Alabama Department of Education Nutrition Subcommittee

1. School Settings - Cafeteria (meals and snack items sold), Vending, and School Stores.
Recommendation:
Schools should provide a consistent environment that is conducive to healthful eating behaviors during school hours and during after-school child care programs. Healthy and appealing foods should be available in
a.) cafeteria meals, a la carte items
b.) vending machines, snack food items sold in the cafeterias, school stores
The vending and snack food items in this recommendation shall be implemented at the beginning of the 2006-07 school year except when a conflict with previously negotiated contracts exists. The changes for the cafeteria meals and a la carte items will need to be implemented in conjunction with the leadership of the State Child Nutrition Program.

Each school’s strategic plan for Improving the School Nutrition Environment plan should be completed by April 1, 2006 and ready for implementation with the beginning of the 2006-07 school years.

A state review during the 2005-06 school year of school/school system plans for healthy choices in vending machines and other recommendations shall occur with possible additional recommendations by the State Superintendent in the spring of 2006 applicable to 2006-07 school year.

Justification for Recommendation #1a:
Eating patterns developed as a child can influence the long-term nutritional status and have a significant impact on the risks- or preventing risks- of chronic diseases of adulthood. The school environment can influence students’ dietary choices and decision-making skills related to food selections while improving the quality of their diets. Therefore, all food sold or served to students in school should meet an accepted nutritional standard for the students’ health.

The school campus should reflect healthy nutrition environments. Adequate time to eat should be allowed to provide for a pleasant dining experience. All public schools should ensure that all students have daily access to the meals offered (breakfast and lunch). Schools should not establish policies, class schedules, bus schedules or other barriers that directly or indirectly restrict access to and completion of meals. All schools should follow the policy for sale of competitive foods as outlined in the memorandum dated November 6, 2001, which clarifies the sale of competitive foods during meal service times. (Schools should refer to LOG #FY02=3005.)
Specific Implementation for #1a:
The Child Nutrition Program (CNP) staff of the State Board of Education can provide general guidance on preparing and serving the menus served in the cafeteria. Changing the Scene - Improving the School Nutrition Environment is a tool kit that addresses the entire school nutrition environment from a commitment to nutrition and physical activity, pleasant eating experiences, quality school meals, other healthy food options, nutrition education, and marketing the issue to the public. This kit can help local people take action to improve their school's nutrition environment. The kit includes a variety of tools for use at the local level to raise awareness and address school environment issues that influence students' eating and physical activity practices. The Child Nutrition Staff can assist schools in obtaining a kit. Additional information is at “http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/index.htm”

Foods served and/or sold through the cafeteria shall adhere to the guidelines established by US Department of Agriculture, published in the School Meals Initiative (SMI) for Healthy Children, 1995 guidance. School meals must meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which recommends that no more than 30% of an individual’s calories be furnished from fat and less than 10% from saturated fat. In addition, the CNP regulations establish a standard that the school lunch provides one third and school breakfast one fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories. Therefore, 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 pre-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.

**Justification for Recommendation for #1b:**
This Committee understands the economical impact of vending machines and school stores and there is no intention of taking that income away. However, selling low-nutritive foods tell students that it is acceptable to compromise health for financial reasons. The schools thereby risk contradicting the messages on healthy eating that should be taught in class.

Beginning with the 2005-06 school year, every school shall review its offerings of foods in vending machines and develop a plan to begin phasing out low-nutritive foods sold in vending machines and school stores and phasing in high-nutritive foods.
Each school should develop a plan with the guidance of the local superintendent or his/her designee that allows for participation by students, teachers, and parents.

