

Status-Quo Standards

Nearly every school in Massachusetts is meeting the Federal Nutrition Services Standards as determined by the USDA. Unfortunately, federal school nutrition standards fall short of even the basic minimum-recommendations laid out by the USDA's own Dietary Guidelines for Americans (the same Federal Agency responsible for school meal standards) -- and that's reflected on the menu.

The standards get some things right...


Requiring a minimum serving of fruits and vegetables, and encouraging whole-grain rich items is a good foundation for nutrition standards.

...but there's room for substantial improvement

Even with minimum requirements for produce, fiber and other critical nutrients are underrepresented on menus, and foods linked to disease easily meet the guidelines.

For comparison, while reviewing the nutrition information of USDA-approved school lunch entrées, we've included similar nutrition facts from McDonald's menu items. School lunch items (and nutrition information) were found on publicly available menus from districts within Massachusetts.

	McDonald's Menu Item	Sodium (mg)	Cholesterol (mg)	Saturated Fat (g)	Fiber (g)
	Big Mac	940	80	10	3
	McDonald's 6 Piece Chicken Nugget Happy Meal (Nuggets only)	715	55	5	2
	McDonald's Cheeseburger Happy Meal (Cheeseburger only)	680	40	6	2

	School Lunch Menu Item	Sodium (mg)	Cholesterol (mg)	Saturated Fat (g)	Fiber (g)
	Italian Sampler with Ravioli	1226	43	4	7
	Toasted Cheese Sandwich	2048	100	24	4

	School Lunch Menu Item	Sodium (mg)	Cholesterol (mg)	Saturated Fat (g)	Fiber (g)
	Scrambled Eggs with Muffin and Tots	726	348	7	3
	BBQ Pork Sandwich	1140	100	4	3
	Egg, Turkey, Ham, and Cheese Waffle Sandwich	750	140	4	2
	Waffles with Strawberries and Cream	354	25	4	5
	Delivery Pizza with WG crust	849	30	6	1
	Mashed Potato and Chicken Bowl	1120	60	3	3