

---

**Aptos Middle School PTSA, San Francisco, Calif.**

## **San Francisco Middle School Banishes Cafeteria Junk Food**

**February 13, 2003**

**Media Release**

<<<>>>

This document is available on the Education Policy Studies Laboratory website at  
<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps1/CERU/Articles/CERU-0302-24-OWI.doc>

---

SAN FRANCISCO -- Aptos Middle School is well under way on a pioneering pilot project to eliminate junk food sold at the school and replace it with healthy choices.

The changes have led to improved student behavior after lunch, teachers report, and revenues at the school's Beanery cafe have risen, defying oft-repeated myth.

Aptos, located in southwestern San Francisco and known as the city's most diverse middle school, is at the forefront of a nationwide movement to provide healthier school food, in response to alarming reports of mounting obesity and related health problems in children. Aptos parents and staff proposed the pilot project late last year to San Francisco schools Superintendent Arlene Ackerman, who readily approved it. Aptos, with 860 students, is the only San Francisco middle school currently making such menu revisions.

Changes to Aptos' Beanery menu began in early January. "This project was inspired after we noticed a troubling number of kids making an entire luncheon out of soda and chips," explains Aptos Principal Linal Ishibashi. "Soda and chips were the first items we banished. Now our teachers are reporting better behavior -- and much less trash in the yard and the building.

"We knew this would have a good effect, but even we are surprised at how rapidly we saw results," Ishibashi adds. "Better eating improves not just physical condition but also learning, safety and courtesy."

When students were surveyed about what healthy foods they'd buy at the Beanery, fresh deli sandwiches, sushi and pasta topped the list.

Those items were added to the menu, along with salads, homemade soups and fajitas. Banished were Hostess snack cakes, Slim Jims packaged meat sticks, nachos, pre-packaged burritos, taco pockets, mega-cheesburgers, french fries, hot links, hot wings and oversized pizzas.

Bottled water replaced soda in locker room machines. "Sales and revenue for the P.E. Department have actually increased," says Julie Kawamoto, Aptos' P.E. lead teacher.

In conjunction with the project, Aptos has added two new health classes where, among other discussions, the University of California, San Francisco School of Dentistry will make presentations on the effects of junk foods on teeth.

Student incentives include a weekly raffle for students "caught" making healthy food choices, while homerooms compete to answer nutrition-related "Questions of the Day." A math class is tracking revenue from Beanery sales.

"We hear that we're the envy of other middle schools," says Aptos parent Dana Woldow, who wrote the proposal for the pilot program. "It's also encouraging to see revenues rise. Now we know it's a myth that cutting out junk food cuts profits."

Advocates outside the school are keeping a close eye on the project. "We hope that the Aptos project will be a model for the entire school district," says Margaret Brodtkin, executive director of San Francisco's Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth. "It shows that middle school students will enjoy healthy food if given the option, and that schools can serve good food without losing money."