

School Nutrition/Feeding Programs

Study: School Fare Healthier than Homemade Lunches

National School Lunch Program meals appear to provide students more fruits, vegetables and dairy than meals prepared at home, according to a small Houston-area study. High-sugar or -fat snacks and non-100% fruit juice in homemade meals made school lunches the healthier option.

Source: [MedPage Today](#), October 5, 2011

Funded Breakfast Programs Grow in Five Districts

This fall, the [Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom](#) introduced universal, in-class meals to more than 62,000 students in Dallas, Little Rock, Memphis, Florida's Orange County and Prince George's County, Maryland. Sponsored by a \$3.15 million [Walmart Foundation](#) grant, [Breakfast in the Classroom](#) targets schools that underuse the federal School Breakfast Program, citing research on the success of classroom-based universal feeding initiatives.

Source: [PR Newswire](#), September 8, 2011

Let's Move! Announces Salad Bar Assistance Grants

As part of the effort to improve children's nutrition, the Food Farming Foundation, National Fruit and Vegetable Alliance, United Fresh Produce Association Foundation and Whole Foods Market have joined Michelle Obama's [Let's Move!](#) campaign by supporting incentives to participants in the [Salad Bars to Schools](#) initiative. All schools in the [National School Lunch Program](#) are eligible for start-up awards to increase access to adequate portions of fresh foods.

Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention release](#), September 12, 2011

SNA Promotes "School Lunch – Let's Grow Healthy" Campaign

To help celebrate National School Lunch Week (October 10-14), School Nutrition Association (SNA) is encouraging school cafeterias nationwide to host "School Lunch – Let's Grow Healthy," a campaign to help students understand where their food comes from and to get excited about healthy school lunch choices. The campaign also coincides with [National Farm to School Month](#). SNA's national ["State of School Nutrition 2011" survey](#) revealed that nearly half of school districts offer locally sourced produce.

Source: [SNA release](#), October 5, 2011

School Wellness

Study: Breakfast Research Brief Highlights Learning Outcomes

Two research briefs from the [Food Research Action Center](#), a member of the [Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom](#), summarize data on the link between school-based breakfast programs and educational achievement. Similar initiatives are associated with health gains such as decreased obesity and food insecurity, and improved performance and attendance.

Sources: [Breakfast for Learning](#) (.pdf), [Breakfast for Health](#) (.pdf), Fall 2011

CDC Research Reviews Best School Practices for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention synthesizes current research on effective strategies for promoting healthy eating and physical activity in schools. In particular, the report addresses the need for coordinated nutrition services, physical and health education programs, employee wellness and professional development, and supportive, health-promoting environments.

Source: [CDC release](#) (.pdf), September 16, 2011

States, Schools Face Vending Challenges

As districts nationwide reform vending machine options following state mandates and 2010's revised national nutrition standards for all foods sold in schools, students have been slow to purchase healthier

choices. Vending companies report 2/3 fewer sales for whole-grain, reduced-fat and fruit snacks compared with traditional offerings. As schools reduce high-fat and sodium choices, some students choose baked chips, smoothies and hummus.

Sources: [Los Angeles Times](#), September 26, 2011; [New York Times](#), October 3, 2011

Students Celebrate Walk to School Day

More than 3,700 schools from all 50 states took part in the [International Walk to School in the USA](#) event on October 5. The activity is part of the [Safe Routes to Schools](#) program. Data suggest that rates of walking to school have declined from 48 to 13% over the past 40 years. Rural districts have implemented so-called walking school buses to help students walk more.

Source: [Education Week](#), October 5, 2011

Health News

CDC Launches Childhood Obesity Eradication Investigation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced a four-year, \$25 million [Childhood Obesity Demonstration Project](#) to research the growing epidemic. The initiative builds on existing community efforts and will identify effective health care strategies for overweight youth ages 2 to 12 covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program for low-income youth. Researchers will assess supportive changes in schools, child care centers and parks, and through preventive visits with physicians.

Sources: [CDC release](#), [International Business Times](#), September 29, 2011

MyPlate Adds Themed Dietary Messages

During September, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and its national strategic partners unveiled themed days to showcase [MyPlate](#) nutritional guidelines. Eating tips such as [Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables](#) and Drink Water Instead of Sugary Drinks were adopted by community partner organizations, including health clinics, schools, churches and gyms. MyPlate, which replaced the MyPyramid symbol, uses visual clues to illustrate the [2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

Source: [USDA release](#), September 7, 2011

National Campaign Highlights Sour Consequences of Sweet Drinks

Sweetened beverages are now the single largest source of calories in the national diet and more than half of Americans drink a sweetened beverage each day. The American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association and the Center for Science in the Public Interest have joined to launch the [Life's Sweeter With Fewer Sugary Drinks](#) campaign, which challenges families to consume no more than three 12-ounce servings per week or eliminate sweetened drinks altogether.

