

Rewards and Incentives

The number of overweight children has reached epidemic proportions both nationally and in North Carolina. Between 1995 and 2000, the number of overweight North Carolina children aged 5 to 11 years old increased 40 percent. More than one in five of 5 to 11 year-olds are overweight and one in four of 12 to 18 year-olds are overweight (NC-NPASS 2003). Schools are places of extraordinary influence on the development of life-long eating patterns. Schools have an opportunity to provide classroom health and nutrition education supplemented by learning laboratories in the many venues where food is offered or served.

In support of Eat Smart: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for All Foods Available in School

Classroom rewards and incentives can be an effective way to encourage positive behavior; however, it is important that students are not given foods for rewards because this can interfere with natural hunger cues. Many foods used for rewards counteract healthful eating messages. Schools should model appropriate behavior and seek alternatives to food given as a reward. The power of the simple words "you did a great job" can be a very effective form of recognition. Respect and words of appreciation go a long way for everyone. It is important that some rewards for students be intrinsic so students can become self-confident and self-motivated. If food is used for a reward, healthy choices with appropriate portion sizes are encouraged and it should be part of a larger learning experience.

Ways to reward a job well done for all ages

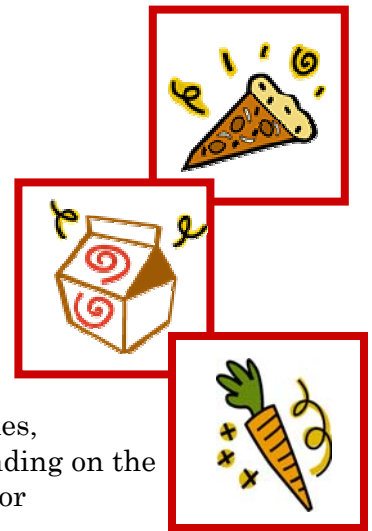
- Extra music and reading time
- Time for music and dancing
- Music while doing school work
- Chat break at the end of class
- Extra computer time
- Free time at the end of class
- Day for watching a movie
- Group activity
- Games
- Homework coupon
- Coupon for prizes and privileges
- Certificate/trophy/ribbon/plaque
- Gift certificate to local non-food merchants
- Free pass to sporting event or play
- Walk break from class
- Fun walk with the principal or teacher
- Guest presenter in class
- Field trip

Elementary Students	Middle School Students	High School Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking things to the office ▪ Taking care of the class pet ▪ Eating with the teacher ▪ Prizes from a treasure box ▪ Pencil toppers ▪ Stickers ▪ Pencils ▪ Stars or smiley faces ▪ Paperback book ▪ Extra recess ▪ Small playground equipment ▪ Leading the class to lunch, recess, library or other adventure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sitting with friends ▪ Music concert at school ▪ Pencils ▪ Paperback book ▪ Pep rally ▪ Magazine subscription ▪ T-shirt/hat/sunglasses ▪ Small sports equipment ▪ Step counter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sitting with friends ▪ Music concert at school ▪ Pep rally ▪ Paperback book ▪ Magazine subscription ▪ T-shirt/hat/sunglasses ▪ Small sports equipment ▪ Prime parking spot ▪ Recognition with morning announcements



Healthy Rewards and Incentives Policy

Schools play a powerful role in influencing students' food choices. There are several ways that schools can ensure that students' eating habits contribute to their learning achievement and lifelong good health. The **Eat Smart: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for All Foods Available in School** encourage the development of policies to support healthful choices for a la carte, vending, after-school programs and school events such as classroom events, celebrations, class snacks, meetings, parties, concessions, intramural events, fundraisers, extracurricular events. Depending on the topic, it may be appropriate for the policy to be made at the district, school or classroom level.



What is policy?

Policies are official statements of vision and judgment that address the needs of a school system, school or classroom. Values, convictions and beliefs usually form the basis for a policy statement. Policies can provide the following:

- Leadership
- Commitment
- Support
- Direction
- Guidance
- Institutionalization
- Public Engagement
- Accountability
- Legal Protection

Policies generally address *what* should be done, *why* it should be done and *who* should do it. Procedures outline the details of *how* to accomplish a policy's goal. Policies can be formal or informal and written or unwritten.

How is policy developed?

Common tasks needed to develop a policy:

- Lay the groundwork
- Build awareness and support
- Draft the policy
- Adopt the policy
- Administer the policy

Getting support for policy

Groups that can support policy change:

- PTA/PTO
- School Improvement Teams
- School Health Advisory Councils
- Public Health Partners
- Cooperative Extension Partners

Sample District Policy for Rewards and Incentives

- It is the intent of ABC School System to use rewards and incentives that do **not** undermine the health of students and/or reinforce unhealthful eating habits. Non-food rewards and incentives will be used as the first choice to encourage positive behavior. If food is used for a reward, healthy choices with appropriate portion sizes are required.

Sample School Policy for Rewards and Incentives

- It is the intent of Good Learning Elementary School to eliminate the practice of using foods that promote unhealthful eating habits as classroom rewards. Teachers will use pencils, erasers and stickers to use as rewards for students.

Sample Classroom Policy for Rewards and Incentives

- It is the intent of Mrs. Parsley, first grade teacher, to not reward her students for positive behavior with food. Mrs. Parsley will use a system of verbal praise and certificates and ribbons to reward her students.