

# STEPPING UP to the PLATE



TRANSFORMING SCHOOL FOOD IN NEW ORLEANS

A report by the New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee (FPAC) was formed by the New Orleans City Council in 2007 as a broad-based collaborative effort to identify ways that our city and state officials can support equitable access to fresh healthy food. The work of FPAC is supported by the time and commitment of a team of dedicated public health and food advocacy professionals. This Steering Committee is represented by members of the following organizations: the Edible Schoolyard New Orleans, Share Our Strength, the Emeril Lagasse Foundation, The Food Trust, the Louisiana Public Health Institute, marketumbrella.org, the New Orleans Food and Farm Network, the Prevention Research Center at Tulane University, the Renaissance Project, Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana, and Seedco Financial Services, Inc.



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Photos for this report were provided by Share Our Strength and Edible Schoolyard New Orleans.

# DEAR FRIENDS

On behalf of the New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee (FPAC) and its School Food Initiative, we are eager to share with you our recommendations for improving the quality, experience, and reach of school food in New Orleans. Both pervasive childhood hunger and the obesity epidemic threaten the health of our children and our city. One in five children in Louisiana is at risk of hunger and the same proportion is obese. Louisiana's rates of obesity and related illnesses are some of the highest in the nation. Turning the tides of childhood obesity and hunger by changing the way our children eat at school has become a national priority supported by First Lady Michelle Obama and the White House. This growing national momentum for school food reform reinforces ongoing local efforts. The post-Katrina landscape which has prompted the reshaping of our education system could position New Orleans as a leader in innovation and effectiveness in improving school-based feeding programs.

While there is no silver bullet to end childhood hunger or poor nutrition, transforming school-based food programs is likely the single most effective strategy to improving the health and well-being of children. With the trend toward extended school days and school years (particularly in public schools in New Orleans), school-age children consume at least half of their daily calories on the school campus. Communities and school districts throughout the country are overhauling child nutrition programs to include healthier, fresher foods to support the health of schoolchildren; we can do the same in New Orleans.

We envision a vibrant, healthy community of New Orleans schools that not only provides nutritious foods to all children but also supports Louisiana's economy by purchasing fresh foods from local farms, fisheries, and businesses. We believe that by offering quality meals, schools will fulfill their educational missions. Nourishing the bodies and minds of students with the healthful foods they deserve will enable them to thrive academically and physically. Healthy diets and lifestyles undoubtedly support excellence within schools, the community, and the entire nation.

FPAC was formed in 2007 as an advisory body to the New Orleans City Council and is comprised of public health professionals, school leaders, food service management companies, food service directors, educators, students, local food and child welfare advocates, nonprofit leaders, academic experts, healthcare representatives, anti-hunger and anti-poverty advocates, government officials, and other stakeholders. This diverse group convened monthly throughout the 2009-2010 school year, and many members participated in smaller workgroups as well.

FPAC members researched best practices and model school meal programs, identified barriers to transforming school food programs, and worked collectively to form the policy recommendations contained in this report. The state, the city, school districts, and even individual schools can make improvements in school meals and this report outlines practical steps that each entity can take. Major areas of focus include increasing food access, expanding the reach of child nutrition programs, improving food quality and nutritional value, and building a strong food culture and vision in our schools and in our city. While a coordinated approach on many fronts by all stakeholders is necessary for systemic change, we believe this report will offer concrete, short and longer-term steps that can be taken at both the policy and practical levels to make needed improvements in school nutrition.

Several unique, effective programs already exist in New Orleans: Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools, the Edible Schoolyard New Orleans, and Meet Me at the Market are all described in this report. Additionally, many schools are incorporating hands-on cooking, food systems education, and gardening into the school experience to support cafeteria reform efforts.

Abolitionist leader, Frederick Douglass said "it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." This report provides a starting place for transforming the way we nourish our schoolchildren so they can succeed in school and in life. We hope you will join us to make this vision for school food a reality in New Orleans.

Sincerely,



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Executive Director  
Edible Schoolyard New Orleans

Co-Chair  
Food Policy Advisory Committee



Ashley Graham  
Louisiana Director  
Share Our Strength

Co-Chair  
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## MISSION

We, the members of the New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee (FPAC), believe that all school children deserve equal access to fresh and nutritious food served through school breakfast, lunch, and snack programs. Each school day, we have the opportunity to provide healthy, nutritious food that will make a positive impact on the health of kids throughout New Orleans. FPAC is committed to researching best practices and model programs throughout the country and engaging school leaders, food service providers, and cafeteria reformers to develop a set of recommendations that will improve the health of school age children in New Orleans.

## VISION

We envision a vibrant, healthy community of schools that provide fresh, nutritious meals and snacks to school children within a context that promotes and supports our local food economy by connecting local farmers, producers, and fisheries to school cafeterias, food service providers, early childhood centers, community centers, and other venues that provide opportunities for healthy food access.

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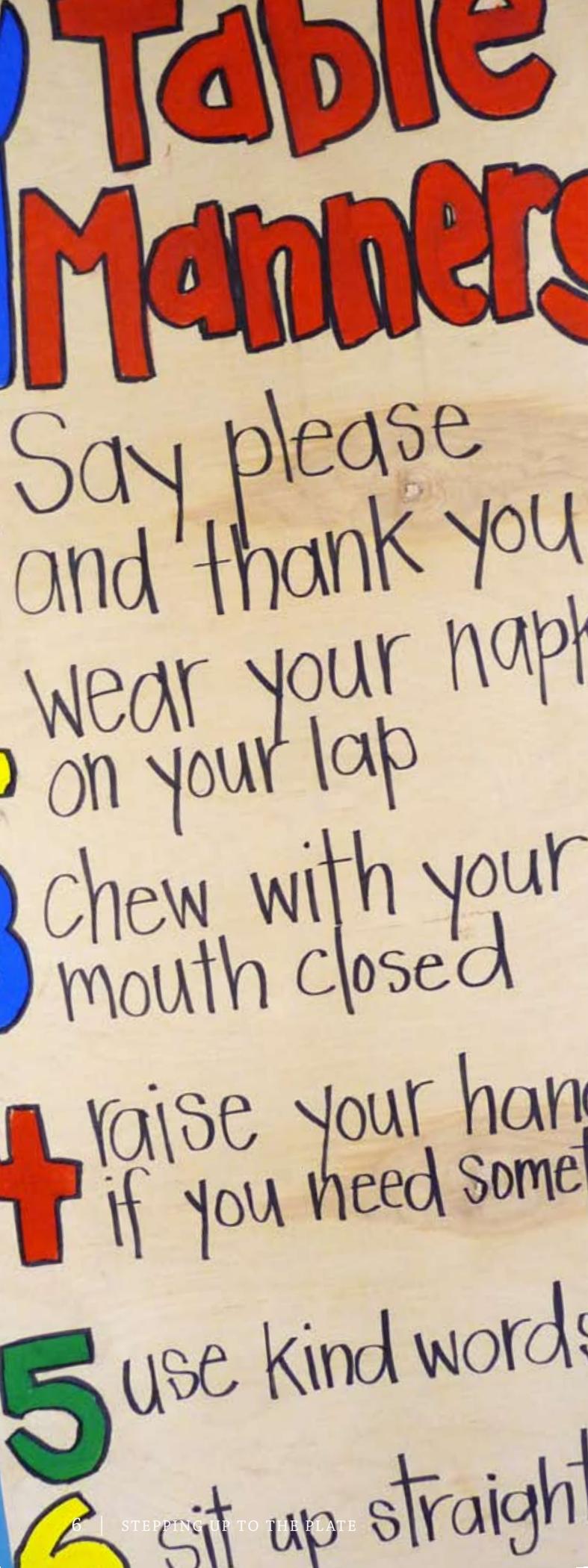
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*\*Endorsement of this report does not create a  
contractual or legal obligation*



