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## RESOURCES: SCHOOL NUTRITION

**Competitive School Foods Are Nutritionally Inadequate.** For many young people, breakfast and lunch consists of individual items selected from a la carte food lines, vending machines, and the school store. Far too often, items at these locations consist of large portions that are high in fat, sugar, sodium, and ultimately, calories. These items are also typically low in essential nutrients. When nutritionally inadequate foods are available and promoted to children at school, it becomes increasingly difficult for children to “balance out” their excesses with healthy foods.

**A New Standard in School Nutrition.** In 1999, under a grant from The California Endowment, the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) began educating policy makers in California about the importance of nutrition and physical activity for children and adolescents. As part of that effort, CCPHA established a [panel of experts](#) in 2001 to develop [recommendations for nutrient standards for competitive foods](#) (foods sold outside of the lunch and breakfast programs) in California elementary and secondary schools.

The Panel developed nutrient standard recommendations for beverages, fat and saturated fat, sugar, portion sizes, and the availability of fruits and vegetables. (The recommendations are available in the [full report](#).) The Panel encouraged local, state, and national policy makers to adopt these standards as one step toward addressing the current epidemic of childhood obesity. Since then, CCPHA has helped lead the advocacy effort for healthful change in California schools, with increasing levels of success.

### Policy Steps Along the Way

Based on the standards recommended by the 2001 Advisory Panel (the expert panel), CCPHA worked with the California legislature and the Los Angeles Unified School District to enact policies related to nutrition standards for California schools:

- **September 15, 2005: SB 12 (Escutia) & SB 965 (Escutia).** Governor Schwarzenegger signed SB 12 and SB 965, landmark legislation establishing the most rigorous nutrition standards in the country for foods and beverages sold on public school campuses, grades K-12. If successfully implemented, these standards will help maintain children’s health, ensure that children are ready to learn, and guarantee that school environments support parents and teachers in encouraging children to establish the healthy eating behaviors they should maintain throughout their lives.
- **October 28, 2003: LAUSD School Food Policy Reforms.** The Los Angeles Unified School District Board voted unanimously to set nutrition standards for all foods on all school campuses, beginning July 1, 2004. LAUSD was among the first large school districts in the nation to support children in making healthy eating choices by setting nutrition standards for all [competitive foods](#) and [beverages sold](#) to students on campuses, grades K-12.
- **September 16th, 2003: SB 677 (Ortiz).** Governor Gray Davis signed SB 677 into law, ensuring that only healthy beverages are sold on elementary, middle, and junior high school campuses beginning July 1, 2004.
- **October 14, 2001: SB 19 (Escutia).** Governor Gray Davis signed SB 19, establishing a statewide [pilot program](#) to determine the financial impact on schools that implement rigorous nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold outside of the school meal program (foods sold a la carte, in vending machines, in school stores and as fundraisers).