



HIGHLIGHTS

Nutrition-Related Behaviors
Access and Marketing of Snacks
in Schools
Farm to School
Improving Breakfast Participation

Missouri School Nutrition Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is a compilation of the most up-to-date nutrition-related behaviors and trends being observed in Missouri public schools as collected and analyzed from four distinct surveys and data sources. This report shares the highlights and informs policy makers and key stakeholders about current methods and resources available for improving the school nutrition environment.

Surveys and Data Sources

1. 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey and 2013 Youth Tobacco Survey
2. 2012 Breakfast Challenge, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Food Services (DESE, SFS)
3. 2012 School Health Profiles, a survey of principals and lead health teachers in secondary schools
4. 2012 Farm to School Census, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Access to foods and beverages that are in the best interest for students is considered the foundation for good health and, consequently, academic success. With the underlying motto that “healthy students make better learners,” schools continue to fall under the scope of public inquiries and expectations on ways they can improve the health of children within their campuses.

Schools have many opportunities to provide access to healthy food choices not only for the well being of its students but also for its own staff as part of worksite wellness efforts. For starters, the latest regulations as set from the **Healthy and Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010** places renewed emphasis for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs to:

- revise and improve menus
- incorporate more scratch cooking
- revive salad bars with variable vegetable and fruit choices, some from local vendors

Smart Snacks of 2014 is the most recent USDA regulation setting standards for foods and beverages sold during the school day, outside of the school lunch program and throughout the school campus.

Nutrition-Related Behaviors of Students

Results from the **2013 Health Risk Behaviors among Missouri Middle School and High School Students Report¹** tracks progress of specific health-related behaviors. Nutrition-related highlights:

- **Not much change in fruit and vegetable consumption:** 22 percent of middle school (MS) and 15 percent of high school (HS) students ate fruits and vegetables five or more times per day in past seven days. This data has not changed in the 10-year period from 2003-2013.

School breakfast is required in school sites with 35% or more free and reduced priced eligible students. (RSMo 191.803)

- **Students are drinking less sweetened beverages.** Just under a quarter (23 percent) of MS and HS students, **drank sugar-added drinks or non-diet soda** one or more times per day during the past seven days. This trend decreased significantly from 2007-2013.
- **The number of HS students who drank three or more glasses of milk per day** during the past seven days has declined significantly from 16 percent in 2003 to 11 percent in 2013. (No data for MS.)
- New data shows 11 percent of MS and 14 percent of HS **students did not have breakfast for the past seven days.** Five percent of MS and 4 percent of HS **students went hungry always or most of the time because there was not enough food at home.**
- However, **the percentage of students participating in a school breakfast program increased** by 5 percent from 22 percent (2011-2012) to 27 percent (2012-2013) as reported by DESE, SFS.²
- A new yet alarming data notes that almost half (45 percent) of MS students and one quarter (25 percent) of HS students were **bullied on school property** in the past 12 months. Being overweight has been identified as a common risk factor for bullying.

Policy Trends: Access and Marketing of Snacks in Schools

According to the **2012 School Health Profiles**,³ trends are starting to indicate significant changes in the types of snack foods and beverages that students can purchase at secondary schools.

There has been a significant downward trend in the calorie-dense yet low nutrient snacks available in schools, as shown in the table.



10%
↓

The percentage of secondary schools offering snack foods or beverages from one or more vending machines, school stores, canteens or snack bars, significantly declined by 10% (from 2002 to 2012).

Percentage of Schools Allowing Students to Purchase:	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Chocolate candy	62.6	61.8	50.8	31.3	33.2	38.3*
Other kinds of candy	62.4	64.1	54.9	36.4	37.5	39.9*
Salty snacks not low in fat (e.g., regular potato chips)			60.9	38.9	38.7	41.4*
2% or whole milk (plain or flavored)			50.2	47.3	37.2	33.3*
Soda pop or fruit drinks that are not 100% juice			74.2	54.9	43.8	46.0*
Sports drinks (e.g., Gatorade)			76.2	75.6	63.9	65.8*
Foods or beverages containing caffeine				47.9	38.4	39.8*
Fruits (not fruit juice)				33.9	31.0	34.9
Non-fried vegetables (not vegetable juice)				25.0	21.0	23.3
Crackers, pastries and other baked goods not low in fat				42.7	41.9	43.3
Ice cream or frozen yogurt not low in fat				26.3	18.3	20.5
Water ices or frozen slushies that do not contain juice				19.7	14.7	17.5

*Significant downward trend

There was a significant downward trend in the percentage of secondary schools that prohibit advertisements for candy, fast food restaurants or soft drinks in school publications, from 29 percent in 2008 to 19 percent in 2012. However, the same could not be stated for similar advertisements on school grounds, school buses or through distribution of products, such as t-shirts, hats and book covers to students (from 2.7 percent in 2008 to 3.8 percent in 2012). This trend can certainly be addressed in present opportunities.

