Many states have been strengthening their school nutrition policies. However, after ten years of hard work, two-thirds of states still have weak or no policy for foods sold out of vending machines, school stores, and a la carte in the cafeteria.

Since the Truman Administration, school meals have been regulated primarily at the federal level. There are detailed national nutrition standards for school meals. There also should be strong national nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold in schools outside of reimbursable meals.

State policies have laid the groundwork for strengthening national school nutrition standards. Given the rising obesity rates and the continued presence of sugary drinks and low-nutrition foods in most of our nation’s schools, the time has come to update the national school nutrition standards.

The Harkin-Murkowski School Nutrition Amendment would bring comprehensive school nutrition standards to all states.

Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) evaluated state policies for foods sold out of school vending machines, school stores, a la carte in the cafeteria, etc. Numbers in parentheses (#) represent states’ rankings.
The nation currently has a patchwork of policies addressing the nutritional quality of school foods and beverages.