

FAQ Regarding Student Wellness Plan and the “Smart Snacks in School” Ruling

Q: What does the school day defined as in the new “Smart Snacks” Ruling?

A: The school day is defined as midnight to 30 minutes after the instructional day ends which would be 4:05 p.m.

Q: What do the new “Smart Snacks in School” nutrition standards do?

A: The new standards will allow schools to offer healthier snack foods for our children, while limiting the amount of junk food served to students. Students will be able to buy snacks that meet nutritional standards for fat, saturated fat, calories, sugar, and sodium while promoting items that are whole grain and low fat.

Q: Why are these standards necessary?

A: Nearly one third of children in America are at risk for preventable diseases like diabetes and heart disease due to being overweight or obese. Also, Mecklenburg County students and adults fall into this range exactly. Students in schools are now getting healthier school lunches with more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy. However, items offered a la carte or in vending machines still lack healthy options. Parents are working hard to ensure their students make healthy choices and we want to do that as well while they are at school.

Q: How will food and beverage options be impacted by the new standards?

A: First, it is important to note that the new standards do NOT apply to foods brought to school in bagged lunches or for activities considered celebrations such as birthday parties, lunch buddies, and holidays. The intent of the standards is not to limit popular snack items, but instead to provide healthy snack options. For example, chips would still be offered, but in a healthier version such as baked chips.

Q: How will the new standards affect fundraising by school groups?

A: The standards do not apply to items sold during non-school hours, weekends or off-campus events. Therefore, concession stands at games are exempt because they occur after the instructional day. Also, schools can still conduct fundraising events such as pizza kits, chocolate bars, or donut sales. However, schools cannot buy extra cases of chocolate bars, for example, and sell them to students throughout the day.

Q: Do these standards prevent children from bringing cookies, cupcakes, or cakes to school on their birthday or special event?

A: USDA has no role in regulating foods brought from home. These standards only affect foods that are sold on campus during the school day.