

Dr. Adrienne Weiss-Harrison
Director of Health Services
New Rochelle School District
515 North Avenue
New Rochelle, NY 10801

RE: 15 minute lunch periods at Trinity Elementary

October 1, 2008

Dear Dr. Weiss-Harrison,

I am writing to you, Chairman of the New Rochelle School District's Health and Wellness Committee, because you are committed to the physical and mental well being of our children. You are in charge of all the nurses in our schools and health and medical issues for the students.

Recently I called your office to talk about lunch procedures. As you know in Trinity Elementary school the 4th and 5th graders get only 15 minutes to purchase and eat their lunch. You confirmed this finding when you spoke with the administration at the school.

You called me back and sympathized. You offered several suggestions which, after discussing with several of the other moms and dads, we weren't comfortable with. The suggestion offered by your medical professor from when you were in med school – to eat standing up because it is faster -- sounded inappropriate to parents' of 9, 10, and 11 years olds. You also suggested renaming the "Overflow Tables" to be the "Leisurely Lunch Tables" to reduce any stigma associated with using them. Then you suggested that we pack a bag lunch rather than purchase lunch to spare the time lost to waiting on line, but this is not always possible. We appreciate your thoughts and candor but believe that better solutions should be made available by the district for our children.

Increasing the length of the lunch period to at least 20 minutes is important for several reasons, including: improved academic performance; reducing unhealthy eating habits that lead to obesity; and learning manners, proper etiquette and socialization. It has been said, a proper lunch will keep a child's mind sharp and ready to learn all afternoon.

Mr. Briceno has expressed an interest in working with a small group of parents to explore solutions to the problem. He agrees 15 minutes is not enough time for lunch, but says that he has scheduling constraints. I am trying to assemble a "Lunch Study Group" to visit the lunchroom, as per an invitation from Mr. Briceno, to see the process. Will you work with Trinity Elementary school administration to overcome these issues to increase the length of the lunch period?

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

cc. Superintendent Organishek, Mr. McMahon, Mr. Briceno

We oppose
15 Minute Lunches at Trinity Elementary

1/8

1.	[Redacted] - [Redacted] 4th grade
2.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 5th grade
3.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 5th [Redacted] [Redacted] 2th
4.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 4th
5.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 1th
6.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 3th
7.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 4th.
8.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 1st.
9.	[Redacted] [Redacted]
10.	[Redacted] [Redacted]
11.	[Redacted] [Redacted]
12.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 4th.
13.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 4th
14.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 1st
15.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 5st

We oppose
15 Minute Lunches at Trinity Elementary

2/8

1.	[REDACTED]	4 ^m grade	
2.	[REDACTED]	2 nd grade	
3.	[REDACTED]	4 th Grade	[REDACTED]
4.	[REDACTED]	3 th Grade	[REDACTED]
5.	[REDACTED]	4 th .	
6.	[REDACTED]	4 th grade	[REDACTED]
7.	[REDACTED]	4 th grade	[REDACTED]
8.	[REDACTED]	4 th grade	[REDACTED]
9.	[REDACTED]	4 th grade	[REDACTED]
10.	[REDACTED]	4 th grade	[REDACTED]
11.	[REDACTED]	3 rd grade	[REDACTED]
12.	[REDACTED]	2 nd grade	[REDACTED]
13.	[REDACTED]	2 nd grade	[REDACTED]
14.	[REDACTED]	4 th Grade	[REDACTED]
15.	[REDACTED]	2 nd grade	[REDACTED]

We oppose
15 Minute Lunches at Trinity Elementary

3/8

1.	[Redacted] (4th [Redacted])
2.	[Redacted] uce [Redacted] 1st grade
3.	[Redacted] 2nd grade
4.	[Redacted] 1st Grade
5.	[Redacted] 1st Grade
6.	[Redacted] 1st grade
7.	[Redacted] 3rd Grade
8.	[Redacted] 3rd Grade
9.	[Redacted] ([Redacted]) 3rd Grade.
10.	[Redacted] ([Redacted]) 3rd Grade
11.	[Redacted] ([Redacted]) 3rd Grade
12.	[Redacted] [Redacted] 4"
13.	[Redacted] 3rd
14.	[Redacted] 3rd
15.	[Redacted] 4rd.

