

# How well is your school? Updates on school wellness from the Rudd Center

January 31, 2012

Kathryn Henderson, PhD

Director of School and Community Initiatives



**YALE RUDD CENTER**  
FOR FOOD POLICY & OBESITY

# Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity

---

Our mission:

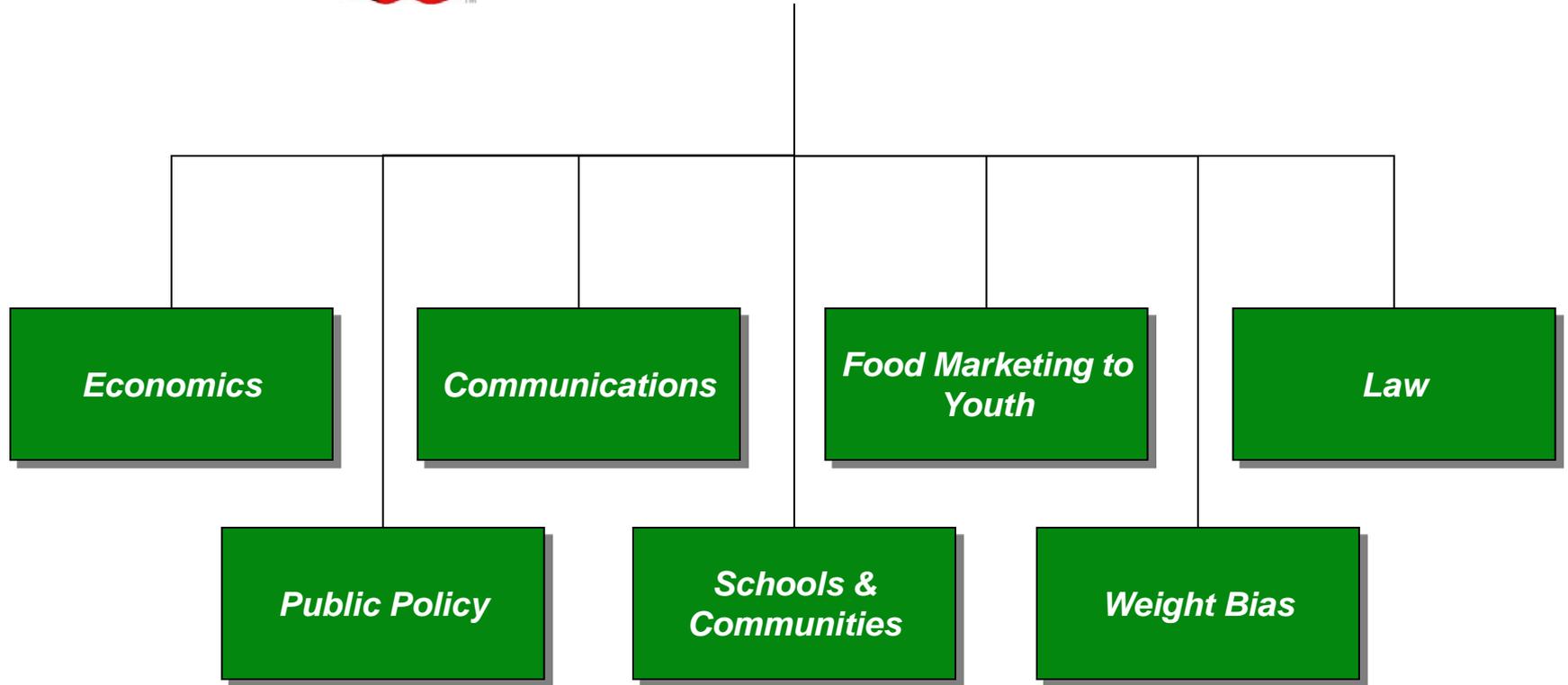
- Improve the world's diet
- Prevent obesity
- Reduce weight stigma

