

# *California Project LEAN*

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**Creating School  
Environments that  
Support Healthy Eating**



**Peggy Agron, MA, RD**

# Project LEAN's Goals

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- *To create healthier communities through policy and environmental changes*
- *To serve as leaders coordinating state and local efforts promoting nutrition and physical activity*

# California Project LEAN's Experience

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## ■ *Successful Students Through Healthy Food Policies*

- *Educates school board members*
- *2004 Innovation in Prevention Award*
- *Policies affecting 1 million children*

## ■ *Food on the Run*

- *Trains youth to seek solutions*
- *Demonstrated improved access*

# California Project LEAN's Experience (continued)

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## ■ *Training and TA Provider*

- *HEAC/HEAL Initiatives*
- *Last year 40 districts implemented changes*

## ■ *Research and Media Efforts*

- *Elevated the issue*
- *State legislation*
- *Sponsored by the Governor*

# The Problem

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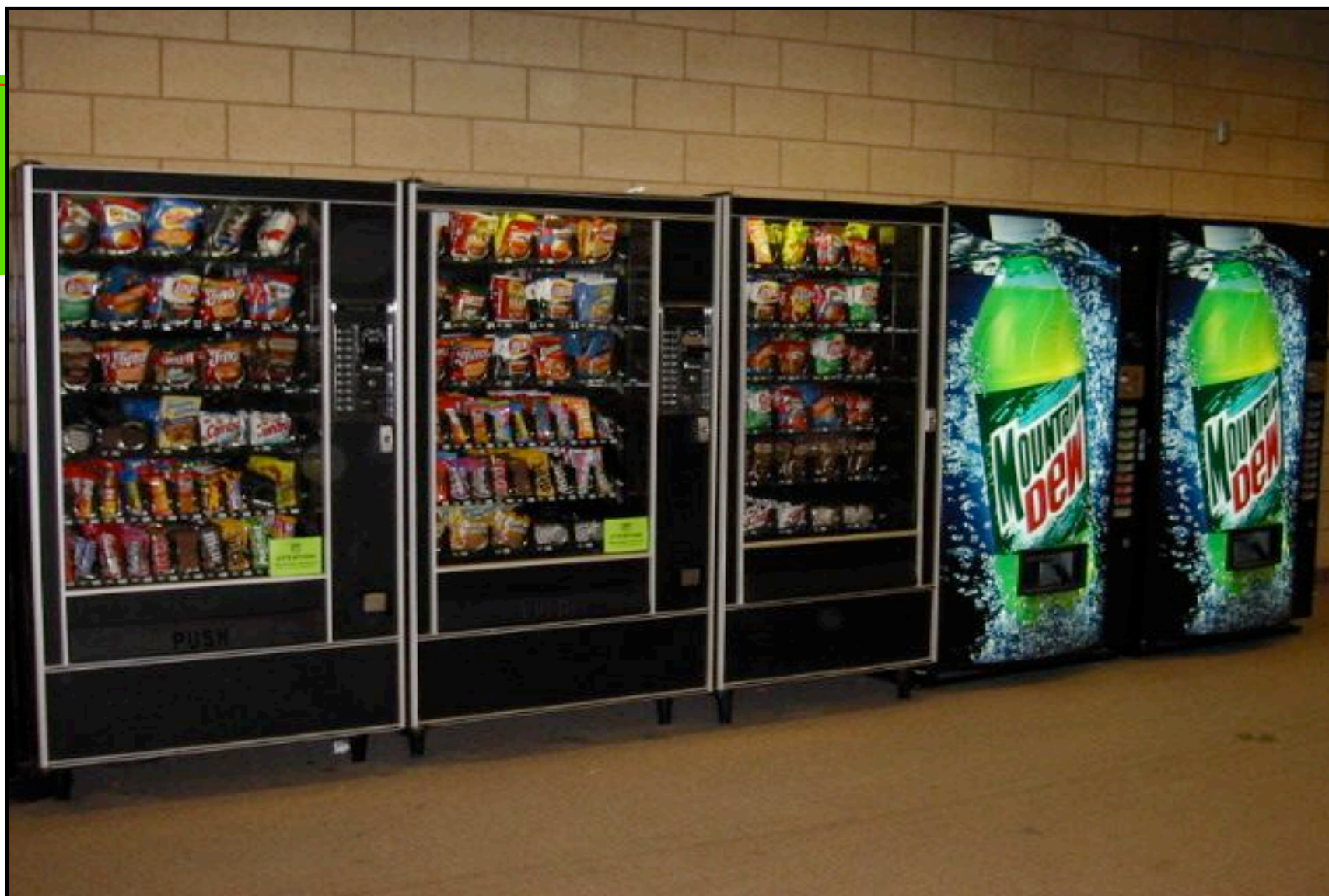
- *About 1/4 of what adolescents eat is “junk food.”*
- *26.5 percent of California’s school-aged children are overweight.*
- *Soft drink consumption is up among youth—135 percent between 1997 and 2001.*

