



Vermont Healthy Schools Resource:

Nutrition



SUMMARY

A. Nutritious Food Choices

1. Nutritious foods are available wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered at school.
 - [Celebrations](#)
 - [Fundraisers](#)
 - [Snack Time](#)
 - [Concession Stands](#)
 - [School Stores](#)
 - [Vending Machines](#)
2. See Appendix A for the definition of nutritious foods.
 - [Appendix A](#)

B. The School Food Service Program

1. Menus are planned to conform to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the nutrient standards established in the regulations of the National School Lunch Program (7CFR 210) and the School Breakfast Program (7CFR 220).
 - [Breakfast and Lunch Menus](#)
2. A la carte (see Appendix A for definition) foods conform to the a la carte guidelines outlined in Appendix B.
 - [A La Carte Foods](#)
3. Food pricing strategies are designed to encourage students to purchase nutritious items and/or reimbursable meals.
 - [Food Pricing](#)
4. Compatible with federal regulations for such purchases, the food service program established procedures to include locally grown foods and beverages in the development of purchasing bids or procedures.
 - [Buying Local](#)

C. Other Food Choices at School

1. Foods and beverages available at school support the nutritional needs of students, are nutritious and meet the A La Carte Guidelines outlined in Appendix B.
 - [Appendix A](#)
 - [A La Carte Foods](#)

2. All food sales on school grounds are under the management of the school food service program. Nutritious foods are included at any time foods are sold at school to raise funds.
 - [Fundraisers](#)
 - [Concession Stands](#)
 - [School Stores](#)
3. Foods sold through vending machines conform to the Vending Guidelines outlined in Appendix C. No foods are sold from vending machines during meal service times.
 - [Vending Machines](#)
4. To the extent possible, foods sold in vending machines, school stores, snack bars and other venues are purchased using the practices described above regarding locally grown foods.
 - [Buying Local](#)

D. Promoting Healthy Eating Behaviors

1. Students and staff have adequate space to eat meals in pleasant surroundings and adequate time to eat, relax and socialize. At a minimum, lunch periods are at least twenty minutes long. Sufficient transition time is also provided.
 - [Eating Environment](#)
2. Nutrition education is integrated within the health education program. Nutrition education focuses on developing healthy eating behaviors, is based on theories and methods proven effective by research and is consistent with Vermont's health education standard 3.5.
 - [Nutrition Education](#)
3. To the extent possible, lunch periods are scheduled to follow recess periods (in elementary schools).
 - [Lunch After Recess](#)
4. Food is not used as a reward or a punishment for students.
 - [Alternative Rewards](#)
5. Food of minimal nutritional value is not marketed on school grounds.
 - [Marketing in Schools](#)

CELEBRATIONS

Implementation Ideas

Schools can promote a positive learning environment by providing healthy celebrations that shift the focus from the food to the child. Make celebrations healthy occasions.

- Parties can incorporate physical activity with games, crafts and activities that students enjoy.
 - Instead of a party, organize a special community service project and involve parents in planning the project
 - Have parents and school staff send in ideas for activities, games and crafts. Compile these ideas into a book that staff and parents can use.
 - Give children extra recess time instead of a class party. For birthdays, let the birthday child choose and lead an active game for everyone.
- If you wish to incorporate food into the celebration, involve the students in the planning and preparation of healthy snacks. This also provides a nutrition lesson and supports what they learn in the classroom.
- Parents and school staff can send in ideas for healthy recipes. Assemble these ideas into a book that staff and parents can use.

Healthy Food and Beverage Ideas:

Beverage

- Fruit smoothies (with low-fat/non-fat milk, yogurt & fresh fruit)
- Low/non-fat milk or soymilk
- Water, flavored water, seltzer water
- 100 percent fruit & vegetable juice

Snack

- Animal crackers
 - Baked pitas with hummus or salsa
 - Celery with peanut butter & raisins*
 - Fruit salad
 - Fruit, yogurt & granola parfaits
 - Ham or turkey wrap with light cheese & veggies
 - Light cheese & fruit kabob
 - Low-sugar, healthy cookie recipes (made with applesauce, canola oil & whole wheat flour)
 - Microwavable popcorn (low-fat)
 - Quesadillas or bean burritos (with whole wheat tortillas, light cheese & salsa)
 - Trail mix (nuts, seeds, dried fruit, whole grain cereal)*
 - Vegetable tray with low-fat dip
- Consider allowing a sweet such as birthday cake or cupcakes as an occasional treat; recognizing that an occasional sweet treat is okay as part of an overall healthy, balanced diet.
 - Choose one day per month to celebrate all the students who have birthdays that month.
 - Keep the portions of sweets small and limit to one per child.
 - Allow children to choose. Offer a healthy alternative snack, such as one listed above, in addition to the sweet.

* **WARNING:** A small but growing number of kids have severe peanut and/or tree nut allergies. Before bringing in peanut butter, peanuts or other nuts as a snack, check to make sure none of the children has an allergy.

Resources

National

- *Classroom Party Ideas* from the University of California Cooperative Extension Ventura County and *California Children's 5 a Day-Power Play!* Campaign. The site provides ideas for healthy snacks and recipes:
<http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/classroompartyideasCA.pdf>
- FOODPLAY's *Guide to Healthy Classroom Celebrations!* This guide includes fun and easy-to-prepare snacks that involve little or no cooking for your class to celebrate birthdays, holidays and special events:
<http://www.foodplay.com/downloads/FreeMaterials/Teachers/Celebrationguide.doc>
- Team Nutrition Resources, developed in partnership between the North Carolina Division of Public Health, NC Department of Public Instruction, NC Cooperative Extension and NC Action for Healthy Kids:
<http://www.nutritionnc.com/ResourcesForSchools/pdf/2006/resourceFiles/teamNutritionPolicyResources.pdf>
- *Fruits & Veggies — More Matters* is the new fruit and vegetable promotion campaign that replaced 5 A Day. The Web site is full of easy recipe ideas:
<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>

FUNDRAISERS

Implementation Ideas

Fundraising does not have to involve selling cookies, candy and other foods that have low nutritional value. This only contradicts nutrition principles taught in the classroom. Fundraising should model and support the message students are taught about healthy lifestyles.

- Evaluate the frequency and nature of fundraising activities that include food sale to determine whether these activities enhance the school nutrition environment.
- If food is sold, choose healthy food items.

Healthy Food to Sell

- Fruit & nut baskets
 - Fruit smoothies
 - Fruit & yogurt parfaits
 - Low-sugar granola bars
 - Low-sodium soup mixes
 - Trail mix
- Consider the option of selling non-food items or participating in other events to support the school and community.

Nonfood Items to Sell

- Air fresheners
- Balloon bouquets
- Books, calendars, magazines
- Candles
- Coupon books
- First aid kits
- Gift certificates
- Greeting cards/stationery
- Holiday ornaments
- House decorations
- Jewelry
- Plants, flowers & bulbs
- Stone/brick/tile memorials
- Water bottles

Fundraising Events

- Bike, walk, jog or rope-a-thons
- Car wash
- Fun runs
- Gift wrapping
- Penny wars
- Raffles
- Bottle drives
- Magic or talent show

Vermont Example

In **Burlington**, the school district policy is that the food service office be made aware of all fundraisers during the school day that include the sale of food. The goal is that such sales will not take place more than twice per month and will also have healthy food choices available. The group putting on the sale is encouraged to work together with the food service office to procure products. The group is also responsible for marking possible food allergens accordingly. One example of a healthy fundraiser was **Champlain Elementary School** (K–5, 290 students) in Burlington. This school held an event selling locally made, healthy pizza. Money was raised for a new sandwich bar that will provide healthy lunch choices for students and staff.