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Anti-Hunger Advocates  
Public Health Advocates  
Charter School Representatives

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FPAC would like to thank the following experts who presented best practices and models from around the country:

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# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend that schools, the Louisiana Department of Education, and the United States Department of Agriculture increase the reimbursement rate for free and reduced price meals, maximize the use of existing federal and state nutrition program resources, and make it easier for children to enroll in these programs.
2. We recommend that school food service authorities and food service management companies serve breakfast, lunch, and snacks that exceed United States Department of Agriculture minimum nutrition standards and provide students with the best possible nutrition.
3. We recommend that schools integrate healthy foods into their school culture through existing curricula, enrichment activities, field trips, after-school programming, and events.
4. We recommend that each school in New Orleans create a wellness policy that reflects the values and culture of their school and use it as an accountability mechanism to ensure that only high-quality, nutritious foods are served to children throughout the school day.
5. We recommend that the city, school districts, and individual schools take steps to ensure that all schools have access to the kitchen infrastructure and equipment required to provide students with fresh, nutritious food.
6. We recommend that school food authorities, food service management companies, the city, and the state support workforce development for school food service staff and recognize the contributions of all school staff who cook and serve meals as essential to bringing healthful foods to students.
7. We recommend that schools purchase products from regional farmers, fisheries, dairies, and other businesses.
8. We recommend that 100% of foods sold outside of the school meals program in elementary, middle, and high schools meet or exceed Louisiana's state nutrition standards.



# INTRODUCTION

Success in school is vital to every child, our communities, and the nation. Children need a healthy diet consisting of plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins in order to learn, grow, and thrive.

Health and education are inextricably intertwined. Schools cannot achieve their central mission of education when students are not well and ready to learn. While schools alone cannot eradicate hunger or solve the childhood obesity epidemic, they can make strides in addressing these challenges with strong school-based policies and programs to help children eat well. The First Lady and the White House recognize the critical role of school-based programming. They are bringing national attention to the issue and adding to the resources available to schools and their partners that are undertaking changes.

## CHILDHOOD HUNGER AND FOOD INSECURITY

One in every five Louisiana children under 18 is at risk of hunger today, and Louisiana has the nation's highest rate of childhood hunger amongst children ages 0-5.<sup>1</sup> The state has the third highest child poverty rate – affecting 28% of all children.<sup>2</sup> Schoolchildren who experience hunger and malnourishment face serious consequences – they are sick and absent more frequently, they have more discipline problems, they lack concentration, and their academic performance is diminished.<sup>3</sup> Most childhood hunger and food insecurity in the United States is attributable to low-wage employment among parents, lack of access to federal nutrition and economic support programs, and limited information about assistance available to families in poverty.

The national economic crisis, Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike, and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill have exacerbated Louisiana's decades-old struggle with hunger. In New Orleans, a city famous for its food and restaurant culture, there is considerable food insecurity and hunger. On average, there is just one grocery store for every 15,700 residents,<sup>4</sup> compared with the national average of one supermarket for every 8,600 residents.<sup>5,6</sup> Additionally, only half of eligible New Orleans families access benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps).<sup>7</sup>

For many low-income children, schools are their most consistent source of nourishment and that is all the more reason for schools to serve meals of the highest nutritional value and quality.

EFFECTS OF FOOD INSECURITY		
Physical Health	Mental Health	Academic Performance
<b>Hunger and food insecurity among children are linked to:</b>		
low-birth weight	behavioral and emotional problems	academic problems
fair/poor" health	lower social skills	lower arithmetic scores
hospitalization	difficulty getting along with other children	repeating a grade
Iron Deficiency Anemia	clinical levels of psychosocial dysfunction	suspension from school
development of chronic illness	thoughts of death, a desire to die, or attempted suicide	higher levels of hyperactivity, absenteeism, and tardiness
stomachaches, headaches, and colds	aggression, anxiety and depression	
increased BMI and weight gain		

### DEFINITIONS

**Hunger** - The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a recurrent or involuntary lack of access to food. Many scientists consider hunger to be chronically inadequate nutritional intake due to low incomes, not just lack of food.

**Food Insecurity** - The limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods. Results in involuntarily cutting back on meals and food portions or not knowing the source of the next meal.

**Obesity** - abnormal or excess body fat accumulation that may impair health and results from energy imbalance – consuming more calories than one burns through physical activity and normal growth.

### TEACHERS SURVEY\*

Every day, teachers in America bear witness to the real life implications of childhood hunger. 63% of teachers polled spend their own money to buy food for their students.

\*Share Our Strength. Hunger in America's Classrooms: Share Our Strength's Teachers Report. 2009:3. [http://strength.org/teachers/assets/SOS\\_Report\\_MedRes\\_Final.pdf](http://strength.org/teachers/assets/SOS_Report_MedRes_Final.pdf). Accessed June 17, 2010.

# CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND NUTRITION

Childhood obesity is one of America's most pressing health challenges. Louisiana's rates of obesity and related illnesses are some of the highest in the nation. In Louisiana in 2007, more than one in three (36%) 10 to 17 year olds was overweight and one in five (20%) was obese.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, minority and low-income children are disproportionately affected by obesity and poor nutrition.<sup>9</sup>

Overweight and obese children are at higher risk than their healthy-weight peers for a host of serious health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, asthma, bone and joint problems, certain cancers, and psychological problems such as poor self-esteem. Many obese children suffer health problems previously considered to be "adult" illnesses, such as Type 2 diabetes. They are also many times more likely to become obese adults.<sup>10</sup>

Obesity poses a serious financial threat to the U.S. economy and health care system, with an estimated annual cost of \$139 billion in medical expenses and indirect costs such as lost productivity.<sup>11</sup>

Hunger and obesity may coexist for many families living below the poverty level. This seemingly counterintuitive relationship is partly due to the body's adaptation to a cycle of food shortages followed by increased consumption of high-calorie foods, resulting in increased body mass.<sup>12</sup> Food shortages frequently occur when funds from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) do not last a family the full month. Additionally, low-income neighborhoods often have few, if any, fresh food retailers. So, families eat the foods that are accessible and affordable which are often high in calories and low in nutritional value.

Moreover, national studies show that most U.S. schoolchildren's diets do not meet the recommendations for good health outlined in the federal government's Dietary Guidelines for Americans.<sup>13</sup> Children's average consumption of vegetables and whole grains fall far short of recommended amounts. They also consume too little fruit, milk, lean meat, and beans. Children eat excessive amounts of sodium and a large portion of their total calories comes from added sugars and saturated fat. This pattern of eating is unhealthy for any child and puts them at risk for health problems throughout their life.

