



GROWING A MOVEMENT



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n the fickle world of 21st-century American popular culture, the ultimate measure of a trend's worth may be whether it gets its own television reality show.

How refreshing, then, that at least two network-based programs and much of one cable channel's program lineup pay homage to the growing trend of eating fresh, nutritious and locally grown food.

The Food Network's chefs preach the value of cooking with fresh, sustainably grown food. And in NBC's "The Biggest Loser," overweight contestants rely on exercise *and* nutrition to shed pounds. Now there is "Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution," the ABC show that has Britain's famous TV chef rescuing communities that have landed on "most overweight" and "least healthy" lists. The show is an entertaining takeoff on a more serious nutrition campaign that Oliver has successfully led in England—especially as it relates to children and school meals.

In the inaugural U.S. program, Oliver did a demonstration for a group of Huntington, W. Va., students. He discarded the healthiest parts of a whole chicken and stuffed the remaining carcass into a food processor, along with preservatives, lots of salt

and extra skin. The dough-like result was formed into nuggets, coated with breading and fried. Although the students made faces, they said they would still eat the nuggets.

Oliver understood that a powerful motivation was at work: Familiar tastes good, and what is unfamiliar tastes, well, not so good. Long-established patterns of eating are very difficult to change.

In this section, we've compiled a sampling of local to national efforts—a few trendsetters in the painstaking work of moving perspectives and palates toward fresh, healthy and locally grown. Even in Huntington, where many had resisted Oliver's program, there has been progress.

Student Ryan Jenkins, who learned to cook healthier meals from Oliver, told West Virginia Public Radio that he's surprised that the changes have continued. "If we're able to do it in West Virginia, ... we show that we're healthier," he said, "and then it spreads because families extend outside of here, and it would just keep spreading and spreading." *h*

—Doug Root, *h* staff

FUNDERS' FEAST! Foundation program officers from across the country attending the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities conference in April at the Pittsburgh Renaissance Hotel dine at the Eat Here! event celebrating sustainably produced foods that have been turned into such mouthwatering concoctions as Spanish meat pies and feta with olive tapenade. Individual foundations represented in the network have made significant investments in organizations that promote easier consumer access to sustainably grown and nutritious food. Being served is John Mitterholzer, senior program officer with the George Gund Foundation. Filling his plate is Chef Daniel Aguera from Vivo restaurant. *For more information: www.fundersnetwork.org*

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THE MINIMUM MINUTES PER WEEK
FOR HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION
IN PENNSYLVANIA

