

Nutritional Standards and Montgomery County Public Schools

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There are two main sets of nutritional standards in MCPS. One set applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. USDA sets standards for a number of key nutrients that must be met in providing school meals. MCPS meals meet, and often exceed these standards and MCPS staff continue to look at menus, conduct focus groups with students, and enhance the menus.

A second set of nutrition standards is in place for all of the other foods and beverages that students have access to outside of the school meals program. MCPS, with input from parents and other health advocates, made some significant changes and strengthened the standards for these items several years ago. These new guidelines were adopted by the Board of Education and apply to foods and beverages sold to students through the a la carte cafeteria offerings, vending machines, school stores, athletic departments, and fund raising done on school grounds. The nutritional standards are as follows:

Beverages (container size not to exceed 16 ounces, except for unflavored water)

- Water
- Flavored, noncarbonated water
- 100 percent fruit juice
- Fruit beverages with a minimum of 50 percent fruit juice
- Low-fat or non-fat milk
- Sports drinks (isotonic beverages) to be available in the physical education area only

Snacks (single portion package, as stated on the label)

- 7 grams or less of fat (nuts and seed excluded)
- 2 grams or less of saturated fat
- 15 grams or less of sugar (fruit excluded)

Parents, school officials and food service staff are encouraged to ensure that foods and beverages meet these standards. In addition, hi sugar/hi fat/hi sodium foods and beverages should not be used as rewards and classroom incentives and in general, should not be promoted in the classroom or throughout the school. School-sponsored events should always include foods and beverages that make a positive contribution to the overall health of the student.

Helpful links

Montgomery County's Wellness Policy:

<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/policy/pdf/jpg.pdf>

Wellness Policy Regulations: <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/policy/pdf/jpgra.pdf>

MCPS Food and Nutrition Services (contains menus, nutrient analysis and other important information): <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/foodserv/menus/cafemenus.shtm>