

JOHN M. PERZEL  
THE SPEAKER



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

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June 30, 2003

Paul G. Vallas, Chief Executive Officer  
The School District of Philadelphia  
Administration Building, Room 219  
2120 Winter Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1099

Dear Mr. Vallas:

I am requesting that when the School District considers the exclusive vending contract between the School District of Philadelphia and major beverage companies, it considers including a clause specifying that only beverages with fruit juice and waters with no added sugars be sold in schools. Instituting such a policy is similar to what 18 other states have proposed, is likely to increase revenue, and will improve the health of our youth.

According to a recent poll by Madonna Young, almost nine of ten parents of Philadelphia public school children (88%) want vending machines in schools to be limited to fruit juice and water. Eighteen other states have launched initiatives to improve school nutrition. A few key examples include:

- **California**

Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest school district in the U.S., banned the sale of soft drinks in vending machines and school stores during school hours. Beverage contracts stipulate that Coca-cola and Pepsi must sell only 50% fruit juices, water, milk or sports drinks with less than 42 grams of sugar per 20oz. bottle.

At the state level, legislation (SB 19, passed 2003) set comprehensive nutrition standards for elementary schools limiting carbonated beverage sales in middle schools, while initiating pilot programs that require all beverages and foods sold outside of federal meal programs to adhere to good standards of nutrition.

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- **Texas**

State legislation (SB 343) introduced in February 2003, would ban the sale of vended foods and beverages in elementary schools and limit secondary school beverage offerings to water, low-fat milk or 50% or more fruit juices.

- **New York**

New York City introduced legislation in November 2002 (LS 1215), which would ban the sale of food or beverages of minimal nutritional value (using the USDA definition) during the school day at all NYC public schools. Schools that do not comply must forfeit any revenue to the general fund of NYC. The New York City School District is planning on implementing these changes this month.

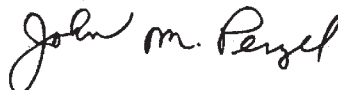
Increased vending revenue is likely to result from a healthy beverage policy. Beverage vending sales have increased 32% in a Philadelphia pilot program, and in Haverford Township School District, a recent report shows that a milk machine now outsells a soda machine 2:1.

Our children's health must not be compromised by encouraging companies to market and sell high-sugar, empty calorie beverages in school vending machines. The average teenager consumes 15 to 20 teaspoons a day of added sugar from soda. This can lead to serious health problems later in life, such as weak bones and an increased risk of diabetes. The healthcare costs of obesity in Philadelphia will rise to \$380 million this year.

With childhood obesity rates on the rise, we should be looking for ways to decrease, not increase, our children's intake of soda. Across the country, other states and school districts are working to prevent childhood obesity.

We should strive to sell only health beverages in school vending machines, such as water and juice. Thank you for your concern about the health and welfare of our children.

Sincerely,



John M. Perzel  
The Speaker

JMP/lal

cc: ✓ Karima Rose