



## *Promoting Health in Minnesota Schools:*

# HEALTHY CONCESSIONS

As society becomes more aware of and concerned with children's health issues, communities are turning to schools to provide an environment that promotes both healthy eating and physical activity.<sup>1</sup> School policies supporting healthy eating and physical activity are an important component of school efforts to promote the health and well-being of school children. Good nutrition and physical activity help "contribute to improved academic performance, attendance rates, behavior, and lifelong health and well-being."<sup>2</sup> Too often, the foods and drinks sold at concession stands are high in sugar, fat, and calories. A strong healthy concessions policy can create and promote healthy eating habits and behaviors.<sup>3</sup>

### **What are school concessions?**

School concession stands sell food and beverages to spectators and participants at school functions such as sports or social events, and are frequently operated by booster clubs, parent groups, or other groups that have a relationship to the school.<sup>4</sup> Concession sales are an important part of many school-sponsored sporting events and extracurricular activities.<sup>5</sup> Sales from concessions are often used to help sports teams, student groups, and clubs raise needed funds.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, many of the foods and beverages sold at these concession stands are high in sugar and/or fat,<sup>7</sup> such as:<sup>8</sup>

- Candy
- Chips
- Soda
- Ice cream
- Pretzels
- Hot dogs
- Pizza
- Hot chocolate

### **Why are healthy concessions important?**

Students and their families eat many meals and snacks away from home while enjoying physical activity or supporting youth in sports and other extracurricular activities. The children and their families who are attending or participating in an event may have no other food available and therefore may rely on concessions for a full meal.<sup>9</sup> Some school events may not even allow outside food or beverages.<sup>10</sup> Healthy concessions provide an important opportunity to offer nutritious foods to children, their families, and the community. Healthy concessions can also be profitable, providing funds for budget-squeezed extracurricular programs;<sup>11</sup> this can be the case even if unhealthy foods are eliminated altogether as concessions options.<sup>12</sup>

## What are healthy concessions?

Healthy concession stand foods and beverages should follow nutritional guidelines such as those issued by the Institute of Medicine.<sup>13</sup> Some schools incorporate non-food items as well.<sup>14</sup> Examples of healthy concessions include:<sup>15</sup>

- Apple cider
- Frozen fruit bars
- Fresh, whole fruit
- Trail mix
- Sunflower seeds
- Baked potatoes
- Veggie burgers
- Corn on the cob
- Soups
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Carrots or other raw veggies
- School gear
- Toys
- Games
- Arts
- Crafts

## Do any federal or Minnesota laws require a healthy concessions policy?

While schools are encouraged to support a broad range of healthy eating and active living initiatives, healthy concessions are not mandated by Minnesota or federal law.

## How can schools use policies to make healthy concessions a priority?

A school's wellness policy can define the concessions that can be sold to help teams, student groups, and clubs raise funds. For example, a school (or a school district) can require the foods and drinks sold at concession stands meet the federal nutrition standards for à la carte foods and drinks or Institute of Medicine standards for Foods in Schools. Concession staff can work with local restaurants, grocery stores, and delis to offer healthier choices. People will choose healthy foods and drinks when they are tasty, convenient and affordable.<sup>16</sup>

## Does the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)<sup>17</sup> Model Wellness Policy<sup>18</sup> address healthy concessions?

No, not specifically.

## Can other MSBA policies be used to support the creation and management of healthy concessions?

Yes. MSBA Policy 902 (Use of School District Facilities and Equipment) is a model policy that could be used to support the creation and management of a healthy concessions policy.

## How can Minnesota schools incorporate healthy concessions into a school wellness policy?

The following language can be incorporated into a school board policy that is modeled after the MSBA's model policy. This language can also be individually tailored to fit into a school board policy that does not follow the MSBA's model.

### Addition to the MSBA School Wellness Policy

#### III. Guidelines

##### F. Healthy Concessions

1. Concessions sales at school-related events will be supportive of healthy eating and physical activity by emphasizing the sale of healthy foods or non-food items.
2. The superintendent, with the assistance of the School Health Council, will create and promote a list of healthy food and non-food items recommended for sale at concessions stands.
3. Groups should strive to have at least 50% of available concessions items be healthy or non-food, and should price those options lower than less healthy foods when possible.
4. Listed healthy foods will meet the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools.<sup>19</sup>
5. The district will disseminate a list of healthy fundraising options as a resource to groups responsible for concession sales.
6. The district will make external organizations using school property aware of the policy regarding fundraising with food and beverage items and will encourage them to adopt the same policy.<sup>20</sup>

## What other ways can schools support healthy concessions initiatives?

In Minnesota, the superintendent is responsible for implementing and enforcing school board policy. Superintendents issue protocols, procedures, and guidelines to help implement the school board's policies. The following language can be incorporated into existing guidelines. However, as school boards and superintendents may adopt more specific or general guidelines based on their needs and goals, policy language can be interchangeable with the guidelines listed below.