We oppose
15 Minute Lunches at Trinity Elementary

4/8

1.	[Redacted]
2.	[Redacted]
3.	[Redacted]
4.	[Redacted]
5.	[Redacted]
6.	[Redacted]
7.	[Redacted]
8.	[Redacted]
9.	[Redacted]
10.	[Redacted] Grade 4 + Kindergarten
11.	[Redacted] - [Redacted] 2 nd Grade
12.	[Redacted] 5 th Grade
13.	[Redacted] - 1st grade + 3rd grade
14.	[Redacted]
15.	[Redacted] K + 3rd

We oppose
15 Minute Lunches at Trinity Elementary

5/8

1.	[REDACTED]
2.	[REDACTED]
3.	[REDACTED] 3rd Grade
4.	[REDACTED] 4 Grade
5.	[REDACTED] 4 th grade.
6.	[REDACTED] 3 rd grade
7.	[REDACTED] 4 th GRADE
8.	[REDACTED] 4 th grade
9.	[REDACTED] 4 th /5 th
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	

We oppose
15 Minute Lunches at Trinity Elementary

6/8

1.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	(5th)
2.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	(5th)
3.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	(2nd)
4.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	(5th)
5.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	(5th)
6.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	(5th)
7.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	(5th)
8.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	4th
9.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	5th
10.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	4th
11.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	2th
12.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	1th
13.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	(5th)
14.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	3
15.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	2.

[Redacted] 1st
 [Redacted] 1st
 [Redacted] 2nd
 [Redacted]

We oppose
15 Minute Lunches at Trinity Elementary

7/8

1.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (5 th)
2.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] 3 rd
3.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
4.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (2 nd)
5.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (3 rd)
6.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (2 nd)
7.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
8.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (2 nd)
9.	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
10.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] and 5 th 3 rd 4 th
11.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] 2 nd 3 rd ST
12.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (1 st)
13.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] 4 th
14.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] 3 rd
15.	[Redacted]	[Redacted] K
	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (2 nd)
	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (2 nd)
	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (1 st)
	[Redacted]	[Redacted] (2 nd)

We oppose
15 Minute Lunches at Trinity Elementary

8/8

1.	[REDACTED] (26,000)
2.	[REDACTED] (3 rd Grade)
3.	[REDACTED] (3 rd Grade)
4.	[REDACTED] 5 th grade [REDACTED] 3 rd grade
5.	[REDACTED] 5 th grade
6.	[REDACTED] 1 st Grade
7.	[REDACTED] (2 nd)
8.	[REDACTED] (3 rd grade)
9.	[REDACTED] (2 nd grade)
10.	[REDACTED] (3 rd)
11.	[REDACTED] (1 st)
12.	[REDACTED] 5 grade
13.	[REDACTED] (2 nd)
14.	[REDACTED] (3 rd)
15.	[REDACTED] (10)
	[REDACTED] (4)



Action for Healthy Kids®

The Role of Sound Nutrition and Physical Activity in Academic Achievement

Factors related to overweight in schoolchildren negatively influence a child's readiness to learn and overall achievement. Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity are not only root causes of overweight and obesity, they are also factors associated with lower academic achievement. Studies demonstrate that when children's basic nutritional and fitness needs are met, they attain higher achievement levels. Schools have a critical role in helping students learn and practice healthy eating habits, and in providing the knowledge, motivation, and skills children need for lifelong physical activity [1].

Poor nutrition hampers academic achievement.