*through creative connections between  
science and public policy*

**“Real Change Requires Real Change”**



# YALE RUDD CENTER FOR FOOD POLICY & OBESITY





# YALE RUDD CENTER FOR FOOD POLICY & OBESITY

 **SEARCH**

- HOME**
- WHO WE ARE**
- WHAT WE DO**
- NEWS & EVENTS**
- PRESS**



- What's New
- Hot Topics
- Publications
- Policy Briefs and Reports
- Revenue Calculator for Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxes
- Pledges Database on Food Marketing to Children Worldwide
- Legislation Database
- Image Gallery
- Seminar Series
- Rudd Center in the News
- Newsletter

## WHAT'S COOKING At the Rudd Center

### New Website on School Food for Parent Advocates

As the next school year begins, the Rudd Center launched a website aimed at helping parent advocates navigate through the complex issues of school food. **Rudd SPARK** - Supporting Parent Advocates with Resources & Knowledge - connects parent advocates to Rudd Center research and resources and each other.

Rudd SPARK helps parent advocates understand school food regulation at the federal, state, and local levels and provides strategies on how to become a school food expert, advocate effectively, and use local and social media for change within their own district.

The site highlights areas that can have a positive impact on the school food environment, including wellness policies, national meal programs, foods sold outside national meal programs, school gardens, and school food legislation. Each area contains relevant research, local examples utilized by school districts, and tools to develop strategies and track progress.

Connect With the Rudd Center



### FRONT BURNER NEWS

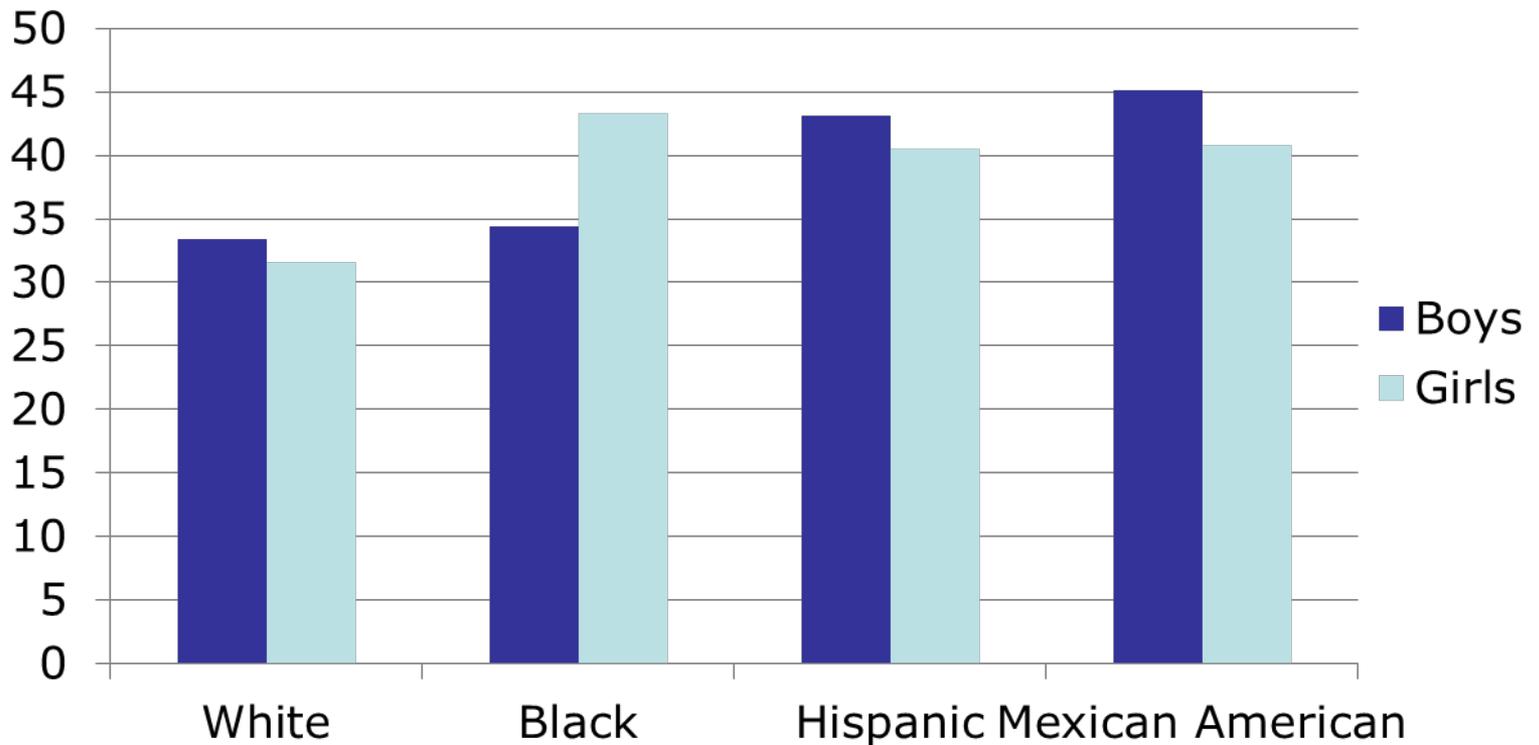
9/19/2011 | WebMD  
**Obesity Puts Young Kids at Risk of Social ...**  
 Obesity increases the risk that young children will become socially isolated by their grade-school years, a new study shows.  
[Read more](#)

