

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Graham L. Pollett, MD, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2012 September 13

---

## **SCHOOL FOOD AND BEVERAGE POLICY (POLICY/PROGRAM MEMORANDUM 150)**

### ***Recommendation:***

*It is recommended that Report No. 107-12 re School Food and Beverage Policy (Policy/Program Memorandum 150) be received for information.*

### **Background**

Studies show that well-nourished students feel better, behave better and are more attentive and ready to learn. Hence, healthy eating enhances student success. Given the link between health and education, schools provide an ideal setting for children to learn healthy eating habits. The Ontario Ministry of Education solidified its commitment to supporting student health when it released the School Food and Beverage Policy (also known as Policy/Program Memorandum 150 – PPM 150 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/150.html>). The Policy reinforces the knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding healthy eating that are taught in the classroom. It creates a more supportive nutrition environment in schools and assists with making the healthy choice an easy choice.

Nutrition standards are the backbone of PPM 150. The principles of healthy eating outlined in Canada's Food Guide have been incorporated and are intended to ensure that the food and beverages sold in schools contribute to students' healthy growth and development.

### **Specifics of the School Food and Beverage Policy**

PPM 150 applies to all food and beverages sold in schools. It does not apply to foods and beverages that are offered to students at no cost. As of September 1, 2011, school boards were required to ensure that all food and beverages sold on school premises for school purposes met the Food and Beverage Standards.

The School Food and Beverage Standards are classified into the four food groups. A category has also been added for Mixed Dishes which include products that have more than one major ingredient. (e.g., pizza). In addition, there is a Miscellaneous Items category which includes foods that are to be used in limited amounts (e.g., condiments). Nutrition Standards for beverages have been developed and are provided separately for elementary and secondary schools.

Within each of the four food groups, foods are further categorized into Sell Most, Sell Less, and Not Permitted for Sale. Specific nutrition criteria have been developed for each food group to determine into which category the food fits. Foods from the Sell Most category must make up at least 80% of all food choices that are available for sale in all venues. Foods in the Sell Less category must make up no more than 20% of all food choices that are available for sale in all venues. To determine if a food fits into a specific category it is necessary to consult the Nutrition Facts Panel and compare this information with the nutrition criteria. Also included in the policy is an exemption for Special-Event Days (up to 10 days per school year).

## Progress to Date

School Boards have coordinated the execution of the Policy through communication with key stakeholders. As a result, the dietitians at the Thames Valley health units (Middlesex-London, Elgin St. Thomas, and the County of Oxford), have worked with the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) and the London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB) to assist with policy interpretation and application. Training opportunities offered include:

- TVDSB workshop with 102 elementary schools and 98 parent council representatives present.
- Presentation to LDCSB with 85 principals/vice principals present.
- Workshop with 55 public health nurses and a variety of food vendors present.
- Workshop with 48 high school family studies and hospitality teachers.
- Workshop for 90 TVDSB elementary school teachers and interested parent council members.
- Workshop to 30 LDCSB parent council group members.
- Update to approximately 60 Physical Education leads at the LDCSB.
- Four workshops for TVDSB elementary teachers with a total of 102 participants.
- Two workshops for 100 TVDSB elementary teachers on the curriculum connections to PPM 150.
- Workshop for 40 TVDSB secondary teachers on the curriculum connection and PPM 150.
- In-service to Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee with 25 participants.
- Update to Public Health Nurses regarding PPM 150 and curriculum connections with 25 present.
- Collaboration with the TVDSB to update their School Nutrition Independent Procedure to make it consistent with the School Food and Beverage Policy. The independent procedure was amended and approved as a policy, Food and Beverages in our School, in December 2011.
- Middlesex-London schools received some individual training with a total of 80 participants.
- Media opportunities were also available to inform clients within Middlesex-London about the policy.

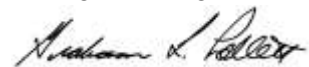
## Next Steps

The School Food and Beverage Policy is a step in the right direction. It has created a more supportive nutrition environment within Ontario schools; however, it is acknowledged that more work is needed. Most Canadian provinces have policies related to food and beverages in schools. British Columbia has had mandatory guidelines since 2005 that apply to all food and beverages sold to students.

Health Unit staff members plan to continue to work collaboratively to address the following:

- Work to engage youth to heighten student understanding of the policy and get their insights into how to change the physical and social environments within the schools to garner greater policy acceptance.
- Bring youth and cafeteria vendors together to obtain dialogue regarding healthier choices that appeal to youth and fit with the policy so that menus can be healthy and reflect student preferences thereby creating the desire for students to eat at the cafeterias.
- Advocate to the Ministry of Education for continued support and leadership from EatRight Ontario regarding creating more provincial resources to support the policy (e.g. food product list), investigate the feasibility of a surveillance role, to tighten up the policy standards and apply it to all foods including foods served (e.g. classroom celebrations, student rewards etc.).

This Report was prepared by Ms. Christine Callaghan, Public Health Dietitian, and Ms. Christine Preece, Manager, Young Adult Team.



Graham L. Pollett, MD, FRCPC

Medical Officer of Health

<p><b>This report addresses</b> the following requirement(s) of the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines: Child Health: To promote the health of children and youth.</p>
---