Specific implementation for #1b:
In order for changes in vending machines and school stores to be accepted, a strategic plan is needed. Changes made without the knowledge and input of the customers (teachers and older students) are usually met with resistance. A school’s strategic plan will include a specific method in promoting the consumption of healthful foods and beverages. Focus groups made of students, staff, and parents can review the approved vending list to identify healthy products that are appealing, followed by a taste testing time for products to be sampled for acceptance. If a focus group is not possible, group surveys can be used to determine staff, student, and parent opinions about the healthy products. When the items are selected, promotion strategies must be incorporated so that all students and parents know about these products and are motivated to try them. For example, involve students and staff in promotional activities using signs, contests, games, health fairs, advertisements, flyers, banners, and other means. Healthy products should have the price at a level that encourages students to purchase them.

In working with contracts with vending services, please refer to the Attachment #1 entitled, Vending Contract, on page 10. This handout outlines questions that should be covered in developing a contract for vending foods.
http://www.ncsl.org/programs/health/vending.htm

Foods sold through the vending machines, cafeteria snack items, and the school stores will follow the Alabama’s Action for Healthy Kids standards. Those guidelines are as follows:
In 1 to 1½ ounce servings, these snack foods are:

- Low or moderate in fat (Less than 10% Daily Value of total fat)
- Have less than 30 grams of carbohydrate
- 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, or calcium
- Contain fiber (5% Daily Value)

Additional guidelines to follow for foods sold through the vending machines, cafeteria snack items, and the school stores are the USDA definition of foods with minimal nutritional value, as found in the USDA policy 7CFR210 #16 appendix B that is below.

**USDA FOODS OF MINIMAL NUTRITIONAL VALUE (FMNV)**

Foods and beverages that are restricted from sale to students are classified in the following four categories:
1. Soda Water- Any carbonated beverage. No product shall be excluded from this definition because it contains discrete nutrients added to the food such as vitamins, minerals, or proteins. **NO CARBONATED DRINKS ARE PERMITTED.**
2. Water ices: Any frozen, sweetened water such as “…sicles” and flavored ice with the exception of products that contain fruit or juice.
3. Chewing gum- Any flavored products from natural or synthetic gums and other ingredients that form an insoluble mass for chewing.
4. Certain candies- Any processed foods made predominately from sweeteners or artificial sweeteners with a variety of minor ingredients that characterize the following types:
   a) Hard candy- A product made predominately from sugar (sucrose) and corn syrup that may be flavored and colored, and is characterized by a hard, brittle texture. Includes items such as sour balls, lollipops, fruit balls, candy sticks, starlight mints, after dinner mints, jaw breakers, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints, and cough drops.
   b.) Jellies and gums- A mixture of carbohydrates that are combined to form a stable gelatinous system of jelly like character and are generally flavored and colored, and include gum drops, jelly beans, jellied and fruit flavored slices.
   c.) Marshmallow Candies- An aerated confection composed of sugar, corn syrup, invert sugar, 20% water and gelatin or egg white to which flavors and colors may be added.
   d) Fondant- A product consisting of microscopic sized sugar crystals that are separated by a thin film of sugar and/or invert sugar in solution such as candy corn and soft mints.
   e) Licorice- A product made predominately from sugar and corn syrup that is flavored with an extract made from the licorice root.
   f.) Spun candy- A product made from sugar that has been boiled at high temperature and spun at a high speed in a special machine.
   g.) Candy-coated popcorn- Popcorn that is coated with a mixture made predominately from sugar and corn syrup.
Examples of foods to use in the vending machine, for cafeteria snack items, and in school stores are below. The following maximum portion size restrictions pertain to all foods and beverages served or made available to students on school campuses with the exception of school meals, which are governed by the USDA.