9/19/2011 | The New York Times  
**Why Even the Most Resolute Dieters Fail...**  
 If you've been trying for years to lose unwanted pounds and keep them off, unrealistic goals may be the reason you've



One in three  
children/adolescents in  
the United States is  
overweight or obese

# Prevalence of overweight in U.S. 6-19 year-olds 2007-2008



BUT...



...it's not just about  
obesity

# Children's Nutritional Status

- They *under-consume*
  - Fruits and vegetables
  - Fiber
- And *over-consume*
  - Refined grains
  - Sugar
  - Saturated fat



# But my child is thin...

---

- High-sugar, high-fat, low-nutrient foods not good for any child
- Put all children at risk for disease
- Can set up all children for a lifetime of poor eating habits



Schools provide an opportunity to nudge children toward healthy habits by modifying the environment



School wellness policies  
are one avenue through  
which we can improve  
the school environment

# Federal School Wellness Policies

---

- 2004 WIC Reauthorization Act
- Required by the 2006-2007 school year
- Policies must address:
  - Goals for nutrition education
  - Nutrition standards for all foods in school
  - Goals for physical activity
  - A plan for measuring implementation
  - Creation of a SWP committee

# Rudd Center Coding System

---

- Three levels for each item
  - 0 – item not addressed
  - 1 – item addressed in a vague or suggested manner
  - 2 – item addressed in a clear way, with language that requires compliance

# Rationale

---

- Written policies carry accountability
- Specific, directive language (“The district must” or “will”) more likely to result in action than optional language (“may”, “strive to”, etc.)
  - Comprehensiveness vs Strength

# WellSAT:

Wellness School Assessment Tool

Rudd Center | [Contact](#)

[Who Should Use This Tool?](#)

[FAQ](#)

[How WellSAT Scores are Calculated](#)

[Resources](#)



**WellSAT** provides a standard method for the **quantitative** assessment of school wellness policies. This tool offers a consistent and reliable means of assessing the **comprehensiveness** and **strength** of school wellness policies within or among states. It was developed by researchers funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

## Welcome to the WellSAT

In passing the Child Nutrition and WIC (Women, Infants and Children program) Reauthorization Act of 2004, Congress mandated that all school districts participating in federal school meal programs create and implement school wellness policies by July 2006. These policies must address nutrition education, nutrition standards for foods sold, and physical activity, and must include measures for evaluating the policy's effectiveness. By completing the Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT), users will be able to assess the quality of their school district's wellness policy, and will be provided with personalized guidance and resources for making improvements, based on the assessment.

Support for this project was provided by grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Rudd Foundation.

Click the links below for WellSAT background and demonstration.

[part 1](#) [part 2](#) [part 3](#) [part 4](#)

If you would like to view the survey without scoring a school wellness policy, click [here](#).