Resources

National

- *The Source for Fundraising Information on the Internet. An online community dedicated to helping those involved in grassroots fundraising.* Provided is an Idea Bank with practical, unique fundraising ideas that can be used by groups of all types:
www.fund-raising.com
- Alternative fundraising ideas plus school success stories:
<http://www.nojunkfood.org/fundraising/>
- *Alaska School Wellness Toolkit.* Included are ideas for fundraisers:
http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/pubs/AKSchoolWellness_4.pdf (Page 31)
- California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition) provides links to fundraisers at school: http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/views/Create_Healthier_Places.asp
- *Healthy School Nutrition Environment Resource List*, developed by The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). This list contains online resources to assist schools with promoting healthy eating and physical activity for children. Included is a section on fundraising:
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/hsne_resource_list.pdf
- *Making It Happen!* A joint project of USDA's Team Nutrition and the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition to school success stories, this site provides links to information on fundraising activities and rewards that support student health*:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/makingithappen.html>
- *Cooking with MyPyramid Fundraising Program.* Consider using this educational family cookbook with recipes that promote the recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid.gov. The recipes are from health professionals across America and have been kid-tested and family approved! Ten recipes were randomly selected from schools across the country, one of which is Fruit Chewy Granola Bars from the 6th grade class at Essex Middle School.
<http://www.cookingwithmypyramid.com/>

*Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center

SNACK TIME

Implementation Ideas

- If snacks are provided by teachers, staff or the school food- service program:
 - Follow the a la carte guidelines as outlined in Appendix B.
 - Incorporate snack time into a nutrition lesson. (See Vermont Example below).
- If students bring snacks from home:
 - Provide students with ideas for healthy, nutrient-dense snacks, and educate them on the importance of making healthy choices.
 - Have students prepare and taste some healthy snack ideas.
 - Educate parents about healthy snacks that provide energy for the brain and muscles and provide staying power until the next meal.
 - Assign students a healthy snack homework assignment that involves parents.
 - Send home, with the child or in the mail, healthy snack handouts outlining the nutrition lessons taught in the classroom, with accompanying snack ideas.
- Whether provided in school or brought from home, establish snack time as fruit and veggie time. Provide students with different fruits or vegetables as a snack, or have them bring their favorite one from home.
 - For additional nutrients and staying power, pair fruits and veggies with low-/nonfat milk or soy milk. (See examples below)
- Have healthy snacks available for teachers, staff and parents at school meetings to demonstrate healthy eating as role models and to support the health of the staff and parents.

Healthy Snack Ideas*

Simple Snacks on the Go! Snacks with Staying Power! Consider pairing with

Baked chips or pita bread	Salsa, hummus, bean dip or guacamole
Cereal (whole grain, low sugar)	Nuts or low-/nonfat milk or soy milk
Cheese stick	Fruit or whole wheat crackers
Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit (e.g., clementines, natural applesauce, frozen blueberries or grapes, fruit bowls, dried apricots, canned peaches in light syrup, etc.)	Yogurt dips, nuts, nut butters, or low-fat cottage cheese; slice and cube fresh fruit to make a fruit salad; pair with low-fat cheese and create kabobs
Fresh veggies (e.g., celery sticks, baby carrots, grape tomatoes, pepper strips, etc.)	Peanut butter, low-fat dip, hummus, salsa and guacamole or vinaigrette dressings
Granola or cereal bar (low fat/sugar)	Low-/nonfat milk or soy milk
Mini whole wheat bagel	Peanut butter, hummus or low-fat cheese
Nuts	Fruit, yogurt or whole-grain cereal
Pudding cup (low fat/sugar)	Banana slices, nuts or low-fat granola
Rice cakes	Nut butter or low-fat cheese
Whole wheat English muffin	Nut butter or low-fat cheese slice
Whole wheat/whole-grain crackers	Nut butter, hummus or low-fat cheese
Yogurt (low fat/sugar)	Low-fat granola, nuts or berries

* **WARNING:** A small but growing number of kids have severe peanut and/or tree nut allergies. Before bringing in peanut butter, peanuts or other nuts as a snack, check to make sure none of the children has an allergy.

Vermont Example

At **Milton Elementary School** (PK–6, 977 students) in Milton, second grade teacher Eleanor Uckele, took the knowledge she gained from her classroom’s FEED (Food Education Every Day) involvement a few years back, to continue educating her children about healthy eating habits. For the past four to five years Ms. Uckele has made a mini-snack every morning during classroom circle time. The children have the opportunity to try foods such as clementines, sliced apples, popcorn, cheese slices on wheat crackers or even sautéed portabello mushrooms! Ms. Uckele takes it upon herself to buy and prepare the food each day. To keep the cost of the program down to only one or two dollars a day, she focuses on choosing seasonal foods. “The benefits are amazing! Children have become accustomed to take risks in trying new foods,” she says. While she never forces children to try the snacks, she notes that most will. In addition to expanding their palate, the children learn about the foods they try. They discuss the vitamins, minerals and benefits of the various foods. Since Ms. Uckele has the children in her class for two years, “They become very good at telling which foods have Vitamin A, or C, and know interesting facts about different foods.” With the long-lasting effects of this program, she emphasizes that it’s worth the time and money. “I encourage others to try it, if not every day, at least as an occasional activity; maybe as a Friday-Food activity?”

See [Additional Vermont Examples: Nutrition](#) for more

Resources

National

- Healthy snack ideas from the Center for Science in the Public Interest: http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/healthy_school_snacks.pdf
- *Smart School Snacks: A Comprehensive Preschool Nutrition Education Program*, from the May 2006 issue of the Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children: <http://www.journal.naeyc.org/btj/200605/BernathBTJ.asp>
- University of Minnesota School of Public Health’s *Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars and Catered Events*: www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc_content/colleges/sph/sph_news/Nutrition.pdf
- *Making It Happen!* A joint project of USDA’s Team Nutrition and the Department of Health and Human Services’ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This site illustrates a wide variety of approaches that schools have taken to improve student nutrition*: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/makingithappen.html>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center

CONCESSION STANDS

Implementation Ideas

Concessions are an integral part of most school-sponsored sporting events. They are often used to help student groups and clubs raise needed activity funds. Unfortunately, many of the foods and beverages sold at these concession stands are often high in sugar and/or fat. However, this doesn't have to be the case. Concession sales can be a great opportunity to provide and promote healthy choices. Research shows that students will buy and consume healthy foods and beverages when the options are accessible, affordable and tasty. Concession sales can be profitable and contribute to the health and well-being of students.

- Offer a variety of healthy food and beverage items that are low in saturated/trans fats, sodium and added sugars.

Healthy Food and Beverage Ideas:

Beverages

- Low-/nonfat milk or soy milk
- Sports drink
- Water, flavored water, seltzer water
- 100 percent fruit & vegetable juice

Dairy (Choose low or non-fat products)

- Cottage cheese
- Pudding cups
- Yogurt
- String cheese

Fruits/Vegetables

- Dried fruit
- Fresh or canned fruit cups
- Fresh fruit or vegetables with low-fat dips

Sandwiches, Hot foods

- Whole wheat sandwiches/wraps (veggies, light cheese, lean meats, or peanut butter & bananas)
- Turkey dogs and/or burgers
- Pizza with veggies & light mozzarella
- Broth-based soups (low sodium)

Snacks

- Animal or graham crackers
- Baked chips
- Granola or cereal bars (low fat/sugar)
- Mini bagels (with low-fat cream cheese)
- Pretzels
- Snack-size bags of light microwave popcorn
- Nuts/trail mix

Vermont Example

At **Harwood Union High School** (9–12, 655 students) in South Duxbury, the School Wellness Policy requires that when food is sold at after-school events, healthy foods must be available as part of the offerings. Sue Duprat, Athletic Director, has reported on the nutritious foods offered in the concession stand when run by the track/cross-country team. Such healthy selections include fruit, fruit juices, water, trail mix or gorp, and bagels. The school plans to offer these expanded choices when other groups run the concession stand in the future, in order to comply with the school wellness policy.

