



# START YOUR CAMPAIGN

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This kit is part three in your journey to changing school lunch. Here you will find tips about how to get started removing the junk from the cafeteria and replacing it with fresh, whole foods.

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### **1) GET MORE DETAILS TO INFORM YOUR CAMPAIGN**

You have already spent a lot of time learning about your local school and district. However there are a few additional pieces of information it's worth gathering before you begin your campaign.

Every school in America is different. Public schools will need to work through their school district. Charter schools may have more flexibility, and private schools can work independently.

Some states have added standards (on top of the USDA standards) to regulate the junk food, snacks and soda, high in salt, fat and sugar sold outside of the cafeteria meal. Several states still have no regulations for these foods.

- Ask for ingredients lists. Find out what's in the food. Be persistent. There is no reason why this information should be refused. After all, it's on the packaging of everything you buy in a grocery store.
- Check out the district wellness policy and find out if and how food in school is covered.
- Learn about any state or county regulations that affect your local district.

### **2) SET GOALS**

Build on your research and conversations with parents, staff, and students, to determine your committee's goals.

Together with your Nutrition Services Staff and administration, identify a set of three goals to work toward in the first year. These goals will vary depending on your particular school or district. Invite the Superintendent, Nutrition Services Director and other key staff to meet with your school lunch committee to commit to a timeline for meeting them.

Working towards specific goals is important. Long-term change is difficult but achievable, especially if you measure success incrementally.

Here are some possible goals that will make a real difference for your kids.

1. Replace processed foods with freshly cooked meals. Note that this can actually SAVE money!
2. Eliminate the junk food – get rid of all the snacks, candy and soda kids may be eating instead of a balanced meal.
3. Introduce more fresh produce – fresh fruit and vegetables should be part of every meal.
4. Set standards for processed foods / artificial flavors, colors, sweeteners, or other additives that don't add nutritional value should not be part of the meal. Limit salt and sugar. Write these into the wellness policy.
5. Get parents involved in school food planning and organization, and involved in the School Wellness Committee.

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### **3) MAKE A PLAN**

You've laid the groundwork for change; now you can get to work. Each school and district is different, but these general tips can help you get on the right path.

- Together with your Nutrition Services Staff and administration, work out what can be accomplished in each semester over the coming year.
- Go back to your group of parents and set out a year-long wish list.
- Break down each goal into actionable steps. (Example action plans for goals such as removing chocolate milk or adding a salad bar are available online).
- Include your goals in a school wellness policy\* so they become a formalized set of values for the food in your school
- Take your list and action plans to the school food team and administration, and to the PTA.
- Set regular meetings with each group to discuss progress.
- Ask the Nutrition Services Staff if they need help from professional chefs and consultants to accomplish the wishlist for change.

### **4) MAKE NOISE**

Keep people motivated for change by raising the issue of school food whenever you can. Even if only a core group is actively working on school food issues, it is important to get the local community to support your efforts.

Below are some ways to get people's attention:

- Start a letter-writing campaign to the people in charge.
- Survey the kids and start a petition for change.
- Write on the school blog.
- Post your goals and plan on the school website.
- Send emails to parents. Do it after every meeting with the people in charge. Tell them what has been agreed. Keep them informed of your progress, and about any problems that you are encountering. Keep asking for their support.
- Do phone banking before key meetings to build the number of attendants and ensure votes in support of your plans.
- Host a town hall meeting for parents in the school district. Invite guest speakers such as your expert advisors.
- Talk to the media. Give them the pictures of your schools food and Invite them in to try it. Show them what you're asking for.

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### **5) RAISE MONEY**

Work closely with the school administration to make sure they are on board with fundraising efforts. A few hundred dollars can make a big difference. Small, one-time investments can help your school nutrition service make the changes while keeping the meal service on budget.

- Make sure the fundraising goal works with the plan you have presented to the administration.
- Check that the administration is on board with how you hope to use the money before you make an ask of the community.
- Write a fundraising letter and send it out via your school e-tree or class email lists.
- Send a printed copy with a stamped envelope to community members, including small businesses. Get a list from the local chamber of commerce.
- Say what you'll use the money for. Be specific. It could be little or big:
  - Purchase a small piece of equipment, like a food processor, or a big one, such as a new oven, for the school cooks.
  - Replace plastic trays with proper plates and cutlery.
  - Purchase pitchers for drinking water.
  - Install a salad bar.
  - Develop a training program for the school cooks.
  - Hire a professional chef/school lunch consultant to audit your school and advise on how to overhaul your meal service.
  - Or go all-out and propose a full kitchen remodel!

### **6) TRACK CHANGE**

- Post your stories and pictures on your school website or Facebook page.
- Blog about your work on school lunch.
- Ask teachers to create school projects that document how the students feel about the new food.

## **RESOURCES**

Additional links and resources are available on [www.jamiesfoodrevolution.com](http://www.jamiesfoodrevolution.com)  
New toolkits and support tools will go online over time so please check back for more information regularly.

### **\*WELLNESS POLICY RESOURCES:**

Center for Ecoliteracy

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

Center for Science and the Public Interest

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

Healthy Schools Campaign

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

Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at Yale University's WellSAT

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

For a good example of a working Wellness Policy

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