



# Eat Smart: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for All Foods Available In School



**What** *Eat Smart: North Carolina's Recommended Standards For All Foods Available In School* is one of many tools that support the Eat Smart, Move More...North Carolina initiative. This document serves as a strategy for improving the eating habits of North Carolina's children and teens.

**When** In December 2003, N.C.'s Consensus Panel To Recommend Standards For All Foods Available In School met to create the framework for the *Eat Smart School Standards*. This Panel of educators, nutritionists, physicians and public health professionals released the completed document in May 2004. It was produced in partnership between the N.C. Division of Public Health, N.C. Department of Public Instruction and N.C. Cooperative Extension Service.

**Where** The *Eat Smart School Standards* will help local education agencies and their School Health Advisory Councils generate local policy to address all foods and beverages available to children and youth in school. Some of the specific food availability issues addressed include:

- School parties and celebrations
- Vending machines outside cafeterias
- A la carte foods and beverages in cafeterias
- Fundraising events and
- After-school snack programs.

**Why** The *Eat Smart School Standards* grew out of a recommendation from the N.C. Healthy Weight Initiative's 100-member task force. "Set state standards for all foods and beverages available in school" was one of six policy and environmental recommendations presented in the task force report, *Moving Our Children Toward A Healthy Weight: Finding the Will and the Way*.

Childhood overweight is an epidemic in North Carolina. Between 1995 and 2004, the prevalence of overweight in North Carolina's children increased 19.8 percent in 12 – 18 year olds, 62.2 percent in 5 – 11 year olds and 65.3 percent in 2 – 4 year olds. The epidemic of childhood overweight is a complex, multi-faceted problem that requires multi-level approaches to reverse the trend.

**Who** The *Eat Smart School Standards* is a tool for parents, community leaders, educators, industry representatives and policy makers to help stimulate change in school nutrition environments.

**How** The *Eat Smart School Standards* are voluntary, sequential and flexible. The document outlines 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 current law and policy.
- **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 develop as they mature. Standards are provided for Grades PreK-5, Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12.

For more information please visit  
[www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com](http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com)

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