

Alabama's Healthy Snack Standards for Foods and Beverages at School

Alabama's Healthy Snack Standards focus on decreasing fat and sugar, increasing nutrient density and moderating portion sizes for snack foods and beverages in school. The Alabama State Department of Education (SDE) requires schools to use these standards to determine what snacks are available at school, including a la carte sales in the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, classroom parties and other school events. The standards do not apply to reimbursable meals served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs, since standards already exist for school meals.

These standards were developed by a statewide committee appointed by the state superintendent. These standards were adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education July 12, 2005.

Nutrition Implementation Guidelines

School Settings (Cafeteria and Vending Machines)

Schools should provide a consistent environment that is conducive to healthful eating behaviors during school hours. The school campus should reflect healthy nutrition environments. Adequate time to eat should be allowed. Schools should not establish policies, class schedules, bus schedules or other barriers that directly or indirectly restrict access to and completion of meals.

Foods served and/or sold through the cafeteria shall adhere to the guidelines established by USDA and published in the School Meals Initiative (SMI) for Healthy Children, 1995 guidance. Serving sizes will comply with the meal pattern requirements as described by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations.

School meals must average, for a weekly period, meeting the standards of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which recommends no more than 30% of an individual's calories be furnished from fat and 10% or less from saturated fat. School lunches should meet the standard of providing one-third and school breakfasts the standard of furnishing one-fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowances for protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories.

Schools must review the items offered as ala carte sales and evaluate the nutritional contribution of each item. Single items may be sold as ala carte that constitute the reimbursable meal. Additional portions of those items may be sold by the cafeteria. Foods not normally used in meeting the requirements of the reimbursable meal and not meeting the criteria listed below should be eliminated or portion sizes reduced in order to be in compliance with the requirements.

Healthy and appealing foods should be available through:

- Cafeteria meals and ala carte items

Schools should focus on improving food quality in the school meal programs by increasing the whole grain options, having one percent or less fat milk as the standard beverage, and increasing fruit and vegetables preferably using freshly grown, Alabama produce. Preparation of foods in the cafeteria should use cooking techniques to provide fiber and reduce fat, sugar, and sodium in school meals. School districts should reduce the number of fried foods and prepared items planned and served each week to comply with the federal guidance for healthy children. Fried potato products (fries, tater tots, etc.) should be limited to a three (3) ounce portion size. Baked potato products, that have not been pre-fried, flash fried, or deep fat-fried in any way, are the product of choice and may be served more frequently replacing the fried potato products. Food flash-fried by the manufacturer may be served but should be prepared by a food preparation other than fried.

The State staff in the CNP will work with local school system CNP employees to address modifications necessary in order to offer healthier school meals.

Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, every school shall have reviewed its offerings of foods sold and developed a strategic plan to provide foods in vending machines, school stores, and snacks sold from the cafeteria with nutritious foods as outlined. The strategic plan to provide healthy food choices will include a specific method in promoting the consumption of healthful foods and beverages. Suggestions include, but are not limited to, a focus group(s) made of students, staff, and parents to review the approved vending list/products to identify healthy products that will be accepted or a survey to determine staff, student, and parent opinions about the healthy products with implementation plans explained. Healthy products should have the price at a level that encourages students to purchase them.

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Foods sold will follow the policy for sale of competitive foods as outlined in the SDE memorandum dated November 6, 2001. Schools should refer to [Log # FY02-3005](#) which clarifies the sale of competitive foods during meal service times. Schools are prohibited from selling or providing free of charge any food or meal that is in competition with the scheduled school meal. Schools are required to restrict student access to concessions, extra sales, vending, and fundraisers during the meal periods. Schools may not schedule sales immediately before or after meals that would in effect compete with the meal service. If sales should occur that are in competition with the meal, then all income generated from such sales will be required to be deposited into the Child Nutrition account. The policy is not intended to restrict access to healthy snacks during recess, or at times other than the meal service.

The Healthy Snacks Standards include guidelines for both nutrient content and types of snack items.

The following guidelines are for nutrient content:

For **single** servings, these snack foods must be:

- Low or moderate in fat (10% or less Daily Value of total fat)
- Have less than 30 grams of carbohydrate (10% or less Daily Value of total CHO)
- Have less than 360 mg of sodium
- Contain 5% Daily Value (DV) or more (10% is healthiest) of at least one: Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, **or** fiber (5% Daily Value)

Types of snack items include:

- **Beverages**
- **Snacks and Desserts**
- **Fruits and Vegetables**

Portion sizes are limited for certain items. Further restrictions for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools are provided in the guidelines shown below.