Resources

National

- Healthy concession stand ideas developed in partnership between the North Carolina Division of Public Health, NC Department of Public Instruction, NC Cooperative Extension and NC Action for Healthy Kids:
<http://www.nutritionnc.com/TeamNutrition/Supporting%20materials/eatSmart/Concessions.pdf>
- North Carolina's Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Nutrition Policy Regulation:
<http://www.chccs.k12.nc.us/PlanningDocuments/NutritionPolicy.pdf>
(See snack guidelines and *Winners Circle* sections.)
- In order to clear up confusion on what is considered healthy, and to provide guidance in purchasing items, the Montana Office of Public Instruction has set up this Web site that outlines guidelines provided from the California Center for Public Advocacy, to be used as competitive food standards for elementary and secondary schools:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfood/nutritionense/WhatsHealthy.pdf>
- Championship Food for Young Athletes—Performance Foods in Sporting Event Concessions: Nutrition Tool Kit 2006. A tool kit put together by ActNow BC, offering all the necessary tools to provide high quality and high performance foods to young athletes every step of their career:
www.kamloops.ca/tournamentcapital/supportzone/healthyconcessions.shtml

SCHOOL STORES

Implementation Ideas

School stores give students opportunities to create valuable marketing and business experiences while learning about the importance of nutritional and healthy food choices.

- A committee can be formed to make the decisions about the school store offerings and should involve students, teachers, parents, food service staff, administrators and possibly even vendors.
 - Students are more likely to be receptive to healthier choices when they have input into determining the outcome.
- School stores can offer school supplies, school spirit items and other nonfood items.
- If school stores sell food and beverages they should strive to provide nutritious foods that support healthy school environments. The offerings should not undermine the teachings in class or compete with the school food-service programs.
- If operated by the food service program, follow the A La Carte Food and Beverage Standards outlined in Appendix B.

Healthy Food and Beverage Ideas:

Beverages

- Water, flavored water, seltzer water
- 100 percent fruit & vegetable juice.

Snacks

- Animal or graham crackers
 - Baked chips or pita chips
 - Cookies (low fat/sugar)
 - Fresh and dried fruit
 - Fruit cups
 - Granola or cereal bars (low fat/sugar)
 - Nuts or sunflower seeds.
 - Prepackaged vegetables such as baby carrots.
 - Pretzels
 - Snack-size bags of light microwave popcorn.
 - Soy chips
 - Trail mix
- Survey students to find out the popular healthy snacks they prefer.
 - Promote healthy products in a trendy, fun way.
 - Offer free samples to elicit enthusiasm and word-of-mouth selling.
 - At special functions, give out coupons for a nutritious snack from the school store.

Vermont Example

At **Rutland High School/Stafford Technical Center** (9–12, 1157 students) in Rutland, Cheryl Niedzwiecki, reports on their continuing effort to offer healthy choices to students and staff at the school store. Their focus is not to confiscate foods completely, but to offer choices for individuals to make for themselves. Though they still sell muffins, candy bars, and snack foods, they have taken steps to eliminate oversized portions of candy, while adding a variety of healthy options. Furthermore, as of this year, the store has discontinued all drinks that contain sugar with no other nutrients. Students can now choose from 100 percent juices, diet beverages, flavored water/seltzer water and a low-sugar tea. Along with these healthier beverages, healthy snacks are also offered. These include pretzels, jerky, fruit leathers, baked chips, organic snacks, nuts and seeds, hummus and an array of power/snack bars. Ms. Niedzwiecki is always searching for opportunities to offer more choices that support a balanced diet for students and staff. She also plans to display information regarding healthy lifestyles and nutritional guidelines at the store.

Resources

National

- *Advice From Montana Schools on Marketing Healthful Foods to Youth*. The information provided is from elementary, middle and high schools across Montana that each received a Nutrition SEN\$E Mini-Grant to support their efforts in selling and marketing healthful foods and beverages to students through student-run stores.
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfood/nutritionense/AdviceFmMtSchools.pdf>
- In order to clear up confusion on *what* is considered healthy, and to provide guidance in purchasing items for school stores, the Montana Office of Public Instruction has set up this Web site that outlines guidelines provided from the California Center for Public Advocacy, to be used as competitive food standards for elementary and secondary schools:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfood/nutritionense/WhatsHealthy.pdf>
- Ideas for healthy school stores, developed in partnership between the North Carolina Division of Public Health, NC Department of Public Instruction, NC Cooperative Extension and NC Action for Healthy Kids:
http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteam/recom/NC_NC%20-%20schoolstores.pdf
- *The A-List: "A-acceptable" Vending Items Listed by Product and Manufacturer*. Posted by the John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition; a partnership of the Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, and Framingham State College:
<http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/vending%20project/alist.pdf>

VENDING MACHINES

Implementation Ideas

The overwhelming majority of options available to children in school vending machines are sugary, high in fat and calories, and/or low in nutritional value. The most common options are soda, imitation fruit juices, candy, chips, cookies and snack cakes. The high prevalence of junk food in school vending machines does not support students' ability to make healthy food choices. The food industry takes advantage of schools' financial problems by offering them incentives to sell unhealthy foods in schools. However, bridging school budget gaps by selling junk food to students is a shortsighted approach.

- Schools can raise money without jeopardizing children's health. A number of schools in Maine, California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and elsewhere have replaced soda with healthy beverages without losing revenue.
- Work with PTA, community health council or other groups to improve foods and beverages sold in vending machines.
- Follow Vermont Vending Guidelines as outlined in Appendix C.

Healthy Food and Beverage Ideas:

Beverages

- Water, flavored water, seltzer
- Low-/nonfat milk
- Sports drink
- 100 percent fruit & vegetable juice

Chilled Snacks

- Baby carrots
- Fruit cups
- Pudding cups or yogurt (low fat/sugar)
- String cheese

Snacks

- Animal or Goldfish® crackers
- Cookies (low fat/sugar)
- Flavored mini rice cakes
- Granola or cereal bars (low fat/sugar)
- Pretzels
- Nuts/seeds and/or trail mix

- Encourage your state legislators, governor, city council member, school board or other elected officials to work to enact legislation that improves the nutritional quality of foods and beverages sold out of vending machines and other school venues.
- Meet with, or write a letter to, the person or group who manages the vending contracts, such as the principal, superintendent, food service, or athletic departments.
- Negotiate with vendors so that contracts include provisions that promote healthful choices. For example, contracts might include:
 - Incentives for the sale of nutritious beverages.
 - Limits on advertising for less nutritious products.
 - Allowances for contract renegotiations if conditions change.
 - School decision-making in product placement, hours of service, and prices.

Vermont Example

At **Champlain Valley Union High School** (9–12, 1332 students) in Hinesburg, students will not find soda in their vending machines. Thanks to financial help by the *Friends of CVU*, Food Service Manager Leo LaForce is proud of their new vending machine that sells both healthy beverages and snacks. Students can find trail mix, peanuts, yogurt, V8 and fruit juices, milk, soy milk, fresh fruits,

granola bars, and some bagged snacks such as, *Chex Mixes*, pretzels, popcorn, baked *Sunchips*, and low-fat *Doritos*.

See [Additional Vermont Examples: Nutrition](#) for more

Resources

National

- *Improve School Foods*, from the Center for Science in the Public Interest: <http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfoods>
- California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition). Navigate to *Creating Healthier Places* and click on, *Taking the Fizz out of Soda Contracts: A Guide to Community Action*": <http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/>
- *The A-List: "A-acceptable" Vending Items Listed by Product and Manufacturer*. Posted by the John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition: <http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/vending%20project/alist.pdf>
- A guide for purchasing healthy foods, from the Montana Office of Public Instruction. <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfood/nutritionense/WhatsHealthy.pdf>
- *Healthy School Nutrition Environment Resource List*, developed by The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Included is a section on vending: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/hsne_resource_list.pdf
- *Making It Happen!* A joint project of USDA's Team Nutrition and the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This site provides links to information on vending, in addition to school success stories*: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/makingithappen.html>
- *Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment*, a tool kit that addresses the entire school nutrition environment*: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/changing.html>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH MENUS

Background Information

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans were updated in 2005. However, the Child Nutrition Programs' regulations have not yet been changed. Therefore, the 2000 guidelines still apply to the National School Breakfast and School Lunch programs.