Source: [Charleston Post and Courier](#), September 13, 2011

Analysts Seek Anti-Obesity Strategies in Earlier Health Campaigns

Applying the same interventions that slashed smoking rates in half might reduce America's obesogenic environment, according to a study from the Harvard School of Public Policy. Researchers identified the most effective measures in anti-smoking campaigns and applied them to the obesity epidemic: a 10% tax on unhealthy foods, better nutrition labeling and reduced advertising of unhealthy foods to children.

Source: [New York Times](#), September 12, 2011

Wellness Programs Look to Emerging Game Technology

Gaming technology might be an economical way to engage more people in wellness programs. Psychologists found that the most successful wellness programs incorporated web or mobile device-based games that helped people change behaviors through a series of achievable goals.

Source: [Smart Blogs on Social Media](#), September 16, 2011

School/Kid Marketing

Federal Agencies Propose Voluntary Advertising Restrictions

With industry self-regulation ineffective, a working group of federal agencies, including the Trade Commission, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration and the Agriculture Department, has prepared voluntary advertising restrictions for foods marketed to children. In

a public letter, 75 researchers urged President Obama to support the [proposed guidelines](#) (.pdf), which would set nutrition limits in foods advertised directly to children.

Sources: [Pittsburgh Business Times](#), September 23, 2011; [The Hill](#), September 27, 2011; [Food Safety News](#), [The Atlantic](#), September 29, 2011

Study: Parents' Advice No Match for Food Ads

Food advertisements have greater influence on a child's food selection than a parent's suggestion, according to a [study](#) in the *Journal of Pediatrics*. Researchers tracked the choices of 75 children ages 3 to 8 after they saw cartoons and ads for fries or apple slices. Despite parents' input, the children tended to select the items they saw advertised.

Source: [MSNBC](#), October 6, 2011

EdTech

Comcast Launches Broadband Plan for Low-Income Households

Low-income families whose children qualify for free meals in the National School Lunch Program can now receive low-cost internet service, affordable computers and digital literacy training as part of Comcast's [Internet Essentials](#) initiative. The program builds on the Federal Communications Commission's plan to bring broadband access to underserved areas.

Source: [EdNet Insight](#), September 20, 2011

Federal Digital Learning Center Opens

The Department of Education unveiled plans for the nation's first major technology learning research center, a bipartisan initiative funded by the public and private sectors. [Digital Promise](#) will identify breakthrough technologies and study how students learn with and use educational tools.

Source: [USA Today](#), September 16, 2011

Study: Racial Gaps in Media Use

Minority youth consume as much as 4.5 hours more media content each day than their white peers, according to a national study of media usage trends. [Children, Media, and Race](#) (.pdf) found that all children read 30 to 40 minutes a day, but black and Hispanic youth spend much more time listening to music, watching television, using cell phones and computers and playing video games. Black children are twice as likely to fall asleep with a television on in the bedroom. All kids ate meals in front of a television.

Sources: [Omaha World-Herald](#), [EurekAlert](#), [Northwestern University release](#), June 8, 2011

General Education Trends

North Carolina District Wins Broad Prize

North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenberg Schools won top honors in this year's [Broad Prize for Urban Education](#), which recognizes districts with academic attainment growth and narrowed achievement gaps among minority students. CMS narrowed math and science gaps at all levels, improved graduation rates, instituted performance-based teacher compensation, moved top teachers to underperforming schools and boasted the highest SAT participation of all 74 eligible districts.

Sources: [Christian Science Monitor](#), [Education Week](#), [Charlotte Observer](#) (NC), September 20, 2011

Survey: Support Grows for National Common Standards

Half of the 44 states and District of Columbia education systems that adopted [common core educational standards](#) believe the new math and English-language benchmarks are more rigorous than prior standards. Most districts find support from parents and community members. The data appear in the Center on Education Policy's nationwide survey [report](#).

Source: [Center on Education Policy release](#), September 14, 2011

*Some links in EdTrends are time-sensitive.
These links may move or expire as the news changes.
Some sources may require registration or fee-based subscriptions.*