



# ...WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

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BioWedge is very easy to set up and configure for existing point of sale software packages for a completely integrated biometric identification system.

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## Flavored, Fat Free Milk a Good Way to Encourage Consumption of Essential Vitamins

One of the most difficult challenges providers of child nutrition programs face is that of childhood obesity. However, with the help of organizations such as the SNA fighting to instigate national nutritional standards, relief may be on its way as federal legislation geared at helping improve the nutrition profile of the National School Lunch Program is now finding itself in the spotlight.

**The more controversial issue is the idea of limiting milk to fat-free (plain or flavored) and plain low-fat milk only.**



The Institute of Medicine's Report Brief of October 2009 states that the new key to recommended changes in School Lunch Requirements is to target the use of more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, reduced sodium levels, as well as maintaining a minimum and maximum levels of calories. Most child nutrition leaders have already began implementing positive menu changes in this direction; however this would set required levels as opposed to general goals. It would also increase the standards not just for meals offered, but the meals selected. Namely, all breakfast must include a fruit, and lunches a fruit or a vegetable in order to be considered a reimbursable meal.

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Invested groups have sounded off regarding some of these topics. The current hot button issue is the offering of flavored milks. The

"New Look of School Milk" brought to schools by the American Dairy Association has provided support to many districts by bringing a marketing campaign with many success stories of increasing the consumption of milk in schools. In fact, some national average data suggests that as much as 70% of milk consumed in schools is flavored. The good news is that flavored or not, milk provides nine essential nutrients including a number of nutrients that kids are not getting enough of such as calcium, vitamin D and potassium.

### What are they saying?

#### *American Dietetic Association:*

A recent study presented at the American Dietetic Association's Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo on Oct. 10, 2009 found that when flavored milk was removed from a school district in Connecticut, milk consumption dropped by as much as 67 percent. Standing behind the dietary guidelines for Americans, the ADA recognizes that the enhancement of palatability of nutrient-dense foods, such as milk, may improve the nutrient intake. Numerous research articles dating back as far as 2002 in JADA archives support that flavored milk drinkers tend to consume more calcium on a daily basis, as well as have a lower intake of soft drinks/fruit drinks.

#### *The American Academy of Pediatrics:*

In their 2004 statement discouraging soft drinks in schools, Committee on School Health, the Academy encouraged consumption of nutritious beverages including low fat and fat free white or flavored milk, water, or real fruit or vegetable juice as healthful alternatives to optimize children's and adolescent's bone health and calcium intake. Bob Murry, MD, FAAP, chair of American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health and author of the soft drinks policy statement is quoted as saying "the small amount of extra sugar in chocolate milk should not negate its nutritional benefits."

#### *The American Heart Association (AHA):*

Supports a positive role for added sugars to

help increase intakes of nutrient-rich foods including dairy foods. As partners with Bill Clinton Foundation's Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a suggested 150 calories in 8 fluid ounces of flavored milk creates a nutrient rich option advocated for use in schools over alternate beverage options. A statement on Dietary Sugars Intake and Cardiovascular Health from AHA reads "When sugars are added to otherwise nutrient-rich foods, such as sugar-sweetened dairy products like flavored milk and yogurt...the quality of children's and adolescents' diet improves, and in the case of flavored milks, no adverse effects on weight status were found."

### What can food service workers do?

- Know your numbers! Know what percent of your student's consume flavored milk and how might this affect participation for your district.
- Offer choices and the right for the parent to limit purchasing of chocolate milk if possible. Most point of sale software allow blocking of a la carte items, or a means to alert a cashier "white milk only" for those parents that believe it has no place in our lunch lines. Utilize technology to allow parents to view what their child is selecting in the lunch line so that a discussion over appropriate choices can happen at home.

- Open communication is the best tool in keeping parents informed while making any of the new changes. Market your healthy choices, and program offerings - I would bet parents would agree that we all are making a great effort to improve the health of children!

This article contains excerpts from The New Nutrition Standards - What you need to know! authored by Maureen Faron, RD, LD, Nutrition Committee Chair SNA of Ohio.

## School Lunch Vs. Bagged Lunch Nutrition

Why is school lunch so valuable and cost efficient? School lunch takes the nutritional burden off the parents!

While it seems that home packed lunches would be cheaper, one has to consider what he or she is packing in the child's lunch. By being a part of the National School Lunch Program, schools are required to provide all five food groups: protein, grain, vegetable, fruit, and milk.

There are also specific calorie requirements based on the age of the child to meet the needs of a growing child.

