

Teachable MOMENTS

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Vending Machine Bans Increase in Schools Nationwide

Should school officials decide what teens can and cannot eat?

Is this decision going to change the growing concern of childhood obesity?

Will this strategy impact school fund-raising initiatives?



To the Teacher

There's a nationwide surge of interest in promoting healthier habits among youth. Obesity statistics are staggering. With young people consuming high-calorie, fatty and sugary snacks in the form of soda, candy, and chips found in most school vending machines, pressure has been put on both schools and soft-drink companies to evaluate the presence of these machines. Recently, many states, counties, districts, and schools have placed bans on what can be sold in vending machines. Some schools actually began to do so as many as six years ago. In 2006, an industry "pact" was made by Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Cadbury Schweppes to increase healthy options sold in schools. As a result, soft-drink sales have declined in schools. By the 2009–2010 school year, all full-calorie soft drinks must be removed from the nation's 125,000 schools.

Opinions differ as to the meaning and importance of this action. In recent years, Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa has introduced legislation calling for the U.S. Agriculture Department to expand the reach of its nutritional guidelines to include school vending machines. Nutritionists, parents, and the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General see a limit on the types of items sold in vending machines as a step toward fighting the childhood obesity epidemic. Some supporting the ban cite a concern that the products sold in vending machines are just another marketing ploy by big companies to build brand loyalty among teens.

Those opposed to the initiative see the ban as an unnecessary precaution. Some citizens point out that teens are able to make their own food choices. Another consideration in the debate over vending machines is the role of sales profits, often used by schools to pay for a

variety of student services, from sports uniforms and arts programs to field trips, technology, and even paper.

Are students likely to feel the impact of a vending machine ban in their schools? If so, in what ways? Take advantage of this "teachable moment" by asking your middle- or high-school students to explore the educational, health, and financial issues related to this current event. What are their opinions?

Suggestions for Using the Worksheets

- Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group a purpose to summarize the vending machine information they read: to explain, to persuade, to inform, or to tell a story. Share summaries in class and discuss how each achieves its purpose.
- Assign individuals, pairs, or small groups to research and respond to the questions for another issue in schools.
- Remind students of the essential prewriting steps such as brainstorming and organizing ideas when writing an essay. Suggest that brainstorming a list is a useful strategy. Then they are to reread the list and cross out things that do not fit the topic. Give students a template for a web, an outline, or other graphic organizer, such as a flowchart. Have them use the organizers to show their main ideas, supporting details, and conclusions.
- Include an oral presentation as part of the assignment.

IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts Addressed

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Web Sites with Information About Nutrition

Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program
<http://healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx>



USDA's National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program: Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/CompetitiveFoods/fmnv.pdf>

How to Understand and Use Nutrition Fact Labels
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>

Team Nutrition: Healthy Schools
<http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov/healthy-schools.html>

Web Sites with Information About Policy and Legislation

Colorado Senate Bill SB04-103
www.leg.state.co.us/

Food Choices at School: Risks to Child Nutrition and Health Call for Action, by the Democratic Staff of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
http://harkin.senate.gov/wellness/Food_Choices_at_School.pdf

The American Beverage Association: School Beverage Guidelines
<http://www.ameribev.org/industry-issues/school-beverage-guidelines/studies/index.aspx>

Institute of Medicine: Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools
<http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/30181.aspx>

Facts on Nutrition and Obesity

- Since 1963, rates of obesity have quadrupled among children ages 6 to 11 and tripled among children ages 12 to 19.
- Only two percent of children eat a healthy diet that is consistent with federal nutrition recommendations.
- Three out of four high school students don't eat the minimum recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Type 2 diabetes, primarily caused by poor diet and physical inactivity, is rising in children.
- In 1996, children ages 2 to 18 years consumed an average of 118 more calories per day than similar children did in 1978—the equivalent of 12 pounds of weight gain annually, if not compensated for through increased physical activity.
- The U.S. Surgeon General reports that the direct and indirect costs of obesity in the United States are \$117 billion per year.
- Nationally, 83 percent of elementary schools, 97 percent of middle/junior high schools, and 99 percent of high schools sell foods and beverages out of vending machines, school stores, or à la carte in the cafeteria. The most common items sold include sugary drinks, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes.