Data will not be saved

## SIGN IN FOR YOUR WELL VISIT

Email Address:

Password:

[Forgot password?](#)

[Don't have an account?](#)

[Register](#)

GO

Your email address will ONLY be used to provide you with updates pertaining to this website.



## Connecticut State Department of Education School Wellness Policy Report

School District: Guilford Public Schools

Policy Date: 8/21/06

Participated in Healthy Food Certification<sup>1</sup>

Comments Section: Yes

2006-2007: Yes 2007-2008: Yes

### Summary of School Wellness Policy Scores

Policy Category	Comprehensiveness			Strength		
	District Score	State Score <sup>2</sup>	DRG Score <sup>3</sup>	District Score	State Score <sup>2</sup>	DRG Score <sup>3</sup>
Nutrition Education	78	65	60	56	44	40
School Meals	15	40	35	15	30	28
Other School Food and Beverages	76	67	69	69	48	55
Physical Education	41	44	40	35	31	30
Physical Activity	60	50	45	40	31	32
Communication and Promotion	58	45	39	58	31	30
Evaluation	83	59	58	67	38	34
Overall Policy Score	59	53	49	49	36	36

# Nationwide SWP Findings

---

- Huge variability in quality of policies
- On balance, school wellness policies are weak
- Some improvements from 2006-07 to 2008-09 school years

Source: Chriqui et al., 2010



# District Variables Predicting Better Policy Quality

---

- Population density: urban districts
- Free / reduced rates: poorer districts
- Racial / ethnic composition: districts with greater prop. of Hispanic students
- Political landscape: greater prop registered democrats



# School Food Environment

---

## School Lunch/Breakfast Program

- Federal regulations

## Competitive Foods

- A la carte cafeteria offerings, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers
- Minimal federal regulation

# Healthy Food Certification (HFC)

---

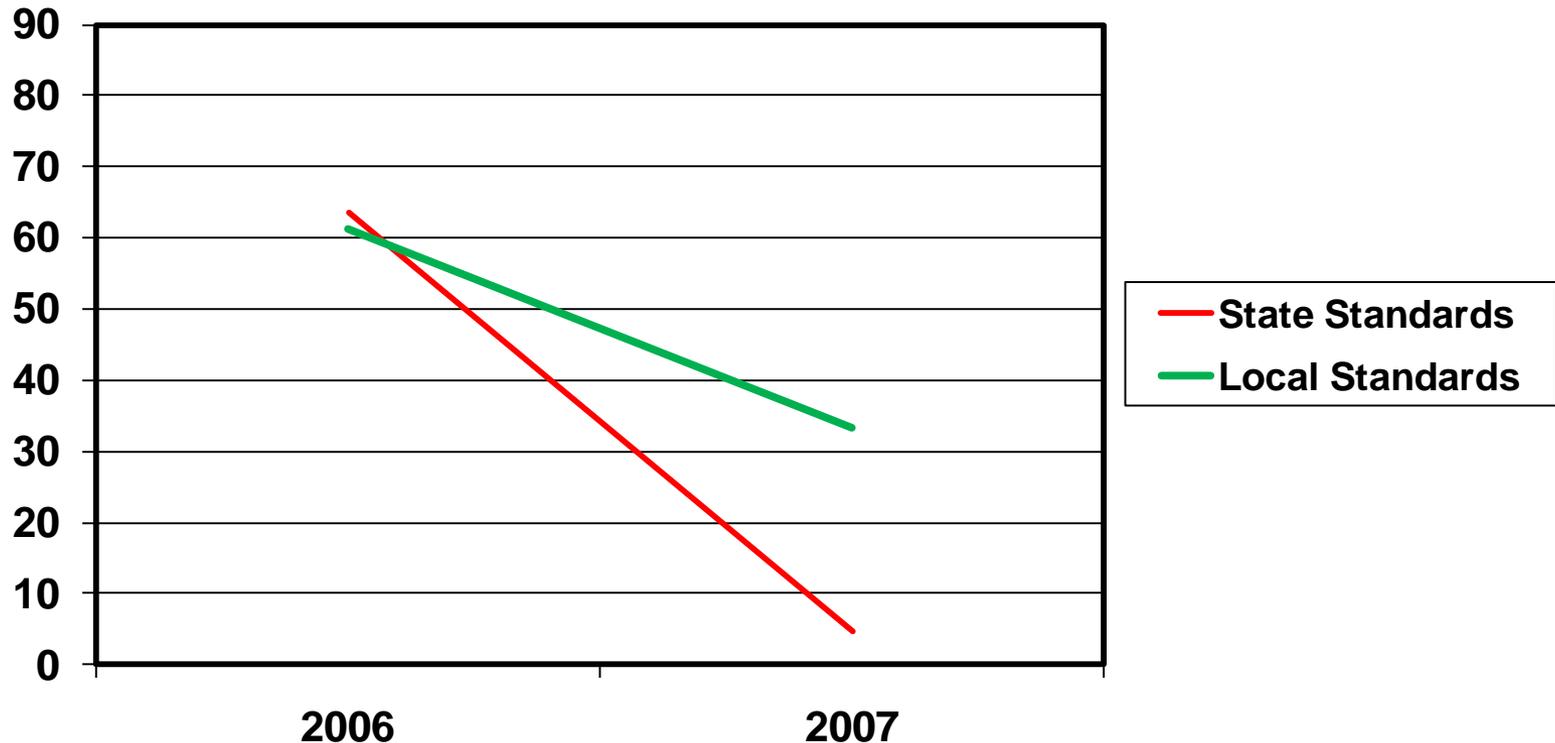
- Standards for competitive foods
- Monetary incentive tied to meal participation
- Limits fat, saturated fat, trans fats, sugar, sodium, portion sizes, calories
- Prohibits ingredients with questionable health effects
- Encourages nutrient-rich foods