The environments we live in and the public policies our government enacts directly impact our eating habits and physical activity.<sup>14</sup> Because children spend much of their day at school, it is important for schools to set policies for nutritious foods and to establish an environment that promotes healthy eating.



## THE MILITARY/NATIONAL SECURITY CONNECTION

Congress created the National School Lunch Program after an investigation into the health of young men rejected in the World War II draft showed a connection between physical deficiencies and childhood malnutrition. In response, Congress enacted the 1946 National School Lunch Act as a "measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children."<sup>\*</sup> Today, 9 million (27%) of 17-24 year olds in the U.S. are too fat to serve in the military. Being overweight is the leading medical reason for rejection from military service. Between 1995 and 2008, the proportion of potential recruits failing physicals each year due to overweight rose nearly 70%. "When that many young adults can't fight because of their weight, it affects our national preparedness and national security," says retired rear admiral Jamie Barnett, a member of Mission: Readiness. The group supports a reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act that would improve food in schools by adopting more stringent nutrition standards, fund proven school-based nutrition and physical activity interventions, and increase funding to make school meals more nutritious, as well as increase the number of children who have access to those meals.<sup>\*\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>Source: Food Research Action Center. [http://frac.org/html/federal\\_food\\_programs/programs/nslp.html](http://frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/nslp.html) . Updated December 2009. Accessed June 17, 2010.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Source: Mission: Readiness: Military Leaders for Kids. Too Fat to Fight: Retired military leaders want junk food out of America's schools. 2010. [http://cdn.missionreadiness.org/MR\\_Too\\_Fat\\_to\\_Fight-1.pdf](http://cdn.missionreadiness.org/MR_Too_Fat_to_Fight-1.pdf). Accessed June 17, 2010.

# SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT

Educational settings are ideal locations for addressing childhood hunger and obesity because many children consume at least half of their daily calories at school through the federally-supported National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).<sup>15</sup> In 2010, over 84% of students in New Orleans public schools, or more than 32,000 students from low-income families, were eligible for free and reduced price meals through NSLP and SBP.<sup>16</sup> These programs have the potential to provide nearly all schoolchildren with access to nutritious, low-cost meals to support their development and health.

But school meals need improvement. The third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study found that fewer than one third of schools in the NSLP offered lunches that met federal standards for total fat and saturated fat. Additionally, 42% of school lunches failed to offer a fresh fruit or raw vegetable daily. Processed foods such as pizza, chicken nuggets, and beef patties accounted for 40% of the lunch entrées available and were among the top contributors of calories, fat, and sodium.<sup>17</sup> Stronger standards and efforts are needed to bring schools closer to meeting the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans<sup>18</sup> and the Institute of Medicine's recommendations on school meals<sup>19</sup> and food in schools,<sup>20</sup> which were developed at the request of USDA and Congress.

Funding for reimbursable school meals flows from the USDA through the Louisiana Department of Education (LADOE) and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LADAF) to local school food authorities (SFAs). The USDA sets minimum nutritional standards for school meals and establishes administrative regulations. The LADOE approves entities to be SFAs, provides technical assistance, and ensures compliance. The LADAF distributes commodity foods to SFAs which range from chicken nuggets and burger patties to fruits and vegetables. SFAs can be individual schools or entire districts and are responsible for the day to day operations of school food service including: hiring staff, enrolling students, maintaining program data, submitting reimbursement data to LADOE, maintaining kitchen equipment, developing menus and recipes, purchasing food, and preparing and serving meals. SFAs have the option to maintain all operations in-house or to contract with a food service management company (FSMC) for some of these functions.

In addition to sourcing commodity foods, SFAs may also forge local food connections through Farm to School programs

which make important purchasing links between schools and local farms, fisheries, and dairies. It also provides agriculture, health, and nutrition education opportunities that help students understand where their food comes from and how their food choices impact their bodies, the environment, and their communities at large. Farm to School programs are gaining popularity and traction around the country and are supported by the White House, the USDA, and the newly created Louisiana Sustainable Local Food Policy Council. The amount of liability insurance that SFAs and FSMCs routinely require of vendors can be cost prohibitive for small and mid-size farmers. In addition to addressing this barrier, successful Farm to School programs must create school and farm networks, build distribution systems, and share cross-discipline information.

Unfortunately, some children who are eligible for free and reduced price school meals do not receive them; therefore, millions of the federal reimbursement dollars already allocated for school meal programs are never used. There are myriad barriers to enrolling in school nutrition programs. Literacy issues may prevent parents from filling out annual enrollment forms. Social stigma may prevent parents and children from requesting free meals and transportation schedules may keep children from arriving at school in time to eat breakfast. Other challenges for child nutrition programs include insufficient federal meal reimbursement rates (which keep providers from purchasing healthful foods), inadequate kitchen equipment and infrastructure to prepare healthful meals, and insufficient investment in a skilled cafeteria workforce.

## FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT RATES

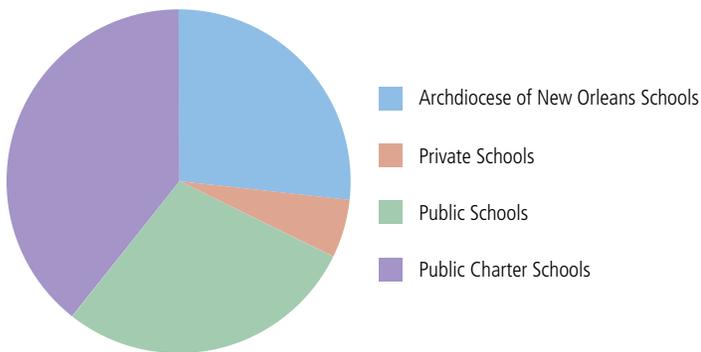
Federal support comes in the form of a cash reimbursement for each meal served. The 2009-10 school year basic federal reimbursement rates were:

	Lunch	Breakfast	Snack	Total Per Student
Free	\$2.68	\$1.46	\$.74	\$4.88
Reduced Price	\$2.28	\$1.16	\$0.37	\$3.81
Paid	\$0.25	\$0.26	\$0.06	\$0.57

Another significant challenge to ensuring children eat well in schools is competitive foods, or foods and beverages that are sold outside of meal programs in vending machines, a la carte lines, school stores, concessions, and through fundraisers. Unlike school meals, the USDA has very limited authority to regulate competitive foods, which are widely available, particularly in middle and high schools. The most common competitive food purchases are high-calorie, low-nutrient items including deserts, candy, salty snacks, and sugary drinks.<sup>21</sup> A recent Health Affairs review of 23 peer-reviewed studies confirms that students have better diets when unhealthy competitive foods are not sold in their

school.<sup>22</sup> Research further suggests that a child’s risk for obesity increases when unhealthy competitive foods are sold on campus, especially among middle school students.<sup>23</sup>

One strategy for ensuring all foods in schools are healthy is for schools to enact wellness policies. In the 2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, Congress required each local school district participating in the USDA school meals program to establish a local school wellness policy. Each policy must include nutrition guidelines for all foods available at school including competitive foods, as well as guidelines for school meals; goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and wellness activities; community involvement in the development of the policy; and a plan for measuring policy implementation.<sup>24</sup> The school environment undoubtedly shapes the foods that children eat. On the other hand, efforts to teach children to eat healthy are seriously undermined if junk food is sold on campus. For better or for worse, the school food environment helps to model and develop student’s eating habits.



## THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND SCHOOL FOOD IN NEW ORLEANS

The school landscape in New Orleans changed significantly after Hurricane Katrina. Before the disaster, the majority of public schools in New Orleans were classified by the state as failing. Post-Katrina, management of these failing schools was transferred from the Orleans Parish School District to the Recovery School District (RSD). Furthermore, operation of many of the schools in both districts was granted to Charter Management Organizations (CMOs). This resulted in a complex education system comprised of parochial schools, private schools, district-operated public schools, and public charter schools. Public schools are now operated by New Orleans Public Schools, the RSD, and 36 different CMOs. Each year as buildings have been repaired, new schools have opened and some existing schools have moved campuses. As a result, schools are at various stages of start-up and/or operation.

Governance of public schools is decentralized, with no single entity responsible for most aspects of school operation. Decisions about school meals, curriculum, competitive foods, and wellness policies are determined by district administration for some schools and by charter administration for others. School food service in New Orleans takes many different forms. Some schools prepare and serve all of their own meals in-house, some contract with a private food service management company, and others contract with a district child nutrition department. This complex school food provider system necessitates engaging many decision makers to improve school food throughout the city.

The School Facilities Master Plan for Orleans Parish calls for all newly built schools to be equipped with kitchens that would allow staff to prepare fresh meals from scratch. However, kitchen and cafeteria facilities at existing school campuses differ greatly. Some campuses are completely modular and others are shared by two schools; some have functioning kitchens on site and others must have food transported to the school; some have cafeterias and others serve meals in the classroom. Additionally, as schools have rebuilt hurricane damaged kitchen facilities, incompatibilities between new equipment and outdated plumbing and wiring have been discovered, necessitating funding in excess of what was provided by recovery efforts. Furthermore, many schools lack adequate cold food storage for fresh foods. This diverse environment affects the variety, freshness, and nutritional quality of foods served to students.

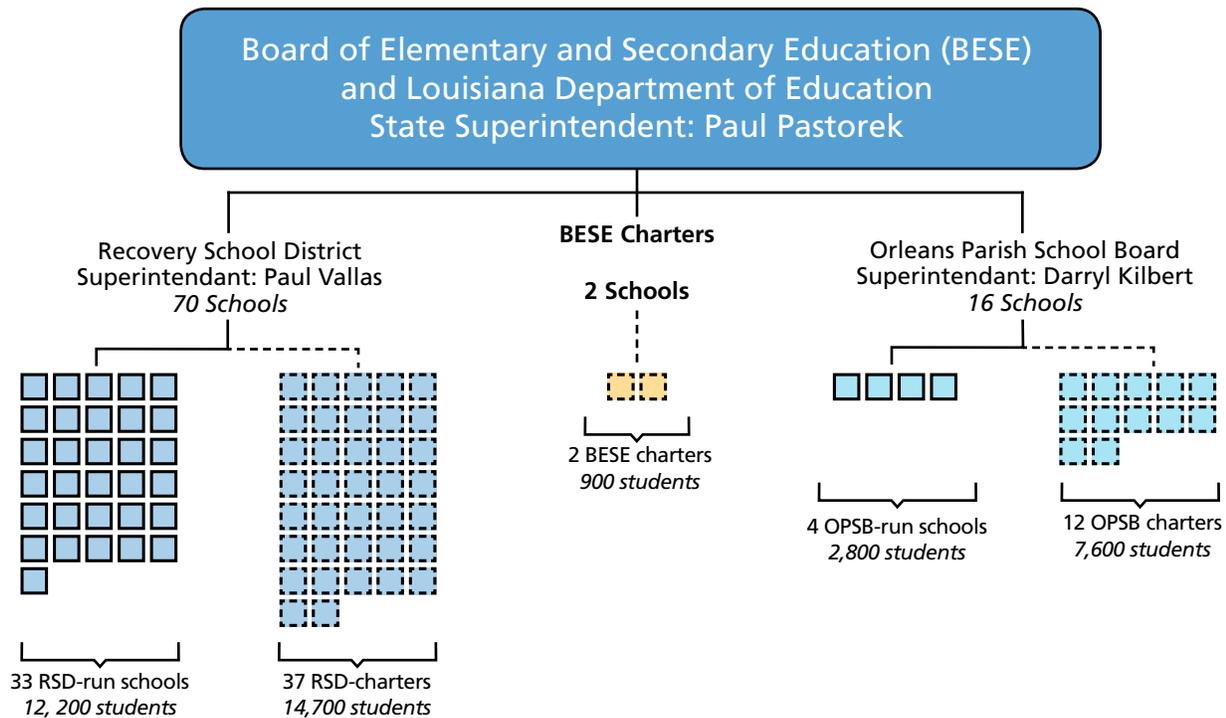
While the schools in New Orleans face challenges unique to their individual situations, they have the same unparalleled opportunity as other schools in this country to promote children’s wellness by creating environments in which children eat healthy foods, take part in regular physical activity, and learn lifelong skills for healthy eating and active living.

## LOCAL STRENGTHS AND SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

Schools, elected officials, and community partners have all demonstrated support for healthy school environments in New Orleans and throughout Louisiana. For example, expanding on USDA requirements for all school districts to have a wellness policy, Louisiana state law also requires districts to have wellness councils. These councils can serve the function of defining school food culture and content of cafeteria meals. Louisiana is among the growing number of states that have passed nutrition standards for competitive

# Public Schools in New Orleans

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



### Total: 88 schools & 38,200 students

For the 2010-2011 school year there expected to be 26 RSD run schools and 44 RSD charters

Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, Tulane University. March 2010

foods and beverages sold on public school campuses during the school day (see summary on page 22).

New Orleans possesses a unique set of assets that make it an ideal setting for improving school meals and offering food-based education. The decentralization of school administration allows individual schools the freedom to make autonomous, personalized decisions about curricula, as well as the food served in their cafeterias and vending machines. Whereas district-wide changes to educational and school meal programming can be challenging to implement, individual schools can take steps to integrate healthful foods into their school meals. Additionally, many schools in the city already have kitchens outfitted with equipment necessary for preparing healthful meals.

The region's unique culinary and agricultural heritage, coupled with a culture of celebrating local food, makes an ideal setting for creating a new generation of New Orleanians who embrace fresh, local, nutritious foods. Louisiana produces a wide variety of fresh foods such as strawberries, citrus, greens,

sweet potatoes, and seafood. Schools can improve the health of their students and staff by incorporating these nutritious ingredients into their meals while also supporting local farmers and fisheries. New Orleans' many farmers markets, community gardens, and urban farms also provide venues for educational field trips. Additionally, New Orleans is home to a multitude of chefs who can impart enthusiasm and cooking knowledge to students, parents, and school staff.

New Orleans students have demonstrated interest in changing their schools' food environments. Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools, a group comprised of students from schools throughout the city, recently formulated recommendations for improving school meals. They suggested that schools should offer local foods and dishes, provide vegetarian entrée options, build school gardens, allow children to eat with real plates and silverware, and provide inviting cafeterias.

