



The Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program A Case-Study for Advocacy

Background information on the program

- The Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program (FVP Pilot), was adopted in the 2002 Farm Bill as an Amendment to the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. The purpose of this program is to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among children in schools throughout a standard school day by increasing access to and preferences for fruits and vegetables.
- The FVP Pilot was a success. Evaluation of the first year showed the program was popular and effective as evidenced by students increased consumption of and excitement for fruits and vegetables as part of a balanced diet. This success and political enthusiasm for the program led to Congress converting FVP from a pilot program to a permanent program in The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act with an expansion in 2004 to 8 states and 3 Indian Tribal Organizations.
- In 2005-2006, Congress appropriated funds so USDA could expand the FVP even further to include a total of 14 states. The states currently participating include Connecticut, Idaho, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and the original four- Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, and Michigan.
- The FVP is administered by USDA who provides funds, implementation materials, and basic guidelines for the program. Each state selects specific schools to be funded from those who apply along with provision of further training and resources.
- At the local level, teachers and administrators creatively determine how to incorporate fruits and vegetables into the school day. The three most common means of distributing the free fruits and vegetables include classroom service, kiosks, and vending machines
- An evaluation was done by USDA. Results from surveys found that students did take advantage of the fruit and vegetable access in their schools with children consuming 93% of servings offered during a week in November and 92% of servings offered during a week in December. Health benefits reported in the FVP Pilot evaluation were: 1) improved attentiveness in class, 2) reduced intake of unhealthy snacks, 3) increased preference and

familiarity with certain fruits and veggies, 4) increased acceptance of fruits and vegetables in school lunch and 5) filled food need for students who might otherwise be hungry.

The Fruit and Vegetable Program at the Local Level

- In Des Moines Schools, King Elementary School and Harding Middle School are currently participating in FVP.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables are served daily in the classrooms at regularly scheduled times. The teachers in both schools have been supportive of the program and students are all active participants.
 - Des Moines schools have made an extra effort to involve parents by ensuring the school office is always stocked with the day's fruit and veggie selection for visiting parents in addition to newsletters sent home.
 - Administrators, staff, and teachers are most impressed with the way FVP has touched every student in their schools without stigmatizing certain children as lower income since all participate in the program.

Issue

Des Moines School system has many more schools that would benefit greatly from the FVP. How can the school system increase availability of the program at more schools?

Question for discussion

How might the Des Moines School system get more schools on the program from a **local, state and federal policy** perspective? Consider the following components for each of these policy levels in your answer:

Who are the decision makers?

What kind of advocacy is needed?

Discuss networking opportunities and grassroots support.

Is there a role for farmers? Industry?

What will be the biggest challenges and how can they be overcome?