

# Marketing's Impact on Program Effectiveness and Healthy Food Choices in Schools

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[www.healthdisparities.umn.edu](http://www.healthdisparities.umn.edu) Program in  
Health  
Disparities  
Research 

# Presentation objectives

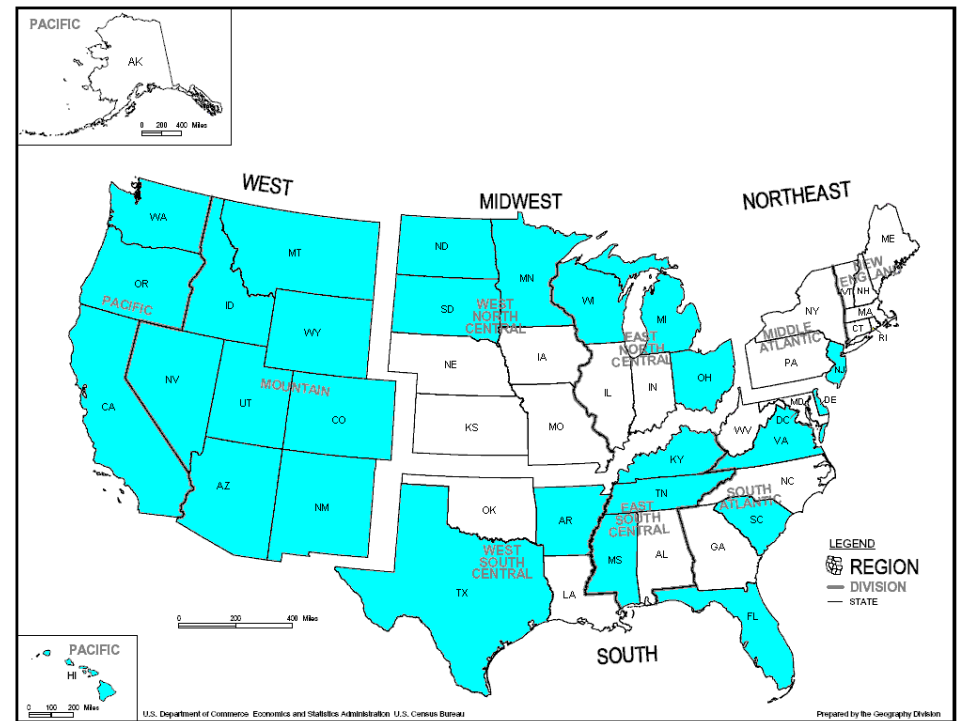
- Identify the 4 healthy food access areas that rural schools are lagging in
- Identify 3 promising practices for schools
- Discuss 3 actions for decision makers

# Students attending rural schools are more likely...

- To attend small schools
- Live in poverty
- Be food insecure
- Unprepared for school

# National study

- Study with 28 U.S. states representing 6,732 schools (2008)
- Principals described school nutrition policies and practices



# What are the main findings?

- Junk foods and drinks were equally available across all schools, regardless of location
- Rural schools were *less likely* to:
  - ban junk food, fast food advertising at school
  - promote healthy foods
  - serve fruits or vegetables
  - have smaller portions sizes

# Why is this important?

- Food access
  - Sugary drinks, fruits and vegetables
- Junk food marketing
  - Linked to obesity
- Promotional strategies
  - Nutrition info, taste preferences, cost sensitive
- Portion sizes
  - Serving sizes have increased over time

# Promising Practices

- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Ban junk food marketing/promote healthy foods in schools
- Cooperative buying partnerships

# Why prioritize school breakfast?

- Broad stakeholder reach
  - Academic performance, healthy diet/weight, hunger
  - School Board Association, School Nutrition Association, Academy of Pediatrics, etc.
- Academic benefits, especially for rural, low income of *school breakfast*
- *School breakfast* eaters have better diets and weigh about 4 pounds less than noneaters



