



## Dealing with Opposition

- Don't turn a potential ally into an adversary by using inflammatory language or presuming their opposition to your agenda
- Help PTA/Principal in other ways first, then approach them about school food
- Meet with decision makers (principals, PTA leaders) in person
- Bring one or two allies
- Build a personal relationship
- Ask their opinion and listen to their concerns
- Empathize with their position / reflect their reasons/feelings
- Know what can be decided at the local level (a la carte selections, vending presence and possibly selections, flavored milks, parties, rewards, fundraisers)
- Align your priorities with those of the school
- Emphasize the link between nutrition and learning
- Provide scientific evidence to back up your asks
- Make small, easy asks first and express appreciation, building up to larger asks
- Avoid extremism, shaky scientific evidence or fixating on one issue
- Use non-confrontational language
- Do not be deflected from your requests – persist in asking for what you want in a positive fashion
- Insist on staying involved
- Know the policies:

**Rewarding with Food:** “It is encouraged that foods and beverages available to students during school-sponsored activities make a positive contribution to the students’ diet and promote health. Staff should avoid using candy or other foods of minimal nutritional value as a classroom reward.” (MCPS Regulation JPG-RA)

**Distribution of Flyers:** “Printed informational materials and announcements from nonprofit community organizations shall be permitted to be distributed directly to elementary students through take-home folders, backpacks, or similar manner at least twice per year and no more than once during each marking period for a maximum of four times per year. Such direct distribution may not be made to middle or high school students. Nonprofit community organizations must provide documentation verifying nonprofit status to the school . . . Elementary school staff may require organizations to deliver printed informational materials and announcements to school five days prior to the day designated for distribution. All printed informational materials and announcements must be collated into stacks of 30 to minimize the staff time necessary for the handling of materials at the schools. Any principal who is concerned that informational material or an announcement submitted for distribution or display may violate law or MCPS policy shall immediately submit a copy to OSSI. Informational materials or announcements that violate law will not be distributed. (MCPS Regulation CNA-RA: Display and Distribution of Informational Materials and Announcements).” If you have problems, please contact:  
Office of School Support and Improvement  
Phone: 301-315-7366