# HFC Program Evaluation

---

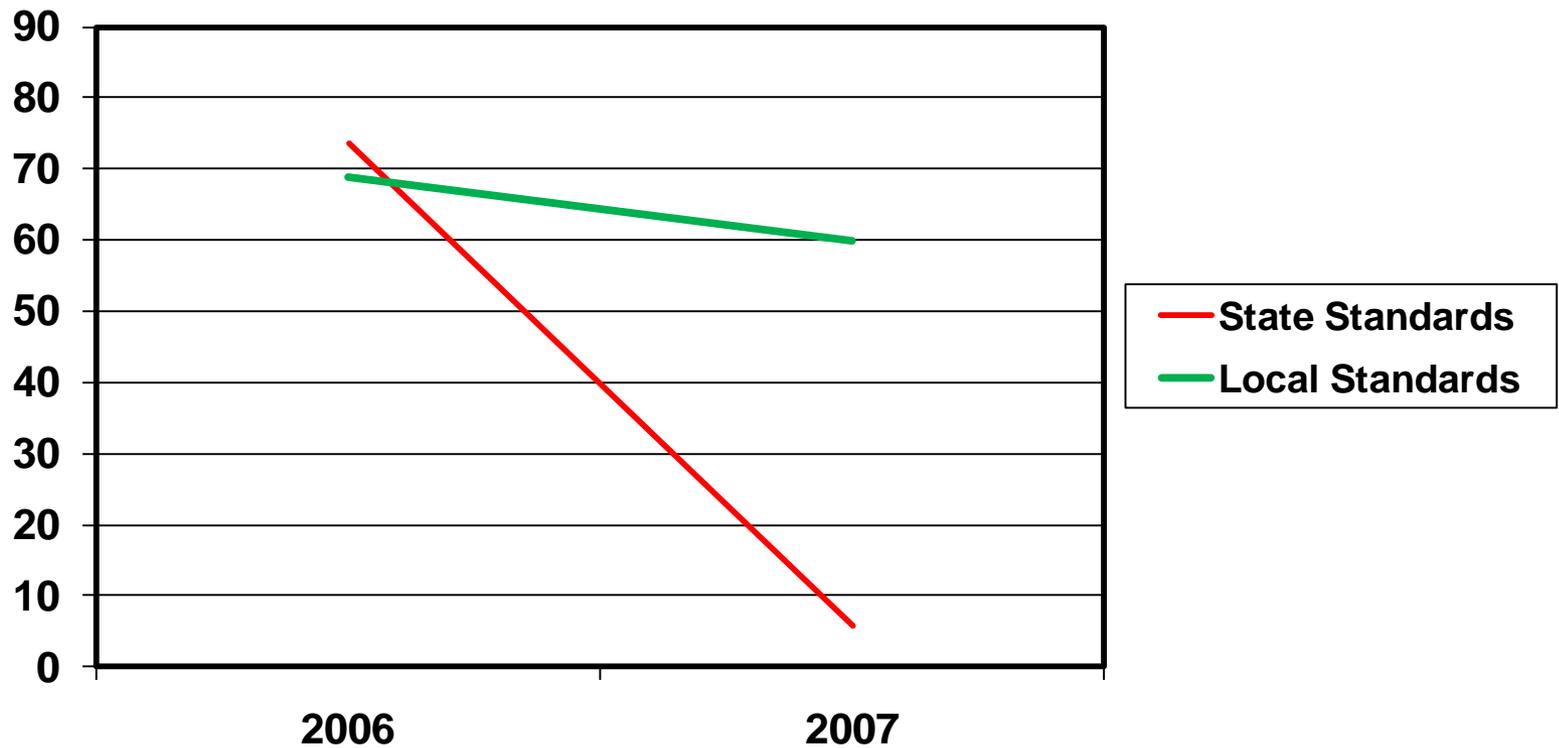
- Year 1 (2006/07) – half of CT districts participated
- Program start-up simultaneous to mandated wellness policies
- Compared unhealthy a la carte snacks available at HFC vs non-HFC schools