Beverages

Acceptable beverages include:

- **Milk** – Milk should be reduced fat milk (1% or less) flavored or unflavored. No more than 10 percent of the daily value may come from fat. Flavored milks may contain no more than 30 grams total sugar per 8 ounce serving. Milk may not contain artificial sweeteners. Milk availability and sizes of less than or equal to 16 oz. may not be restricted at any time during the school day.
- **Dairy Alternatives** such as soy milk and rice milk – No more than 30 grams total sugar per 8 ounce serving. No more than 10 percent of the daily value may come from fat. Dairy alternatives may not contain artificial sweeteners.
- **Fruit or Vegetable Juice (100% juice and low sugar fruit smoothies)** - 100 percent juice is exempt from the sugar standard.
- **Water** – Includes plain (in any size container) and flavored waters without added sugar or caffeine.

Portion Sizes – Limit portion sizes of all beverages to no more than 12 ounces (except water in any size container and milk. Milk container sizes may not exceed 16 ounces.

In regards to beverage sales:

Elementary Schools: An Elementary School is defined as a school where the majority of students are in grades Pre-K through 5.

Effective with the 2005-2006 school year, no carbonated soft drinks shall be available for sale to students at any time during the school day. No vending machine display front may display any product that is not water or 100% fruit juice with no added sweeteners. Items that may be sold include non-carbonated flavored and unflavored water, **100%** fruit juices and milk. No other competing food/beverage sales are to be available to students during the meal service time. Sales may not occur immediately before or after the meal service time in an effort to circumvent this policy.

The school day is defined as the period of time that children arrive at school until after the end of the last scheduled class.

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Middle Schools: A Middle School is defined as a school where the majority of the students are in grades 6 through 8.

Effective with the 2008-2009 school year, no carbonated soft drinks shall be available for sale to students at any time during the school day. No other competing food/beverage sales are to be available to students during the meal service time. Sales may not occur immediately before or after a meal service in an effort to circumvent this policy. Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year no vending machine display front may display any product that is not water or **100%** fruit juice with no added sweeteners. Juice may not exceed 15 calories per ounce. Juice sizes should not exceed 10 ounces.

The school day is defined as the period of time that children arrive at school until after the end of the last scheduled class.

High Schools: A High School is defined as a school where the majority of the students are in grades 9 through 12.

Effective with the 2008-2009 school year, the selections available in vending machines or for sale in school stores are to be non-carbonated flavored or unflavored water, 100% fruit juices, milk, tea, or sports drinks. 100% juice should not exceed 12 ounces and contain no more than 180 calories. Sports drinks, or teas, may not exceed 12 ounces and contain no more than 99 calories.

Carbonated beverages must be no/low calorie beverages not to exceed 20 ounces and contain no more than 25 calories.

Bottled water, flavored or unflavored with 0 calories may be sold in any size. No beverages of any kind or other competing food/beverages sales are to be available to students during meal service times or immediately before or after meal service times.

The school day is defined as the period of time that children arrive at school until after the end of the last scheduled class.

Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year no vending machine display front may display any product that is not water or 100% fruit juice with no added sweeteners.

Snacks and Desserts

This category addresses chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, cookies, animal/graham crackers and cereal bars, granola bars, bakery items (e.g., pastries, toaster pastries, muffins, soft pretzels), frozen desserts, ice cream, yogurt and smoothies (made with low-fat dairy alternatives and/or fruit/juice).

- **Fat** – Nuts, seeds, peanut and other nut butters may provide more than 10% daily value of total fat.
- **Carbohydrates** – Naturally occurring sugars in fruits, vegetables, and dairy products are not included in the maximum amount of carbohydrates per serving...
- Encourage the availability of whole grains and foods containing fiber. Provide choices of whole grains and naturally occurring grains (those with minimal/trace amounts of added fat and added sugar).

Portion Sizes – Serve the portion sizes listed below. If products meet the standards for snacks and desserts, they may be served in single-serving portion sizes **or** in a package that does not exceed the serving size limits specified below.

Baked chips, popcorn, rice cakes, puffed snacks.....	1.25 oz.
Crackers, hard pretzels, pita chips, snack mix.....	1.25 oz.
Peanut butter-filled crackers and cheese-filled crackers.....	1.25 oz.
Trail mix, nuts, seeds, soy nuts.....	1.25 oz.
Cereals.....	1.25 oz.
Low-fat cookies, animal crackers, graham crackers, cereal bars, granola bars.....	1.33 oz.
Bakery items, e.g., pastries, toaster pastries, muffins, bagels, soft pretzels.....	2 oz.
Low-fat frozen desserts, low-fat ice cream and pudding, fruit bowls.....	4 oz.
Low-fat yogurt.....	8 oz.
Smoothies (made with low-fat yogurt or other low-fat dairy alternatives and/or fruit/juice).....	12 oz.

