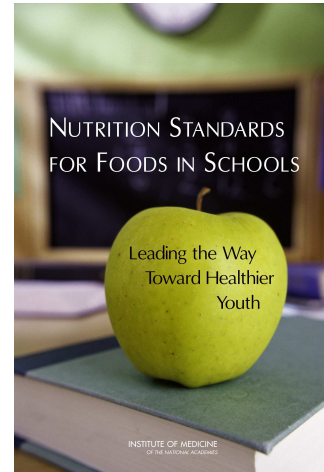


# Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier Youth



## **Committee on Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools**

### Statement of Task

A multidisciplinary committee of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) will be convened to review and make recommendations regarding appropriate nutrition standards for the availability, sale, content, and consumption of foods and beverages at school, with attention given to foods and beverages offered in competition with federally-reimbursable meals and snacks. Specifically, the committee will:

- Draw on literature regarding the availability, nutritional profile, and risks (including substitution) of school foods and beverages, including recent work by the General Accountability Office, as appropriate;
- Synthesize lessons learned from relevant research, development of federal nutrition standards for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, and experience from the development of state- and local-based standards for foods and beverages offered outside federally-reimbursable meals and snacks;
- Consider whether a single set of nutrition standards is appropriate for elementary, middle, and high schools, or if more than one set is needed;
- Develop nutrition standards, based on nutritional science, for foods and beverages offered in school, with a focus on foods and beverages offered outside federally-reimbursable meals and snacks;
- Consider how to assure that foods and beverages offered in schools contribute to an overall healthful eating environment; and
- Develop benchmarks to guide future evaluation studies of the application of the standards.

## **BOX 1 Guiding Principles**

To initiate the study process, the committee developed a set of principles to guide their deliberations.

The committee recognizes that:

1. The present and future health and well-being of school-age children are profoundly affected by dietary intake and the maintenance of a healthy weight.
2. Schools contribute to current and life-long health and dietary patterns and are uniquely positioned to model and reinforce healthful eating behaviors in partnership with parents, teachers, and the broader community.
3. Because foods and beverages available on the school campus represent significant caloric intake they should be designed to meet nutritional standards.
4. Foods and beverages have health effects beyond those known to be related to vitamins, minerals, and other known individual components.
5. Implementation of nutrition standards for foods and beverages offered in schools will likely require clear policies; technical and financial support; a monitoring, enforcement, and evaluation program; and new food and beverage products.

The committee intends that:

6. The federally reimbursable school nutrition programs will be the primary source of foods and beverages offered at school.
7. All foods and beverages offered on the school campus will contribute to an overall healthful eating environment.
8. Nutrition standards will be established for foods and beverages offered outside the federally reimbursable school nutrition programs.
9. The recommended nutrition standards will be based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, with consideration given to other relevant science-based resources.
10. The nutrition standards will apply to foods and beverages offered to all school-age children (generally ages 4 through 18 years) with consideration given to the developmental differences between children in elementary, middle, and high schools.

## **Recommended Standards**

### **Standards for Nutritive Food Components**

**Standard 1:** Snacks, foods, and beverages meet the following criteria for dietary fat per portion as packaged:

- No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat;
- Less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fats; and
- Zero trans fat.

**Standard 2:** Snacks, foods, and beverages provide no more than 35 percent of calories from total sugars per portion as packaged.

*Exceptions include:*

- 100-percent fruits and fruit juices in all forms without added sugars;
- 100-percent vegetables and vegetable juices without added sugars; and
- Unflavored nonfat and low-fat milk and yogurt; flavored nonfat and low-fat milk with no more than 22 grams of total sugars per 8-ounce serving; and flavored nonfat and low-fat yogurt with no more than 30 grams of total sugars per 8-ounce serving.

**Standard 3:** Snack items are 200 calories or less per portion as packaged and á la carte entrée items do not exceed calorie limits on comparable NSLP items.

**Standard 4:** Snack items meet a sodium content limit of 200 mg or less per portion as packaged or 480 mg or less per entrée portion as served for á la carte.

### **Standards for Nonnutritive Food Components**

**Standard 5:** Beverages containing nonnutritive sweeteners are only allowed in high schools after the end of the school day.

**Standard 6:** Foods and beverages are caffeine free, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine-related substances.

### **Standards for the School Day**

**Standard 7:** Foods and beverages offered during the school day are limited to those in Tier 1.

**Standard 8:** Plain, potable water is available throughout the school day at no cost to students.

**Standard 9:** Sports drinks are not available in the school setting except when provided by the school for student athletes participating in sport programs involving vigorous activity of more than 1 hour's duration.

**Standard 10:** Foods and beverages are not used as rewards or discipline for academic performance or behavior.

**Standard 11:** Minimize marketing of Tier 2 foods and beverages in the high school setting by:

- Locating Tier 2 food and beverage distribution in low student traffic areas; and
- Ensuring that the exterior of vending machines does not depict commercial products or logos or suggest that consumption of vended items conveys a health or social benefit.

