

A large, stylized graphic of an apple in shades of orange and white, serving as a background for the title. The apple is composed of several overlapping, rounded shapes that create a sense of depth and texture. The colors transition from a light peach to a deeper orange, with white highlights that define the apple's form.

HEALTHIER VENDING: For Schools

Why Should Schools Promote Healthier Vending?

Reversing the obesity epidemic requires a long-term, well-coordinated approach to reach young people where they live, learn, and play. Schools have a big part to play. Working with other public, voluntary, and private sector organizations, schools can play a critical role in reshaping social and physical environments and providing information, tools, and practical strategies to help students adopt healthy lifestyles¹³.

Childhood obesity also impacts their grades. Unpublished data from the CDC's 2003 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that students who received an insufficient amount of physical activity were more likely to receive Ds and Fs in school. Students who watched three or more hours of television per day were also more likely to receive Ds and Fs in school. These should be considered sobering statistics by parents and school officials who want children to do well in school and become successful and self-sufficient members of society.

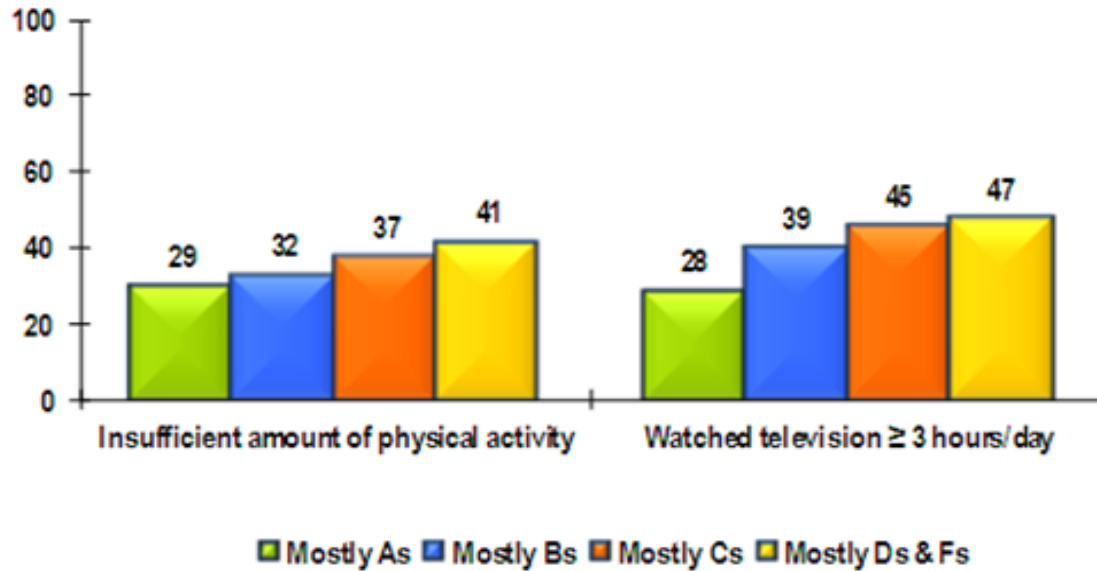
Research clearly shows that nutrition and physical activity are directly linked to academic achievement¹³.

- Children who eat well and are physically active learn better, while poorly nourished and sedentary children tend to have weaker academic performance and score lower on standardized achievement tests.
- Poor nutrition and hunger interfere with cognitive function and are associated with lower academic achievement in underweight, normal weight and overweight children.
- Emerging research suggests that lower academic achievement is associated with being overweight.
- Numerous studies have found that regular physical activity supports better learning. Student fitness levels have been correlated with academic achievement, including improved math, reading and writing scores.
- Research also suggests that decreasing physical education may undermine the goal of better performance, while adding time for physical activity may support improved academic performance.

- More than 95% percent of young people are enrolled in schools.
- Students have the opportunity to eat a large portion of their daily food intake and to be physically active at school.
- Schools are an ideal setting for teaching young people how to adopt and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.
- Research has shown that well-designed, well-implemented school programs can effectively promote physical activity and healthy eating.
- Emerging research documents the connections between physical activity, good nutrition, physical education and nutrition programs, and academic performance.



Percentage of U.S. High School Students Getting Mostly A's, Mostly B's, Mostly C's and Mostly D's and F's* Who Engage in Selected Health Risk Behaviors



*As reported by students

Source: Unpublished analyses of CDC, National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2003.

Image courtesy of Melissa Fahrenbruch, MEd, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2012.

For a list of some schools and school districts that influenced food and beverage contracts around the country, please visit [Making It Happen: School Nutrition Success Stories](#).

The national 2006 School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS)¹⁴ conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 33% of elementary schools, 71% of middle schools, and 89% of high schools had a vending machine or a school store, canteen, or snack bar where students could purchase food or beverages. The most common beverages sold were sports drinks, soda pop, and fruit drinks (not 100% juice), and the most common foods sold were higher-fat salty snacks. SHPPS 2006 data indicate that, while some progress has been made since the 2000 SHPPS, much more is needed. The Third School Nutrition and Dietary Assessment study (SNDA-III)^{15,16} also confirms that current offerings in schools do not fully support a healthy diet for children and adolescents. Vending machines and a la carte sales were available in the vast majority of middle and high schools, and these sources often contained low-nutrient, energy-dense foods. Unhealthy foods were much more pervasive in high schools than elementary schools and in rural schools compared to urban and suburban schools, but there were no significant differences between low-income and higher-income schools¹⁶.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

I represent a school or a school district. Are there additional considerations?

Yes! In 2010, President Obama signed into law the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The Act strengthens school food nutrition standards, increases access to and funding for school meals, and increases technical assistance to schools. It also strengthens school wellness policies, improves farm to school programs, expands afterschool meals programs for at-risk children, and establishes certification standards for food service personnel. The Act also gives US Department of Agriculture the authority to set nutritional standards for all foods regularly sold in schools during the school day, including vending machines, the “a la carte” lunch lines, and school stores.

The USDA has recently released proposed rules regarding competitive foods sold at schools. These new nutritional standards enacted will have an impact on what can be sold in vending machines at school during the school day. Therefore, school should consider stocking their vending machines with 100% healthy food/beverage options early to avoid disconnecting their machines during the school day.

Additionally, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires vending machine owners and operators with 20 or more vending machines to disclose calorie content for certain items. Other nutrient information – total calories, fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, sugars, fiber, and total protein – must be made available in writing upon request.

While we all should be concerned and take steps to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic in Lancaster County, this year, a great amount of attention has been placed on school environments. Over the summer, our schools worked tirelessly to meet the new Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act and USDA school food requirements. However, there are other ways schools can address overweight and obesity. Some of those ways include changes to foods and drinks sold in vending machines, at concession stands, and during fundraisers.