Nutrient standards are the required level of calories and nutrients provided to a specific age group. The nutrient standards for healthy school meals were established by weighing and averaging the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for different groups of children. The RDA specifies levels of calories and selected nutrients. Nutrient standards have been set for both breakfast and lunch for the following nutrients:

- Total calories Protein Iron Calcium Vitamin C Vitamin A
- Percent of calories from fat (30 percent or less)
- Percent of calories from saturated fat (10 percent or less)

Menus planned for a week should average the daily nutrient levels shown in the chart below.

Lunch					Breakfast		
	Pre-school	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12	Grades K-3 (Option)	Pre-school	Grades K-12	Grades 7-12 (Option)
Energy Allowances	517 calories	664 calories	825 calories	633 calories	388 calories	554 calories	618 calories
Total fat ¹	17g ²	22g ²	28g ²	21g ²	13g ²	18g ²	21g ²
Total saturated fat ¹	6g ³	7g ³	9g ³	7g ³	4g ³	6g ³	7g ³
Protein	7g	10g	16g	9g	5g	10g	12g
Calcium	267mg	286mg	400mg	267mg	200mg	257mg	300mg
Iron	3.3mg	3.5mg	4.5mg	3.3mg	2.5mg	3.0mg	3.4mg
Vitamin A	150RE	224RE	300RE	200RE	113RE	197RE	225RE
Vitamin C	14mg	15mg	18mg	15mg	11mg	13mg	14mg

¹ The grams of fat will vary depending on actual level of calories because they are based on percentages

² Total fat not to exceed 30 percent over a school week

³ Saturated fat to be less than 10 percent over a school week

Meal Requirements

Program regulations offer schools several different options as to plan meals to meet the nutrient standards. Menu planning options include nutrient-standard menu planning (using computer nutrient-analysis programs to plan meals based on the nutrients in the foods), or food-based menu planning (planning meals that offer specific minimum food components). Each of these options must comply with the specific meal pattern that forms the structure around which the menu is planned. Most Vermont schools use the food-based system.

Implementation Ideas

- Replace high-fat foods with lower fat options such as light mayonnaise instead of regular.
- Reduce the amount of premade entrée items, and increase from-scratch items.
- Replace canned fruits and vegetables with fresh produce cut into pieces, as finger food.
- Gradually replace white flour in recipes with whole wheat pastry flour, oat flour or white whole wheat flour. Schools have successfully built up to a 60/40 or 50/50 ratio—even in cookies.
- Increase the number of choices available in each meal component (meat, breads/grains, fruits and vegetables, milk) to increase the likelihood that students will choose foods from each component.
- Offer vegetarian options regularly.

Vermont Examples

At **Champlain Valley Union High School** (9–12, 1332 students) in Hinesburg, the food-service program has been slowly phasing out less nutritious items by replacing them with healthier alternatives. They started out offering low-fat ice cream, sherbets and Italian ice as alternatives to the high-fat ice cream that was being sold previously. They then purchased a soft-serve machine, selling five percent–milk fat cremees and have now been able to completely replace the 16–20 percent–fat ice cream. Their current plan is to slowly replace the five percent–milk fat cremees with nonfat frozen yogurt by running special frozen yogurt flavors every so often. Food Service Director, Leo LaForce, advises, “Don’t just ban unhealthy items, but slowly replace them with healthy, flavorful alternatives!” See [Additional Vermont Examples: Nutrition](#) for more

Resources

National

- *The Power of Choice: Helping Youth Make Healthy Eating and Fitness Decisions* is a toolkit developed by the Department of Health and Human Services’ FDA & USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service. It is intended for after-school program leaders working with young adolescents*: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/power_of_choice.html
- *Making It Happen!* A joint project of USDA’s Team Nutrition and the Department of Health and Human Services’ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, illustrating a wide variety of approaches that schools have taken to improve student nutrition. * <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/makingithappen.html>
- *Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment*, a tool kit that addresses the entire school nutrition environment*: <http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov/Resources/changing.html>
 - USDA has many other resources available. “Team Nutrition” offers nutrition education and food-service operational information. The “Healthy Meals Resource System” provides technical assistance, support and materials for school food-service and child-care professionals: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>
- The 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* from The US Department of Agriculture: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/guidelines/index.html>
- The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion’s Healthy Youth! nutrition page. This Web site includes data and statistics, science-based strategies, policy guidance, programs and references: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/index.htm>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center, in addition to:

- *A Vegetarian Resource Guide*, (kit)
- *School Nutrition Team: Strategies for Success, A Guide to Nutrition Education*, (book)
- *The Science of Energy Balance: Calorie Intake & Physical Activity*, (curriculum, grades 7–8)

A LA CARTE FOODS

Implementation Ideas

- Offer fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and a variety of low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products daily.
- Utilize fresh, locally grown products when possible.
- Use surveys, focus groups, taste tests or other methods to solicit student input to ensure that food items meet students' tastes and interests.
- Display healthier a la carte items so they are more noticeable in meal lines, satellite carts or kiosks.
- Involve students in the promotion of healthier a la carte items through health, business, art, or food and nutrition courses.
- Use special promotions to feature specific food items daily, weekly, monthly or seasonally.
- Promote healthy a la carte foods with creative, descriptive names.
- Display nutrition facts to promote the consumption of healthier items.
- Display colorful props or marketing posters to promote healthier foods.
- Improve menu items and options of the school meal program to encourage their purchase over a la carte foods.

Vermont Example

Champlain Valley Union High School (9–12, 1332 students) in Hinesburg completed a significant renovation of the school kitchen and cafeteria a few years ago. They took advantage of the change in facilities to make modifications in the food service program. Previously, many meal options were only available as a la carte sales, while the school lunch program offered just one meal option. The new kitchen and dining area emphasize offering a variety of healthy meal choices as reimbursable school meals. A la carte items are limited to extras, and healthy foods are featured. School lunch program participation increased from approximately 25 students per day to over 300 students per day. Now, about three years later, the participation is approximately 600 lunches per day.

See [Additional Vermont Examples: Nutrition](#) for more

Resources

National

- *Building a Healthy A La Carte Program: Making Cents Out of Change Resources*. A long list of resources from the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program in collaboration with the USDA's Team Nutrition:
<http://www.kidseatwell.org/A%20La%20Carte%20Workshop%20Resources.doc>
- Information, resources and success stories concerning improving the school environment and a la carte foods. Compiled by Action for Healthy Kids:
http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_topic.php?topic=7
- The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's Healthy Youth! nutrition page. This Web site includes data and statistics, science-based strategies, policy guidance, programs and references: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/index.htm>
- The National Association of State Boards of Education's Center for Safe and Healthy Schools Web site. This site outlines the Increasing Healthy Eating project and provides valuable resources: http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/healthy_eating_project.htm.

- *The Power of Choice: Helping Youth Make Healthy Eating and Fitness Decisions* is a toolkit developed by HHS' FDA & USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. It is intended for after-school program leaders working with young adolescents*:
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/power_of_choice.html
- *Making It Happen!* A joint project of USDA's Team Nutrition and the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This site illustrates a wide variety of approaches that schools have taken to improve student nutrition*:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/makingithappen.html>
- *Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment*, a tool kit that addresses the entire school nutrition environment*: <http://teamnnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/changing.html>
- *Eat Well & Keep Moving* is an interdisciplinary nutrition and physical activity curriculum aimed at building lifelong healthy habits in upper elementary school students*:
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/EWKM.html>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center, in addition to:

- *A Vegetarian Resource Guide*, (kit)

FOOD PRICING

Implementation Ideas

Pricing is used by commercial businesses on a regular basis to encourage purchasing, to reduce inventories of specific products and to promote the company or brand. They use sale pricing to bring customers into the store and price specials to introduce new products. School nutrition programs can also use pricing to promote healthy eating behaviors, increase participation in the school meals program and reduce intake of less healthy foods without actually eliminating them entirely.

