

## Healthy Schools, Healthy Students

Clearly everyone knows that junk food is not healthy. But does everyone fully understand how much of a problem it is? Not entirely. Junk food in schools has been an issue to numerous people for as long as I can remember. I have come across several arguments from different points of view to this matter. Various people that I encountered claim that junk food in schools is the reason why children and teenagers are unhealthy and excessively gaining weight. Although I do not agree that obesity in minors is primarily caused by the food they eat at school, I do argue that it adds to it and worsens the problem. Therefore, making school a healthier place, by banning junk food, can make a big difference. In order to successfully ban junk food from schools we need to start by educating parents and children about the effects that food causes to one's body, gradually changing school lunch food along by adding more physical activities, and teaching healthy habits to students through gardening.

First off, educating not only students, but parents as well, about the effects that food brings upon to one's body is significant to comprehend the importance of healthy eating. "A balanced diet rich in organically grown produce is the best formula for producing strong minds and bodies" (Greene). Countless people are not aware that eating healthy is crucial especially during childhood years. It plays a central part to how children's bodies are developed. According to Greene, "behavior and academic performance are affected by the quantity and quality of the foods we provide children during the school years" ("The Quality of Children's Diets"). In other words, not only bodies but children's brains are affected on what and how much they eat. Greene asserts that students need a good nutrition in order to do well in school and up to now, most schools are not giving a good enough nutrition to their students. Childhood obesity is greatly affected by unhealthy school lunch and the outcome of it may turn out awful as kids start to grow older and continue eating that way. Christeson states that "with childhood obesity tripling in the last four decades, it is also the primary medical reason why people cannot enlist in the military: one in four young adults is too overweight to be recruited" ("Junk Food in Schools"). With that being said, junk food can affect you in the long term and one might be enjoying it now, but in the future might regret it.

Furthermore, gradually changing school lunch food and adding more physical activities at school is a great way to make the change simpler for students to adjust to. Kids love to be active, so physical activities is rather advantageous. There are quite a few ways to make a class lecture more active such as, "dancing hip-hop to the alphabet and learning math by twisting into geometric shapes" (Seidl). In spite of this, there are still going to be several students having trouble to become accustomed to eating fresh food. In that case, to ban junk food and become a healthier school, it takes not only the students, but parents and school staff to get involved. For instance, Seidl explains that "staff and teachers also set positive examples by shunning empty calories and actively participating with students in exercise" ("Banning Junk Food"). It is essential to slowly modify school lunch food and not abruptly stop giving/allowing junk food at school. If it is not done bit by bit, there is a high possibility that the outcome will be disastrous. Students need time to accommodate to the change. According to Seidl, students at Northeast Elementary Magnet School are responding well to the change of diet, this information indicates that it is attainable to completely keep junk food out of school grounds.

Additionally, teaching healthy habits to students through gardening can be an enjoyable outdoor class project. Israel claims that "gardening promotes an understanding and appreciation

of growing fresh, natural vegetables, which encourages students to change their eating habits and eliminate junk food from their diets" ("Planting School Gardens"). It is much less complex to change the eating habits of a kid. It is constant years of unhealthy eating that may take an outrageous amount of effort to break the bad habit, and many people "cannot" do so or simply do not want to. Adding gardening to school activities will be a fun educational method for students to learn about healthy food. It is easier for a child to engage in activities and find it interesting than an adult would. Not only will they learn the importance of healthy eating by gardening, but they will also get to eat the food they grow themselves. Kids will find that experience fascinating. School staff, on the other hand, might not due to lack of resources. "Say "school garden," and some educators hear "expensive and difficult." But that's not necessarily true" (Israel). Some school faculties may dispute that it can be pricey, but as Israel mentions, "School gardens can start in the simplest of ways." ("Planting School Gardens").

Concisely, there are several tactics that schools can use to successfully cut out junk food; such as, informing students and their parents about the effects of food, improving school lunches along by adding more physical activities, and teaching healthy habits to students through gardening. It is a matter of time. It will not be easy for the school itself, nor the students. But sooner or later, there will be progress. For years junk food has been seen and given as a reward to kids, though, it should rather be viewed as a punishment. It is not a reward to nourish a child with foods that contain large numbers of chemical substances. It will not be easy for a child to start eating healthy when he or she is used to eating incredibly unhealthy. However, obesity rates are increasing and for that reason, banning junk food at schools will help prevent the numbers from going any higher and maintaining students healthy.