Responding to the call of their students and health officials, many schools throughout New Orleans have begun to provide healthful food offerings, nutrition education, gardening and

cooking programs, and many other innovative ways to engage students, parents, and the community in adopting healthy eating habits. Many of these changes and programs have been accomplished through school partnerships with businesses and non-profit organizations. Some examples of successful programs include:

- The Edible Schoolyard New Orleans integrates hands-on garden and cooking into the K-8 curriculum and school culture at Samuel J. Green Charter School.
- Warren Easton Charter High School installed a cafeteria salad bar in 2009, improved healthy vending options to exceed state standards, provides nutrition education for students and parents in partnership with LSU AgCenter, and has an active school wellness council that recently ratified a comprehensive school wellness policy.
- From 2007-2009, O. Perry Walker High School offered food systems education and cooking class curricula developed by the New Orleans Food and Farm Network.
- Science and Math Charter High School created a fresh fruit smoothie bar.
- FirstLine Schools and its food service provider, Sodexo, have increased servings of whole grains, fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and local produce and reduced the amount of processed foods served at Samuel J Green Charter School and Arthur Ashe Charter School.
- Schools throughout the city have installed various types of gardens.
- The LSU AgCenter and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation are partnering with elementary schools in Louisiana to provide the Smart Bodies interactive health education program.
- Our School at Blair Grocery works with at-risk youth to build their leadership in creating a sustainable food system, operating a 1/2 acre farm and weekly farmers market in the Lower Ninth Ward, and partnering with small farmers in rural Louisiana to increase access to local, healthy food.
- Marketumbrella.org offers market field trips for schools, coordinates farm field trips for students, and funds food and garden programs for children.
- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation partners with many schools to create and implement wellness councils and wellness policies.
- Healthy Lifestyle Choices (HLC) oversees the implementation of the HLC health education curriculum to many schools, provides professional development opportunities, and has piloted a salad bar program in multiple elementary schools.
- The Backpack Program administered by Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana provides children at chronic risk for hunger with backpacks of food for consumption during non-school times.
- 9-A-Day The Head Start Way is an early childhood intervention that provides fresh produce, a nutrition newsletter, and nutrition activities to children and families from Head Start programs throughout New Orleans.
- Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools is a citywide group of students who developed their own “12 Recommendations for School Food and Cafeterias,” conducted taste tests and school food surveys with their peers, shares their perspectives with decision makers, and will continue to

grade schools’ implementation of their recommendations using school food report cards.

- For the 2010-2011 school year contract between the Recovery School District and ARAMARK Education, reimbursable meals and competitive foods will meet the certification for the Healthier U.S. Schools Challenge Gold criteria.
- Nearby St. Tammany Parish Schools has a nationally recognized model for healthy food services and is willing to share best practices.

Regulatory barriers, limited organizational capacity, and budget constraints have restricted expansion of these types of programs across all schools. Over the course of the last school year, FPAC members examined these challenges, identified opportunities to improve school food in New Orleans, and explored model programs and best practices from across the country. Based on this research, we recommend the following policy changes in order to create a healthy food environment in all New Orleans schools.

*“Right there, in the middle of every school day, lie time and energy already devoted to the feeding of children. We have the power to turn that daily school lunch from an afterthought into a joyous education, a way of caring for our health, our environment, and our community.”*

*– Alice Waters*



*“Every day I get a chance to do something new... I learn to cook, I learn how to grow food, and I learned how to be myself.”*

*- Fifth Grader*

**1** We recommend that schools, the Louisiana Department of Education, and the United States Department of Agriculture increase the reimbursement rate for free and reduced meals, maximize the use of existing federal and state nutrition program resources, and make it easier for children to enroll in these programs. Ensuring access to healthy food means federal programs designed to help schools feed low-income students must reach all eligible children. Federal meal reimbursement rates must be raised to ensure that schools can afford to purchase the healthful ingredients necessary for nutritious meals. The Louisiana Department of Education and schools should reduce barriers to enrollment in free and reduced-price meal programs and they should pursue federal sources of capital funding. We recommend the following strategies:

**The United States federal government should:**

- Increase the USDA free and reduced-price meal reimbursement rate to schools.\*

**The Louisiana Department of Education (LADOE) should:**

- Streamline child nutrition program application processes for school districts and for families.
- Increase the number of summer sites that offer meals to children and reduce administration burden for entities acting as summer feeding sites by encouraging use of the Seamless Summer Feeding application process.
- Expand the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in Louisiana in order to provide free fruit and vegetable snacks to more students.
- Participate in the After School Supper Program, a current pilot program that is anticipated to be expanded through the next federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act.
- Provide resources for teachers to identify hungry students.
- Improve data collection systems for the Child Nutrition Program, Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), and CDC School Health Profiles.

**Schools and school districts should:**

- Apply to the LADOE to participate in Special Assistance (Provision 2 or 3) to provide free, universal breakfast and lunch to students in schools where the majority qualify for free meals.
- Protect low-income students from stigma by using point-of-sale technology, which protects information about which students eat free and reduced price lunches.
- Address gaps in out-of-school feeding by partnering with non-profit organizations to offer backpack programs, which send children home with healthful meals and snacks.

*\*Current Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation passed by the Senate Agriculture Committee contains a provision to help schools meet increased nutritional requirements by increasing the reimbursement rate by six cents per meal for certified school food authorities; the increase will be dependent on performance.*



A school that utilizes Provision 2 offers meals at no charge to all students regardless of income. The school then claims federal reimbursement at the correct income category for each student and pays the total cost for ineligible students and the difference for reduced cost students.

**Schools can increase participation by:**

- Assisting low-literacy families with applications
- Using an electronic point of sale system for data collection
- Applying to LADOE to serve breakfast
- Actively marketing participation in the breakfast program
- Coordinating bus and cafeteria schedules to allow time for students to eat breakfast
- Ensuring that the kitchen has sufficient storage and equipment for breakfast components
- Exploring healthy hot breakfast, breakfast in the classroom, or Grab-n-Go options
- Promoting the importance of eating a healthy breakfast

**Federal capital funds can be used to purchase:**

- Ovens and tilt skillets for preparing healthy entrées.
- Walk-in coolers for fresh fruits, vegetables, and salad bars.
- Dishwashing equipment to reduce use of disposable dishes.



## 2 We recommend that school food service authorities and food service management companies serve breakfast, lunch, and snacks that exceed United States Department of Agriculture minimum nutrition standards and provide students with the best possible nutrition.\*

The existing USDA minimum nutrition standards for school meals, which were established in 1995, are not sufficient to ensure that students select healthy, appealing food options every day; nor do they reflect advances in dietary guidance or address the childhood obesity epidemic. Placing top priority on the nutritional quality of school meals, rather than their cost, is an investment in students who are ready to learn and in a healthier community. Improving the quality of school food will require addressing financial, infrastructure, and logistical barriers. We recommend the following strategies:

### The United States federal government should:

- Improve the quality of foods available through the USDA commodities program by including a greater variety of fresh items and minimizing processed foods.