# Unhealthy a la carte snacks: Elementary School

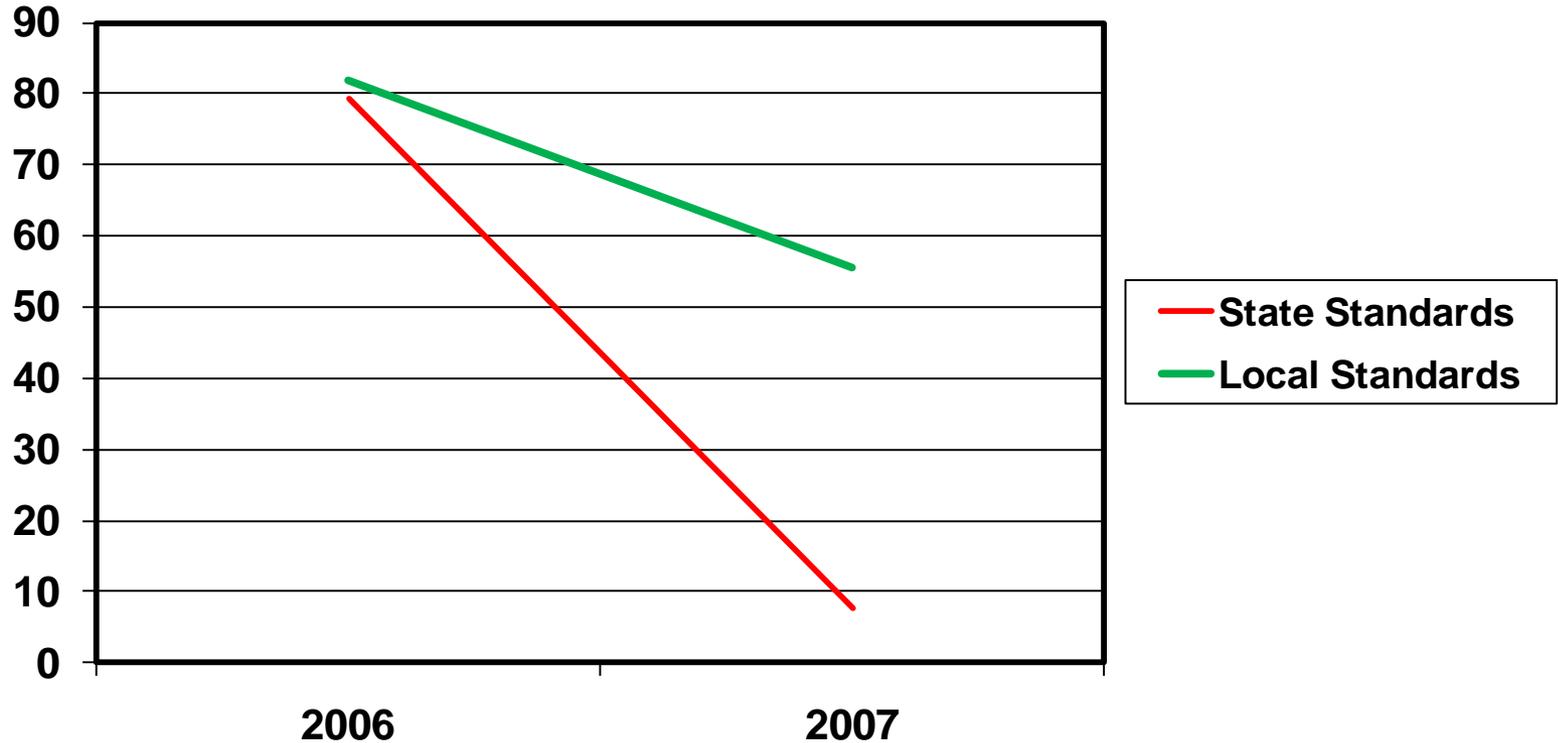


Source: Long MW, Henderson KE, Schwartz MB. Evaluating the impact of a Connecticut program to reduce availability of unhealthy competitive food in schools. *Journal of School Health*. 2010 Oct;80(10):478-486.

# Unhealthy a la carte snacks: Middle School



# Unhealthy a la carte snacks: High School



# 2006-2007 CT School Nutrition Environments

---

- Significant reduction in the sales of all unhealthy snack categories in all levels of schools
- Participation in the Healthy Food Certification led to significantly greater reductions in unhealthy snack sales
- Policy strength (but not comprehensiveness) significantly predicted reduction in unhealthy snack sales

# Further HFC Program Evaluation

---

- Increase in participation in paid meals at middle schools after one year
- Ongoing research on this question
- Program participation has increased each year since:
  - Now at > 70%
  - 99% re-certification rate

# School Wellness Policy Implementation

---

- A strong written policy is nice, but does it get implemented?
- Our data suggest that stronger policies are more likely to be implemented
- Many studies currently underway

