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Healthy Foods Take Center Stage at Portland Public Schools

More healthy foods will be sold at Portland Public Schools' sports games and in school vending machines, under new policies that take effect in September.

The policies also call for all food served at school celebrations, staff parties and other district events to meet federal nutrition standards. Soda is no longer to be sold, even in the staff lounge.

The Portland Board of Public Education approved the policies in the spring, and staff training began soon afterward. But most families won't be aware of the changes until school begins in September.

The policies recognize that diet influences students' ability to learn, and they aim to ensure that food offered at schools and school events support student achievement. The new policies will not apply to food that students and staff bring to school for their own consumption.

During the school day, all food must meet the USDA's Healthier US Schools Challenge minimum nutrition standards at the Gold Award level. All beverages must meet the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's High School Beverage Guidelines.

Slightly looser food standards apply before and after the school day. Although all packaged food must meet the same Healthier US Schools Challenge standards, up to half of non-packaged food may not meet those standards.

The new standards apply to food and beverages sold or served by a school or school organization regardless of location. Food served on field trips, sold



by sports teams or offered at events sponsored by parent teacher organizations (PTOs) all must comply with the policies.

The nutrition policies do not apply to non-school groups such as community athletic leagues using schools outside of the school day. Exemptions also include non-school groups providing concessions at school events that take place off campus - for example, high school basketball games at the Expo and graduations and concerts at Merrill Auditorium. See documents explaining the rules: <http://www2.portlandschools.org/nutrition-services>.

The policies were developed over five years with input from students, staff, parents and other community members. They reflect recent state and federal legislation and best practice for school nutrition.

Adoption of the policies qualified the district to receive \$90,000 from Portland Public Health under its federal obesity prevention grant. Those funds are being used for staff training about the policies, resources for school organizations and mini-grants to schools.