# Why Schools?

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- *Link to academic achievement*
- *Children are a captive audience*
- *Many eat 2/3 of their daily food intake there*

# Vending Machines in Schools





# School Fundraising

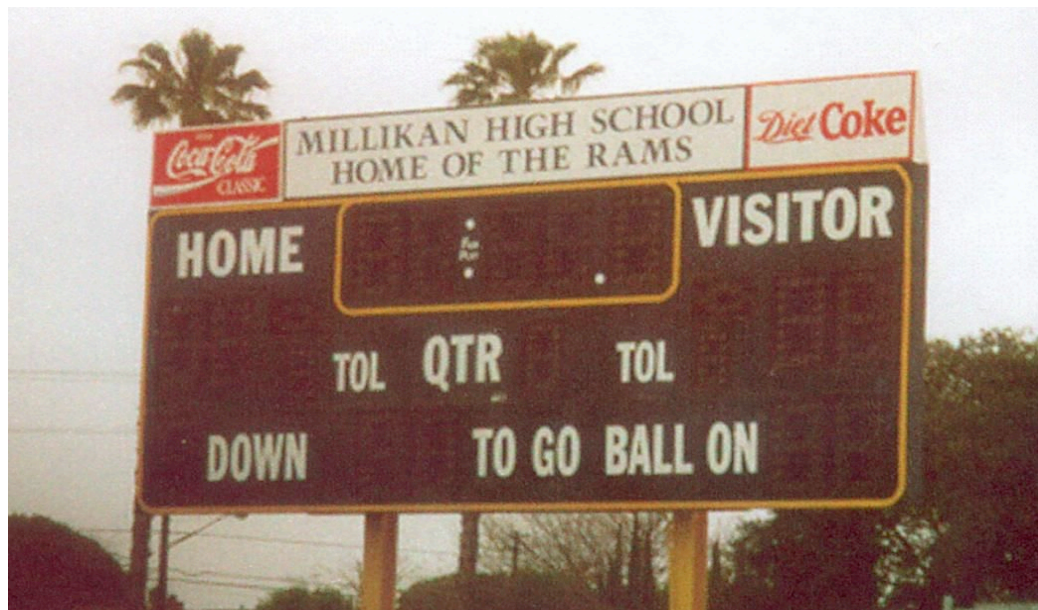




