
American Beverage Association

Beverage Industry School Vending Policy

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Childhood obesity is an important problem facing our society. Experts believe childhood obesity should be addressed by promoting healthy lifestyles, including a balanced diet and regular physical activity. The American Beverage Association agrees.

The responsibility for achieving healthy lifestyles is shared by everyone. Parents, schools, government, industry and communities all have a role to play in encouraging lifestyle choices that include a balanced and nutritious mix of foods, beverages and frequent exercise.

Our industry's products play an important role in the lifestyle choices of young people. That is why we are working to ensure our products, policies and programs support efforts of parents and children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Consumers of all ages have long enjoyed the refreshment and taste our products provide. We believe consumption of our industry's products has a place in healthy lifestyles and that these products are appropriate for young people who are following balanced diets and are physically active.

Our industry is committed to expanding the range of products we offer so consumers are better able to select beverages compatible with their lifestyle choices. The beverage industry currently offers young people and adults a wide variety of beverages, including bottled water, 100 percent fruit juices, juice drinks, dairy-based drinks, sports drinks, teas and soft drinks.

In recent years, there has been considerable public discussion about the sale of soft drinks and other sweetened beverages in schools. Our industry recognizes that the availability of soft drinks and other beverages in schools – where children are not under the direct supervision of parents – raises unique issues. We have addressed these issues in the past by adopting responsible school vending policies and working with local school districts to provide a mix of products that meets the needs of school administrators and parents. However, our industry has concluded that a new industry-wide school beverage policy will enable us to better partner with parents and schools, and enhance the role of community decision-making over the sale of beverages in schools.

Having worked with parents, community leaders and school officials across the country, we understand that they want the beverage industry to do more to help their children learn to make good lifestyle choices. We understand they want greater control over the nutrition choices of their younger children in the school environment. We understand that they would prefer that certain full-calorie beverages not be available to younger children at school, but that older children can have more beverage choices. We have responded to these groups by adopting a new policy for the availability of beverages sold through vending machines placed in schools.

Beverage Choices for Each Grade Level

ABA is encouraging all companies involved in the sale of beverages, including the beverage brand owners, bottlers, independent vending operators and others to adopt this policy regarding the availability of beverages sold through vending machines placed in schools.

We encourage school districts and bottlers to implement this policy as soon as possible. Where school beverage contracts already exist, the policy would be implemented upon expiration or earlier if both parties agree. As the beverage industry continues to develop innovative beverage choices, including low- and no-calorie products, we will work with our school partners to consider policies that encompass these new beverages.

We will work closely with parents, community leaders and school officials to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) Provide only bottled water and 100 percent juice to elementary school students.
- (2) Provide nutritious and/or lower calorie beverages to middle school students, such as bottled water, 100 percent juice, sports drinks, no-calorie soft drinks and low-calorie juice drinks. No full-calorie soft drinks or full-calorie juice drinks with five percent or less juice provided until after school hours.
- (3) Provide a variety of beverage choices to high school students, such as bottled water, 100 percent juice, sports drinks and juice drinks. No more than 50 percent of the vending selections will be soft drinks.