### **Standards for the After-School Setting**

**Standard 12:** Tier 1 snack items are allowed after school for student activities for elementary and middle schools. Tier 1 and 2 snacks are allowed after school for high school.

**Standard 13:** For on-campus fundraising activities during the school day, Tier 1 foods and beverages are allowed for elementary, middle, and high schools. Tier 2 foods and beverages are allowed for high schools after school. For evening and community activities that include adults, Tier 1 and 2 foods and beverages are encouraged.

### **Actions for the Implementation of Nutrition Standards in Schools**

**Action 1:** Appropriate policy-making bodies ensure that recommendations are fully adopted by providing:

- Regulatory guidance to federal, state, and local authorities;
- Designated responsibility for overall coordination and oversight to federal, state, and local authorities; and
- Performance-based guidelines and technical and financial support to schools or school districts, as needed.

**Action 2:** Appropriate federal agencies engage with the food industry to:

- Establish a user-friendly identification system for Tier 1 and 2 snacks, foods, and beverages that meet the standards per portion as packaged; and
- Provide specific guidance for whole-grain products and combination products that contain fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

**TABLE 1. Foods and Beverages That Meet Tier 1 and Tier 2 Standards**

Foods	Beverages
<b>Tier 1 for All Students</b>	
<p>Tier 1 foods are fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and related combination products* and nonfat and low-fat dairy that are limited to 200 calories or less per portion as packaged and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat</li> <li>• Less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fats</li> <li>• Zero Trans Fat (<math>\leq 0.5</math> g per serving)</li> <li>• 35 percent or less of calories from total sugars, except for yogurt with no more than 30 g of total sugars, per 8-oz. portion as packaged</li> <li>• Sodium content of 200 mg or less per portion as packaged</li> </ul> <p>À la carte entrée items meet fat and sugar limits as listed above and:**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Are National School Lunch Program (NSLP) menu items</li> <li>◊ Have a sodium content of 480 mg or less</li> </ul> <p>*Combination products must contain a total of one or more servings as packaged of fruit, vegetables, or whole grain products per portion.  **200-calorie limit does not apply; items cannot exceed calorie content of comparable NSLP entrée items.</p>	<p>Tier 1 beverages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water without flavoring, additives, or carbonation.</li> <li>• Low-fat* and nonfat milk (in 8 oz portions): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Lactose-free and soy beverages are included</li> <li>◊ Flavored milk with no more than 22 g of total sugars per 8-oz. portion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 100-percent fruit juice in 4-oz. portion as packaged for elementary/middle school and 8 oz. (two portions) for high school.</li> <li>• Caffeine-free, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine substances.</li> </ul> <p>*1-percent milk fat</p>
<b>Tier 2 for High School Students After School</b>	
<p>Tier 2 snack foods are those that do not exceed 200 calories per portion as packaged and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat</li> <li>• Less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fats</li> <li>• Zero Trans fat (<math>\leq 0.5</math> g per portion)</li> <li>• 35 percent or less of calories from total sugars</li> <li>• Sodium content of 200 mg or less per portion as packaged.</li> </ul>	<p>Tier 2 beverages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-caffeinated, non-fortified beverages with less than 5 calories per portion as packaged (with or without nonnutritive sweeteners, carbonation, or flavoring).</li> </ul>

## COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR FOODS IN SCHOOLS

**VIRGINIA A. STALLINGS** (*Chair*), Joseph Stokes Jr. Research Institute, Children's Hospital, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Philadelphia

**DENNIS M. BIER**, Children's Nutrition Research Center, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX

**MARGIE TUDOR BRADFORD**, School Board, Bardstown Independent School District, Bardstown, KY

**CARLOS A. CAMARGO, JR.**, Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham & Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston

**ISOBEL R. CONTENTO**, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York

**THOMAS H. COOK**, Vanderbilt University's School of Nursing, The Monroe Carroll Children's Hospital, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

**ERIC A. DECKER**, Department of Food Science, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

**ROSEMARY DEDERICHS**, Food Services Department, Minneapolis Public School District, MN

**JAY T. ENGELN**, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, VA

**BARBARA N. FISH**, West Virginia Board of Education, Parkersburg, WV

**TRACY A. FOX**, Food, Nutrition, and Policy Consultants, LLC, Bethesda, MD

**JAMES C. OHLS**, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Princeton, NJ (retired)

**LYNN PARKER**, Food Research and Action Center, Washington, DC

**DAVID L. PELLETIER**, Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

**MARY T. STORY**, Division of Epidemiology and Community Health, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

### *Project Staff*

**ANN L. YAKTINE**, Senior Program Officer

**ALICE VOROSMARTI**, Research Associate

**HEATHER B. DEL VALLE**, Senior Program Assistant

### *Food and Nutrition Board Staff*

**LINDA D. MEYERS**, Director

**GERALDINE KENNEDO**, Administrative Assistant

**ANTON L. BANDY**, Financial Officer

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