# School Cafeterias



# Logos on Scoreboards and Banners



Baskin Robbins  
ice cream  
around walking  
track in  
gymnasium

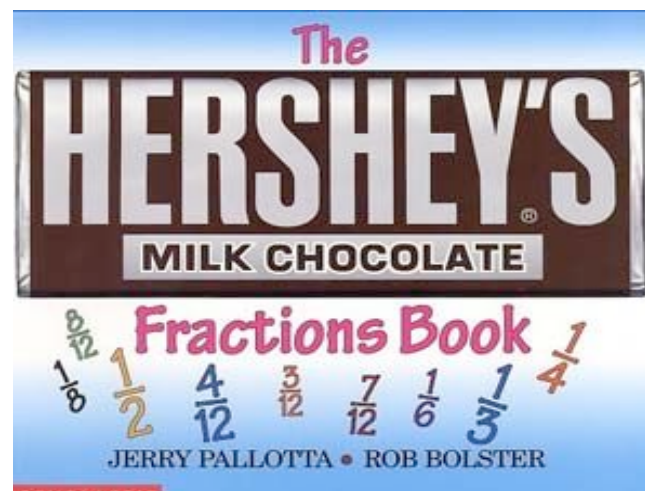
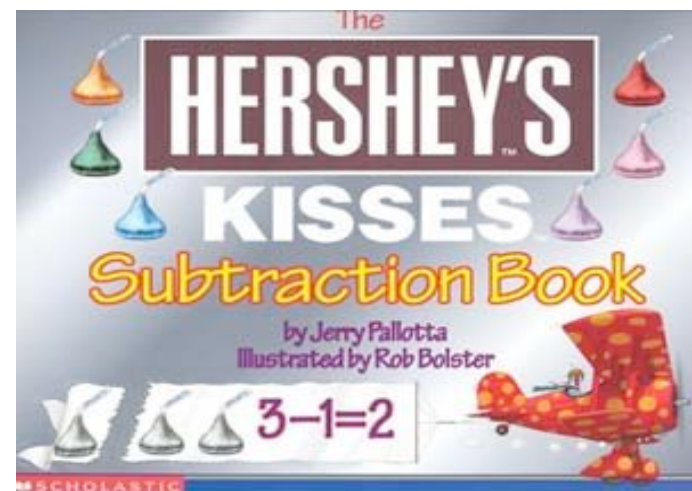
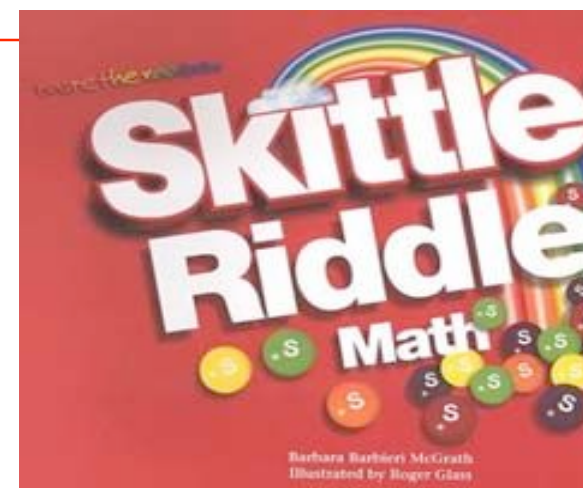
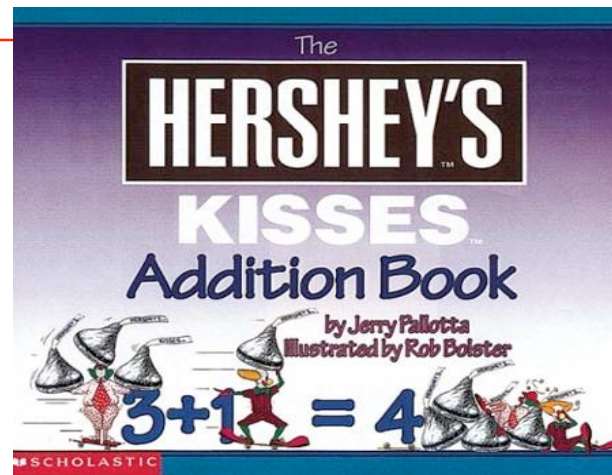
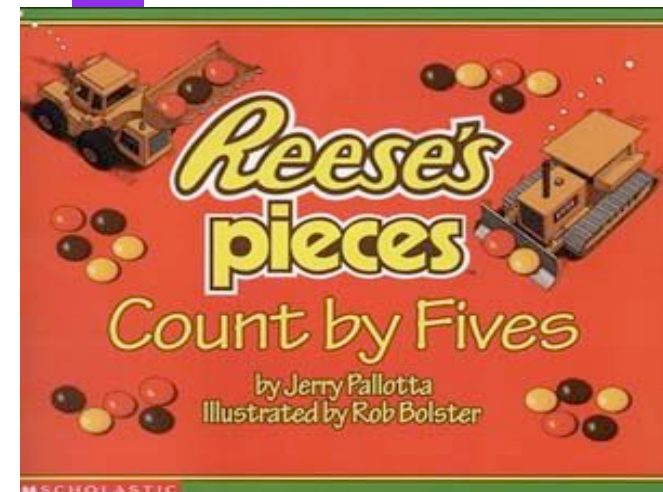


