutrition and health

- School Superintendents/
School Board Members:**
- Support a healthy eating environment and tell others about your commitment
 - Make funds available to support healthy eating
 - Establish and enforce policy for foods available in schools
 - Require comprehensive skill based nutrition education for PreK-12
 - Support school meal programs—eat breakfast and lunch at school

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Glossary

A la carte: Any individual food sold in school cafeterias. Also known as supplemental sales.

Added sweeteners: Sweeteners added during processing or packing.

After School Snack Program: Federally funded program that offers cash reimbursement for serving snacks to children in after school activities aimed at promoting the health and well being of children and youth.

Body Mass Index (BMI): An index of body weight for height used to classify overweight or obesity in adults. BMI, adjusted for age and gender, is also used to identify children and adolescents who are overweight or at-risk for overweight.

Child Nutrition Program: The school food service program operated under the auspices of the NC Department of Public Instruction, Division of School Business and Finance, Child Nutrition Services.

Childhood overweight: A gender- and age-specific Body Mass Index at or above the 95th percentile for children and youth aged 2 to 20 years, based on 2000 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) growth charts. Neither a separate definition for obesity nor a definition for overweight based on health outcomes or risk factors is defined for children and youth.

Class snacks: Snacks brought into a school classroom for all students to share and enjoy.

Classroom events: Events occurring in a school classroom for all students to participate in or enjoy.

Concessions: Food sold at events on school property, during the school day or outside school hours.

Competitive foods: Any foods sold in competition with the School Breakfast, National School Lunch or After School Snack Programs.

Extracurricular: Outside the regular course of study but under the supervision of the school.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value: Foods and beverages that do not provide at least 5 percent of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for any one of several key nutrients. Soda water (carbonated beverages), water ices, chewing gum and certain candies are included.

Fundraisers: Activities in which students or others sell products to raise money for the school.

Healthy People 2010: Healthy People 2010 is the prevention agenda for the Nation. It is a statement of national health objectives designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to health and to establish national goals to reduce these threats.

Intramural events: Events occurring between students in the same school.

Juice, 100%: Undiluted liquid fraction of whole vegetable, fruit or fruit blends without added sweeteners.

Juice drink: Diluted, sweetened fruit or vegetable juice or fruit or vegetable juice blend.

Milk

Skim Milk: Pasteurized, homogenized fluid cow's milk containing less than .5% milk fat.

Low fat milk: Pasteurized, homogenized fluid cow's milk containing 1% milk fat.

Reduced fat milk: Pasteurized, homogenized fluid cow's milk containing 2% milk fat.

Whole Milk: Pasteurized, homogenized fluid cow's milk containing 3.5% milk fat.

National School Lunch Program: Program under which participating schools operate a nonprofit lunch program authorized by 7CFR210 of the National School Lunch Act.

Obesity: A Body Mass Index of 30 or greater in adults. There is no definition for obesity in children and youth. Refer to "childhood overweight" for a definition that applies to children and youth aged 2 to 20 years.

Overweight: A Body Mass Index between 25 and 29.9 in adults. Refer to "childhood overweight" for definition that applies to children and youth aged 2 to 20 years.

Policy: A principle plan or course of action as pursued by an organization.

Portion size: A quantity of food or beverage intended for consumption by one individual.

Pouring rights contract: A contract with a vendor for the sale of one brand, also known as an exclusive beverage contract.

Regulation: Rules that implement laws.

Reimbursement: Federal cash assistance paid to participating schools for lunches, breakfasts and after school snacks that meet USDA requirements.

School Breakfast Program: Program under which participating schools operate a nonprofit breakfast program authorized by 7CFR220 of the National School Lunch Act.

School Health Advisory Councils: Advisory group of individuals who represent segments of the school and community. The group acts collectively to provide advice to the school system on all aspects of school health. The NC State Board of Education's *Healthy Active Children Policy* requires a Council in each school district.

School lunch: Noontime meal that meets the requirements of the National School Lunch Program.

Sound nutrition principles: Principles of human nutrition based on the preponderance of scientific evidence to date. For example, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid are sound nutrition principles.

Supplemental sales: Foods sold in school cafeterias intended to supplement funds received from the federally reimbursed school meals. Historically, supplemental sales were intended to supplement a student's lunch brought from home. For example, a carton of milk to accompany a brown-bag lunch.

Vending machine: Cash-operated machine that dispenses foods and/or beverages.

Water: Carbonated and non-carbonated water, with no added sweeteners and zero calories.

Weekly USDA Standard: Congressionally mandated requirement that federally reimbursed school lunches and school breakfasts average, over the course of a week, no more than 30 percent of calories from fat and less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. *Eat Smart School Standards* recommend that schools progress toward using this standard daily.

Existing Policy, Law and Regulation

NC STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Policy # EEO-S-000

1. A la carte sales are limited to foods contributing to the nutritional well-being of the child and aiding in the establishment of good food habits. School food authorities and sponsoring organizations may provide these foods under the following conditions:
 - A. Sponsors must operate all food and beverage services during or before the established lunch period through the school food service department.
 - B. The school food service department retains all receipts from the sale of these items.
 - C. Sponsors must use all food service income for the purpose of the school's non-profit Child Nutrition Programs.
 - D. A la carte items may not include food of minimum nutritional value.
2. Competitive food sales by a school of extra food items in the lunchroom or its general environs must be on a non-profit basis. "On a non-profit basis" means that the sponsor deposits income from the sale of such food items to the account of the school's non-profit lunch and breakfast programs and uses the income solely for these programs.
 - A. The school may sell extra food items after the established lunch hour is over, only with the approval of the LEA. The established lunch hour is over when the last pupil has been served for the day.
 - C. The department may deny the opportunity to participate in the program to any school food authority that operates in violation of state policy.

Complete text available at: sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/

NC GENERAL STATUTE 115C-264. Operation.

In the operation of their public school food programs, the public schools shall participate in the National School Lunch Program established by the federal government. The program shall be under the jurisdiction of the Division of School Food Services of the Department of Public Instruction and in accordance with federal guidelines as established by the Child Nutrition Division of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Each school may, with the approval of the local board of education, sell soft drinks to students so long as soft drinks are not sold (i) during the lunch period, (ii) at elementary schools, or (iii) contrary to the requirements of the National School Lunch Program.

Complete text available at:
www.ncga.state.nc.us/Statutes/Statutes.asp

US CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATION Sec. 210.11

Competitive foods means any foods sold in competition with the Program to children in food service areas during the lunch periods. State agencies and school food authorities shall establish such rules or regulations as are necessary to control the sale of foods in competition with lunches served under the Program. Such rules or regulations shall prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value.

Complete text available at: www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_04/7cfr210_04.html

US CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATION Sec. 220.12

Competitive food services. State agencies and School Food Authorities shall establish such rules or regulations as are necessary to control the sale of foods in competition with breakfasts served under the Program. Such rules or regulations shall prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value, as listed in appendix B of this part, in the food service areas during the breakfast periods.

Complete text available at: www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_04/7cfr220_04.html



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