- Reduce the price of fresh fruit and vegetables.
 - Advertise the new price reduction in the cafeteria.
- Decrease the price of healthy snacks in the school store and/or vending machine.
 - Or increase the price of the less healthy items to cause a relative reduction in the price of healthier foods.
- For schools that offer a la carte foods:
 - Reduce a la carte offerings to foods that do not compete with the school meal.
 - Price a la carte items high enough to encourage students to choose a reimbursable meal instead of the a la carte items.
 - Price less healthy food options higher than healthier a la carte foods.
 - Reduce the portion size of foods available a la carte.

Vermont Example

Marilyn Edwards, the General Manager of Food Services for **Rutland City Schools** in Rutland has wellness on her mind when planning the school menus. As part of Rutland's Healthy School Meals Initiative for 2006–07, new healthier items are being introduced with price adjustments that encourage these options. For instance, the deli stations at the local schools encourage use of whole wheat rolls. If a student wants white rolls, they must pay extra for them. Additionally, french fries have been removed from the meal offering at **Rutland High School/Stafford Technical Center** (9–12, 1157 students); they are sold only occasionally and separately at a *sinful* price. Furthermore, cookies are no longer available at bargain-basement prices, thereby encouraging students to purchase only a few smaller cookies as a treat, rather than a handful for lunch. While Ms. Edwards states that the Healthy School Meals Initiative continues to be a work in progress, she's pleased with the strides they've made so far and proud that their food-service program remains a success!

See [Additional Vermont Examples: Nutrition](#) for more

Resources

National

- Published in the April 2005 *Journal of Nutrition, Public Health Strategies for Dietary Change: Schools and Workplaces* is an article by Simone A. French. Included are three studies that show how environmental intervention can be an effective strategy to promote the purchase and consumption of healthful foods in community-based settings:
<http://jn.nutrition.org/cgi/content/full/135/4/910>
- From the Wisconsin Public Health and Health Policy Institute's March 2005 publication is an issue brief entitled *Improving Student Nutrition through School Vending Machine Policies* by Matt Landis, David Ahrens and Patrick Remington. Included is a piece on pricing strategies for vending machines:
<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/publications/briefs/Vol6%20No1web.pdf>
- *Making It Happen!* A joint project of USDA's Team Nutrition and the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This site provides links to information on how to adopt marketing techniques, in addition to school success stories*:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/makingithappen.html>
- *Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment*, a tool kit that addresses the entire school nutrition environment*: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/changing.html>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center

BUYING LOCAL

Implementation Ideas

- Pursuing partnerships with local farms and farmers, manufacturers, and small processors.
- Taking advantage, where possible, of existing products that are already available, such as eggs, milk and dairy products, cheese, apples and produce.
- Asking local distributors to carry Vermont products in their inventory to allow for easier availability to school districts.
- Writing bid contracts that allow school districts to buy local products "off bid" if primary vendors cannot or will not sell them.

Vermont Example

Burlington School District in Burlington has a variety of relationships with local growers and producers. The district makes weekly wholesale purchases of fresh vegetables from a farmer in the fall. Burlington also contracts with several farmers in March to grow certain crops produced during the summer and fall. These crops, such as cherry tomatoes, may be used fresh. However, the kale, Swiss chard, zucchini and basil grown in eighty pound quantities, are processed by food-service staff and community volunteers during the summer and fall to be used throughout the school year. In addition, because of successful relationships with local farmers, if there is an abundance of a certain crop, farmers call the director, Doug Davis, and offer produce at a discount.

See [Additional Vermont Examples: Nutrition](#) for more

Resources

Vermont

- Tools and resources from Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day), a community-based approach to school food-system change through a collaboration of three Vermont non-profits (Food Works, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, and Shelburne Farms):
<http://www.vtfeed.org/tools-resources/index.html>
 - *Vermont Farm to School: A Guide to Bringing Locally Produced Foods into Vermont Schools*, VT Food Education Every Day (VT FEED), 2006. This guide has details about various local purchasing options, as well as seasonal recipes and guides about how to start farm-to-school programs at schools.
- The following organizations have listings of farmers who sell to local businesses, schools and institutions:
 - Vermont Agency of Agriculture:
www.vermontagriculture.com
 - Vital Communities:
www.vitalcommunities.org
 - Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont:
www.nofa.org
 - Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association:
www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/VV&BGA/VVBGA.html
 - Vermont Fresh Network:
www.vermontfresh.net

National

- *Eat Smart—Farm Fresh! A Guide to Buying and Serving Locally-Grown Produce in School Meals*. USDA Food and Nutrition Service with National Farm-to-School Program, Dec. 2005: http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/Farm-to-School-Guidance_12-19-2005.pdf
- *Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions: A Resource Guide for Farm-to-School and Farm-to-Institution Programs*. From the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, 2003: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/farmtoschool.html#ver>

EATING ENVIRONMENT

Implementation Ideas

Children will enjoy their food more and may try healthier options if they can relax, eat and socialize without feeling rushed. Studies show that environment has a powerful influence on behavior. A pleasant dining area allows students to pay attention to what they are eating and to enjoy the sensory and social aspects of a healthy meal.

- To address issues related to time scheduled for lunch periods, review and revise school food-service policies to maximize time for eating and allow for normal social interactions.
 - Monitor the number of students released to the cafeteria at any one time, and where possible, use a staggered release.
 - Schedule meal periods at appropriate times, such as lunch is not served before 11:00 am or after 1:00 pm.
 - Make sure activities, such as tutoring, pep rallies, club meetings, etc. occur at times that do not overlap with planned meal times.
 - Schedule recess for elementary grades before lunch so that children are less distracted, and ready to eat, during lunch time (see Lunch After Recess in this Implementation Guide)
- Evaluate operational characteristics of the school food-service programs, particularly for their effect on the speed of service. More efficient service techniques that result in students spending less time in the serving line can be implemented.
 - Do a traffic flow analysis with the help of students or teachers.
 - If able, increase the number of serving areas.
 - Using individually portioned and packaged menu items can improve service, especially for the younger students.
- Create dining areas that are attractive and have sufficient space for seating.
 - Ensure tables and chairs are the right size for the students.
 - Use round tables instead of long rectangular tables for easier student interactions. This encourages conversation and makes the eating environment more like a dining room than an institutional cafeteria.
 - Make special dining experiences available occasionally, such as using tablecloths, student waiters, table decorations, special invitations, etc.
 - Integrate plants and student artwork into the dining area.
 - Have a student art class help paint a mural on a dining room wall.
 - Look for talent and resources from school staff, students, parents, and leaders of community organizations and businesses to make needed changes.
 - Post information about the food you are serving such as a description of items, nutritional facts, where the food comes from, or recipes for favorite dishes.
- Give priority to facility design for the food preparation, service and eating areas in school renovations and new construction.
- Have teachers and/or the principal help serve lunch (at least occasionally), and encourage students to make healthy choices.
 - Teachers and the principal can also eat with students and make an effort to let students see their healthy food choices. Use these meal periods as an opportunity to communicate with students and to encourage students to talk and socialize.
- Create a family eating experience in elementary schools by inviting families to eat with students.
- Hold a *Name the Cafeteria* contest to promote a sense of student ownership of the area.
- Provide natural lighting. If able, add skylights in the eating area to let in a little daylight. Or make sure dining areas have windows, so that the only light isn't from fluorescent bulbs.

- Use creative, innovative methods to keep noise levels appropriate—no eat in silence, whistles or buzzing traffic lights.
 - If able, recruit volunteers so that one adult is at each table eating lunch with the children. They can act as good role models and prevent behavior problems.
 - Work with the principal to develop appropriate training for those who supervise the school dining room. Maintain safe, orderly and pleasant eating environments.
- Install hand-washing equipment and supplies in a convenient place, so that students can wash their hands before eating.
- Make drinking fountains available for students to get water at meals and throughout the day.

Vermont Example

Chelsea School (K–12, 191 students) in Chelsea replaced their rows of rectangular tables with round tables that seat eight to nine students. The food-service director also has simple centerpieces that change with the seasons or holidays. Additionally, students' artwork is hung in the entrance, and nutrition fact posters are displayed near the tables.

See [Additional Vermont Examples: Nutrition](#) for more

Resources

National

- *Eating at School: A Summary of NFSMI Research on Time Required by Students to Eat Lunch*, by Martha T. Conklin, PhD, RD and Laurel G. Lambert, PhD, RD, LD: http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/eating_at_school.pdf
- *Measuring and Evaluating The Adequacy of the School Lunch Period*, a publication for child nutrition professionals from the National Food Service Management Institute: <http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Newsletters/insight12.pdf>
- *Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment*, a tool kit that addresses the entire school nutrition environment*: <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/changing.html>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Implementation Ideas

The Vermont Comprehensive Health Education Law (16 V.S.A., Section 131) requires health education as a course of study for grades K–12 in Vermont schools. Nutrition education is identified as one of the ten components of comprehensive health education.

The nutrition education curriculum should positively influence the understanding, skills and behaviors of students related to healthy food choices. As part of a comprehensive health education course, nutrition instruction should give students the knowledge and motivation to develop lifelong healthful eating habits.

- Ensure that nutrition knowledge and skills are integrated across the K–12 curriculum.
- Involve a school health council or similar body, including classroom teachers and child nutrition staff, to develop an effective, age-appropriate, nutrition-education program that:
 - Uses state-adopted health textbooks or home-economics careers and technology textbooks, that is family and consumer science.
 - Uses other nutrition-related materials to enhance the core curriculum, such as the resources listed below.
 - Encourages and uses supplemental lesson plans that integrate nutrition knowledge and skills into other subject areas. For example:
 - Use food preference surveys, food intake diaries, or an election of the school's favorite fruit or vegetable as opportunities for math concepts including graphing and percentages.
 - Create posters in art class to promote healthy eating.
 - Observe how recipes are affected when various ingredient substitutions are made, as part of a science experiment.
 - Creates a connection between what is taught in the classroom, what is served in the cafeteria and what is available in the surrounding community.
 - Research indicates that behavior is changed when nutrition education integrates classroom, cafeteria, and family/community experiences. For example, have classes plan a school lunch and/or breakfast menu with help from the food service manager, applying lessons about the food guide pyramid and the importance of variety. Incorporate locally grown foods and/or foods from other countries.
 - Provides opportunities for experiential learning, such as complementing lessons with opportunities to prepare foods, garden, or taste test.
 - Provides staff development for classroom teachers on basic nutrition and evidence-based instructional strategies that build skills.
- Disperse nutrition messages throughout the school that are consistent and reinforce each other, such as including a nutrition tip or fact with the morning announcements.
- Reinforce nutrition knowledge, skills and behaviors by making supplemental materials available to families.
 - Additionally, use homework assignments and projects that encourage students to discuss nutrition lesson information with family members
- Collaborate with food-service staff to allow students to apply classroom nutrition instruction in the school cafeteria by making healthier food choices.
- Use breakfast-in-the-classroom time for nutrition education lessons.

Vermont Example

Sharon Elementary School (PK–6, 102 students) in Sharon has made student wellness a whole-school/whole-year focus. In the kindergarten, the nutrition education has centered on expanding the students' palates by tasting a variety of unusual foods. In some classes the focus has been on the food guide pyramid, while in others, students explore seasonal foods. They investigate how various foods are used in the American diet, the history of the food, health-related issues (nutrients in the food, what is a healthy or not-so-healthy form of the food), and then prepare and eat the food. Some classrooms have focused on changing behaviors such as increasing water intake by having water bottles on the students' desks. Parents are also included. The Wellness Fair day has learning stations in every classroom and an evening session designed to give parents information about how wellness education relates to grade expectations. The faculty has begun developing a coordinated wellness curriculum that can become part of local assessment efforts.

See [Additional Vermont Examples: Nutrition](#) for more

Resources

Vermont

- In 2002, the *Vermont Health Education Guidelines for Curriculum and Assessment* was published to support Vermont teachers in the development of standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment of students' knowledge and skills in health education. These guidelines are available at:
http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_coordhealth/curriculum_guide_02.html
- In 1998 FoodWorks (<http://www.tworiverscenter.org/>), the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) (<http://www.nofavt.org/about.php>) and Shelburne Farms (<http://www.shelburnefarms.org/>) created the FEED (Food Education Every Day) program (<http://www.vtfeed.org>). This program works with schools to improve students' diets by helping classroom teachers to develop curriculum that meets the Vermont Framework of Standards and incorporates food, local farms, and nutrition. FEED also trains and works with food-service staff to feature local, seasonal produce in healthy and appealing meals in the cafeteria. To date, FEED has worked with teachers, administrators, cooks and students in dozens of schools, including intensive efforts in Alburg, Burlington, Chelsea, Hardwick, Jay/Westfield, Milton, Starksboro and Waitsfield.

This past year, teachers and students have been inspired to build their own school gardens as part of, or related to, the FEED work being done at schools. These gardens offer a place to study hands-on science, math, language arts, and social studies while providing ingredients for the school food service. Here are just a few examples of how schools are planting healthy learning opportunities for students in towns around Vermont.

Starksboro School built gardens and planted garlic this past fall. The garlic will be used next fall in the cafeteria meals, with more vegetables to come this spring.

Alburg School created a garden bed in the shape of an A in the front of their school and is growing herbs and salad greens in the spring for the lunch program.

Chelsea School's *Civics in Action* class completed twelve raised garden beds this past fall; one for each grade. This spring they will plant crops for the food service and for classroom lessons.

Orange Center School has a booming summer garden program where students harvest their daily snack from the garden (when seasonally appropriate). Classrooms grow the seedlings in the spring, the summer *Gardens for Learning* program uses and maintains the gardens throughout the summer break, and then classes return in the fall to harvest and prepare the beds for the following spring.

National

- *School Nutrition...BY DESIGN!* This is the report of the Advisory Committee on Nutrition Implementation Strategies, designed by the California Department of Education: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/schnutrtn071206.pdf>
- *The Role of Michigan Schools in Promoting Healthy Weight* is a 2001 consensus paper from the Michigan Department of Education Office of School Excellence. Information on nutrition education curriculum is incorporated into these practical guidelines and policy recommendations to school districts for promoting healthy weight for all students: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/healthyweight_13649_7.pdf
- *The Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education*[®]. This model is divided into six phases at every grade level, with one phase concentrating on nutrition at each grade level: <http://www.emc.cmich.edu/mm/phasesnutrition.htm>
- *Nutrition Competencies for California's Children: Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12* is designed to guide school districts and agencies in promoting effective, sequential and comprehensive nutrition education: <http://www.californiahealthykids.org/articles/nutrcomp.pdf>
- *Healthy School Nutrition Environment Resource List*, by The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). This list contains online resources to assist schools with promoting healthy eating and physical activity for children. Included is an extensive section on nutrition education: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/hsne_resource_list.pdf
- *Eat Well & Keep Moving* is an interdisciplinary nutrition and physical activity curriculum aimed at building lifelong healthy habits in upper elementary school students*: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/EWKM.html>
- *Planet Health: An Interdisciplinary Curriculum for Teaching Middle School Nutrition and Physical Activity*. This curriculum was written to help teachers tackle a growing problem among adolescents: not enough physical activity, too much TV and poor eating habits*: www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc/proj_planet.html
- *The Power of Choice: Helping Youth Make Healthy Eating and Fitness Decisions* is a toolkit developed by the Department of Health and Human Services' FDA & USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. It is intended for after-school program leaders working with young adolescents*: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/power_of_choice.html
- Many additional resources and materials are available through the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's Team Nutrition: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/nutrition.htm> and *MyPyramid for Kids*: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center, in addition to:

- *A Vegetarian Resource Guide*, (kit) and *A Teen's Guide to Going Vegetarian*, (book)
- *Healthy Body Image: Teaching Kids to Eat and Love Their Bodies Too!* (grades 4–6)
- *The Science of Energy Balance: Calorie Intake and Physical Activity*, (curriculum, grades 7–8)
- *USDA Team Nutrition Calendar Companion*, (book)
- *Team Nutrition: Getting It Started and Keeping It Going*, (book)

LUNCH AFTER RECESS

Implementation Ideas

- Scheduling takes creative planning and flexibility. Get everyone on board and involved, including food service staff, teachers, administrative staff, parents and students.
- Have disposable wipes and trash cans available at the door to the cafeteria or entrance from the playground, or provide access to instant sanitizer dispensers to clean hands before entering the cafeteria.
- Create a traffic pattern of children going from the playground to the classroom (to put away coats, for example) then to the bathroom to wash hands before entering the cafeteria.
- Encourage students to prepay for lunch to avoid losing money on the playground.
- Students may be hungrier and thirstier as a result of the change.
 - Have cold water available.
 - Promote the school breakfast program.

