Based on current research, this guide was developed to provide strategies for schools posting nutritional information as required in the Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools.

Prepared by Minna Scholten, Framingham State University
Graduate Student in Food and Nutrition
for the John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition, 2013
Options for making nutrition information available for competitive foods include:

1) Displaying on the school food service website
2) Displaying at point of selection (POS)
   - On signs near items on the serving line
   - At the point of entry to the serving line
   - On stickers for wrapped items
   - On or near vending machines
3) Displaying in other areas of the cafeteria:
   - On posters, on flyers, or in a reference binder

Best practices:

- **Begin online and then expand to other venues.** Posting nutrition information at has been easy for some school food directors and challenging for others. Work in steps to develop the approach that is right for your district.

- **Advocate for comprehensive nutrition education in your schools.** In the absence of nutrition education, posting nutrition facts may not affect students’ purchasing habits. However, ability to use food labels does improve after nutrition education.

- **Use posters and banners.** These are top marketing strategies in school food service. Consider displaying nutrition labels on a wall or other attractive display area.

- **POS displays may not always be the most effective option.** While some studies show that POS nutrition information helps high school students make healthier choices and increases satisfaction with school meals, one showed no impact.

- **Display information that is easy to read and interpret.** One study used the Nutrition Facts Label format because students were already familiar with it. Be sure to use large, clear, bold fonts.

- **Talk with school nurses and health teachers to get their thoughts on how POS nutrition information would impact the students.** Though research is lacking, some dietitians and doctors have suggested that too much information at POS may adversely affect body image and increase stress in children. Make nutrition information easy to access but be sensitive to potential issues of disordered eating. Utilizing flyers or an accessible binder can be a good compromise.

- **Educate coaches.** In one study, student athletes were especially interested in posted nutrition facts.
• **Actively promote the initiative.** Directors who implemented POS displays suggested getting on the morning announcements. Other suggestions include using parent newsletters and staff email blasts.

*Whichever method you choose, collecting feedback from students, parents, teachers, school lunch staff, and other school food service directors will help you make this initiative a success.*
References:


