

You are what you eat

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Lauren McFall Mr. Gossett English 10H-4 March 17, 2008 You are What You Eat Throughout the past twenty years, obesity in the United States has drastically increased. Currently, one-hundred and seventeen billion people in the United States are obese. Out of those people, three-hundred thousand people die each year because of complications due to being over-weight. One out of every four children in the average school in the United States is over-weight.

In an effort to combat this growing obesity epidemic, concerned members of the school community have petitioned the GRCSS School Board, recommending that high-calorie beverages in school vending machines and high-fat-content food items currently available from the hot-lunch menu be replaced by more healthful alternatives. Admittedly, one concern is that many schools have a hard time budgeting this kind of substitution.

Healthful foods are currently more expensive for schools to provide, and also, schools worry that children who are addicted to eating their high-fat junk food will not buy healthful foods if they substitute them, decreasing income used for extra-curricular activities, sports, clubs and more. It is also true, of course, that some students will instead, bring in their own junk-food and high-calorie beverages from home.

These concerns for altering the hot-lunch menu are genuine. However, if high-calorie beverages and foods in schools are replaced with more healthful alternatives, some children will establish more healthful eating habits at young ages, and carry that over with them into adult-hood. Schools that have made the switch have said, " It's not true that children will only eat

junk, they just need healthier choices. And granted the school may suffer financially, a school free of vending machines and fast food in the cafeteria values the well-being of their students. Another reason this switch could be beneficial is because research has shown that the high sugars in soda can be linked to hyperactivity, anxiety and difficulty concentrating. Children who eat junk food and drink regular soda are not getting essential vitamins and nutrients, decreasing the efficiency and effectiveness of their education in the classroom.

Those students who take in their daily amounts of fruits and vegetables, and eat overall healthier meals, will feel better and have greater attentiveness in the classroom. Clearly, then, it is in the best interest of the students of schools that high-calorie beverages in vending machines and high-fat-content food be eliminated from hot-lunch menus. Not only will it establish more healthful eating habits in young-adults, but it will hopefully also limit the sickening statistics of obesity in our country.