Vermont Example

The **Jay/Westfield Joint Elementary School** (K–6, 66 students) in Jay has a very popular recess before lunch schedule. After a long morning of academics, students are ready to burn off some energy. The school implemented a staggered lunch schedule to accommodate this program. Beginning at noon, students go out for a twenty minute recess. After recess they return to their classrooms to take off coats and boots and wash up. Then they head to the cafeteria (with a five minute spread between grades) calmer and ready to eat.

Resources

National

- *Recess Before Lunch Policy: Kids Play and then Eat!* A guidebook from Montana's Team Nutrition Program and School Nutrition Program:
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/recessBL.html>
- A list of resources, research and supporting information related to recess before lunch:
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/SchoolFood/RBLResources.pdf>
- A PDF presentation of the study: *Food Waste is Reduced When Elementary School Children Have Recess Before Lunch* by Mary Jane Getlinger:
www.doe.state.in.us/food/pdf/netrecessstudy.pdf
- *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide*, from the National Association of State Boards of Education. Designed to help educators establish effective policies that promote high academic achievement and lifelong healthy habits*:
<http://www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/fitthealthy.html>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center

ALTERNATIVE REWARDS

Implementation Ideas

Food is commonly used to reward students for good behavior and academic performance. It's an easy, inexpensive and powerful tool to bring about immediate short-term behavior change. Yet using food as reward has many negative consequences that go far beyond the short-term benefits of good behavior or performance. Some disadvantages of using food as a reward are:

- It sends a mixed message between nutrition education taught in the classroom and the school environment.
- It encourages over consumption of foods high in added sugar and fat.
- It may displace more nutritious foods offered in the school meal program.
- It teaches kids to eat when they are not hungry to reward themselves.

A wide variety of alternative rewards can be used to provide positive reinforcement for children's behavior and academic performance.

Zero-Cost Alternatives

- Certificates
- Eat lunch or read outdoors.
- Extra credit
- Gift certificate to local non-food merchants; have certificates donated.
- Give a five-minute chat break at the end of the day.
- Have a teacher read a book or perform a special skill (e.g., singing).
- Have extra art or recess time.
- Listen to music while working.
- Make deliveries to the office.
- Note from teacher to the student commending their accomplishment.
- Phone call or letter sent home to parents or guardians commending child's achievement.
- Photo recognition board in a prominent location in the school.
- Play a favorite game or do a puzzle.
- Recognition of a child's achievement on the morning announcements or school Web site.
- Sit by friends.
- Teach the class.

Low-Cost Alternatives

- Paperback book
- Pick from a treasure (sports cards, Frisbee®, non-food items).
- Spelling or math flash cards.
- Stickers, pencils and other school supplies
- T-shirt/hat/sunglasses
- Trophies/ribbons/plaques

Resources

National

- *Constructive Classroom Rewards: Promoting Good Habits While Protecting Children's Health*, from the Center for Science in the Public Interest:
http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructive_rewards.pdf
- *Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward* from Michigan State University Extension:
<http://www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/foodrewards.pdf>
- *Making It Happen!* A joint project of USDA's Team Nutrition and the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This site illustrates a wide variety of approaches that schools have taken to improve student nutrition*:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/makingithappen.html>
- *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide*, from the National Association of State Boards of Education. Designed to help educators establish effective policies that promote high academic achievement and lifelong healthy habits*:
<http://www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/fitthealthy.html>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center

MARKETING IN SCHOOLS

Marketing in schools consists of selling specific brands of foods and beverages and the prominent use of logos and company names such as on score boards. Research shows that this advertising influences children and adolescents and their purchases and consumption of less healthful diets. This in turn likely contributes to negative diet-related health outcomes and risks among children and youth. Schools can use the principles of commercial marketing to promote healthy foods, while limiting endorsement of foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV).

Implementation Ideas

Avoid marketing of FMNV in schools:

- Marketing of products in schools often creates brand loyalty and encourages the consumption of foods that may not benefit the health and well-being of the students.
- Food companies take advantage of the opportunity to reach large numbers of children and adolescents in a contained setting and the financial vulnerability with which schools are faced.
- Reduction to exposure to marketing is an effective obesity-prevention strategy. Therefore, limit marketing of commercial products that compete with the school food-service program.
- Do not enter into contracts with soft drink and other companies. The chief goal of these companies is profit, not the welfare of children and adolescents. *Pouring rights* are usually stipulations of these contracts in which the companies can control the beverage distribution within the school.
- If the decision is made to enter into such contracts, consider the following guidelines:
 - Schools have the right to choose which beverages/products to make available.
 - Always offer a healthful option.
 - Price water and other nutritional products lower than, or the same as, carbonated beverages.
 - Schools have the right to decide the use of logos and signage, which should be kept to a minimum and not on textbooks or other educational materials.
- Do not accept curriculum supplies or money for field trips and athletic facilities/equipment from food companies that market their products with logos and company names on school grounds.

Uses the principles of commercial marketing to support healthful food choices in schools

- Market healthful food options using techniques from the commercial food industry to help students improve food choices.
- The 4 P's of Marketing:
 - Products
 - Ask students which healthful products they would enjoy (taste tests, focus groups, surveys). They are more likely to try and purchase the product if their input was part of the decision making
 - Be mindful of packaging and presentation of products.
 - Placement
 - Think about where student's are most likely to buy food (vending machines, concession stands, school stores).
 - Within the cafeteria, place healthful foods at eye level and at the end of the a la carte line.
 - Promotion
 - Enthusiasm, role modeling, customer service: Staff and faculty should set good examples by making healthful choices and encouraging students to do the same.
 - Advertising, public relations, point-of-purchase promotions.

- Price
 - Offer discounts when introducing new healthful foods.
 - Make healthier foods less expensive than FMNV.

Note: Please also see the *Vending Machines* and *Food Pricing* sections of this implementation guide.

Resources

National

- *Making It Happen!* A joint project of USDA's Team Nutrition and the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This site provides links such as Influence food and beverage contracts and Adopt marketing techniques, in addition to school success stories*: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/makingithappen.html>
- *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools*, by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Makes specific recommendations for the nutritional quality of foods offered in schools and explains the effect marketing has on youth:
- *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?*, by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Discusses and makes specific recommendations on food marketing in all areas of society, including the impact of food marketing in schools.
- The Prevention Institute's *Strategic Alliance: ENACT* provides information on how to eliminate marketing of unhealthy foods on school grounds. Model school policies and additional resources are available: http://www.preventioninstitute.org/enact/school/marketing_8b.html#model
- *Citizen's Campaign for Commercial Free Schools* lists examples of model policies from school boards and school districts eliminating commercial marketing in schools. There is also a *Commercialism Walkthrough* worksheet useful in evaluating commercialism in your school: <http://www.scn.org/cccs/action.html>
- *Healthy School Nutrition Environment Resource List*, by The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). This list contains online resources to assist schools with promoting healthy eating and physical activity for children. Included is a section on commercialism in schools: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/hsne_resource_list.pdf
- Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU). Arizona State University conducts research, disseminates information and helps facilitate dialogue between the education community, policymakers and the public at large about commercial activities in schools: <http://epsl.asu.edu/ceru/index.htm>

