



Rainy River District School Board provides a healthier learning environment for students

(November 2, 2004) – The government recently announced that it is directing school boards to remove all junk food from vending machines in elementary schools. The Rainy River District School Board has only one elementary school with a vending machine that is accessible to students and all elementary schools have already taken steps to provide healthier food and beverage choices for students.

The single elementary school of the Board that offers a vending machine to students is stocked with water and fruit-based beverages only. Individually, schools of the Board have moved toward improving food and beverage choices for students in various ways such as: breakfast programs that are tied with learning, daily milk programs, improving choices at canteens and by working in conjunction with the Health Unit. Schools also bring nutrition awareness to parents through newsletters with ideas for packing nutritional school lunches and snacks. One of the schools has dances that are now pop and chip free and students can be found selling cheese as a fundraiser rather than chocolates.

Ninety percent of the Board's elementary schools now follow a "Balanced Day" schedule for students. The Balanced Day has three educational blocks divided by two nutrition breaks totaling in 90 minutes. According to Brain Compatible Learning Research, optimum learning conditions result when nutritional needs are fulfilled and a balanced day is created. The schedule has been well-received by students, staff and parents.

The Rainy River District School Board is identifying a committee to develop a policy regarding nutrition and will continue to develop healthier schools through healthier food and beverage choices for students.