Source: Center for Science in the Public Interest and U.S. Surgeon General's Office

How Vending Contracts and Fund-Raising Work

According to officials at one high school in Maryland, the school made \$72,438.53 in a single academic year (1999–2000) through its contract with one well-known beverage vendor. The school made an additional \$26,227.49 through its contract with a snack food vendor.

The following is a breakdown of the school's contracts and a detailed list of how the school spent the \$98,666.02.

The school agrees to:

- Guarantee product sales of at least 4,500 cases of drinks per year. If sales fall short of that number, [the vendor] shall have the right to reduce the guaranteed commission per year by the percentage of decline in the cases sold.
- Ensure that no competitive products to [the vendor] be made available in the school.
- Make the company's carbonated and non-carbonated products available to all students during all hours and at all locations in the school, except where not permitted by federal and state regulations. The high school acknowledges that current state and federal regulations permit the sale of beverages in schools at all hours and all places except meal hours in the cafeteria.
- Ensure that all menu boards, vending machines, and concessions dispensing beverages carry advertising panels mentioning [the vendor's] products which are clearly visible to the public.
- Grant [the vendor] exclusive advertising rights on athletic fields.
- Ensure [the vendor] that the school's student population does not fall below 2,100 students.
- Ensure [the vendor] that the school has at least five snack machines throughout the school and an additional two in the teachers' lounge.

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How Vending Contracts and Fund-Raising Work, *continued*

How the money is spent:

Activity	Expense
school maintenance	12,090.84
computer wiring	27,933.83
student handbooks	8,342.50
educational materials	1,492.07
school locks	874.00
staff incentives (money for training)	5,754.03
staff meetings	877.96
school computers	1,506.06
office supplies	644.38
field trips	599.36
public relations	1,678.42
yearbook	1,000.00
awards	201.46
mileage	104.33
cable	42.44
clubs	192.79
student support	1,948.46
black history month activities	1,154.30
instructional copier	8,012.50
emergency cell phone	314.42
office supplies	1,003.06
postage	2,380.29
fees, dues, memberships	1,329.00
school improvement	328.33
TV studio	395.06
IDS phone	61.00
school assessment	205.96
deposit to bank for future use	18,199.17

Source: www.commondreams.org

School Beverage Guidelines

The American Beverage Association's School Beverage Guidelines provide the following beverages:

Elementary Schools

- Bottled water
- Up to 8-ounce servings of milk and 100% juice
- Fat-free or low-fat regular and flavored milk and nutritionally equivalent (per USDA) milk alternatives with up to 150 calories/8 ounces*
- 100% juice with no added sweeteners, up to 120 calories/8 ounces, and with at least 10% of the recommended daily value for three or more vitamins and minerals

Middle School

- Same as elementary school, except juice and milk may be sold in 10-ounce servings
- As a practical matter, if middle-school and high-school students have shared access to areas on a common campus or in common buildings, then the school community has the option to adopt the high-school standard.

High School

- Bottled water
- No- or low-calorie beverages with up to 10 calories/8 ounces
- Up to 12-ounce servings of milk, 100% juice, and certain other drinks
- Fat-free or low-fat regular and flavored milk and nutritionally equivalent (per USDA) milk alternatives with up to 150 calories/8 ounces*
- 100% juice with no added sweeteners, up to 120 calories/8 ounces, and with at least 10% of the recommended daily value for three or more vitamins and minerals
- Other drinks with no more than 66 calories/8 ounces
- At least 50% of non-milk beverages must be water and no- or low-calorie options

* *In recognition of the currently limited availability of flavored milk with less than 150 calories/8 oz and the importance of milk's natural nutrients in children's diets, flavored milk with up to 180 calories/8 oz will be allowed under these guidelines until August 31, 2008, so long as schools attempt to buy the lowest-calorie flavored milk available to them. Because of unique CA state milk regulations, the calorie limit for fat-free and low-fat flavored milk in CA schools is 180 calories/8 oz with a transition period until August 31, 2008 that allows 210 calories/8 oz.*

Time of Day

- All beverages sold on school grounds during the regular and extended school day.
- The extended school day includes before- and after-school activities like clubs, yearbook, band, student government, drama, and childcare/latchkey programs.
- These guidelines do not apply to school-related events where parents and other adults are part of an audience or are selling beverages as boosters during intermission, as well as immediately before or after an event. Examples of these events include school plays and band concerts.