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Fruits and Vegetables

Make **quality fruits and vegetables** available at any place snack items are sold. For example, dried fruit in vending machines, fresh fruit such as pineapple slices or melon cubes or fresh vegetables such as baby carrots in a la carte lines and school stores. ("Quality" means fruits and vegetables prepared and packaged without added fat, sugar, or sodium.)

- **Fat** – No more than 10 percent of daily value calories from fat.
- **Carbohydrates** – No more than 10 percent daily value **or** 30 grams maximum per serving.

Portion Sizes – If products meet the preceding standards for fruits and vegetables, they may be served in the following portion sizes:

- ½ cup minimum for quality fruits and vegetables
- ½ cup maximum for vegetables or fruits with added fat
- 1.25 ounces maximum for dried fruit

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)

FMNV may not be sold in schools. The definition of FMNV is found in 7CFR 210, Appendix B. The summary is as follows:

- Water ices, including frozen sicles, ices and slushes, except those ices containing fruit juice.
- Chewing gum, flavored or unflavored from natural or synthetic sources
- Certain candies, processed predominately from sugar or corn syrup sweeteners combined with a variety of ingredients including but not limited to:
 - Hard candies, sour balls, fruit balls, candy sticks, starlight mints, after dinner mints, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints, and cough drops
 - Jellies and gums, such as gum drops, jelly beans, jellied and flavored fruit slices
 - Marshmallow candies or other aerated sugar, corn syrup, or invert sugar confections
 - Fondants, such as candy corn, and soft mints
 - Licorice
 - Spun candy, cotton candy
 - Candy coated popcorn

LONG RANGE GOALS. There is no implementation date set at this time: **These items should be addressed in more detail in the local wellness policy.**

A. Foods provided:

1. Frying as a method of on-site preparation for foods served as part of school meals, ala carte, snack lines, and school stores should be limited with the intention of elimination. Alternative methods of cooking (baking, broiling, and steaming) should be implemented instead of frying. (Deep fat frying equipment may not be purchased with CNP funds **after July 1, 2006.**) Braising pans may not be purchased with the purpose of circumventing this policy.
2. Schools should pay special attention to portion sizes and assist students in selecting the appropriate amount of food.
3. Except when medically contraindicated, no one on the school campus will provide access to "for sale" or "free" foods and beverages that do not meet the guidelines described above. With respect to school parties, food or beverage items served should meet the criteria for food items found in The Healthy Snack Standards on page 2. Items falling under the definition of foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) as described above should not be provided. However, some items such as birthday cakes and/or cupcakes may be allowed on an infrequent basis. Schools have the discretion to prohibit any specific items according to standards established by the school or school district. Persons responsible for this compliance include school administrators or staff (principals, coaches, teachers, etc.), students or student groups, parents or parent groups, or any other person, company or organization.

B. School programs:

Schools are encouraged to participate in programs such as school gardens, farm to school programs, farmer's markets, and similar programs to increase the availability and consumption of Alabama-grown fruits and vegetables whenever possible.

Fundraising Activities

By the end of the 2005-06 school year, all fundraising activities that involve the selling of food should reinforce food choices that promote good health.

The document, Guide to Healthy School Fundraising, may be useful when teaching the staff, parents, and others who assist in fundraising events. This document is on the web at <http://www.adph.org/nutrition/schoolnutrition>.

All fundraising activities except when contracts have been or will be executed by August 8, 2005, that involve the selling of food during school hours or as students gather on the school campus before school begins or as students wait on transportation or otherwise exit the school campus following school dismissal should reinforce food choices that promote good health. This means all events outside the school day are not affected by this recommendation and booster clubs, etc. are free to select items for sale for specific fundraising and concession sales as they see fit as long as the activity does not conflict with this position.

Training

Teachers and other staff should understand the importance of fully implementing the nutrition and health education curriculum and become familiar with its underlying theory and concepts.

One initial in-service activity shall occur for personnel in each school system on the importance of nutrition and physical education with respect to prenatal, infant adolescent and adult lifestyles and lifespan, with new personnel being assigned to in-service activities during their first full year of employment. The length or duration of this in-service will be determined by the school district, but in no case should be less than 3 hours. This shall begin with the 2006-2007 school year. This in-service will also provide teachers the skills needed to use non-lecture active learning methods, assess and improve their own eating practices, and make staff aware of the behavioral messages they give as role models.

All CNP directors must meet qualifications:

- New staff must complete the educational requirements as specified in the standard in the [Code of Alabama \(1975\), 290-080-030-06](#) within a three-year period from the date of employment.
- Current staff not meeting the qualifications must complete the educational requirements as specified by the beginning of the 2008-09 school year.
- Costs incurred for meeting these requirements cannot be funded with child nutrition funds.

Food service workers should be trained by a qualified Child Nutrition Program (CNP) director as published in the Code of Alabama (1975), 290-080-030-06.