Source: Schwartz , Henderson, Falbe, Novak, Wharton, Long, O'Connell, & Fiore. Strength and comprehensiveness of district school wellness policies predict policy implementation at the school level. Journal of School Health, in press.

# Rudd 'Roots' Parents <sup>SM</sup>

Get Started

Change School Food

Build Community

Stay Connected



## Rudd 'Roots' Parents

Working with parents for grassroots change.

Recent News

**ACTION ITEMS**



Consumers

Use the tools to compare marketing techniques aimed at children and nutritional quality of popular sugary drinks.

Go →



Understand the methods and key measures employed by the Rudd Center to compile our research.

Researchers

Go →



[Sugary Drink FACTS in Brief](#)



[Marketing Rankings](#)



[Targeted Marketing](#)



[Nutrition Ranking](#)



[Nutrition Information](#)



[Sugary Drink Marketing 360° Briefs](#)

## Just give me the FACTS!

Here are the FACTS about sugary drink nutrition and marketing to children.

Sugary drink companies speak to children early, often, and when parents are not looking. Sugary drinks are the most unhealthy food product marketed to children and are relentlessly and aggressively targeted toward them. Food marketing to children negatively influences the dietary choices and the health of society's most vulnerable citizens. Given the childhood obesity epidemic at hand, we need meaningful solutions and real change. We're here to give you the FACTS.