**Portion Sizes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food or Beverage</th>
<th>Portion Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chips (baked or containing no more than 3 to 7.5 grams of fat per bag), crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, and pretzels</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-fat cookies/cereal bars</td>
<td>1 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-fat bakery items (examples: pastries and muffins) * Many low fat items replaced the fat with sugar. Check the label for carbohydrate content.</td>
<td>2 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen dairy desserts, low fat ice cream, and pudding “Jello” fruit bowls</td>
<td>4 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt (low-fat) less than 30 grams total carbohydrates</td>
<td>8 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced fat milk (1 percent or less), flavored or unflavored. Flavored milks may contain no more than 30 grams total sugar per 8 ounce serving.</td>
<td>8 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverages should include water in any size container. Other beverages may include sports drinks (12 ounces), 100% fruit juices (12 ounces or less), low-sugar fruit smoothies (12 ounces), and one (1) percent or less fat milk - as stated above (8 ounces).</td>
<td>12 ounces unless specified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***Amendment to the Overall Report on Student Health Dealing with Beverages Sold in Schools***

**Elementary Schools**
- No carbonated soft drinks. Only Noncarbonated products

**Middle Schools**
- 70% of selections in vending machines are to be noncarbonated water, fruit juices, milk products, teas and sports drinks
- 30% of selections can be carbonated soft drinks. Of those, at least 50% (15% of total) will be low/no calorie soft drinks.

**High Schools**
- 50% of selections in vending machines are to be noncarbonated water, fruit juices, milk products, teas and sports drinks
- 50% of selections can be carbonated soft drinks. Of those, at least 50% (25% of total) will be low/no calorie soft drinks

**Vend Fronts**
- Elementary/Middle Schools - All vend fronts will picture water or fruit juice products.
- High Schools - During the 2005-06 school year, vend fronts will be primarily water and juice products, with only occasional soft drink
vend fronts allowed. During the 2006-07 school year, all vend fronts other than those located in athletic spectator settings (e.g., football stadium,) will be water and juice products.

Additional tools available for use in implementing these changes are at the end of this report. These tools should not be interpreted as this committee’s endorsement of a particular name brand product. They are included for additional reference materials only.

**Long-Range Goals for Recommendation #1:**

A. Foods provided:

   1. Beginning July 1, 2006, schools may not use CNP funds to purchase new fryers for the school breakfast/lunch programs. State staff in the CNP will work with local school system CNP employees to address modifications necessary in order to offer healthier school meals. Schools are encouraged to participate in school gardens, farm to school programs, farmer’s markets, and to purchase Alabama-grown fruits and vegetables whenever possible.

   2. Except when medically contraindicated, no one on the school campus will provide access to “for sale” or “free” foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) as described above. This includes any food and beverage listing sugar or high fructose corn syrup as the first ingredient on school premises until after the end of the last scheduled class. This includes school parties. 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. Refer to Attachment #2, Guide to Healthy School Parties on page 11 and Attachment #3, Recommendations for Healthy Snacks at School, at School Parties, and at Home on page 12.

   3. Schools should pay special attention to portion sizes and assist students in selecting the appropriate amount of food. One suggestion is to modify the method of serving in moving away from self-service for all menu items to the portion sizes as described by USDA meal pattern. Cafeteria designed specifically for self-service could provide pre-portioned food items, providing more nutrition information on the line through printed materials, i.e. fat or calories per serving of a food. The 2005 US Dietary Guidelines states, “Though there are no empirical studies to show a causal relationship between increased portion sizes and obesity, there are studies showing that controlling portion sizes helps limit calorie intake, particularly when eating calorie-dense foods (foods that are high in calories for a given measure of food). Therefore, it is essential that the public understand how portion sizes compare to a recommended amount of food (i.e., serving) from each food group.”

B. School programs:
Schools will encourage participation with programs such as school gardens, farm to school programs, farmer’s markets, and similar programs to increase the availability and consumption of local fruits and vegetables.

2. Fundraising Activities for All Schools
Recommendation:
All fundraising activities that involve the selling of food should reinforce food choices that promote good health. (Reference: Dietary Guidelines)
Timeline: This recommendation shall be implemented by the completion of the 2005-06 school year.
Justification for Recommendation #2:
School fundraising strategies which include the sale of healthy foods and non-food items is a public demonstration of the school’s commitment in promoting healthy behavior among students, families, and the communities at large, while helping schools meet their financial needs.

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 fit as long as the activity does not conflict with this position.

