

II. SCHOOL MARKETING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The school environment has dramatically changed since the time when most parents attended school. Many parents and educators do not fully realize the subtle yet pervasive marketing and advertising practices that students are exposed to on a daily basis at school.

Schools have become a critical location for marketers to gain the undivided attention of children and youth. Marketing in schools can be increasingly harmful to students as they have repeated exposure to advertisements on school television and public announcement systems, in sponsored curriculum, and on school equipment and facilities, including on vending machines placed in high trafficked areas. All students are exposed to these types of advertisements in schools whether they are purchasing the advertised products or not.

IN-SCHOOL FOOD AND BEVERAGE MARKETING PRACTICES INCLUDE:



Product sales: This includes foods such as soft drinks, fast food and snack items sold out of vending machines, student stores, food carts, and snack bars,

as well as exclusive soft drink and branded food contracts. This also includes fundraising activities conducted by student groups, parent-teacher organizations, and booster clubs. Many of these fundraisers involve the sale of unhealthy foods and beverages. Marketers offer fundraising ideas to schools in exchange for advertising their product to students.

One example is Krispy Krème partnership cards. Schools buy the cards from Krispy Krème for \$5 and sell them to the end users for \$10. The buyer gets a dozen free donuts with every dozen they buy.



"Marketing to children in schools is especially problematic because in schools children are a captive audience and are asked to believe that what they are taught in school will be in their best interest."

**—Alex Molnar
Professor and Director
Education Policy Studies Laboratory
Arizona State University**

CAPTIVE KIDS: SELLING OBESITY AT SCHOOLS

An ACTION GUIDE to Stop the Marketing of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages at School



Direct advertising: This includes advertisements placed around campus, on buses, scoreboards, billboards, posters, banners, and on book covers. These advertisements can also be found in school hallways, the gymnasium, football field, cafeteria, food carts, quad, classroom, and locker rooms, and on school buses. Also common are electronic advertisements on the public announcement system or on classroom television broadcasts such as Channel One. Channel One

is a for-profit enterprise that provides electronic equipment to schools in exchange for schools showing students a daily 12-minute news program that includes two minutes of commercials. Corporations also give away free product samples to promote and encourage consumption of their products.

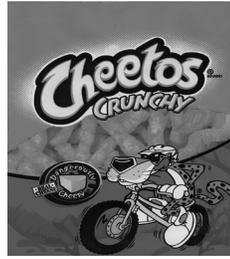


Indirect marketing: This includes corporate-sponsored curricula and contests in which students and schools receive products. Corporations market their product to students by sponsoring contests and by giving away coupons in schools. With Campbell's Labels for Education Program, for example, students' families have to buy about \$2,500 worth of soup to obtain enough labels to get a \$59 heavy-duty stapler.⁸ Round Table Pizza also has a program that rewards elementary students with a coupon for a free personal pizza for reading a certain number of required minutes per day.



Market Research: This includes student surveys or panels, product pilot or taste tests that expose students to a company's product.

A review of 77 corporate-sponsored classroom kits and materials found nearly 80% to be biased or incomplete, "promoting a viewpoint that favors consumption of the sponsor's product or service or a position that favors the company or its economic agenda."⁹



Presence of Advertising on School Campuses

Among schools in a national survey:¹⁰

- 23 percent allow promotion of candy, fast foods, and soft drinks through coupons.
- 14 percent allow promotion of candy, fast foods, and soft drinks through sponsorship of school events.

Among California high schools:¹¹

- Nearly 72 percent allow advertising for fast food and beverages on campus, while only 13 percent prohibit such advertising.
- The most common fast food or beverage advertisements are on vending machines (48 percent), scoreboards or signs (31 percent), and posters (23 percent).

A recent California study by the Public Health Institute found:¹²

- More than half (60%) of the posters and signage for food and beverage products were for products such as candy, soda, and chips.
- 94% of marketing activities such as coupon distributions or product giveaways were conducted by companies associated with high fat, high sugar foods.
- 93% of school events were supported by companies selling unhealthy foods such as candy, fast food, and soda.
- 71% of the logos displayed on equipment were for sweetened beverages, and sports drinks.
- 65% of vending machine advertisements were for sweetened beverages, soda, and sports drinks while water accounted for only 21% of all vending advertisements.



See Fact Sheets:

Food and Beverage Marketing on California High School Campuses Survey