

Chapter 10
Food and Nutrition Politics, Policy, and Legislation

Student assignments and activities designed to enhance learning and stimulate critical thinking.

1. Using THOMAS (<http://www.thomas.gov>), determine the current status of the MEAL Act. What city(s) has enacted similar laws? Describe the specifics of these laws, including their history, implementation, and outcomes.
2. Discuss 3 guidelines that you think should be added or changed in the development of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.
3. Find a nutrition-related bill that has been introduced recently to Congress (used THOMAS to find). Then, write a letter to your legislators in support or opposition to the bill. See Box 10.24 (page 297) for a model letter.
4. In December 2006, New York City banned the used of *trans* fat in local restaurants. To learn more about *trans* fat, see <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fdatrans.html>. Then, answer the following questions:
 - Describe *trans* fat. How does *trans* fat differ from other types of fat?
 - What is the status of *trans* fat in your city/town?
 - How might the banning of *trans* fat help Americans reduce future medical costs?
 - Do you think that menu labeling and/or public education would be a more effective or appropriate policy option than a *trans* fat ban? Explain your answer.
5. Summarize and discuss at least three different policies more rigorous than those required by the National School Lunch Program that have been proposed or adopted as part of the Local School Wellness Policies. Additional information and sample policies can be found at the following websites:
 - USDA. National School Lunch Program: Regulations (see 210.10).
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/regulations/7CFR210.pdf>
 - School Nutrition Association. Child Nutrition: Local School Wellness Policies.
<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Index.aspx?id=1076>
 - Food Research and Action Center. Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Local School Wellness Policies Briefing.
http://www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/cnreauthor/wellness_briefing.htm
 - USDA. Team Nutrition: Healthy Schools.
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy_steps.html

6. Review Box 10-12 and *Team Nutrition* at <http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/guide.pdf> for more information about School Nutrition Policies. List and explain some barriers that would prevent politicians from implementing school nutrition policies. What barriers might prevent school principals from creating and implementing school nutrition policies? Describe how school nutrition policies may affect extra-curricular activities.

Read Component 2—Quality School Meals and Component 3—Other Healthy Food Options (pages 15-20) of the *Team Nutrition* guide referenced above. Create 3 policies for each component, and explain how these policies would affect the school food environment (including a la carte items and vending machine options). What would you do if you received a negative or threatening response from the school food vendors? From the students? From the parents?

7. Read the following article:
Close RS, Schoeller DA. The financial reality of overeating. *J Am Col Nutr.* 2006;25:203-209.
Available at: <http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/business/20061202money3.pdf>.

Discuss whether a poor family can afford to pass up “supersizing” a meal at a fast food restaurant.

8. Using THOMAS (<http://www.thomas.gov>), discuss the nutrition-related policy additions and changes that have been made to the 2002 Farm Bill. Does the name “Farm Bill” readily encompass the scope of the legislation? Why or why not?

9. Define the term “junk food.” What foods are included and excluded from your definition? Why? Who would support and oppose your definition, and why? Several public health professionals have proposed a “junk food” tax. Based on your definition, do you think this is feasible and appropriate? Explain your answer. (Refer to Question 6 from Chapter 13 for a related question regarding “junk food.”)

10. Choose a topic from the *Center for Science in the Public Interest’s* “Policy Options to Promote Nutrition and Activity” at http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/policy_options.html. What is the status of the policy you chose? Discuss whether this policy has been successful. Is this policy practical for your community? Include in your answer the effects this policy would have on each of the key stakeholders involved.

11. Read “School Foods Report Card,” posted at http://cspinetorg/new/pdf/school_foods_report_card.pdf. Then, access the full text of S 2592 or HR 5167 through THOMAS to determine the current status of the proposed legislation. Use

Google or another search engine to investigate the portrayal of the proposed legislation in the mass media.

- A. Explain why certain interest groups are in favor of the legislation and others are opposed to it.
- B. Discuss how the proposed legislation might overlap school local wellness policies established in response to P.L 108-265.
- C. Predict how local wellness policies could be affected if this legislation is enacted.
- D. In your opinion, should the federal government determine what kinds of foods can be sold in vending machines in schools? Explain.