80 Percent of Public Schools Have Contracts With Coke or Pepsi

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Is your kid going to a Coke school or a Pepsi school?

If you don't know what I mean, consider yourself and your kid lucky. [Starting in the early 1990s](http://epsl.asu.edu/ceru/Documents/cace-00-03.PDF), poor public schools began selling exclusive ["drink rights"](http://www.kewpieathletics.com/Forms_Handbooks/Coca-Cola%20Pouring%20Right%20Brochure.pdf) to one or another big soda company, which would then supply all the beverages and junky snack food sold in the school snack bars, stores, and soda machines as well as at sports events. Along with sugary drinks, of course, the companies also invaded the schools with plenty of advertisements…

Imagine going to a school where the uniforms are made by Nike, the cafeteria food comes from Pizza Hut and all the classrooms are sponsored by Mc Donald’s or M&M’s… It is exactly what is happening in our country. In 2005, according [to one survey](http://www.pediatricsdigest.mobi/content/122/1/e251.full), nearly half of all public elementary schools and about 80 percent of public high schools operated under drinking rights contracts. It's clear what the schools get for their trouble.

The soda deals subsidize other aspects of schooling, too. For example with a 10-year contract Coca-Cola paid the Illinois school district $4 million upfront and an additional $350,000 a year to sell its beverages in schools. The annual payments have funded field trips, gym uniforms, computers and smart boards that individual school budgets may not otherwise have afforded.

These companies think that, if kids start buying their drinks and junk food today, they will continue buying them when they’re older. So they are ready to invest a lot of money to promote their products in schools.

But what are these schools giving up in return? A just-released [study](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/08/08/peds.2011-3353.full.pdf%2Bhtml) by food specialists and researchers compares the weight gain of kids in states that limit in-school junk food sales with those of kids in states that don't. Obesity rates among children ages 6 to 11 in states that don't limit junk food sales and have contract with big companies have quadrupled over the past four decades, and nearly a third of children and adolescents—more than 23 million kids and teenagers—are obese or overweight.

In 2010, President Obama signed a law requiring the establishment of national standards for snack foods and beverages sold in schools. Business and money VS health and kids, the mission is the hardest ever!

***From:*** [***http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2012/08/schools-limit-campus-junk-food-have-lower-obesity-rates***](http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2012/08/schools-limit-campus-junk-food-have-lower-obesity-rates)