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## Healthier Water for San Diego

For many people bottle water seems to be the water to drink, since people believed that it's "convenient to drink" ("Bottled Water"). It's in every convenience store and is a portable easy option unlike tap water. Many also believed on the myth, that bottle water is actually healthier. However, what they don't realize is that the bottled water often comes from places like a river in San Bernardino National Forest. The large corporation, Nestle depletes the river for one purpose: to sell bottled water in our local stores. They make a large profit by depleting the river potentially hurting the environment. Therefore, we as citizens of California need to be informed about what we drink. We need to understand that the choice between drinking bottled water and tap water is an important issue, so we can make good choices that help the environment. In fact, if we were informed Californians would realize that our tap water is the better choice, that there are a lot of reasons why one should not drink bottle water. People need to realize that drinking bottled water hurts the environment and that tap water is actually very safe and provides health benefits such as fluoride to prevent cavities. Lastly tap water is provided for less money.

One reason why drinking bottled water is so harmful is that it hurts our natural resources. Take for example what Nestle is doing when they tap water from the San Bernardino National Forest. According to Ian James in the article "Bottling Water Without Scrutiny" published in *The Desert Sun*, Nestle is using an expired permit from 1988 that allows them to get bottled water for \$524 each year. Not to mention, the U.S. forest services has not been keeping track on how much water is going away from the rivers or how badly it is damaging the wildlife. According to James, scientists like biologist Steve Loe actually surveyed San Bernardino national forest, and found that Nestle's piping system harms the California landscape, but it will also endanger many species of animals important to the ecosystem. Some of the fish like the Santa Ana speckled dace are already gone ("Bottling Water"). Nestle is very efficient in the way they provide bottle water to our local stores and provide a service, but one needs to be well aware about all the harm that a simple plastic bottle of water causes to the environment.

While people think that bottled water is much safer, they do not realize that before we get it in our homes, the government ensures that the water received from certain places like Colorado River and California aqueduct are well treated. Our water in San Diego is treated either in Otay treatment facility or Alvarado treatment facility, and it undergoes through a process until the water meets the full requirements. According to the article "Water Treatment," since 1974 water has been regulated through the safe drinking water act. When water is gain from a source it carries pathogenic which is microorganism, therefore, water goes through a treatment that involves "coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, and filtration." It might sound simple but there are a lot of precautions that the city takes before we drink it. The process of water purification contains a lot of chemicals disinfectants and some of them are chloride and chloramines. Water quality is always regulated through the EPA, in other words environmental protection agency; they set guidelines for treatment facilities to follow accordingly.

Additionally, water treatment actually can help your health. Treatment facilities are always aware of the human health to the point where fluoride is added to tap water. It is actually called fluoridation; according to a "Science Dispute" is the process where small amounts of

hydrofluorosilic acid is added in to drinkable water to obtain optimal oral health benefits. One can find fluoride in toothpaste, mouth rinses, as a pill or in our tap water. As one should be aware fluoride is added to tap water as a healthy measurement, in order to prevent tooth decay or cavities. According to the Sweetwater authority service area starting November 1, 2016 fluoridation of water supply will be delivered to every house in San Diego area. Sweetwater authority will ensure that our tap water is healthy and reliable. They will make sure that the treated water has the right concentration of chemical, and not only do they provide the water, they actually make sure that the water contains no other waste chemicals. For example, inorganic contaminants, pesticides, herbicides, organic chemical compounds and radioactive chemicals. Unlike bottle water industries, where the owners tend to hide the real truth about their plastic.

Moreover, it is widely important that we as a community understand that bottle water is not better than tap water but expensive. According, to Elizabeth Royte in the excerpt "How Water Went on Sale and Why We Bought it" she explains how drink about of 8 bottles of water with an average price of Forty-nine cents can add up to \$1,400 a year. One may think that a few cents don't harm, but at the end bottle water companies rip our wallets. On the other hand we got tap water. According to the EPA tap water is everywhere in the United States. One can get access of potable water for much less money, as tax payers we already pay for the water and there should be no other reason why to spend money on bottle water.

In conclusion, bottle water is reliable when need it but it is creating an issue here in California to the point where is affect our environment and taking our money. Bottle water industries don't tend to care for our rivers, our species, our ecosystem, and all they care about is the money. If we as citizens continued to support those big industries, then one is part of the problem. One should be aware and knowledge that tap water is also available and that the government will do everything required to provide use with good quality water.

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