

PROPOSAL FOR APTOS MIDDLE SCHOOL BEANERY

In this country last year, there were 3 times as many overweight adolescents as in 1980. Type-2 diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol are increasing among youth.* In response, school districts such as Oakland and Los Angeles have banned the sale of sodas in their schools. While districts do stand to receive needed revenue from the sale of sodas and other junk foods to students, and while such funding can be critical at times of budget shortages, it is becoming increasingly clear that both the general public and the SF school board would like to see a more responsible approach to student nutrition, one which does not justify the sale of unhealthy food to children by claiming that “we need the money”.

It is well known by parents that if children are offered a choice of soda or juice, they will choose soda, but if only juice is offered, they will drink juice. Although a ban on chips, sodas, and other unhealthy foods in schools would undoubtedly result in an initial decrease in revenue for the Student Nutrition Department, it is possible that much of the lost income would eventually be recouped when students become accustomed to buying the healthier choices offered to them. Without sufficient data, tracked over the long term, the district has no way of knowing if, for example, the loss of income from soda sales would ever be mitigated by an increase in juice, water, and chocolate milk sales.

Aptos Middle School would like to implement a pilot program, effective immediately, in which the unhealthiest choices currently offered to our students in the Beanery would be eliminated, while the healthier choices would remain available. We would expect a short-term drop in income while students adjust to having only the currently less popular offerings, such as milk and juice, still available to them. However, it is our belief that, over the remainder of the school year, sales of these items would begin to increase. While revenue from healthier choices may never achieve the level of current sales, there is no reason to think that students will stop buying foods from the Beanery altogether.

We are asking for support for this program from the very top level of the SFUSD. We need your assurance that our site will be granted autonomy to make responsible choices about the foods offered for sale to our students, REGARDLESS of the effect on the bottom line. We believe the value of the data we will compile regarding sales of healthier items, as compared to sales of junk foods, will more than compensate the Student Nutrition Department for any loss of revenue. Data and trends from Aptos can be used to project changes in income over the entire district, should such autonomy be granted to every site, or should the district go forward with implementing a chips-and-soda ban at all Beaneries. Any attempt to offset revenue loss by obtaining a grant or other philanthropic donation would most likely require specific figures for the amount of lost revenue due to a ban on unhealthy food. Without research such as what we are proposing, the best that could be offered would be a guess. This pilot program will yield data based on actual sales, not guesswork or estimates.

*Findings from the US Surgeon General; see

<http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=57886&category=SCHOOLLUNCH&BCCode=LP&newsdate=10/26/2002>

Specifics:

*Pilot program to begin effective December 1, 2002, extending through June 6th, 2003.

*Beanery menu choices will be determined by a committee consisting of Aptos parents (including pediatricians and nutritionists), staff, and the Principal.

*Data will be collected by the committee reflecting current levels of sales, and tracking sales monthly during the pilot period; reports will be forwarded to Student Nutrition and/or the Superintendent on a schedule to be determined by mutual agreement.

*The current staffing level of the Aptos cafeteria and Beanery will be maintained throughout the program. Regardless of the outcome of the pilot program, cafeteria personnel will not be held responsible for any fluctuations in sales, or for what is expected to be an initial decrease in revenue. There will be no loss of staff in the Aptos cafeteria or Beanery as a result of this pilot program, nor will the status of the cafeteria revert to “non-cooking” as a result of this pilot program.

*If the program is deemed successful by the Superintendent, it may be renewed for an additional school year, but in any event, the program will continue through the end of the 2002-03 school year, so that sufficient data may be generated.