Recent studies demonstrate:

- In a New York study, many students experienced malnutrition that was too slight for clinical signs yet still affected their intelligence and academic performance. This impairment can be corrected through improved nutrition [2], [3].
- Among fourth grade students, those having the *lowest amount of protein* in their diet had the *lowest achievement scores* [4].
- *Iron deficiency anemia* leads to *shortened attention span, irritability, fatigue, and difficulty with concentration*. Consequently, anemic children tend to do poorly on vocabulary, reading, and other tests [5].
- Children who suffer from *poor nutrition* during the brain's most formative years score much *lower on tests of vocabulary, reading comprehension, arithmetic, and general knowledge* [6].
- Six- to eleven-year-old *children from food-insufficient families* had significantly *lower arithmetic scores* and were more likely to have *repeated a grade*. Families were classified as food-deficient if they self-reported as sometimes or often not having enough food to eat [7].
- Even *moderate under-nutrition (inadequate or sub-optimal nutrient intake)* can have lasting effects and *compromise cognitive development and school performance* [8].
- Morning fasting has a negative effect on cognitive performance, even among healthy, well-nourished children. A test of the speed and accuracy of response on problem-solving tasks given to children who did or did not eat breakfast found that *skipping breakfast had an adverse influence on their performance on the tests* [9].

Proper nutrition enhances academic performance.

School breakfast programs have shown the effective role of nutrition in enhancing academic performance. Studies demonstrate participation in School Breakfast Programs:

- Improves school performance and reduces absenteeism and tardiness. Relieves hunger and improves children's ability to succeed at school [10],[11],[12];
- Improves academic, behavioral, and emotional functioning and leads to increased math grades, lowered absenteeism, and improved behavior [14], [15];
- Increases composite math and reading scores, improves student behavior, reduces morning trips to the nurse, and increases student attendance and test scores [16];
- Strengthens children's psychosocial outcomes, lowering anxiety, hyperactivity, depression, and psychosocial dysfunction [17];
- Raises scores on basic skills tests and reduces tardiness and absenteeism among participants [18].

Increased physical activity leads to higher academic achievement.

Recent studies show:

- Academic achievement improves even when the physical education reduces the time for academics. A reduction of 240 minutes per week in class time for academics to enable increased physical activity led to consistently higher mathematics scores [19], [20].
- A recent study has shown a correlation between the SAT-9 test results with the Fitnessgram indicating that the physical well-being of students has a direct impact on their ability to achieve academically. Students with the highest fitness scores also had the highest test scores [21].
- Intense physical activity programs have positive effects on academic achievement, including increased concentration; improved mathematics, reading, and writing test scores; and reduced disruptive behavior. [22].
- Aerobic conditioning may help to improve memory. Exercise may strengthen particular areas of the brain, and oxygen intake during exercise may enhance greater connections between neurons [23].

The links between schoolchildren's nutrition, physical activity, and achievement was a key topic addressed at the Healthy Schools Summit, held in Washington, D.C. October, 2002. Chaired by former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher, MD, PhD, with First Lady Laura Bush serving as Honorary Chairperson, the Summit kicked off the nationwide initiative.

David Satcher, MD, PhD is the founding chair and along with other members of the board, provides expertise and oversight to AFHK, a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status. The collaboration includes more than 40 national organizations and government agencies representing education, physical activity, health, and nutrition—such as the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National PTA. In addition to providing ongoing guidance, these organizations contributed to the development of the October 2002 national Healthy Schools Summit, as well as to the formation and on-going guidance and direction of 51

AFHK State Teams. These teams are comprised of volunteer health professionals, teachers, administrators, parents and other concerned community leaders.

The National Dairy Council, the National Football League and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have provided funding and support for Action for Healthy Kids.

