

Soft Drinks and School-Age Children

School Beverage Policy Considerations

Students' health status and its link to learning should play an important role in district decision-making about beverage sales. The following policy recommendations can be made to improve the health of students:

Financial Factors

- Fund schools and student activities so they do not have to rely on children's soft drink consumption to fund educational activities.
- Set lower prices for healthy beverages like 100% fruit juice, water and low-fat milk.
- When fundraisers are used, ensure that the funds provided by students, families and community members overwhelmingly go to the school. Minimize the amount given back to outside businesses or organizations.

Advertising and Promotion

- Set school district policies that ensure students have greater access to healthy beverages than to unhealthy ones.
- Eliminate school advertising and promotional events that promote unhealthy beverages.
- Educate school personnel and students that water provides adequate rehydration for students, including most athletes.

School District Control

- Establish autonomous school district control, not soft drink company control, over all aspects of beverage sales and advertising in schools.
- Widely publicize and solicit public comment before entering into a beverage contract at individual schools and school districts.
- Eliminate confidentiality clauses that prohibit school districts from sharing with the general public all facts associated with their beverage contracts.
- Set contract provisions that allow for yearly, public review of the contract, including changes or cancellation of the contract to meet student health needs.

Beverage Contract Administration

- Establish a committee of school personnel, students, parents and community health professionals to evaluate and improve schools district beverage policy.
- Administer beverage contracts as part of the school district's overall child nutrition program.