# Project BREAK! study results

Goal: increase access to school breakfast in rural schools

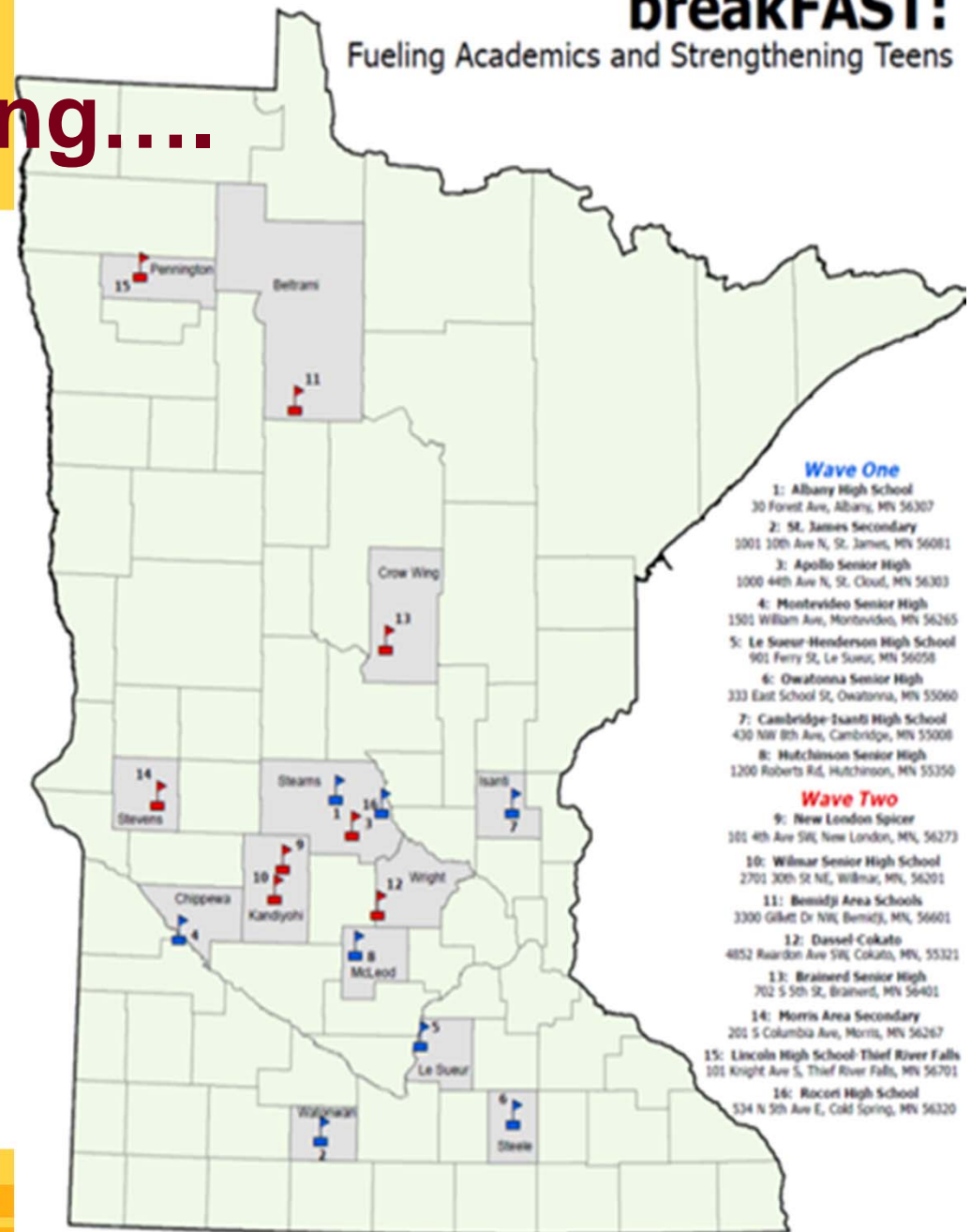
- Increase in SBP participation among low income students, girls, students of color
- Increase in whole grains and milk
- Decrease in breakfast skipping
- Maintain healthy weights

# Currently evaluating....

- Grades
- Absences
- Tardiness
- Disciplinary events
- Health office visits



**breakFAST:**  
Fueling Academics and Strengthening Teens



Map by: Minnesota Population Center



**breakFAST**  
fueling academics & strengthening teens



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# Opportunities for decision makers

- Support School Breakfast Programs
- Connect schools to local agriculture to offset food costs and increase healthy food access
- Identify creative ways to connect parents and community businesses to schools



# Support School Breakfast Programs

- Establish state reimbursements
- Enroll more eligible families
- Review bus schedules, start times
- Create pipeline programs (elementary, middle/jr., high schools)

*All school districts are required to arrange bus schedules so that buses arrive in sufficient time for schools to serve breakfast prior to the instructional day.*

*[KY.REV.STAT.ANN. § 158.070]*

# Support local agriculture

- Food Policy Councils
  - Examine local food systems and provide recommendations to improve access
- Farm to School Programs
  - Connect kids to food; supports local farmers
- Collective purchasing of food for federal school nutrition programs
  - Smaller and rural schools have the most to gain

*Legal and policy tools available at the [Public Health Law Center.org](http://PublicHealthLawCenter.org)*

# Connecting schools, families and businesses

A strength of rural schools...

- 41% of town/rural schools report both family and community involvement in school nutrition policy development
  - 32% of city schools
  - 34% of suburb schools

# Family & community involvement

- Having family and/or community help in developing school nutrition policies:
  - Fewer junk food items in schools
  - More fruits/vegetables
  - Smaller portion sizes
  - Pricing strategies
  - Collect parent, student suggestions
  - Provide nutrition information



# But not for policies to....

- Ban distributing junk food merchandise
- Ban junk food advertising in school buildings, grounds, bus, publications

# Parent outreach/engagement strategies

- School siting decisions can be leveraged to promote greater school and community connectivity
- Shared use of school property
- Afterschool and out –of-school time

*Legal and policy tools available at the [Public Health Law Center.org](http://PublicHealthLawCenter.org)*

# Summary: Food access in schools

- Food access challenges of costs, resources, infrastructure, etc. transcend geography
  - *Most problematic in rural schools*
- National evidence base exists on how to improve food access in school settings
  - *Unique rural challenges*
- Solutions will likely impact multiple settings
  - Child care, after school programs, worksites

# Thank you & questions

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