### Healthy Concessions Guidelines

- More than 50% of foods and beverages must meet the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools.<sup>21</sup>
- Healthier and/or non-food items should be priced lower than less healthy foods when possible.<sup>22</sup>
- Healthy items will be placed at eye level for small children.<sup>23</sup>
- Marketing strategies and advertisements, such as signs, posters, and table tents, will be used to highlight healthier items as compared to less healthy options.<sup>24</sup> Menu items that meet the IOM Nutrition Standards will be starred or otherwise highlighted in a way that makes it easy for customers to determine which items are healthier.
- The school and/or groups providing concessions will provide a means for customers to give feedback on which healthy options they like best.<sup>25</sup>

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., *Local Wellness Policy: A Guide for Development*, MINN. DEP'T OF EDUC. 5 (2005), available at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/cdrr/nutrition/docsandpdf/localwellnesspolicy.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> *School Wellness Policies*, IDAHO DEP'T OF EDUC., <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cnp/wellness/> (last visited May 6, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> *Concessions*, EAT SMART MOVE MORE NORTH CAROLINA, available at <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/EatSmartSchoolStds/Texts/concessions.pdf> (last visited May 8, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> *Guidance Document for School Concessions*, AITKIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA, available at <http://co.aitkin.mn.us/Departments/Enviro-Svcs/PDF-Library/SchoolConcessionStandsLicensingOptions.pdf> (last visited May 8, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> EAT SMART MOVE MORE NORTH CAROLINA, *supra* note 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Concessions Model Policy*, HEALTHY SOUTH DAKOTA 1 (last revised 2012), available at <http://www.healthysd.gov/Communities/PDF/ModelConcessions.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> *School Concession Stands – Operations*, MINN. DEP'T OF HEALTH, <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/fs/schoolconop.html> (last visited May 6, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> *Healthy Concessions Guide*, NEMOURS FOUNDATION 1 (2010), available at <http://www.nemours.org/content/dam/nemours/wwwv2/filebox/service/healthy-living/growuphealthy/healthyconcession.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> HEALTHY SOUTH DAKOTA, *supra* note 7, at 3.

<sup>11</sup> EAT SMART MOVE MORE NORTH CAROLINA, *supra* note 3.

<sup>12</sup> NEMOURS FOUNDATION, *supra* note 9, at 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Nutrition Standards For Foods in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier Youth*, INST. OF MEDICINE (Apr. 2007), available at <http://www.iom.edu/-/media/Files/Report%20Files/2007/Nutrition-Standards-for-Foods-in-Schools-Leading-the-Way-toward-Healthier-Youth/FoodinSchools.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> HEALTHY SOUTH DAKOTA, *supra* note 7, at 3.

<sup>15</sup> See HEALTHY SOUTH DAKOTA, *supra* note 7, at 3 (providing an extensive list of “green” (best), “yellow” (acceptable), and “red” (less than ideal) food options for concession stands).

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA CITIES, *HANDBOOK FOR MINNESOTA CITIES 17:14* (2012), available at <http://www.lmc.org/media/document/1/chapter17.pdf> (“The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) supports, promotes and enhances the work of public school boards. MSBA is a private nonprofit organization that provides technical assistance; cost-saving programs; and advocacy, training, research, and referral services for all of Minnesota’s public [school members]. Membership in MSBA is voluntary.”).

<sup>18</sup> *MSBA/MASA Model Policy 533: Wellness*, MINN. SCHOOL BOARD ASS'N & MINN. ASS'N OF SCHOOL ADMIN. (2010).

<sup>19</sup> *Competitive Foods and Beverages in U.S. Schools: A State Policy Analysis*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREV. 3 (2012), available at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/nutrition/pdf/compfoodsbooklet.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> *Model School Wellness Policy: Fundraising*, NAT'L ALLIANCE FOR NUTRITION AND ACTIVITY, <http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/WellnessPolicies.html#fundraising> (last visited May 6, 2013).

<sup>21</sup> CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREV., *supra* note 19, at 3.

<sup>22</sup> HEALTHY SOUTH DAKOTA, *supra* note 7, at 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> NEMOURS FOUNDATION, *supra* note 9, at 2.