# School Stores





# More Advanced Counting Books



# Advertising on School Buses





# Portion sizes





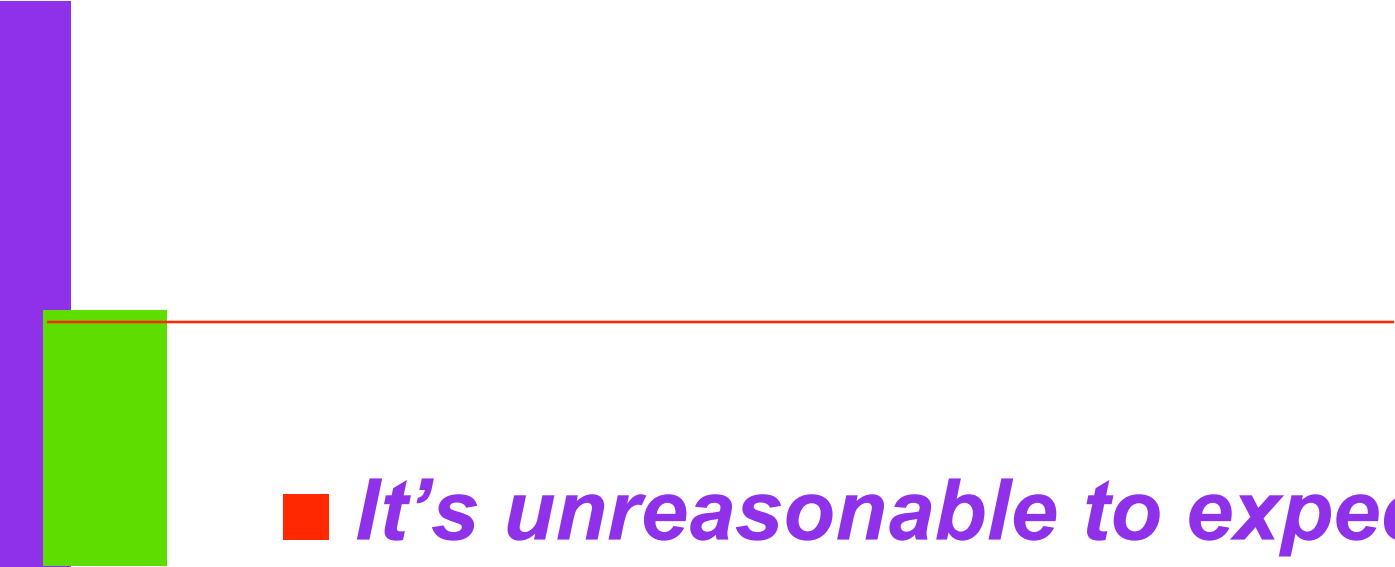


***"The school system is where you  
build brand loyalty."***

**John Alm  
President, Coca-Cola Enterprises**





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- *It's unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural, and physical environment conspire against such change"*

*- Institute of Medicine*

# The Climate

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## ■ *Federal*

- *Local Wellness Policy Requirement*
- *IOM Committees*

## ■ *States*

- *Many passing legislation*
- *Linking to the wellness policy requirements*

## ■ *Local*

- *Passionate staff and community members*
- *Passing district level policies*

# Question



**How do we deal with school environments that discourage healthy eating?**

# Solution

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## Enact and Implement Policies that Support Healthy Eating

