

## **IMPLEMENTING SMART SNACKS IN YOUR SCHOOL**

On July 1, 2014 the Smart Snacks guidelines – which originated from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act – went into effect. All schools enrolled in the National School Lunch Program must comply with the nutrition guidelines for what is considered “Smart Snacks.” The Smart Snacks in School Guidelines applies to foods sold a la cart (individually sold food and beverage in the school cafeteria), in a school store, vending machines, snack bars, and fundraisers. The guidelines include calorie, sodium, fat, sugar limits and beverage portion limits for elementary, middle, and high school.

The School Nutrition Association has created a nine-step process to assist parent groups, school districts, and students functions in implementing the new guidelines.

**STEP # 1: KNOW YOUR VENUES.** Take inventory of every place in your building where snacks and beverages are being sold.

- Where are snacks and beverages sold to students in the school?
- Which staff member, student, or parent group oversees each location?

**STEP # 2: GET OTHERS INVOLVED TO BUILD CONSENSUS.** Once you have identified everyone responsible for selling snacks and beverages in the school, it is time to build consensus by educating your school community about the new standards through meetings, parent (PTA/PTSA) website, in newsletters, on bulletin boards, during wellness fairs, or on social media.

**STEP # 3: KNOW YOUR PRODUCTS.** Take inventory of the products in each of your venues.

**STEP # 4: ENGAGE THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT BUSINESS OFFICERS.** Find out who in your school or district deals with the vendors and manages actual contracts and make sure they know about the Smart Snacks nutrition standards. Ask them to help you identify contracts that may need amending based on the results of the product inventories you completed, and identify the vendors who may need to be contacted.

**STEP # 5: WORK WITH YOUR VENDORS.** Begin communicating to your existing vendors the Smart Snacks nutrition standards and the items that will need to be replaced.

**STEP # 6: TALK TO NEIGHBORS AND COMBINE YOUR EFFORTS.** All schools must comply with the Smart Snacks nutrition standards, so it is smart to combine forces. Consider organizing a meeting with neighboring schools and/or districts to network lessons that have worked. Even if a formal partnership is never pursued, learning how others are implementing the standards can be tremendously helpful.

**STEP # 7: COMMUNICATE AHEAD OF TIME.** This is possibly the most important step to successfully making changes to the snacks and beverages in your school. Many different audiences (administrators, staff, students, parents) need to know that changes are coming.

**STEP # 8: PROMOTE THE NEW, HEALTHY CHOICES IN YOUR SCHOOL.** It is important to remind your school community about the new and improved snacks and beverage options and promote them with a few marketing tactics.

**STEP # 9: ENGAGE STUDENTS.** Involve students in the process wherever you can and consider their opinions and feedback – they are the ultimate customers. When they are part of the decision making process, they are much more likely to embrace the changes.

## FUNDRAISERS

Parent groups (PTA/PTSA) are often turned to for fundraising when school resources are short. To improve the health and nutrition of students, fundraisers that involve selling food or beverages during the school day must also be addressed.

There are many healthy fundraising alternatives available that are not only practical, but profitable. Healthy fundraisers set a positive example and support 1) healthy eating and physical activity by children, 2) nutrition, 3) parents' efforts to feed their children healthfully, and 4) the fundraising needs of the school.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CHANGE?

In lieu of bake sales, candy, doughnut sales, and pizza or pizza kits why not try:

Book Fairs	Calendars	Bottled water
Picture frames	Greeting cards	Candles
Car washes	Personal care items	Cookbooks
Fruit Sales	Fun Runs	Walk-a-thons
Bowl-a-thons	Sporting events	Skating parties
Holiday decorations	Wrapping paper	Magazine subscriptions
Plants, flower seeds	Recycling clothing	First aid kits
Sport equipment	Games and toys	Dance parties
Grocery store script or gift cards sales		

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

It is important to provide consistent messaging around foods and beverages and healthy eating throughout the school building/campus or out-of-school time. Promoting healthy options during meal or snack times while allowing foods high in calories, fat, sugar, and sodium sends conflicting messages. Evolving policies and standards around foods and beverages allowed in school and out-of-school creates the opportunity for starting healthy new traditions.

## RESOURCES TO CONTACT & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- National PTA ([schoolfoods@pta.org](mailto:schoolfoods@pta.org))
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Smart Snacks Calculator (<http://healthiergeneration.org/calculator>)
- United States Department of Agriculture, Smart Snacks Information (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/smart-snacks-school>)
- United States Department of Agriculture, Healthier School Day-Tools for Schools: Focusing on Smart Snacks (including Smart Snacks resources and policies) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>)
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Fundraisers ([http://www.healthiergeneration.org/take\\_action/schools/snacks\\_and\\_beverages/fundraisers/](http://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/fundraisers/))