

# FACT SHEET

## 2000 California High School Fast Food Survey

### RESEARCH:

Concerned about the record level of youth obesity in California, the Public Health Institute commissioned the *2000 California High School Fast Food Survey*, the first study in the state to research the prevalence of fast foods on California high school campuses and student access to healthy foods at school. This study, conducted by Samuels & Associates, describes the types of fast food being sold on California high school campuses, the factors that influence such sales and the economic and policy issues associated with them. The self-administered survey was distributed to all (323) district-level public school food service directors who have a high school in their district.

### FINDINGS:

1. 95% of responding districts reported selling fast foods as a la carte items.
2. The most common fast foods sold in districts as a la carte items are pizza (87%), cookies (86%), chips (84%), and burritos (83%).
3. The most common fast food brands sold in responding districts are Taco Bell (53%), Subway (22%), and Dominos Pizza (19%).
4. The two primary reasons that school districts report selling fast foods are: 1) students like fast foods (65%), and 2) fast foods keep food service out of the red (29%).
5. Fast food profits are used to support a variety of school operations including food service (88%), facilities improvement (24%), as well as extracurricular and athletic programs (11%).
6. An overwhelming majority of districts (72%) allow fast food and beverage advertising on campus.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The *2000 California High School Fast Food Survey* recommends:

1. Offer students more healthy foods that are as convenient, inexpensive, and appealing as high-fat fast foods.
2. Explore new opportunities to generate support and revenue that are not based on the sale of unhealthy foods.
3. Examine the use of schools as a channel for food and beverage company promotions.

### RESPONSES:

California Project LEAN's (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition) Food on the Run Program is kicking off a new educational campaign in 30 California high schools called The Simple Solution to the Energy Problem. It's aimed at reaching, educating, and motivating teens to make better nutritional choices as well as to advocate for healthier food choices in their schools. The campaign includes a series of public service announcements, brochures, community events, media tours, and other high school activities.

### FUNDING:

The Public Health Institute commissioned this survey. It was funded by a grant from The California Endowment.

### AUTHOR:

Sarah Samuels, Dr.P.H., R.D., president, Samuels & Associates

### SUPPORTING CAMPAIGNS:

Findings from the survey will be used by public health programs such as California Project LEAN, California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness Program (CANFit), and the Southern California Public Health Association as part of their efforts to address adolescent nutrition and physical activity issues.