



TOOLKIT TWO

FIND SUPPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIND ALLIES AMONG PARENTS	3
FIND OUT WHETHER YOUR SCHOOL HAS A HEALTH & WELLNESS COMMITTEE	3
FIND YOUR ALLIES AMONG STAFF AND DECISION MAKERS	4
LOVE YOUR LUNCH LADIES	4
SPEAK AT THE NEXT PTA MEETING	5
PRESENT TO YOUR SCHOOL BOARD	5
PRESENT TO YOUR STUDENT BOARD	6
FIND EXTERNAL ADVISORS	6
ASSOCIATED SUPPORT TOOLS	7
CONNECT WITH OTHERS	7



This kit is part two on your journey to change school food. Here you will find general information about making your case for change and building a network of support to help make it happen.

1) FIND ALLIES AMONG PARENTS

As a lone parent, asking for change is going to be tough. Find three or four other parents who really care about this issue and are prepared to work with you and get involved.

- ★ Find out if there is a local Food Revolution Ambassador near you to connect with [here](#).
- ★ Talk to interested parents, and collect their names and contact information.
- ★ Set a time and place for your first meeting and email everyone who indicated interest.
- ★ Announce the new committee and first meeting at the PTA or any other school gathering.
- ★ Post flyers around the school and tell everyone in your school newsletter.

2) FIND OUT WHETHER YOUR SCHOOL HAS A HEALTH & WELLNESS COMMITTEE

If it doesn't, now is the time to create one. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act requires that schools update their local wellness policies and include goals for nutrition promotion. Wellness committees should include many stakeholders, including physical education teachers, school health professionals, students, parents and other interested community members, school board members and school administrators. Although the final rule on local school wellness policies is not likely to be released until at least late 2013, connecting with or even becoming a member of this committee now will get you ahead of the game and give you a lead into the way things work within the school and how you can help make change. Make sure that your school has a plan for implementing their wellness policy and that it is being periodically reviewed and assessed to ensure that it's up to date with the latest standards.



3) FIND YOUR ALLIES AMONG STAFF AND DECISION MAKERS

As you work to support these changes, remember that school lunch is a complex program. Even if your cafeteria staff and school administration support the changes, there are still many challenges that as a parent, you may not even have known existed. The Nutrition Services staff at your school are your committee's first ally and your most powerful weapon for change. Be sure to collaborate with them from the beginning.

- ★ Be prepared with the results from your school food audit and any additional notes.
- ★ Explain that you are a group of concerned parents who want to help support the changes to school food.
- ★ Find out what the school administration are working towards, what their goals are and let them know that you are there to support them.

4) LOVE YOUR LUNCH LADIES

Meet and get to know your food service staff, and ask them how you can help.

They should be involved every step of the way, so let them know you are on their side. Talk to them about the current situation, how things can improve, and any challenges that need to be overcome to get healthier, fresher food in the kitchen.

- ★ Learn more about how they work, what they would like to see changed and what works well.
- ★ Find out what equipment they need to make changes in the kitchen. It could be anything from a blender or food processor to new ovens or increased refrigerator space.
- ★ Ask if they are getting the training and technical assistance they need. A change in food can mean new skills or techniques and more training opportunities can provide a positive boost to their confidence. Work with your school district and state child nutrition program to provide technical assistance and materials where needed.
- ★ Is there a school in your area where lunch ladies cook meals from scratch that meet the new regulations? Why not organize a training day and ask them to teach their skills, knowledge, tips and best practices to lunch ladies in other schools?



5) SPEAK AT THE NEXT PTA MEETING

Not everyone, parents and administration alike, will want to change the current system. This may be due to a lack of knowledge about what is really happening in the cafeteria, fear, apathy or a combination of all of these things. It is up to you and your committee to present the case for change. Use our Parents Bill of Rights for Better School Meals to introduce the issue.

- ★ Talk about the results of your audit or observations in the school cafeteria. Add your own pictures or data.
- ★ Ask for support and volunteers – get email addresses and set up a group email.

6) PRESENT TO YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

When you are ready and have gathered all the facts, get food on the agenda for the next school board meeting and present your case.

- ★ Work with your Health & Wellness Committee and school nutrition director to prepare a strong case and get their advice on the areas where they need the most support.
- ★ Use the Parents Bill of Rights to show your school board that you are serious.



7) PRESENT TO THE STUDENT BOARD

Students are often the strongest and most convincing advocates for change. It is important that you approach them early and get them on board with your campaign.

- ★ Ask the student council if you can come in and have a conversation with them and get contact information for students interested in changing the school food.
- ★ Start a student club. Ask them what they want to change and why and get them to help spread the word throughout the school, monitor the changes, and get other students enthusiastic about getting more real food on the menu.
- ★ Introduce some volunteer lunchtime champions to help encourage students to try new foods. Whether it is lunch staff, teachers, parent volunteers, or even other students acting as lunchtime champions, they can encourage students to try new foods and educate them about foods that are unfamiliar.

8) FIND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

- ★ Ask a couple of local health experts to lend their support such as a pediatrician, dietician or the school nurse. They will be able to provide an independent voice of authority on the importance of good nutrition for child health and the kinds of problems arising from child obesity and poor diet that they see daily.
- ★ Invite local chefs to support you as well. They are strong advocates for better food values and can explain the benefits of cooking from scratch in contrast to processed meals, while getting children excited about food.



ASSOCIATED SUPPORT TOOLS:
SCHOOL FOOD: THE BASICS
SCHOOL FOOD DECISION MAKERS
SCHOOL FOOD AUDIT
PARENTS BILL OF RIGHTS FOR BETTER SCHOOL MEALS

Thanks to [CSPI](#) and [ChangeLab Solutions](#) for their contributions and providing resources for these toolkits.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Join others advocating better school food on our Food Revolution Community Facebook page, and share your stories, tips and photos of school food:
www.facebook.com/foodrevolutioncommunity

Any questions? Email us at FoodRevolution@jamieoliver.org to connect with the team.

Find your nearest Food Revolution voluntary ambassador [here](#), or apply to become one yourself [here](#)!