FACTS – the Food Advertising to Children and Teens Score – was developed by

## Press Release

Despite industry promises, Yale study finds unprecedented marketing of sugary drinks to youth

Young people are being exposed to a massive amount of marketing for sugary drinks, such as full-calorie soda, sports drinks, energy drinks, and fruit drinks. The study is the most comprehensive and science-

# Marketing-Schools Connection

---

- Marketing/branding of unhealthy foods in schools
  - Takes many forms
- Fast food and corner stores in school zones
- School bus advertising

# Weight Bias and Stigma

---

- Creates an atmosphere of blame and intolerance
- Reduces quality of life for children, adolescents, adults
- Negatively impacts multiple domains of living (work, social, health)
- Results in serious psychological, social, and physical health consequences
- Discrimination across many settings

# Victimization of Obese Youth

---

Among overweight youth, **30%** of girls and **24%** of boys are victimized at school

Vulnerability increases with body weight

Among the *heaviest* youth, **60%** report victimization

BMI predicts future victimization

# Teasing and Bullying in Adolescence

Reason for teasing	Primary reason students are teased	Observed sometimes, often, very often
	%	%
Being overweight	40.8	78.5
Gay/lesbian	37.8	78.5
Ability at school	9.6	61.2
Race/ethnicity	6.5	45.8
Physical disability	3.3	35.8
Religion	1.2	20.8
Low income/status	0.8	24.9

# Weight-based Bullying in Adolescence

Types of weight-based victimization	%
made fun of	92
called names	91
teased in a mean way	88
teased during physical activity	85
ignored or avoided	76
teased in the cafeteria	71
excluded from activities	67
target of negative rumors	68
verbally threatened	57
physically harassed	54

# Locations at School Where Weight-Based Teasing Occurs

Teasing location	Total
Lunch room/ cafeteria	56%
Classroom	52%
Gym	46%
Locker room	41 %
Stairs/ Hallway	41%
School bus	39%
Playground/ athletic field	38%
Washroom/ bathroom	29%

# Academic Consequences

---

Because of weight-based victimization:

- Students report their grades are harmed
- Students report avoiding school
- The odds of these reports increased by 5% per teasing incident

(Even after accounting for gender, age, race, grades, and weight status)

# In their own words...

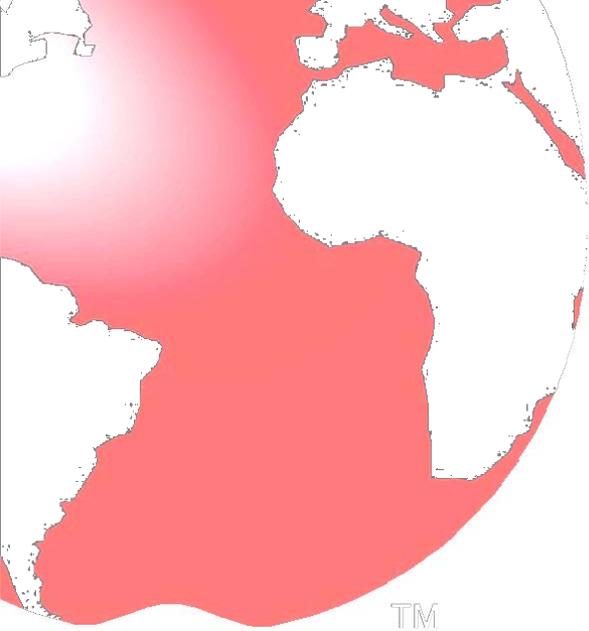
---

*“Kids at school would make fun of me, and kick me. It made me feel worse about myself. It has made me depressed so I just eat more.”*

*“All through school, kids called me names, laughed at me, tripped me, stuck pins in me to see if I would pop. It still hurts.”*

*“Every single minute of high school was awful. I weighed 240 pounds when I was 14. I was spit on, pinched, teased daily. I was ridiculed and had no real friends.”*

*“My mother took me out of kindergarten because I would come home every day crying. The kids made fun of me all day long—in class, on the playground, and on the walk home. I would be hysterical by the time I got home.”*



# Thank you

[www.yaleruddcenter.org](http://www.yaleruddcenter.org)

kathryn.e.henderson@yale.edu



**YALE RUDD CENTER**  
FOR FOOD POLICY & OBESITY