Vending Machine Bans Increase in Schools Nationwide

Worksheet 1: Keeping Track of the Facts

There's a nationwide surge of interest in promoting healthier habits among youth. Obesity statistics are staggering. With young people consuming high-calorie, fatty and sugary snacks in the form of soda, candy, and chips found in most school vending machines, pressure has been put on both schools and soft-drink companies to evaluate the presence of vending machines in schools. This fall, states, counties, districts, and schools have found themselves placing bans on what can be sold in vending machines. Some schools actually began to do so as many as six years ago. In 2006, an industry "pact" was made by Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Cadbury Schweppes to increase healthy options sold in schools. As a result, soft-drink sales have declined in schools. By the 2009–2010 school year, all full-calorie soft drinks must be removed from the nation's 125,000 schools.

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Those opposed to the initiative see the ban as an unnecessary precaution. Some citizens point out that teens are able to make their own food choices. Another consideration in the debate over vending machines is the role of sales profits. Lucrative profits made from vending machine sales are used by schools to pay for a variety of student services, from sports uniforms and arts programs to field trips, technology, and even paper.

Do school officials have an obligation to monitor foods sold on school grounds? Are school officials limiting a student's right to choose his or her own food? Are food and drink manufacturers taking advantage of schools to advertise their products? Should schools be able to raise money through vending machine sales?

Learn more about the issue by reading the three information sheets provided by your teacher.

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Vending Machine Bans Increase in Schools Nationwide

Worksheet 1: Keeping Track of the Facts, *continued*

Use the double-entry notes chart below. On the left side of the chart, write key points from your reading. On the right side, write what you think, questions you have, or connections you make to your own experiences.

Key Points I Read	What I Think

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Worksheet 2: Forming Your Opinion

Think about the information you've learned about vending machines and nutrition. Conduct more research on the issue on the Internet or in news articles.

What's your opinion on the issue? Use the graphic organizer below to form your opinion and identify facts to support your opinion. Write the opinion statement in the Opinion box. Write the supporting evidence in the Evidence boxes.

Opinion	
	Evidence
	Evidence
	Evidence

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Worksheet 3: Persuasive Writing

Many school cafeterias have vending machines that offer “snack food,” such as chips and soft drinks. Some people feel strongly that the foods sold in vending machines have no place in a school. Other people believe that students should be free to make their own choices about what they eat, and schools should be allowed to generate money through vending machine sales.

Weigh the arguments on each side of the issue. On a separate sheet of paper, write a recommendation to your school board about whether or not the cafeteria should sell “junk food.”

Write a persuasive essay stating your opinion about whether or not your school should have vending machines. Give at least two reasons to support your opinion.

Be sure to try to convince your readers—members of the school board—to agree with your viewpoint. Use persuasive language, and provide clear facts and examples to support each of your points.

Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Keeping Track of the Facts

Answers will vary depending on the author's point of view.

Worksheet 2: Forming Your Opinion

Answers will vary depending on the author's point of view.

Worksheet 3: Persuasive Writing

Answers will vary. Use a scoring rubric such as the following:

Score = 1: The response provides minimal support of the position. Such an essay would lack elaboration, and no organizational structure would be demonstrated. The essay might be riddled with errors in punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

Score = 2: The response addresses some parts of the writing task. The writer of such an essay attempts an organizational structure, but does not communicate clearly, and the viewpoint is inconsistent. As a result, a coherent sequence is likely difficult to find. Supporting details are either incomplete or generally inappropriate.

Score = 3: The essay generally communicates clearly with a mostly consistent point of view. Using a variety of sentence types, this complete essay should provide an organizational structure with adequate support and elaboration. The writer should competently transition between ideas. To achieve a higher score, the writer might have anticipated the opposing viewpoint and refuted it. More purposeful word choice and writing free of spelling and grammatical errors would also be needed to achieve a higher score.

Score = 4: The complete essay uses a formulaic five-paragraph structure. The writer should use a seamless, effective organizational structure. The writer presents his or her opinion using a well-developed description of his or her position. The support of the opinion is relevant and complete, and purposeful word choice is consistently provided throughout the response. The author considers an opposing view and counters it with a logical argument. A strong conclusion clearly summarizes the points made in the essay.