Open Letter from Educators

Dear CEO Easterbrook,

As teachers, school support staff, principals, school nurses, and advocates dedicated to the education and well-being of children, we urge you to end the exploitative practice of McTeacher’s Nights.

On McTeacher’s Nights, teachers “work” at a local McDonald’s in hopes of raising much-needed funds for their schools. Parents and children are encouraged to eat at McDonald’s so they can see “their very own educators serve up hamburgers, fries and shakes.”

It is wrong to enlist teachers to sell kids on a brand like McDonald’s whose core products are burgers, fries, and soda. Marketing junk food to children is a harmful practice. We are in the midst of the largest preventable health crisis in the U.S.—one that is spreading throughout the world, and that increasingly affects children. If this trend is not reversed, many children will be burdened with diet-related diseases like obesity and Type 2 diabetes, affecting their health for life.

Health professionals on the front lines of treating these diseases have long urged you to stop targeting children. The World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend restrictions on junk food marketing to children. Study after study from esteemed organizations such as the Institute of Medicine and the National Bureau of Economic Research suggest that junk food marketing targeted at kids is a serious health concern.

McTeacher’s Nights undermine these important efforts, exploiting educators’ authority and popularity to lure kids to McDonald’s. Transforming teachers into McDonald’s marketers is

particularly egregious in light of a recent study in *Clinical Pediatrics* linking fast food consumption with lower educational outcomes.\(^6\)

What’s worse, this is merely one of many tactics McDonald’s uses to market junk food to children in schools. From serving up branded fast food in school cafeterias to sending its corporate mascot into schools to “teach” everything from physical activity to healthy eating,\(^7\) McDonald’s has actively contributed to the degradation of the school food environment in communities across the country. These tactics have a devastating impact on children’s health, especially in communities that already see disproportionately high rates of diet-related disease.

Children deserve special protection, especially in schools. That’s why First Lady Michelle Obama and the United States Department of Agriculture took action to curb school-based marketing of unhealthy food.\(^8\)


Teachers Unions

National Education Association
National Education Association Healthy Futures

AFT Michigan
AFT Missouri
AFT New Jersey
AFT Oklahoma
AFT Pennsylvania
AFT Utah
AFT Vermont
AFT West Virginia
California Federation of Teachers
California Teachers Association
Connecticut State Vocational Federation of Teachers
Florida Education Association
Georgia Federation of Teachers
Ohio Federation of Teachers
Vermont National Education Association
Virginia Education Association
West Virginia Association of School Nurses

Albuquerque Teachers Federation
Allegany County Education Association
Amsterdam Teachers Association
Arlington Education Association (Massachusetts)
Arlington Education Association (Virginia)
Atlanta Federation of Teachers
Birmingham AFT
Boston Teachers Union
Brookline Educators Union
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Association of Educators
Chicago Teachers Union
Cleveland Heights Teachers Union, Local 795
Cleveland Teachers Union, Local 279
District Twelve Education Association
Exeter West Greenwich Teachers Association
Fairfax Education Association
Fremont Education Association
Grand Rapids Education Association
Green Bay Education Association
Holliston Federation of Teachers
Houston Federation of Teachers
Jefferson Elementary Federation of Teachers
Madison Teachers Inc.
Metropolitan Nashville Education Association
Milwaukee Teachers Education Association
Montgomery County Federation of Teachers
Moore Association of Classroom Teachers
Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers
Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers
Pittsfield Federation of School Employees
Red River United, AFT Local 4995
Saint Paul Federation of Teachers
Salt Lake Federation of Teachers
Savannah Federation of Teachers
School District 14 Classroom Teachers Association
Schaumburg Education Association, District 54
Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals
Tiverton Teachers Association
Toledo Federation of Teachers
United Teachers Los Angeles
United Teachers of Santa Clara

Education Advocates

Organizations

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood
Corporate Accountability International

Citizens for Public Schools
Class Size Matters
Defending the Early Years
Educational Studies Department of Colgate University
Engaging Schools
Healthy School Food Maryland
Movement of Rank & File Educators (MORE)
New York State Foundations of Education Association
North Country Alliance for Public Education
NYS Allies for Public Education
Obligation, Inc
Oneonta Area for Public Education
Parents 4 Teachers
Parents Across America
Peace Educators Allied for Children Everywhere
Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools (PCAPS)
Public Advocacy for Kids
Public Schools First NC
Real Food for Kids – Montgomery County
Rethinking Schools
Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children’s Entertainment

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