### School food authorities and food service management companies can implement changes over time. We recommend that the following standards be implemented in part during the 2010-2011 school year and in full by the 2015-2016 school year.\*

- All school meals and snacks served meet or exceed the USDA Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning Approach<sup>25</sup>, the USDA Healthier U.S. School Challenge Silver award criteria<sup>26</sup>, and the following standards:
  - Foods are prepared from fresh ingredients to the extent possible. The quantity of processed foods, saturated fat, sodium, and sugar served is reduced.
  - At least two non-fried vegetables and a salad bar or prepared entrée salads are offered every day at lunch. At least one fruit is offered every day at breakfast and at lunch. Fresh or frozen vegetables and fruits are preferred over canned; canned fruit must be canned in its own juice.
  - At least one whole grain item is offered every day.
  - The following protein options are given priority: lean red meat, lean pork, skinless poultry, lean deli meats, fat-free or low-fat cheese, beans, and tofu.
  - Beverage options include only water, 100% fruit/vegetable juice, and skim or low-fat (1%) (preferably unflavored) milk or nutritionally equivalent non-dairy alternatives.
  - Meals feature locally grown or produced ingredients to the extent possible and reflect the food cultures of the student body.
  - Vegetarian options including, but not limited to, salads are offered regularly.
  - Free, safe drinking water is available at every meal and snack.
  - Provide a breakfast option that includes a lean protein, a fruit, and a grain that is not a pastry.

### Schools and districts should:

- Maximize the number of students who eat breakfast by developing a plan to serve children who arrive late.
- Negotiate contracts for food service provision that include criteria for fresh, healthy school meals and snacks.

\* At printing time of this document, changes to the Child Nutrition Reauthorization were being examined by the United States Senate Agriculture Committee. Any federal food criteria changes to school lunch, breakfast, and snack programs should be incorporated into the criteria set forth in this document.

The USDA Healthier U.S. Schools Challenge offers monetary awards to schools that meet wellness criteria.

HUSSC criteria	Award
Gold Award of Distinction	\$2,000
Gold	\$1,500
Silver	\$1,000
Bronze	\$500

### INSTITUTES OF MEDICINE REPORT (IOM)\*

The 2009 IOM report to the USDA on school meals recommends that the USDA adopt standards for menu planning that reflect current advances in dietary guidelines and include:

- Increasing the amount and variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Setting a minimum and maximum level of calories
- Focusing more on reducing saturated fat and sodium

\* Stallings VA, Suitor CW, Taylor CL, Eds. School meals: Building blocks for healthy children. Consensus Report by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, Food and Nutrition Board, Committee on Nutrition Standards for National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. 2010. <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2009/School-Meals-Building-Blocks-for-Healthy-Children.aspx>. Accessed June 17, 2010

**3** *We recommend that schools integrate healthy foods into their school culture through existing curricula, enrichment activities, field trips, after-school programming, and events.* Teaching children to eat healthful foods must happen not just in the cafeteria but also in the classroom and throughout the school environment. School staff, students, parents, food service management companies, non-profit organizations, and school administrators can all collaborate to create a healthy school food environment and culture. Creating this context and culture is essential to successfully integrating healthy foods into the cafeteria. We recommend the following strategies:

**The Louisiana Department of Education should:**

- Partner with non-profit organizations to provide toolkits and resources to schools.

**Schools and school districts should:**

- Allow for meal times that are long enough to ensure time to eat, socialize, and digest food.
  - Students should have at least 20 minutes to eat after they arrive at the table with their food.\*
  - Transportation schedules should allow students to be in the cafeteria at meal times.
- Use time in the cafeteria to promote positive interaction between students and staff and to develop verbal communication skills.
- Create cafeterias that are aesthetically pleasing.
- Ensure that 100% of foods sold outside of meal times meet or exceed Louisiana’s state nutrition standards as set forth in Act 331 (2005) and Act 306 (2009). (See page 22)
- Provide teachers with professional development on experiential food-based education and its integration with other curricula.
- Install school gardens.
- Partner with non-profit organizations, food service management companies, and private entities to provide some of the following experiential food-based education:
  - Curricula that focus on nutrition, food entrepreneurship, and food systems
  - Gardening classes and clubs
  - Cooking classes and clubs
  - Tastings of healthy, seasonal foods
  - Featured fruit or vegetable of the month
  - Farm/market field trips
  - Farmer visits to the school
  - Chef demonstrations at school
  - Point of selection marketing
  - Parent/family cooking classes
  - Smoothie bars

*\*A minimum of 20 minutes of seat time is recommended by the American School Health Association and studies conducted by the National Food Service Management Institute. The New York Coalition for Healthy School Food recommends 30 minutes.*



*“...its wonderful because me, my brother, my mother, and my friends were able to cook together as one big family.”*

*- 5th Grader*



**4** *We recommend that each school in New Orleans create a wellness policy that reflects the values and culture of their school and use it as an accountability mechanism to ensure that only high-quality, nutritious foods are available to children throughout the school day.* The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 requires that all local educational agencies (districts) participating in the National School Lunch Program establish a local school wellness policy. Additionally, Louisiana Act 286 (2009) requires that each city, parish, and other local public school board establish a school health advisory (or wellness) council. While wellness councils created at the district level can usefully set broad standards, we believe that each school community should develop a wellness policy that reflects their own values and school culture. We recommend the following strategies:

**Schools should :**

- Form a wellness council that includes school staff, students, parents, and community partners.
- Create a wellness policy through this wellness council that:
  - Specifies nutrition guidelines for all foods sold across the entire campus, including school meals.
  - Sets goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and wellness activities for students and staff.
- Outline a plan for measuring implementation of the wellness policy.

*“...experiencing food education teaches us more than a textbook does.”*

*- Lucy Tucker,  
ReThinker*

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program supports more than 9,000 schools across the U.S. in their efforts to improve access to healthier foods; increase physical activity opportunities before, after, and during school; enhance nutrition education; and establish school employee wellness programs. The Alliance has partnered with 80 schools in metro New Orleans. Schools can enroll and receive free assistance and support to become a healthier place for students to learn and staff to work at [HealthierGeneration.org](http://HealthierGeneration.org).

**5** *We recommend that the city, school districts, and individual schools take steps to ensure that all schools have access to the kitchen infrastructure and equipment required for providing students with fresh, nutritious food.* A school cannot transform raw foods into healthy, nutritious meals without the requisite infrastructure: kitchens, equipment, and dry and cold storage. We recommend the following strategies:

**The Louisiana Department of Education (LADOE) and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry should:**

- Change the commodities distribution schedule from monthly to weekly to allow for more efficient storage of fresh items.

**The Recovery School District and New Orleans Public Schools should:**

- Conduct a needs assessment of all New Orleans public school buildings' kitchen infrastructure and equipment.
- Amend the New Orleans Schools Master Plan to include detailed specifications for the kitchen infrastructure and equipment required to provide fresh, healthy meals.

**School food authorities (SFAs) should:**

- Apply to the LADOE for United States Department of Agriculture funds to improve kitchen facilities.
- Partner with food service management companies to create and implement preventive maintenance and repair plans for kitchen infrastructure and equipment.