- 1. Refocus strategies from traditional information dissemination to environmental/policy change.*
- 2. Assist community groups to advocate for improved nutrition options in schools.*
- 3. Institute school policies that support healthy eating and physical activity.*
- 4. Educate and involve youth.*



# Why Policy?

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- *Policies can affect large numbers of people by improving environments and encouraging individuals to change their behavior.*
- *Policies remain long after program funding and program people are gone.*

# Getting Started

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- *Develop a work group—a role for all*
- *Assess current policies and practices*
- *Collect data if needed*
- *Set clear goals*
- *Develop an Action Plan*
- *Tie your message to what is important to the decision-makers*
- *Review your progress*

# Strategy: Engage Youth

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*Students can:*

- *Conduct research and assessments*
- *Help formulate solutions*
- *Educate their peers and decision-makers*
- *Participate in tasting and marketing*
- *Change their schools!*

# Dispelling Myths

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- *Kids have freedom of choice*
- *Kids won't eat healthy foods*
- *Kids will revolt*

# Students Speak out...

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- “I just buy it every day because it tastes good and it’s not too expensive,” said a sophomore.  
“There’s nothing really good in the cafeteria. If this is the only thing to choose from, then I’m going to keep buying it.”
- “While I agree that school food isn’t the best...I believe if more effort was given to the preparation than simply giving up and serving ‘fast food,’ which has no redeeming food value, kids would start to like it better.” -Lisa, CA

# Strategy: Community Mobilization

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- Engage diverse stakeholders
- Find champions
- The LAUSD Story
  - *Second largest district in the US*
  - *Multiple partners*
  - *An inside champion*
  - *Beverage, snack, and meal policies*



# Strategy:

## Reaching School Board Members

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■ *Are they interested in nutrition?*

Yes

- *Link between nutrition and learning*
- *Link between nutrition and attendance*
- *Practical benefits to students' health*
- *Obesity in the media*
- *Wellness policy requirements*

# Reaching School Board Members

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■ *Are they interested in nutrition?*

No

- *Nutrition is not always a priority*
- *They feel inadequately prepared to address the topic*
- *Budget considerations loom large*

# We've Come A Long Way

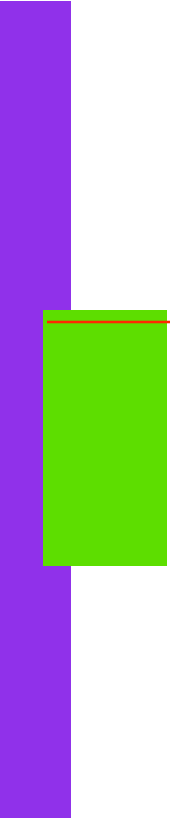
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- It's been just 6 years since the Fast Food Survey
  - *Federal requirements*
  - *State Laws*
  - *Local policies*
- But more to do
  - *Implementation*
  - *Monitoring and evaluation*
  - *Further Improvements*

# Remember...

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- *Take action even if it's small steps*
- *Be clear on your goals*
- *Look for small victories*
- *Don't let people tell you that it can't be done.*



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***“There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long range risks and costs of inaction”***

***–John F. Kennedy***

# CPL Resources

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- *Playing the Policy Game*
- *Reaching School Board Members*
- *Student Wellness: A Healthy Food and Physical Activity Policy Resource Guide*
- *Taking the Fizz Out of Soda Contracts*
- *Captive Kids: Selling Obesity at Schools*
- *Jump Start Teens*

# More Resources

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## ■ *Websites*

- [www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)
- [www.publichealthadvocacy.org](http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org)
- [www.cfpa.org](http://www.cfpa.org)
- [www.cspi.org](http://www.cspi.org)
- [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash)
- [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)
- [www.nasbe.org](http://www.nasbe.org)
- [www.eatbettermovemore.org](http://www.eatbettermovemore.org)
- [www.fns.usda.gov/tn](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn)

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**[www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org](http://www.CaliforniaProjectLEAN.org)**