

Dear MISD Principal,

As summer vacation comes to an end, and the new school year approaches, I wanted to take some time to review the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy, and some of its changes.

The Texas Public School Nutrition Policy's focus is to help slow the growth of childhood obesity by ensuring healthy, well-balanced meals in schools. The policy is one of the strictest nutrition policies in the nation. It limits the types, quantities, and frequency that schools can sell certain foods. One change for the 2008-2009 school year is that no school will be able to fry any products. However, schools may buy foods that have been pre-fried and frozen, but they must be baked or heated by another method.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) and competitive foods (any food/beverage not provided by school food service) are always a topic of interest and sometimes causes confusion.

FMNVs include:

- Any carbonated beverage (even those with added vitamins, minerals, or protein)
- Frozen sweetened water such as popsicles (except those made with fruit or fruit juice)
- Gum, and any processed foods made predominantly from sweeteners or artificial sweeteners such as hard candy, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy and candy-coated popcorn.

\*Some exceptions to these rules have been made by the state.

Please refer to the following table to determine when and where FMNV and Competitive Foods are allowed in schools:

Elementary Schools	FMNV & competitive foods are not to be sold any time, anywhere on elementary school premises by anyone until after the end of the last scheduled class.
Middle Schools	FMNV are not to be sold any time, anywhere on middle school premises by anyone until after the end of the last scheduled class.  Competitive foods are not allowed on middle school campuses from 30 minutes before to 30 minutes after meal periods.
High Schools	FMNV are not to be sold during meal periods in areas where reimbursable meals are served or consumed.

The Texas policy also has restrictions on portion sizes. The next table explains what portions are appropriate for different foods that may be sold in schools.

<b>Food or Beverage</b>	<b>Portion Size</b>	<b>Other Requirements</b>
Chips (baked or fried)	1.5 oz	No more than 7.5 grams of fat per bag.
Crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, jerky, pretzels	1.5 oz	
Cookies, cereal bars	2 oz	Total fat <30% of calories or 3 grams per 100 calories; saturate fat <10% of calories or 1 gram per 100 calories; sugar must be <10 grams per ounce.
Bakery Items	3 oz	*Same as above
Frozen desserts, ice cream, frozen yogurt, pudding, or gelatin	4 oz	
Beverages other than milk	12 fl. oz	Must not contain >30 grams of sugar per 8 fluid oz. Juices should be 100% fruit and/or vegetable juice. No limit on non-carbonated, unflavored water.
Frozen fruit slush	6 fl oz – elementary 12 fl oz – middle and high schools	Must contain at least 50% fruit juice.

Please note that elementary schools may provide FMNV during special events, but schools are limited to 3 special events per year. The principal of each campus must specify these events, and the dates must be turned into School Nutrition. We are required to log the dates that the special events occur per TDA regulations. During these special events there are no restrictions on the types of food brought for the children's consumption. However, FMNV may not be served during lunch or breakfast periods where reimbursable meals are consumed.

In regards to birthday parties in classrooms, it is allowed to have cupcakes or cake in the afternoon after students have finished lunch. The birthday party must

NOT interfere with lunch. We caution you, however, about allowing parents to bring food into classrooms. There is no way to guarantee that the food/beverage was prepared under safe/sanitary conditions, whereas food provided by school food service must follow strict HACCP regulations.

Also, we encourage you to try to think of alternative ways to reward students besides food. Students need to learn the importance of moderation and portion control to help reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity. Some extra time at recess may be a healthier reward option. If snacks are served in the classroom, we recommend that they are healthy snacks. Here are some healthy options to try:

- String cheese and an apple
- Milk and graham crackers
- Yogurt and fruit

It should also be noted that secondary school stores are allowed to sell FMNV as long as they will NOT be served or sold in the same area as a reimbursable meal. The stores must also follow the portion size restrictions listed above. In addition, candy may not exceed 1.5 ounces. These rules apply to anything served or sold by PTA or PTO groups, booster clubs, school organizations, guest speakers, etc...

We appreciate your help in keeping our schools in compliance with the state and federal nutrition regulations. For any questions regarding the policy regulations/restrictions, please feel free to contact me. We look forward to a great school year!

Sincerely,

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