**Schools should:**

- Provide cafeterias that are safe, aesthetically pleasing, and promote sustainability. Cafeterias should feature:
  - Hand-washing sinks
  - Reusable trays, plates, and metal utensils rather than disposable products
  - Waste composting systems
- Make free, safe drinking water available throughout the school building during the entire school day.





*“... experiencing food education in a real farm teaches us more than a textbook does.”*

*- Lucy Tucker, Rethinker*

**6** *We recommend that school food authorities, food service management companies, the city, and the state support workforce development for school food service staff and recognize the contributions of all school staff who cook and serve meals as essential to bringing healthful foods to students.* The entire community is strengthened when cafeteria workers have the wages, equipment, and training needed to provide nutritious meals to children. The additional efforts of school leaders, parents, teachers, and volunteers further this effort and create a supportive environment for students and staff. We recommend the following strategies:

**School food authorities and food service management companies should:**

- Ensure sustainability and continuity of a skilled school cafeteria workforce by providing competitive wages and benefits.
- Hire adequate staff and train them to prepare and serve fresh, healthy foods. Components of training should include:
  - Instruction from experienced food service providers and local chefs
  - Cooking healthful, local dishes
  - Handling and preparation of fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Preparation of whole grains
  - Cooking from scratch
  - Helping students make healthful food selections
  - Conducting taste tests with students and their families
  - Manipulating menus and recipes to include healthy, seasonal, fresh items

**The Louisiana Workforce Commission, New Orleans Mayor’s Office, New Orleans City Council, New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, Greater New Orleans, Inc., and others should partner to:**

- Promote strategic food service workforce development programs that involve:
  - School cafeteria workers
  - Local producers, fisheries, and farmers
  - Local food service management companies
  - Commercial kitchens
  - Food wholesalers and distributors
  - Cold storage facilities

**The State of Louisiana should:**

- Partner with the Corporation for National and Community Service to enhance current school food reform efforts through FoodCorps members.

**7** *We recommend that schools purchase products from regional farmers, fisheries, dairies, and other businesses.* Providing locally grown and produced foods in school meals and snacks would increase students' access to healthy foods while stimulating the local economy and supporting a sustainable food system. Achieving this goal, requires fostering relationships between schools and food producers, developing local distribution systems, and building capacity among local farmers and fisheries. We recommend the following strategies:

**The Louisiana Legislature should:**

- Institute a requirement that schools purchase a specified portion of food that is grown, processed, packaged, and distributed in Louisiana.
  - We suggest that at least 10% of school food service purchases be from local sources.\*
- Fund a collaborative program between the Louisiana Department of Education and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LADAF) to promote the use of local foods in school cafeterias. The program should include:
  - A funded program administrator position to be housed in the LADAF.
  - Creation of an asset map of regional farmers, producers, and fisheries.
  - Development of relationships between schools and regional farmers, producers, and fisheries.
  - Training school food service staff about seasonality of food, harvest calendars, crop yields, and crop risks.
  - Informing farmers about school requirements of products (inspections, safety, quantity, quality, and consistency).
- Create a competitive environment for small and mid-size, local farmers, fisheries, and producers that can supply schools by creating a short-term pilot program to offset liability insurance requirements

**Louisiana Economic Development, New Orleans Mayor's Office, New Orleans City Council, New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, Greater New Orleans, Inc., the Business Council of New Orleans, and others should:**

- Promote food enterprises and school food entrepreneurship in their business attraction, job creation, and retention programs. They should invest in and provide technical assistance to:
 

◦ Local producers, fisheries, and farmers	Food processing facilities
◦ Local food service management companies	Cold storage facilities
◦ Commercial kitchens	Composting operations
◦ Food wholesalers	Equipment manufacturing
◦ Food distributors	

**The City of New Orleans should:**

- Encourage and facilitate the use of land near schools for development of school gardens and micro farms that can provide produce to schools.
- Institute a citywide composting program for household, commercial, and school food waste.

**School food authorities and food service management companies should:**

- Decrease existing barriers that restrict purchasing from local farmers, fisheries, and producers.

\* Laws and proposed bills in other states, on average, require that 10%-20% of state agency purchases be from local sources.



**Schools can increase local purchasing by:**

- Asking SFAs to require that local products constitute a designated % of total purchases.
- Purchase local products for staff meetings and parent/community events
- Purchase local products for parties, concessions, and fundraisers.

**FARM TO CAFETERIA GROWS LOCAL ECONOMIES\***

The North Carolina Farm to School (<http://www.ncfarmtoschool.com/>) program is one way the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services promotes the health benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables to children. The program is a combined effort between the department's Food Distribution and Marketing divisions and brings locally grown produce purchased from local farmers to school cafeterias across the state. During this past record year for the N.C. Farm to School program, school systems purchased \$800,000 worth of North Carolina commodities including 13,315 flats of strawberries.

Note: This popular item among schoolchildren is the leading fruit crop in Louisiana. In 2008, the Louisiana strawberry industry involved 89 growers producing 395 acres of strawberries for a gross farm value of \$15 million.

\* North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Public Affairs Division. NC Agriculture Review. <http://www.ncagr.gov/paffairs/AgReview/articles/2010/6-10farmtoschool.htm>. Accessed June 17,



**8** We recommend that 100% of foods sold outside of the school meals program in elementary, middle, and high schools meet or exceed Louisiana's state nutrition standards. State nutrition standards for competitive foods are set forth in Act 331 (2005) and Act 306 (2009), as summarized in Table X. Competitive foods are foods sold outside of the school meals program including those sold in vending machines, in school stores, as fundraisers, as concessions, or a la carte in the cafeteria. All competitive foods sold by students or sold on school campuses should reinforce healthy eating lessons taught to students and reflect the values set forth in school wellness policies. We recommend the following strategies:

### State Nutrition Standards for Snack Foods Sold in Louisiana Schools

The Louisiana State Legislature and the Louisiana Department of Education have established nutrition standards for the types of foods and beverages that can be sold in Louisiana public schools outside of the school breakfast and lunch programs, often called 'competitive foods'.

### Louisiana Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods Sold in Schools (Act No. 311, 2005)

- Foods of 'minimal nutritional value' (such as candies with almost no vitamins or protein) and fresh pastries shall not be sold.
- 100% of items sold in public elementary and secondary schools and 50% of items sold in public high schools must meet the below criteria:
- 150 calories or less
- 35% of total calories from fat or less
- 10% of total calories from saturated fat or less\*
- 30 g of sugar or less
- 360 mg of sodium or less per serving\*

\* Criteria included in the Approved Vending List for Schools presented by the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and the Louisiana Department of Education. Available at: <http://www.pbrcc.edu/division-of-education/vending-list-for-schools/>

### La. Nutrition Standards for Beverages Sold in Schools (Act No. 311, 2005 & 306, 2009)

- In public elementary and secondary schools, only the following beverages may be sold: Water; Milk (skim, low-fat, flavored, and non-dairy); 100% juice with no added sweeteners, 16 oz serving or less.
- In public high schools, only the following beverages may be sold outside of school meals: Water; Milk (skim, low-fat and nondairy); 100% juice with no added sweeteners, 12 oz serving or less; No-calorie or low-calorie beverages with no more than 10 calories per 8 oz; Other beverages with no more than 66 calories per 8 oz, 12 oz serving or less.