Here are some recent findings about the nutritional content of School Lunch vs. Bagged Lunch:

### School Lunches:

School lunches have been found to be more nutrient dense. This means that the lunches have a higher ratio of nutrients to calories. The lunches tend to be higher in: Vitamin D, B12, B6, riboflavin, pantothenic acid, phosphorus, magnesium, zinc, and calcium.

The lunches are also higher in fiber.

### Bagged lunches:

Home packed lunches are typically lower in: calories, fiber, Vitamin A, calcium, and iron. Home packed lunches have been found to be higher in sugar, sodium and saturated fat. One study found that bagged lunches had double the sugar and fifty percent more sodium and saturated fat compared to school lunches.

Hudson City School's recent School Meals Initiative review led to the commendations including meeting the RDA's\* for calcium, Vitamins A and C. The review also showed a good variety of fruits and vegetables. On average, Hudson schools met 97 % to 100 plus % of all required nutrients. The menu also falls below the maximum requirements for fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Lastly, Hudson students are choosing 99% of the fiber requirements by choosing whole grain options.

Let us take the nutritional burden off of your hands, and buy school lunch!

\*The RDA stands for the Recommended Dietary allowance which is the average daily dietary intake level that is sufficient to meet the nutrient requirement of nearly all (97 to 98%) healthy individuals in a particular life-stage and gender group. The RDA is the goal for usual intake by an individual to help aid in decreasing the risk of certain chronic diseases.

### Resources:

Bednar, C. (2008). Comparison of Nutrient Content and Cost of Home Packed and Reimbursable School Lunches. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 108 (9), 90.

Nomani, M. (2006). Nutrient Content of School Lunches and Packed Lunches as Offered and Consumed by Elementary School Students. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 106 (8), 65.

Richards, C. (2008). Food and nutrient intakes of primary school children: a comparison of school meals and packed lunches. *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*, 21 (5), 420-427.

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## SNA Partners with First Lady Michelle Obama's Childhood Obesity Initiative

The School Nutrition Association (SNA), representing 55,000 school nutrition professionals, is proud to support First Lady Michelle Obama's childhood obesity initiative. SNA and its members have agreed to a number of key steps to further improve the nutritional quality of school meals and advance nutrition education for America's students. Commitments include:

1. Challenge school nutrition programs to

achieve US Department of Agriculture's **HealthierUS School Challenge Certification**, significantly increasing the number of schools nationwide meeting the program's goals:

- SNA will work with USDA to eliminate current barriers for recognition, ensuring more schools can participate in the program; provide training and mentoring to assist school nutrition programs in meet-

ing the HealthierUS School Challenge requirements; and promote the program through conferences and meetings, publications and events

- SNA's goal is to increase the number of HealthierUS Schools from the current 600 to 2,000 in year one, and with the support of other education community partners, reach 10,000 HealthierUS Schools by year five.

2. Encourage school nutrition directors to partner with the Center for Disease Control's **Coordinated School Health Programs** to improve the school health environment. SNA will offer educational programs and training on successfully implementing the Coordinated School Health Program.

3. Challenge school nutrition program directors to accelerate the time frame for meeting the **Institute on Medicine's (IOM) National Nutrition Standards for school meals**. To meet this goal, SNA will initiate the following during the 2010-2011 school year:

- Develop and promote the LAMP Awards (Leading Advancements in Menu Planning), a recognition program encouraging school districts and industry members to use innovative menu plans, recipe and product development, and other tools to achieve IOM goals prior to the timeline for implementation.
- Partner with local fruit and vegetable growers through Farm to School Programs to promote consumption of more fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Partner with industry to provide more affordable whole grain products and to develop nutrition education campaigns influencing students to consume more nutrient-dense foods at a critical time in their development.

4. Advance **nutrition education** opportunities for all students. With the First Lady and federal officials, SNA plans to partner with media, technology, and education program leaders to bring turnkey nutrition

education into the classroom, cafeteria, and home.

"First Lady Michelle Obama recognizes how crucial school meals are to the health and academic success of America's children, and school nutrition professionals are proud to support the First Lady's effort to combat childhood obesity and strengthen under-funded school meals programs," said School Nutrition Association President Dora Rivas, MS, RD, SNS, and executive director of Food and Child Nutrition Services for the Dallas Independent School District in Texas.

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"Since announcing her initiative, the First Lady has eloquently shared her own struggles as a working mom to foster healthy lifestyles for her children," said Rivas. "The School Nutrition Association looks forward to working with the First Lady to encourage America's families to get involved in school nutrition programs and promote physical activity and healthy eating at home."

"The school cafeteria is a classroom for students – an opportunity for them to learn about nutrition and well-balanced meals. School nutrition programs need the support of parents and families to succeed - whether joining students for lunch or making time to talk with them about the food they eat at school, taking an interest in a child's eating habits can lead to a lifetime of good choices. After all, when a child has tried new fruits and vegetables at home, he or she is more likely to pick up those items when they walk through the lunch line."