To be implemented fully by the completion of 2005-06 school year

Specific Implementation for #2:
Consideration of profit, target audience acceptance, and target audience affordability will be given in selecting fundraisers.
Refer to Attachment #4, Guide to Healthy School Fundraising and Attachment #5, Creative Financing and Fundraising on pages 13 and 14. These handouts may be useful when teaching the staff, parents, and others who assist in fund raising events. The committee understands that schools use various fund raising opportunities and many individuals will need to be included in the teaching process; therefore, the 2005-06 school year may be needed to reach all persons involved.

3. Training and Development
Recommendation:
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. Health education training on the importance of nutrition and physical activity will be completed by a
minimum of one (1) teacher in-service by the completion of school year 2005-06 and thereafter on an annual basis.

Justification for Recommendation #3:

Training in nutrition and health education can increase the extent to which staff implements a curriculum EFFECTIVELY, that in turn will affect the student’s learning and behavior changes. Nutrition and health education training for teachers should address content and teaching strategies.

Specific Implementation for #3:

Training should focus on giving teachers the skills they need to use non-lecture active learning methods of classroom instruction. Training should help teachers assess and improve their own eating practices and make them aware of the behavioral messages they give as role models. Teachers should be trained not to use food as a reward or punishment.

Training food service workers should be conducted by a qualified child nutrition program director as published in the Code of Alabama (1975), 290-080-030-06. Child nutrition managers and child nutrition staff should be trained on meeting the Healthy School Meal Initiative requirements and basic nutrition/child health issues.

Qualifications for Child Nutrition Program Director Certification are detailed in the standard in the Code of Alabama (1975), 290-080-030-06. School districts must enforce the standards and meet the criteria established for this position. New staff employed in these positions who do not meet the qualifications must complete the educational requirements as specified, in 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. The State Child Nutrition Program staff can assist in locating college course work that will be applicable.

4. School Environment Health Assessments

Recommendation:

In conjunction with the requirements of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act, each school will conduct evaluations using a nationally recognized, validated survey to identify strengths and weaknesses and prioritize changes as an action plan for improving student health. The assessment and planning steps will involve teachers, child nutrition staff, other school staff as appropriate, parents, students, and the community as a part of the required wellness policy. Plans for implementing the school environment assessment must be complete by the beginning of the school year 2006-07.

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. This shall begin with 2006-07 school year.

Justification for Recommendation # 4:

Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act (Public Law 108-265), Section 204, requires each school district to create a wellness policy by the beginning of school year 2006-2007. The policy guidelines address childhood obesity. The recent legislation encourages the development of a school wellness committee/council to develop goals and plans for nutrition education, physical activity, and other activities. Details for this policy are at http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html on the USDA web site as well as http://www.schoolnutrition.org on the School Nutrition Association website.

Specific Implementation for #4

Those involved with the policy formation will include parents, students, the school board, child nutrition director, school administration, and the public. Congress recognizes that schools play a critical role in providing a healthy environment for the prevention of childhood obesity, creating a healthy environment for combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical activity.

The law places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level so the individual needs of each school district can be addressed. The use of a standard, validated, national survey tool will assist the school in determining priorities the council will need to address in the wellness policies. Examples of survey tools may be found at the CDC web site for Healthy School Index at http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/shi/ or at Team Nutrition http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/changing.html at the USDA web site. Other tools may be available; however, utilizing the same tool will assist in comparison purposes. As a result of the corrective action taken, each school will offer parents wellness information resources that include family based approaches for improved health outcomes. Completing the school environment assessment will be the first step in an ongoing process for monitoring progress and reviewing the recommendations for change. This is an ongoing process, which will vary from school to school depending on the areas of changes selected.

Schools must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. Schools must also establish nutrition standards for all foods that are available on each school campus during the school day, with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. Schools are required to measure the implementation of the wellness policy and to involve a broad group of individuals in its development.
The site: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html serves as a clearinghouse of information on the components that should be considered when establishing a school wellness policy. Examples of policies already developed by schools and state agencies are provided as resources and references.