

## **AP 113-1 Nutritional Foods in Schools Rationale**

Nutrition plays a significant role in children's growth and development, resistance to disease and physical and mental health. It is important to have a diet that is nutritionally well balanced.

Research clearly shows that many life-threatening diseases and health concerns such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes and dental problems begin in childhood from early food habits. Of particular concern in recent years is the increased consumption of refined sugars and trans-fatty acids in the North American diet. Research also demonstrates a significant relationship between nutrition and a child's physical, emotional healthy and intellectual readiness to learn. The school's role in health promotion and disease prevention is significant which underscores the need for action.

Many children do not receive enough food or enough essential nutrients to support proper growth and good health. Many children are overfed and still under-nourished. Short-term effects of chronic under-nutrition are fatigue, irritability, inattentiveness, and increased susceptibility to colds, influenza, and infections. Long-term effects can be underachievement in school, low self-esteem and general poor health.

The Abbotsford School District believes the situation is serious and there is enough research now supports that this generation of young people will be the first generation to have shorter life spans than their parents. Schools are a powerful influence in the lives of growing children and therefore have a unique opportunity and obligation to foster a school environment that promotes, values and models support for all aspects of healthy living.

The Abbotsford School District is concerned about the changing nutritional habits and attitudes of young people, and wishes to contribute to the establishment of healthy eating habits by providing:

- instruction at all levels K-12 in the basics of good nutrition; and
- offering food and beverages of sound nutritional value in its school food services programs and offerings.

The Abbotsford School District also recognizes that many schools have come to depend upon revenue from the sale of the food and beverage items that have been phase out of schools. We are, however, aware of School Districts that have implemented nutrition policies restricting the sale of sugar- laden beverages and other junk foods. It should be noted that these districts and schools not only maintained, but also in some cases have increased, revenues from the sale of nutritional foods and beverages