

**Testimony to the Board of Education – Lindsey Parsons, Co-Director, RFKM
10/8/13**

Hi, my name is Lindsey Parsons and I'm the Co-Founder of Real Food for Kids – Montgomery, a grassroots, parent advocacy group with over 700 supporters, and members in 97 MCPS schools.

Rice Krispie treats, Welch's Fruit snacks, Dorito's, Cheetos, Cheez-its, Tostitos, Chocolate Chip Cookies, Candy Cookies, Sugar Cookies, Double Chocolate Chip Cookies, Fruit 66 100% juice (almost 7 teaspoons of sugar), V8 fusion 100% juice (over 7 tsp. of sugar), Rich's Ice Creams including Strawberry Shortcake, Fudge Frenzy, Rainbow Polar Pole and Vanilla Ice Cream Sandwich. These items are sold to children in the cafeterias of most schools in MCPS but they do not appear anywhere on the menus. They also do not appear on the MCPS Division of Food and Nutrition Services web site or on the individual school web sites nor are lists sent home to parents, to my knowledge. To a parent, every parent I have spoken to has no idea that these items are available for sale to their children and that their children can use their lunch accounts to purchase them. Note that the American Heart Association recommends that pre-teens and adolescents should consume no more than 5-8 teaspoons of added sugar a day, so just one of these 100% juice drinks sold in MCPS would put them in danger of exceeding a healthy amount of sugar.

What I'd like to ask is for MCPS to first publish the a la carte items available for sale on the DFNS web site, second, to add it to the monthly menus, 3rd, to publish specific item lists to the web sites of each individual school, fourth, to send the lists home to parents once a year, and fifth, that in every location in which these items are listed, information is provided about how to block your child's lunch account so that they cannot purchase these items with the money parents believe they are putting in to purchase meals.

I believe this to be a minimum standard of transparency and honesty with the parents of Montgomery County.

I also hope that in the coming months our trial of healthier a la carte and vending items at Takoma Park Middle School will be a success and MCPS will be switching to healthier a la carte and vending items for sale in all of its schools.

I hope to see many of your faces at our school food forum on Nov. 2.