**Fast Food in Schools** with Commentary

There is a general consensus backed by plenty of evidence, that fast food is unhealthy. In fact, there have been plenty of anti-fast food activists calling for healthier policies in order to counter the “obesity epidemic”- especially for younger kids. Yet despite fast food being unhealthy, many public schools facilitate fast food restaurants. According to investigative journalists Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson, “about 19,000 public schools sell branded fast food in the cafeteria.” The fact is that fast food restaurants make a lot of money for the schools. Still, if schools were to contract with fast food chains, there would need to be certain guidelines to ensure healthy eating habits. Three guidelines that would be very effective would be to censor the foods that are being sold, forbid advertising of unhealthy foods, and to limit the amount of food a student can buy.

The first guideline would be to have the school decide which items are too unhealthy to be sold without negative consequences. Many foods sold by fast food restaurants far exceed the recommended amount sodium, saturated fat, trans fats, or sugar. For instance, The New York City Health Department conducted a study of 6,580 meals bought at fast food restaurant chains and found that “about 57% of the meals exceeded the 1,500mg daily sodium level.” Many other meals far exceed the proper calorie count. Meals such as these should be taken off the menu. Many students don’t know or care about the effects unhealthy foods can cause. Schools should not facilitate unhealthy foods. These healthier items would consist of smaller amounts of fat, sodium, and sugar, and increased amounts of vegetables, fruits, and protein. Several states have already banned junk food and soda from public schools including California and Connecticut. Taking the very unhealthy items off the menu would be a necessary guideline.

Another guideline is to forbid the fast food restaurants from advertising the unhealthier items that they are allowed to sell. Advertising is a very effective way of getting people to buy a product. Advertising plays an essential role in the fast food restaurant industry. Many

*Orients and engages the reader with an angled and compelling introduction.*

*Indicates an awareness of audience’s needs by providing relevant contextual details.*

*Establishes a purpose by stating a claim(s*). Could be a little more succinctly stated.

*Supports claim(s) with insightful, logical reasoning and compelling evidence.*

*Uses accurate and credible sources that fully support the claim(s).*

*Shows insightful understanding of topic.*

fast food restaurants advertise in schools to get students to buy a certain item. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack stated that,” companies spend 149 million a year marketing food and drinks to kids in school.” Schools allow this to make money. Because advertising influences people’s purchases, advertising healthy food instead of junk food would promote healthier food choices. Instead of advertising a certain soft drink, the restaurants should advertise juice or bottled water. Instead of fries, advertise vegetables. Or instead of desserts, advertise fruits. Advertisements can actually make money for the school while being a useful tool in promoting healthy eating habits. It just depends on how it is used.

Lastly, schools should limit the amount of food a student can buy. Even while controlling what’s on the menu, students can still make unhealthy choices by overeating. Without a limit, students can consume many more calories than what is recommended for a healthy diet. Portion control is essential in maintaining a healthy diet. The Health magazine surveyed the top 100 largest fast food chains in America and listed the ones deemed healthiest. The healthiest two, Panera Bread and Jason’s Deli, encouraged smaller meals. It was a major factor as to why they were elected as the top two healthiest fast food chains in America. Without portion control, the other guidelines won’t be as effective. This guideline is very important.

Fast food restaurants can be very beneficial to schools financially. However, it is the school's obligation to provide healthy guidelines. By censoring what is being sold, allowing advertisements of only healthy food, and by limiting how much a student can purchase, schools can ensure that students make healthy choices.

*Groups related ideas, reasons, facts, and details into sections or paragraphs that are logically ordered.*

*Uses a variety of transitional words, phrases and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons and evidence.*

*Does not acknowledge alternate or opposing claims.*

*Quotes or paraphrases the data and conclusions of others with consistent accuracy (with no evidence of plagiarism).*

*Cites sources but not with full bibliographic information*

*Shows and maintains a consistent command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage.*

*Shows and maintains a consistent command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.*

*Uses knowledge of language and its conventions to skillfully connect with audience.*

*Chooses words carefully to convey and maintain an appropriate tone for audience and purpose within a formal style.*

*Provides a conclusion that follows from the argument presented*