### The Louisiana Department of Education should:

- Monitor and enforce existing state nutrition standards.
- Offer schools technical assistance for writing contracts with vending machine suppliers and breaking contracts with suppliers that do not adhere to requirements.

### School Districts should:

- Incorporate nutrition standard compliance into audits of individual schools.

### Schools should:

- Designate a person to monitor nutrition standard compliance and report violations to school administration.
- Create wellness policies that:
  - Specify nutrition guidelines for all foods sold across the entire campus.
  - Outline plans for ensuring that all contracts for school vending comply with the wellness policy and state nutrition standards.
  - Prohibit students, teachers, parents, and school groups from selling food or beverage items on or off campus that do not meet campus-wide nutrition standards.
  - Ensure that elementary and middle schools sell only fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nonfat or low-fat milk and dairy products, water, or 100% juice outside of the school meals program.

### The City of New Orleans should:

- Provide incentives for food stores located within one quarter mile of schools to stock and promote fresh, healthful foods.
- Give stores located within one quarter mile of schools priority for funding through the New Orleans Fresh Food Retail Incentives Program if they will substantially increase the quantity of fresh fruits and vegetables available in their store.
- For food stores located within one quarter mile of a school, applications for variance or conditional use should be dependent on the store dedicating a specified minimum percentage of shelf space to fresh fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, the store should have demonstrated community support.

# CONCLUSION

It is time to change the way we feed children in New Orleans. Food insecurity, obesity, and unhealthy school food environments are threats to student achievement, individual and community health, the local economy, and even national security. The urgency of these challenges, combined with current national trends in school food reform and innovative local efforts already underway make this the perfect time to act.

This report contains short and long term recommendations and examples that can positively impact school food on both a practical and policy level. Legislators, state and city officials, school administrators, food service management companies, teachers, parents, and students can each play an important role in improving the school food environment. While this will undoubtedly be a challenging effort, it is a goal we will achieve by leveraging community and organizational strengths, building on existing resources, making incremental changes, and forging partnerships across sectors.

We strongly encourage our city and state leaders to work toward swift implementation of these recommendations. Successful students, productive citizens, and a skilled workforce are necessary to the future of New Orleans and to Louisiana. Now is the time to invest in our children. Ensuring that they have access to healthy food, the understanding to make healthy food choices, and the opportunity to support and build the local agricultural economy will ensure the health and vitality of our city and regional economy.



A close-up, monochromatic photograph of a young child with curly hair, looking intently at a kiwi fruit held in their hands. The entire image has a light green tint. The child's face is in profile, and their hands are positioned to hold the kiwi fruit. The background is softly blurred.

*“Always eating your fruits helps you  
have more energy and strength”*

*- First Grader*

# RESOURCES

## School food service programs technical assistance

- Louisiana Department of Education - Division of Nutrition Assistance  
<http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/nutrition/home.html>
- The Lunch Box - Chef Ann Cooper  
<http://www.thelunchbox.org/>
- National Food Service Management Institute  
<http://www.nfsmi.org/>

## School cafeteria equipment budget

- New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee  
[www.nolafoodpolicy.org](http://www.nolafoodpolicy.org)

## Sample menus and recipes

- The Lunchbox - Chef Ann Cooper  
<http://www.thelunchbox.org/>
- National Food Service Management Institute  
<http://bit.ly/USDAmenu>
- St. Tammany Parish Public Schools  
<http://www.stpsb.org/foodservice/foodservice.htm>
- USDA Healthy Meals Resource System  
<http://bit.ly/healthyUSDAmeals>

## Incorporating locally grown and produced foods into school meals and programs

- The Lunchbox - Chef Ann Cooper  
<http://www.thelunchbox.org/>
- Marketumbrella.org  
<http://www.marketumbrella.org/index.php?page=crescent-city-farmers-market>
- National Farm to School Network  
<http://www.farmtoschool.org/index.php>
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/Default.htm>

## Student Programs

- Greater New Orleans Afterschool Partnership  
<http://gnoafterschool.org/>
- Marketumbrella.org – Farmers market and farm field trips  
<http://www.marketumbrella.org/index.php?page=crescent-city-farmers-market>
- New Orleans Outreach  
<http://www.nooutreach.org/>
- Our School at Blair Grocery  
<http://schoolatblairgrocery.blogspot.com/>
- Students Rethink New Orleans Schools  
<http://www.there thinkers.com/>

## Starting a school garden

- LSU AgCenter  
[http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/lawn\\_garden/master\\_gardener/school\\_gardens/](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/lawn_garden/master_gardener/school_gardens/)
- Parkway Partners  
<http://www.parkwaypartnersnola.org/schooyard.html>

## School wellness policies and wellness committees

- Alliance for a Healthier Generation  
<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3057210#>  
and <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx>
- Louisiana Action for Healthy Kids  
[http://take.actionforhealthykids.org/site/Clubs?club\\_id=1130&pg=main](http://take.actionforhealthykids.org/site/Clubs?club_id=1130&pg=main)
- Louisiana Department of Education – Division of Student Learning and Support - <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/scs/2784.html>

## Curricula, lesson plans and health education activities

- The Chez Panisse Foundation – Lesson Plans for grades 6-8  
<https://www.chezpanissefoundation.org/store/lesson-planning.html>
- The Edible Schoolyard New Orleans – Gardening lesson plans integrated into core curriculum K-8  
<http://esynola.org/>
- Healthy Lifestyle Choices – Comprehensive health education  
<http://www.hlconline.org/about.html>
- Louisiana Action for Healthy Kids – Fuel Up To Play 60 physical activity and nutrition activities  
<http://www.fueluptoplay60.com/>
- Louisiana Department of Education – Health Education lesson plans K-12  
<http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/nutrition/acrosscurriculum/HealthEdLessonstable.html>
- Louisiana Department of Education – Nutrition education programs  
<http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/nutrition/465.html>
- LSU AgCenter – Smart Bodies Program; Nutrition and physical activities integrated into core curriculum K-5  
<http://www.smartbodies.org/default.aspx>
- Sodexo – free, web-based nutrition education and activities K-12  
<http://www.besmart-eatsmart-livesmart.com/>
- USDA Team Nutrition – Nutrition education  
<http://bit.ly/TeamNt>

## Vending items that meet state nutrition requirements

- Pennington Biomedical Research Center  
<http://www.pbrc.edu/division-of-education/vending-list-for-schools/>

## Childhood hunger

- Food Research and Action Center  
<http://frac.org/>
- Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana  
<http://no-hunger.org/Programs/FoodDistribution/Child%20Hunger.aspx>
- Share Our Strength  
<http://strength.org/>

## More Information on School Food Reform

- The Chez Panisse Foundation - What You Need to Know about School Lunch  
<http://www.chezpanissefoundation.org/store/public-policy.html>
- The White House Taskforce on Childhood Obesity Report to the President  
[http://www.letsmove.gov/taskforce\\_childhoodobesityrpt.html](http://www.letsmove.gov/taskforce_childhoodobesityrpt.html)
- For additional resources please visit the FPAC website  
[www.nolafoodpolicy.org](http://www.nolafoodpolicy.org).



*“I used to feel grumpy and tired but now that I get good food I feel excited to come to school.”*

*- Fifth Grader*

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