School Nutrition Policy in New Brunswick

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Overview

• Once upon a time
• First ending
• Second ending
• Alternate endings
• Happy endings
Key Policy Components (1991)

- Nutrition standards
  - Follow Guidelines for Healthy Eating
  - Milk and fruit juices sole beverages
  - No fruit drinks, **soft drinks**, candy, chips, chocolate bars, **deep fried foods**, doughnuts, and other foods high in fat, sugar and/or salt

- Nutrition education

- Access to nutritious food for all students
First Ending: What’s For Lunch?

- **Soft drinks** (43)
- **French fries** (40)
- **Poutine** (37)
- Pizza (30)
- Chocolate milk (29)

- Salad (0)
- White milk (0)
- Apple (0)
- Juice (0)
- Water (0)
Key Policy Components (2005)

• Make foods with maximum* nutritional value available and promote them

• No fundraising with foods with minimum* nutritional value

• Promote foods with maximum* nutritional value

• Support and reinforce messages about healthier eating

* nutrition criteria established for standards
Second Ending: What’s For Lunch?

- Chocolate milk (236)
- Low fat cookies (160)
- Pizza (93)
- Large pizza pop (50)
- Customized crispy chicken sub with vegetables on whole wheat wrap (39)

- Salad (not available)
- White milk (15)
- Apple (not available)
- Juice (6)
- Water (3)
From 1997 to 2010 . . .

What is Different?
- No deep fat fried food
- A few more whole grains
- Fewer foods and beverages with low nutrition value
- Non-food fundraisers
- Increased acceptance/less overt resistance to nutrition
- More nutritious packaged foods brought from home

What is Similar?
- High sales of a few items
- Low availability and sales of vegetables and fruits
- Low sales of complete meals
- Customer-oriented food service staff
- Wide variation in nutrition quality of food brought from home
Why this Ending?

- ‘Eating out’ frame of reference
- Ineffective delivery mechanisms for providing and promoting vegetables and fruits to students
- Financial pressures (food companies, school revenues)
- Little support for implementation
  - Reliance on food service companies for implementation; little nutrition education, policy education, or outreach
- Lack of integration into education mandate
Why this Ending?

- Low priority issue for schools, parents, and public
- Lack of awareness
  - what is served and what students are eating
  - importance of nutrition
  - perspective that families and schools can support each other

_Globe and Mail, October 4, 2010_

*It’s only 1 meal out of 3 and only 5 days a week. The kids will survive. Give them good stuff the rest of the time and give them a lunch they’ll eat.*

*If parents want their kids to eat healthfully, they NEED to set the example. Blaming the schools/ government is a cop-out.*
Options for Alternate Endings

• Implement strict nutrition standards that allow only healthy foods in schools
• Stop providing food in schools
Options for Alternate Endings

- Increase ‘stealth’ nutrition – eating out frame of reference
  - Pizza with whole wheat crust
  - Fruit juice slushies
Options for Alternate Endings

- Increase emphasis on marketing healthy foods with customer input
  - Products
    - Quality, nutrition, appeal
  - Placement
    - Impulse buying
    - Ability for customers to reach
  - Feature items
  - Pricing
    - Differential pricing
  - Promotion
    - Samples
    - Encouragement
Options for Alternate Endings

- Increase vegetable and fruit availability and consumption
Options for Alternate Endings

• Provide nutrition education for students
  • Food preparation
  • Gardens
  • Tastings
  • Nutrition skills
Options for Alternate Endings

• Provide policy education
  • Conduct ‘Literate’ taste testing
  • Create advertisements and healthy eating promotions
• Analyze foods relative to nutrition standards
• Compare and contrast different nutrition standards
• Analyze the policy process
• Monitor policy implementation
• Assist with marketing the policy
• Participate in school health/nutrition committees
Options for Alternate Endings

• Support awareness and capacity building (e.g., resources, advocacy) for school nutrition:

  • Administrators
  • Teachers
  • Food service staff
  • Parents
  • Community members
  • Dietitians and other health professionals
  • Media
  • Government and politicians
Options for Alternate Endings

• Compile all elements into a comprehensive school nutrition policy that is supported and evaluated
  • Food environments
    • Food and nutrition standards
    • Physical environments
    • Social environments
    • Access to food
  • Nutrition education and services
  • Awareness and capacity building
Options for Alternate Endings

• Learn from best practices –
  *We care about and love our children*

*We want them to eat well and be nourished.*

*Deborah Madison*
Getting to ‘Happy Endings’

• What is served and consumed, what supports exist for healthy eating, what factors are at play?
• What alternate endings do we agree are worth exploring?
• What are the results when we implement alternate endings?
• How do we enable the implementation and maintenance of ‘happy endings’?
And all the students in New Brunswick ate happily and healthily ever after.
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