

School Nutrition/Feeding Programs

Online Menus Distribute Nutrition Content

To meet growing demand for healthier school lunches, some food providers are posting the nutritional content of menus online. [Sodexo Education](#), a major provider, now lists portion sizes, calories and nutrition details by school on its website and provides ingredient lists to school nurses. Disseminating information this way helps districts comply with wellness policy mandates.

Source: [Trib Local](#) (IL), October 20, 2011

School Lunch Program Proposed Changes Debated

The government's proposed changes to the National School Lunch Program, to make school lunches more nutritious, have spurred debate between lawmakers from farm states and low-income areas and food companies lobbying against the proposed rules. Nutrition experts say if the nation is serious about making progress fighting obesity, what children eat at lunchtime must be addressed. While the food industry agrees that eating more fruits and vegetables and reducing salt is important, it has persuasively argued that it has developed healthier foods over time and claims the proposals go too far too fast.

Source: [New York Times](#), November 1, 2011

- **Conference Highlights Efforts to Prevent Obesity**

The annual conference of the [American Public Health Association](#) offered several methods to ensure that schools provide healthier foods and beverages to students. Among the ideas: conducting polls of students to shape menu changes and restructure lunch rooms; taking advantage of existing programs, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#); and targeting interventions to enough young people to change behaviors. Dosage was a recurring theme among presentations.

Source: [New Public Health blog](#), November 1, 2011

Innovators Suggest Cheap, Healthy Lunchroom Transformations

Schools can boost sales of healthy foods with low-cost environmental changes, such as lighting, attractive displays, and prominent placement, according to research by the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement at Cornell's [Center for Behavior Economics](#). The group is joining forces with [Let's Move!](#) and the [Chef's Move to Schools](#) program.

Source: [UPI.com](#), September 29, 2011

School Wellness

Survey: Schools Fail to Meet Activity Standards

Only 16% of elementary schools provide physical activity opportunities before, during and after school, according to a [survey](#) by the [American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance](#). Researchers assessed schools' adherence to comprehensive physical activity programs, which require a commitment to education, at least 60 minutes of daily activity, and community and family involvement. Only 13% of middle schools and 6% of high schools met all components.

Source: [AAPHERD release](#), October 12, 2011

- **Study: New York Schools Rethink Failing Phys Ed Programs**

A recent audit of 31 New York City elementary schools found that none comply with standards of activity adopted last year by the [National Association for Sport and Physical Education](#). Administrators cite budget cuts and space shortages as reasons for the shortfall. New York

requires 120 weekly minutes of activity for elementary students. Some schools are integrating activity into academic lessons.

Source: [New York Times](#), October 19, 2011

Health News

Survey Finds Majority of Americans Overweight, Unwell

A recent [Gallop poll](#) found that two-thirds of the American workforce is overweight or obese, and half are both overweight and suffer from a chronic health problem. Only 1 in 7 adults of the 100,000 surveyed self-reported normal weight and no chronic illness. Researchers estimate an annual loss of more than \$153 billion in productivity for increased sick days.

Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), October 17, 2011; [National Public Radio](#), October 27, 2011

- **Healthy People Annual Assessments Finds Obesity, Health Disparities**

Although the nation's health improved in some critical areas over the past decade, more than 80% of the [Healthy People 2010](#) objectives remain unchanged. Cholesterol levels and rates of smoking decreased, though obesity rates increased in all age groups and progress in meeting nutrition targets was limited. Researchers also noted widening health disparities between socioeconomic and racial groups.

Source: [American Medical News](#), October 24, 2011

Study: Portion Control Needed for All Children

Teens are more likely than young children to overeat when presented with larger portion sizes, according to a study in the [American Journal of Clinical Nutrition](#). Researchers found that older children progressively increased consumption when offered larger portions, but young children were better able to self-regulate intake. However, all children had a tendency to overeat when portions were not controlled.

Source: [Food Navigator USA](#), October 18, 2011

Study: Soda Consumption Linked to Risky Behaviors

Teens who consume more than five cans of soda each week are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, including alcohol consumption, smoking and violence. The [Boston Youth Survey](#) of 1,878 teens from 22 public schools found that 30% had high soda consumption and were significantly more likely to carry a weapon or report aggressive behavior than those who drank less soda.