The First Lady's initiative was launched just as Congress prepares to reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act, a critical opportunity for legislators to enhance the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs for 31 million American children who benefit from school meals each day.

"SNA has been calling on Congress to increase the school meal reimbursement to keep pace with rising costs. We hope the First Lady's activism will encourage legislators to provide school lunch professionals with the support they need to offer an even greater variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains to students," said Rivas.

Article provided by:



[www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org)

## No Cash? - No Problem!

How would you like to be the only merchant in a town that accepted credit cards as well as cash? If all your competitors only took cash exclusively you would have a tremendous advantage, wouldn't you?! Let's translate that advantage to our schools, which can be very much like small towns. In most schools there are a variety of stores... which most people call "vending machines." How much of an advantage do you think it would be to offer credit purchases through your school vending machines? It would have the same effect. Cashless merchandising always increases sales, even if that store is a vending machine.

Food Service Solutions can connect healthy school vending machines to their POS program, extending cashless transactions to both ala carte and reimbursable meal vending machines. This creates

several advantages for the Nutrition Department and the school:



1. **Increased Ala Carte Sales:** Students and staff can buy healthy beverages, snacks & food 24-7 without cash... or with cash.

2. **Faster Lunch Lines:** Teenagers would rather clog the lunch line to use their parent's money for just a beverage or a snack rather than use the cash in their pockets at the vending machines. Offering POS account cashless purchases in the vending machines automatically speeds up the lunch lines.

3. **More Ala carte lines without more labor costs:** Speeding up lunch lines shouldn't have to mean more labor costs. A vending machine that accepts the students POS identification to access their POS lunch account **costs less than 50 cents per hour** to buy and operate. This is based on operating this machine 10 hours per day but just the usual 180 school days per year.

4. **Reimbursable Lunch and Reimbursable Breakfast sales:** You can easily offer 100 different combinations in one vending

machine to create a government approved lunch. You can also add breakfast through your Food Service Solutions operated vending machines... while still offering all vending selections independently as ala carte selections.

### Going Cashless to Get More Cash

Self-operated school vending machines can generate a great deal of new revenues. You can even offer to replace

other vending machines around the school by paying the administration or sports department exactly what they have already been receiving... or just a percentage of any sales occurring after the cafeteria closes... since all vending sales are time stamped with the Food Service Solutions vending program.

When you control the stores in the school 'town' and then add credit sales you can dramatically increase income. Pro-active

partnering with other school departments with POS empowered healthy vending machines promotes a comprehensive nutrition program that is convenient, healthy and financially sustainable.

If you would like to know more about the Food Service Solutions vending opportunities please contact Jim Dillingham at the offices of Vend-ucation in New Hampshire. 800-633-2400 or at [venducate@aol.com](mailto:venducate@aol.com).

## How Hungry Kindergartners Can Actually Increase Your Food and Labor Funding

There are a surprising number of schools in the U.S. that allow federal food and labor funding to go unclaimed. These schools have a large percentage of students that are eligible for the free and reduced-price meal program, but who fail to enroll due to either a lack of understanding or unfamiliarity with program and its benefits.

An example of such a school was Hawthorne, a K-12 District in Los Angeles, California. With the vast majority of their students being eligible for the program, officials were desperately looking for ways to increase student enrollment.

One of the district's most successful methods for increasing participation centered upon, of all things, kindergarten students. While half-day kindergartners qualified to receive free lunches, the schools did not

worry about advertising the service because there was no one to monitor these young children during lunch. Additionally, kindergartners were generally not welcomed to the campus at lunchtime, leading to a kindergarten lunch participation of only 5%.

Unable to fix the supervision problem for the half-day students, staff members decided instead to provide reimbursable lunches for kindergartners during snack break. Teachers and administrators worried about the time it would take, but the lunch staff found that they could offer a healthy meal in the same amount of time as their usual snack time.

Participation jumped from 5% to 95%, with the revenue from increased participation supporting the extra food and labor costs.

The program was a hit with the teachers because no classroom time was lost, not to mention that they received additional classroom tools in the form of nutrition-themed coloring pages.

Due to this and many similar improvements, Hawthorne has been able to increase enrollment district wide, with over 80% of their students now enrolled in the free and reduced-meal program. Essentially, by simply feeding their kindergartners, officials at Hawthorne were not only able to increase the level of funding in order to cover the costs, but they were also able to max out the amount of monies they could receive by way of E-rate funding. Schools across the country should learn from their example, and take advantage of the many benefits the free and reduced-meal plan has to offer.

...WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

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