
The New York Times

Soda Makers Widen a Ban on School Sales

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The Coca-Cola Company, PepsiCo and Cadbury Schweppes will extend their ban on soft drink sales to include United States middle schools, ceding to pressure from health advocates and parents to reduce obesity in children.

Beverage companies will halt sales of full-calorie carbonated drinks during the school day under voluntary guidelines announced yesterday by the American Beverage Association, a trade group. The new policy will permit the sale of no-calorie drinks and all sodas after school hours.

Coca-Cola and PepsiCo reaffirmed policies to sell only water and 100 percent juice in elementary schools.

Five of the 10 largest school districts have banned soft drinks and many other districts are considering such restrictions, said Ross Getman, a New York lawyer and advocate for bans.

Mr. Getman said the agreement is a calculated move by soft-drink makers to prevent state and local officials from adopting more comprehensive rules, particularly at high schools.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 94 percent of high schools sold soft drinks in 2000.

Donald R. Knauss, president of Coca-Cola North America, said in a statement: "These guidelines mark a commitment by the industry to provide schools with beverages that offer variety, nutrition and fewer calories."

Dawn E. Hudson, president and chief executive of Pepsi-Cola North America, said, "We've been working diligently to introduce new, healthier offerings that give schools a broader selection of better-for-you options."