Source: [Science Daily](#), October 14, 2011

School/Kid Marketing

Study: Teens and Kids See More Ads for Unhealthy Drinks

America's young people saw twice as many advertisements for sugary drinks in 2010 as in 2008, according to a report from Yale University's [Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity](#). The report examined the marketing practices of 14 major companies and the nutritional content of almost 600 products. It found that most companies regard minority youth as a growth market for sugary drinks. The report concludes that self-regulatory pledges by beverage companies are not working. The [American Beverage Association](#) disputes the findings, claiming the report fails to distinguish between children's programming and primetime family-friendly television.

Source: [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation release](#); [National Public Radio](#), October 31, 2011

Study: Profits, Reputation Follow Healthier Food Companies

A report by the [Hudson Institute](#) reveals financial benefits of selling "better-for-you" foods: stronger sales growth and higher operating profits. The study followed 15 major international food and beverage companies for five years and found that those selling reduced and low-calorie foods, as well as foods typically perceived as healthier, had substantially stronger reputation ratings and sales.

Source: [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation release](#), October 2011

School Fund-Raisers Try Community Food Trucks

Dozens of cash-strapped Southern California districts are raising funds through an innovative, community approach: food trucks in the parking lot. Some schools host weekly food truck events, in which up to 10

vendors gather at dinnertime. They use social media sites like Facebook and Twitter to help spread the word. On average, schools earn \$50 per truck for equipment, scholarships and projects. A 2010 ruling protects students from fees for basic supplies and books and prohibits mandatory fund-raising efforts. **Source:** [Los Angeles Times](#), October 23, 2011

EdTech

Digital Divide Grows with Youth Adoption of Media

More than half of elementary students use smart phones, iPads, or similar devices, according to "[Zero to Eight: Children's Media Use in America](#)." However, television still dominates children's media use. On average, children younger than age 8 spend more than 90 minutes a day watching TV or DVDs. The study, conducted by Common Sense Media, found an "app gap" exists along socioeconomic lines.

Source: [eSchool News](#), October 25, 2011; [New York Times](#), October 25, 2011

General Education Trends

Officials Debunk Common Core Standards Myths

A survey of educators found that many misunderstand the [Common Core State Standards](#) initiative, erroneously believing it is a federal program that contains a national curriculum and is unaffordable in the current economic climate. Others believe it sets unrealistic expectations about the work required to implement standards and the likelihood standards will transform schools.

Source: [Harvard Education Letter](#), September/October 2011

Survey: Parents Prefer Frequent Updates, Through Email

Parents want to remain current on curriculum changes and education updates, as well as their child's classroom progress, according to a survey of 43,410 parents by the [National School Public Relations Association](#). Parents overwhelmingly prefer email, direct websites and portal sites for communication, but feel public and social media sites lack credibility.

Source: [NSPRA Counselor](#), August 2011

Educators Prepare for More Budget Slashes

More budget cuts are likely ahead for educators. According to the American Association of School Administrators, districts will not see budget levels return to pre-recession levels until 2013 or later. Districts are handling the cuts by reducing or cutting art, drama and music programs, and 120 districts have gone to a four-day school week. After-school programs and field trips are also on the chopping block, and slashes in budgets and teacher layoffs have forced schools to cut some P.E. classes. Poorer districts, which are more reliant on state funds, are being hit harder.

Source: [Time.com/Associated Press](#), October 24, 2011

Math Scores Rise in Nation's Report Card

Since 2009, 4th and 8th graders achieved slight gains in math but reading performance barely shifted, according to the results of the [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#). Slightly more than one-third were proficient in reading, despite the 2014 [No Child Left Behind](#) goal of total proficiency in both math and reading. Achievement gaps between white and black students persist; gaps between white and Hispanic students narrowed slightly.

Sources: [Christian Science Monitor](#), [U.S. Department of Education release](#), November 1, 2011; [eSchool News](#), November 2, 2011; [Time](#), November 3, 2011

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