

## Americans want pizza, burgers & nuggets pulled from school menus, poll finds

Written by

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### ***Nearly two-thirds of parents of school-age children describe local school food as “poor” or “only fair”***

A majority of Americans believe nutrition in local school meals falls far short of what children need, a new survey finds. And the foods people most associate with school meals – pizza, chicken nuggets and hamburgers – are the same foods they believe should be cut drastically from school menus.

The survey reports near-universal agreement that childhood obesity is a problem or crisis, and improving the health of American children requires communities to prioritize access in schools to fresh produce and exercise.

The survey was commissioned by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and released last week at the Foundation’s 10th annual Food & Community Networking Meeting, held this year in Chandler, AZ.

Food & Community is the premier gathering of the good food movement, drawing 650 activists, reformers, researchers and public health officials to explore topics such as farm-to-school projects and eradicating “food deserts.” The survey was conducted in April among 801 adults from all regions of the country.

Key findings include:

- 55 percent of Americans – and 63 percent of parents of school-age children – described the nutritional quality of local school food as “poor” or “only fair.”
- The top five items that came to mind when asked about school food are all high in fat or sodium: pizza; hamburgers; French fries/tater tots; hot dogs/corn dogs; and chicken nuggets.
- These are the very foods Americans would like to see drastically cut from school menus. Nearly 70 percent of Americans said pizza should be served in school just once a week or pulled from menus entirely; more than 60 percent said chicken nuggets and hamburgers should be limited to once a week or removed.

For context, the most recent School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study conducted by the USDA found that 90 percent of school lunch menus offer entrees such as pizza and

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cheeseburgers.

“The data in this survey highlight the widespread support for transforming school food to help all children lead healthier lives,” said Dr. Gail Christopher, who oversees food, health and well-being as vice president of programs at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. “When students have access to healthy, locally-grown food and physical activity, it allows them to thrive both in and out of the classroom.”

Through its Food & Community Program, the Kellogg Foundation targets investments to improve school food, increase access to good food and physical activity environments, and shape the national healthy eating and active living movement.

Survey respondents were clear about what needs to be done to turn the childhood obesity epidemic around.

More than 85 percent said fresh, not canned, fruit and vegetables should be offered every day in school cafeterias. Eighty-six percent listed requiring 60 minutes of exercise in the school day as either the top or a high priority in improving students' health.

Asked about factors contributing to the obesity epidemic, 71 percent listed cutbacks in recess and physical education as a significant factor.

*The survey was conducted by Lauer Johnson Research and has an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percent. The full results are available at <http://drop.io/fac2010>.*

*W.K. Kellogg Foundation and its Food & Community Program advocate equitable access to good food and physical activity. The foundation has directed more than \$230 million toward supporting healthy food and farming projects. Food & Community ([www.foodandcommunity.org](http://www.foodandcommunity.org)) seeks to improve food systems and the lives of vulnerable children. The Kellogg Foundation is also a founding member of the Partnership for a Healthier America, a foundation that supports First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative with the goal of curbing childhood obesity within a*

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