

Healthy School Choices for Healthy School Kids

- Whereas, Proper nutrition is conducive to growth, development, systemic health, oral health and learning; and
- Whereas, The National Center for Health Statistics estimates that 15.3 percent of children aged 6 to 11 years and 15.5 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 19 in the United States are seriously overweight, a prevalence that has tripled for adolescents in the past 2 decades, with an additional estimated 31 percent of girls and 28 percent of boys more modestly overweight; and
- Whereas, In children and adolescents, being overweight is generally caused by unhealthy eating patterns, lack of physical activity, or a combination of the two, with genetics and lifestyle also playing important roles; and
- Whereas, Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults, with potential for the associated risk factors for heart disease (coronary plaque formation), type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and other health problems, said risk factors being present both in overweight children and adolescents and then in adults; and
- Whereas, It has long been known that increased sugar in the diet contributes not only to becoming overweight and obese, but to developing dental caries (cavities) and dental erosion; and
- Whereas, Soft drinks are the biggest source of sugars in the American diet (each 12-ounce serving of a carbonated, sweetened soft drink contains the equivalent of 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 Calories), accounting for one-third of all sugar in the diet, with each man, woman and child in America drinking 576 twelve-ounce soft drinks per year or what amounts to over 53 gallons of carbonated soft drink per year per person, an amount surpassing all other beverages, including water; and
- Whereas, Americans now drink over twice as much soda per person as they did 25 years ago, and while teens drank twice as much milk as soda 20 years ago, teens now consume twice as much soda as milk, a factor making teenage girls more likely candidates for osteoporosis when they are older; and
- Whereas, The sales of soft drinks under exclusive contracts are, according to the Government Accounting Office, the most common and most lucrative commercial activities in schools, with the sales of soft drinks in schools having, by their visibility and availability, a dramatic influence on soft drink consumption patterns of children and youth; and
- Whereas, Many of the exclusive “pouring rights” soft drink contracts have provisions to increase the percentage of profits that schools receive when soft drink sales volume increases, thus offering a substantial incentive for schools to promote consumption by adding vending machines, increasing times they are available, and marketing the products to students, which changes the school’s role from simple provider of vending machines to active peddler of the sodas; and
- Whereas, Children are being given the message that good nutrition is merely an academic exercise that is not supported by the school administration when they are taught in the classroom about good nutrition and the value of healthy food choices, only to

find themselves surrounded in school by vending machines and snack bars offering low nutrition, empty calorie options; and

- Whereas, The American Academy of Pediatrics has adopted and implemented a policy stating that pediatricians should work to eliminate sweetened drinks in schools; now, therefore, be it
- Resolved, That Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, through its member councils and units, oppose contractual arrangements that influence consumption patterns that promote increased access to soft drinks for children and adolescents and organize efforts to encourage local boards of education and school and school district administrators to refrain from entering into same; and be it further
- Resolved, That Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers urge its local councils and units to investigate the extent of beverage company commercialization presently existing or under consideration in their local district; and be it further
- Resolved, That Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, through its councils and units, encourage their local boards of education to adopt policies that ensure positive public school-commercial sector relations, and guard against commercial partnerships that require school districts to advertise and promote sales as a condition for receiving funds, products, materials or equipment; and be it further
- Resolved, That Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, through its councils and units, encourage local boards of education and school and school district administrators to make all decisions regarding the sale of foods, in addition to the National School Lunch Program meals, on the basis of nutrition goals, not profit making; and be it further
- Resolved, That Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, through its councils and units, encourage local boards of education to set policy eliminating the sale of sweetened drink in schools in favor of nutritious food/drink offerings, or at least, prohibiting the sale of soft drinks and other foods of minimal nutritional value throughout schools from the beginning of the school day until the end of the school day; and be it further
- Resolved, That Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers, through its councils and units, encourage local boards of education and school and school district administrators to integrate the school nutrition program with education in order to contribute to the lifelong development of healthy eating habits in our children and youth and send a consistent and strong message to our children and youth concerning eating habits.