* Available at the VT Department of Education Resource Center

GENERAL NUTRITION RESOURCES

Available from the Health Education Resources

- *A Vegetarian Resource Guide*, (kit)
- *Eating Disorders Awareness and Prevention*, (curriculum, early childhood)
- *Healthy Body Image: Teaching Kids To Eat And Love Their Bodies Too*, (grades 4–6)
- *The Power of Choice*, (after school program, young adolescent)
- *Making It Happen! School Nutrition Success Stories*, (book)
- *Changing the Scene – A Guide to Local Action*, (kit)
- *Planet Health*, (curriculum, middle school)
- *Eat Well & Keep Moving*, (curriculum, elementary)
- *The Science of Energy Balance: Calorie Intake and Physical Activity*, (curriculum, grades 7–8)
- *USDA Team Nutrition Calendar Companion*, (book)
- *A Teen;s Guide to Going Vegetarian*, (book)
- *Team Nutrition: Getting It Started and Keeping It Going*, (book)

Web Resources

- The Centers for Disease Control has many school health-related resources available from their Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/>
- The National Association of State Boards of Education has initiated a project to promote school wellness. The goal of the Increasing Healthy Eating project is to increase awareness, motivation and capacity among education leaders about the issues surrounding healthy eating in schools. Their Web site provides links to many resources: http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/healthy_eating_project.htm
- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation that works to raise awareness and create solutions to childhood obesity. Register your school to be part of the Healthy Schools Program, which provides policy implementation ideas, examples of school success stories and tools such as a food product nutritional value calculator: <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx>
- Basic information about nutrition, the food guide pyramid and the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* can be found at: <http://www.mypyramid.org/guidelines/index.htm>, and <http://www.nutrition.gov/>
- The Department of Education in New Hampshire has collected examples of best practices for healthy school-nutrition environments in a publication that is available online. The publication offers examples of many schools' Team Nutrition grant projects that include a variety of nutrition initiatives: <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/Education/doe/organization/programsupport/documents/HealthyNutrition--12-05.pdf>

ADDITIONAL VERMONT EXAMPLES: NUTRITION

Snack Time

At **Rutland Intermediate School** (3–6, 644 students) and **Rutland Middle School** (7–8, 371 students) in Rutland, Food Service General Manager, Marilyn Edwards, has sought ways to improve the nutrition offered to students. One of the many health initiatives she has helped to implement is providing healthy snack options. Snacks at these two schools include 100 percent juice products and baked chips. Also, she is proud to state that the snack products offered by the schools contain no trans fat.

Vending Machines

Chantale Nadeau, a public health nutritionist for the Newport District Office of the Vermont Department of Health, considers **North Country Union High School** (9–12, 1050 students) in Newport to be an example of a school that has consistently worked on creative ways to adopt an effective school wellness policy. Three years ago, North Country Union High School replaced two of the school's six soda machines with milk vending machines. The effort was championed by the community, including area dairy farmers and area medical providers. Water and juice is offered in the remaining vending machines, along with carbonated beverages. Ms. Nadeau is proud to state that carbonated beverages currently occupy less than 50 percent of the slots in the vending machines and water is the best seller at the school.

At **Edmunds Middle School** (6–8, 379 students) in Burlington, Healthy Living teacher, Ginger Farineau, teaches her students how to read nutrition labels. Upon one of their label reading lessons, students discovered how much sugar was in various beverages—some of the same drinks served in their own vending machines! It took some time, but with the help of classroom exercises like these and a note to the principal, Edmunds Middle School saw changes in their vending machines. Now students and staff can find water, Vitamin Water, 100 percent juice and milk, instead of soda and fruit drinks with only 5 percent juice. Additionally, their snack machines are now stocked with healthy options such as cheese and yogurt.

A La Carte Foods

At the beginning of the 2006–07 school year, the **Arlington Memorial School** (6–12, 230 students) food-service program in Arlington revamped menus to eliminate a la carte sales. They began offering more fresh fruits and vegetables and increased menu items cooked from scratch, while reducing premade, purchased foods. Participation in the food-service program increased in the first few months of school by about 24 percent.

Food Pricing

At **Champlain Valley Union High School** (9–12, 1332 students) in Hinesburg, pricing strategies are used to encourage the purchase of the school meals. Some a la carte items are less expensive if purchased with a meal. For example, if students wish to purchase a low-fat creme (which replaced the higher fat ice cream previously offered), they receive it at a reduced price when also buying the well-balanced, reimbursable school meal.

Buying Local

Feed Your Head is an educational program of the Brattleboro Food Co-op. It provides free in-class programs for grades K–8 on topics that include *Healthy Snacks*, and *Local Farms and Food*. The Co-op also provides discounts on fresh produce to schools or to individual classroom teachers who want to provide healthier snacks and establish or improve salad bars. As a result of this work and efforts to collaborate, other food co-ops have sought nutrition-education training and are offering discounts to schools.

Hardwick Elementary (K–6, 282 students, Hardwick) Food Service Director, Val Simmons, has developed relationships with local farmers, producers and the local food co-op. She orders produce weekly from several farms. This includes seasonal fall produce, as well as winter vegetables such as beets and potatoes. In addition, she purchases locally made bread all year. At the co-op, she gets a discount on her purchases, such as small quantities of grains, dried beans and vegetables.

At **Brewster-Pierce Elementary** (PK–4, 127 students) in Huntington, Alison Forrest, Food-service Director, has used local foods for over five years. She does this through direct purchasing from a local farmer, as well as requesting local foods from her distributor, Black River Produce. Serving local and less common vegetables is her forte, and she introduces these to students with a brief nutrition lesson and taste test, before serving them on the serving line.

The **U-32 High School** (7–12, 885 students, Montpelier) food service director, Rick Hungerford, has been ordering local produce from a farm for over four years. He buys the products wholesale in the fall and into the winter. He also belongs to *Farm to Table*, a program in Central Vermont that buys from thirteen farmers. Through the program, he purchases a share of farm produce in the spring. This enables him to receive a weekly delivery of fresh produce, tomato sauce, eggs, bread and processed baby carrots.

At **Sharon Elementary School** (PK–6, 102 students) in Sharon, produce is purchased from a local farmer through a winter Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) agreement. In this case, the school pays the farmer a lump sum in August for produce they will receive, as needed, throughout the fall and winter.

Eating Environment

Champlain Valley Union High School (9–12, 1332 students) in Hinesburg completed a significant renovation of the school kitchen and cafeteria a few years ago. Their brand new cafeteria has an open, bright atmosphere, with sufficiently spaced round tables to encourage conversation. The students can enjoy their meals and socialize during their thirty minute lunches.

At **Edmunds Elementary** (K–5, 310 students) and **Middle School** (6–8, 379 students) in Burlington, a parent and local artist worked with the school art teachers and students to paint panels of Vermont food and agriculture. Twenty-eight panels now hang on the brick walls in the cafeteria, which “spruce up” the eating environment.

At **Harwood Union High School** (9–12, 655 students) in South Duxbury, students ran a small café as an alternative to eating in the cafeteria. When the food-service program took over operations in this alternate space, they began offering reimbursable school breakfasts and lunches. Additionally, they started to provide a variety of healthy a la carte items, including trail mix, cider and other 100% juices, sandwiches and daily specials such as chili. This win-win situation established the student lounge as an alternative to eating in the cafeteria and allowed the food-service program to gain additional customers.

Nutrition Education

Montpelier High School (9–12, 411 students) in Montpelier is proud of its greenhouse program. “It’s a lot of work, and certainly a work in progress—but one that’s well worth the effort,” states biology teacher Tom Sabo. Since biology is a state-required course, every student in the school will work in the greenhouse at least one year. The students grow organic greens that are served at the cafeteria’s salad bar. Food scraps from the cafeteria are then sent to Vermont Compost Company, and the captured nutrients are brought back to the greenhouse as soil. In the last two years, Mr. Sabo’s biology classes have grown over 200 pounds of lettuce, and salad bar sales are up 65 percent! In the spring, environmental science students will plant potatoes in a new plot adjacent to the greenhouse, so all eyes are focused ahead.