The **Smart Snacks in School** standards, which take effect at the start of the school year 2014-2015, will build on those healthy advancements. The regulations will further pave the way for more progress and new developments in access to and sale of snacks sold throughout the school campus during the school day.

Resource:

Smart Snacks

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/legislation/allfoods.htm>

The Center for Commercial-Free Public Education

<http://www.ibiblio.org/commercialfree>

Overall, cumulative changes are likely the result of a 2006 School Wellness Policy, a federal requirement, setting course for the development of a school wellness committee and policies that include nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages available on school campuses.



Promising Observations: Farm to School

The inaugural 2012 USDA Farm to School Census⁴ was conducted to determine the prevalence of farm to school programs in the United States. In Missouri, promising results are taking root.

- **Just under a third** (29 percent) of Missouri schools, large and small, rural and urban alike **are participating in farm to school activities.**
- An impressive **\$4.5 million of school food budgets were invested in local purchases.**
- **Over half** (58 percent) of these districts stated that they **will buy more local foods in the future.**
- **Vegetables topped the list** of local products being purchased (19 percent) with local fruits following close behind (17 percent).
- School gardens are sprouting up with **89 edible school gardens being reported in Missouri schools.** Edible gardens provide fresh produce to schools or the community.

Resources:

Rainbow Days - A salad bar promotion by Department of Health and Senior Services

<http://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/rainbowdayprojects>

Let's Move Salad Bars 2 Schools

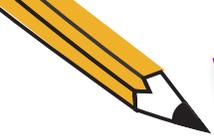
<http://saladbars2schools.org/guidelines>

Missouri Farm to School Network, Missouri Extension

<http://mofarmtoschool.missouri.edu>



Southern Boone Learning Garden,
Ashland, Missouri



What Schools Can Do

Improving Accessibility In and Outside of the Cafeteria

There are many low cost, no cost alternatives that schools can consider that are research-based as supported by Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Program.

- Price nutritious food and beverages at a lower cost while increasing the price of less nutritious options.
- Increase the variety of healthier a la carte and vending items.
- Decrease the variety of less healthy selections.
- Make healthier food more convenient by placing it **everywhere**: creating a healthy convenience line or a “health bar.”
- Consider pre-cutting or bagging healthy food: “Grab ’n Go.”
- Introduce changes gradually or over the summer.
- Provide information on the nutrition and caloric content of foods available.
- Conduct taste tests to determine food preferences for nutritious items.
- Offer water, fruits and vegetables as part of school celebrations. Make healthy choices an easier choice.

Resource:

Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Program
<http://smarterlunchrooms.org>

Student Advisory Councils (SAC)

Involving students in decisions about their school’s nutrition environment makes them feel good about eating healthy. Empowerment creates enthusiasm. SAC can be encouraged to:

- provide feedback on which foods to serve on which days
- suggest how to promote foods (student athletes reading menu of the day, etc)
- suggest how to improve the cafeteria atmosphere
- suggest appealing names for foods
- participate in school wellness committee meetings

Improving Breakfast Participation

As reported by the *School Nutrition Association, Growing School Breakfast Participation*, schools can consider new ways to deliver breakfast to middle and high school students to help maximize participation, achieve higher attendance rates, boost student achievement and reduce absenteeism and visits to the school nurse.

- A Grab ’n Go option served in the cafeteria with a variety of foods that students like offers speediness; a good option for smaller-sized districts.
- Hallway breakfasts in a Grab ’n Go style also provide speedy service. Finding the right location for the kiosks is key.
- Breakfast in the classroom needs teacher acceptance and buy-in. Most common in the middle schools.
- Breakfast vending is an up-and-coming venue that resonates with the high school student.

To learn more about different ways to serve breakfast in the secondary levels, schools can access www.schoolnutrition.org/growingbreakfast.

Resource:

Missouri School Breakfast Challenge
<http://dese.mo.gov/divadm/food/breakfast-challenge.htm>



Additional Information
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Bureau of Community Health and Wellness 573-522-2820 or pat.simmons@health.mo.gov
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER
Services provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.