**For further information about Action for Healthy Kids,
or to become involved in an AFHK State Team,
visit our website at www.ActionForHealthyKids.org**

Resources

[1] Bogden, J.F. *Fit, healthy, and ready to learn: a school health policy guide*. Alexandria (VA): NASBE, 2000; [2] Schoenthaler, S. Abstracts of early papers on the effects of vitamin-mineral supplementation on IQ and behavior. *Personality and Individual Differences* 1991;12(4):343; [3] Schoenthaler, S., Amos, S., Eysenck, H., Peritz, E., and Yudkin, J. Controlled trial of vitamin mineral supplementation: effects on intelligence and performance. *Personality and Individual Differences* 1991;12(4):361; [4] American School Food Service Association (ASFSA). Impact of hunger and malnutrition on student achievement. *School Board Food Service Research Review* 1989;(1, Spring):17-21; [5] Parker, L. *The relationship between nutrition and learning: a school employee's guide to information and action*. Washington: National Education Association, 1989; [6] Brown, L., Pollitt, E. Malnutrition, poverty and intellectual development. *Scientific American* 1996;274(2):38-43; [7] Alaimo, K., Olson, C.M., Frongillo Jr., E.A. Food insufficiency and American school-aged children's cognitive, academic, and psychosocial development. *Pediatrics* July 2001;108(1):44-53; [8] Center on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy. Statement on the Link between Nutrition and Cognitive Development in Children. Medford, MA: Tufts University School of Nutrition 1995; [9] Pollitt, E., Leibel, R., Greenfield, D. Brief fasting, stress, and cognition in children. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 1991;34(Aug):1526-1533; [10] Murphy, J.M., Pagano, M.E., Nachmani, J., Sperling, P., Kane, S., Kleinman, R.E. The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 1998;152:899-906; [11] Kleinman, R.E. et al., Hunger in children in the United States: potential behavioral and emotional correlates. *Pediatrics* 1998;101(1):E3. [12] Office of Research, Education, and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, USDA. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 1998;67(4):798S-803S; [14] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Guidelines for school health programs to promote lifelong healthy eating. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Recommendations and Report* 1996 Jun 14; 45:RR-9; [15] Bamard, A. Study links school breakfast, results. *Boston Globe* 2000 Nov 29; [16] Minnesota Department of Children Families and Learning. *School breakfast programs energizing the classroom* 1998; [17] Murphy, J.M. et al. Effects of a universally free, in-classroom school breakfast program: results from the Maryland Meals for Achievement Evaluation. Initial Report 1999 May 4; [18]; [19] NASPE, Executive Summary, *Shape of the Nation* 2001; [20] Shephard, R.J., Volle, M., Lavalee, M., LaBarre, R., Jequier, J.C., Rajic, M. Required physical activity and academic grades: a controlled longitudinal study. In: Limarinen and Valimaki, editors. *Children and Sport*. Berlin: Springer Verlag; 1984. 58-63; National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE). New study supports physically fit kids perform better academically. 2002 [21]. Shephard, R.J. Curricular physical activity and academic performance. *Pediatric Exercise Science* 1997;9:113-126; [22] Symons, C.W., Cinelli, B., James, T.C., Groff, P. Bridging student health risks and academic achievement through comprehensive school health programs. *Journal of School Health* 1997;67(6):220-227; [23] .

People who are overweight or obese should focus more on how they eat rather than what they eat, according to Dr Rick Kausman, a Melbourne GP.

Dr Kausman, principal of the Weight Management and Eating Behaviour Clinic, said empowering people to implement healthy behaviour such as reducing the speed of eating and only eating when hungry was more effective than focusing on losing kilos.

An audit of 75 consecutive patients from his clinic showed that people's weight stabilised or decreased, physical activity rose, they felt less guilty about eating and more confident of maintaining dietary changes up to 12 months after such a programme (*Australian Family Physician* 2003; 32: 89-91).

Dr Kausman said, 'A key thing is that it's possible to help people lose weight without dieting. This study shows that we empowered people to be able to make changes when they were ready by giving them a few tools.'

These measures included:

- ascertaining the reasons for eating quickly, and working on slowing eating down;
- helping people become aware of non-hungry eating;
- addressing emotional happiness and physical activity.

Dr Kausman concedes that long consultations — one hour initially and up to half an hour for follow-up visits — are a vital part of his programme.