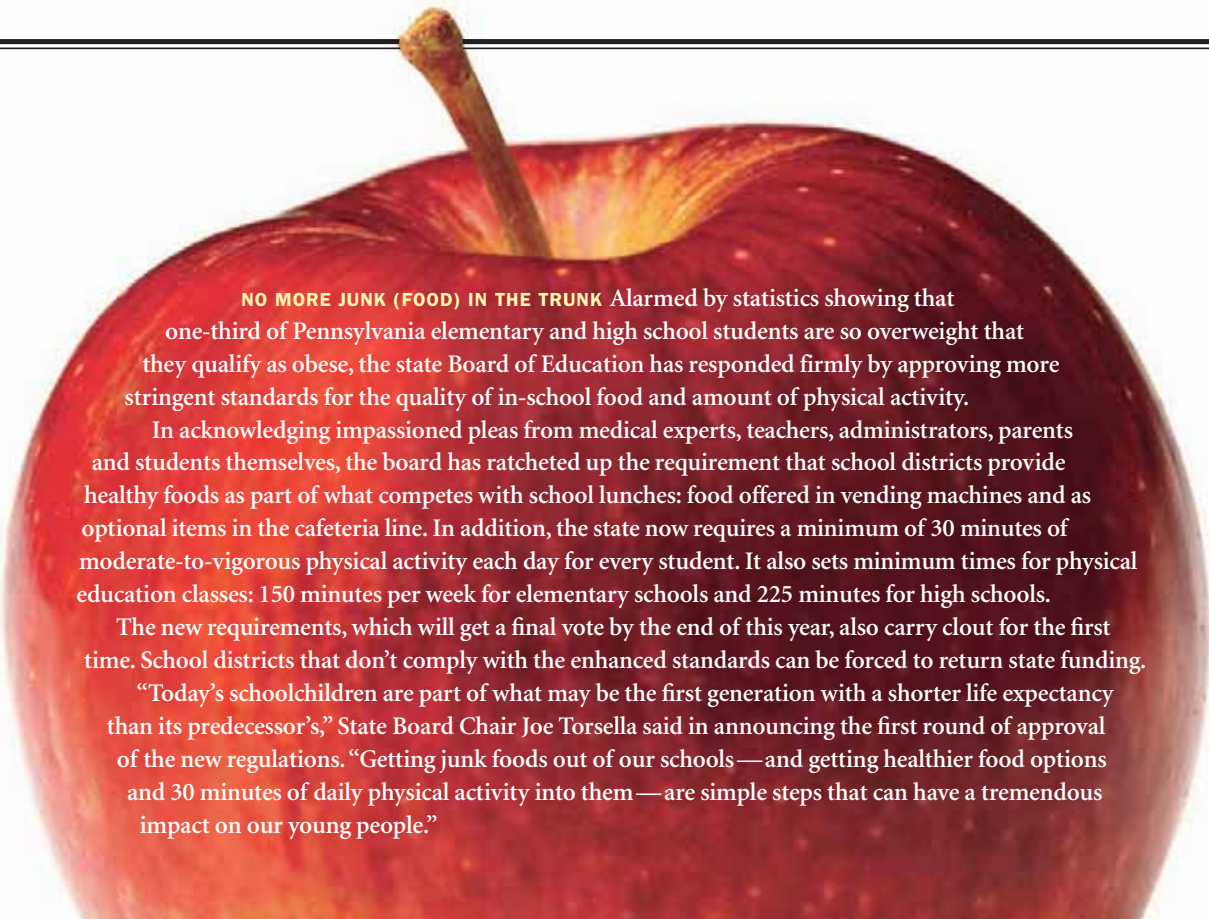
New Pennsylvania Board of Education Standards



Joshua Franzos

Ask your child what he wants for dinner only if he's buying.

FRAN LEBOWITZ, AMERICAN HUMORIST & ESSAYIST



NO MORE JUNK (FOOD) IN THE TRUNK Alarmed by statistics showing that one-third of Pennsylvania elementary and high school students are so overweight that they qualify as obese, the state Board of Education has responded firmly by approving more stringent standards for the quality of in-school food and amount of physical activity.

In acknowledging impassioned pleas from medical experts, teachers, administrators, parents and students themselves, the board has ratcheted up the requirement that school districts provide healthy foods as part of what competes with school lunches: food offered in vending machines and as optional items in the cafeteria line. In addition, the state now requires a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day for every student. It also sets minimum times for physical education classes: 150 minutes per week for elementary schools and 225 minutes for high schools.

The new requirements, which will get a final vote by the end of this year, also carry clout for the first time. School districts that don't comply with the enhanced standards can be forced to return state funding.

"Today's schoolchildren are part of what may be the first generation with a shorter life expectancy than its predecessor's," State Board Chair Joe Torsella said in announcing the first round of approval of the new regulations. "Getting junk foods out of our schools—and getting healthier food options and 30 minutes of daily physical activity into them—are simple steps that can have a tremendous impact on our young people."



PIZZA ALFRESCO Peabody High School student Eric Washington, left, tests his first self-made pizza for doneness as part of a class held at the Braddock community oven in Braddock. The project, which began in 2007, is the first piece of an ambitious plan by public relations executive-turned-bread baker Ray Werner to create dozens of public square ovens in communities throughout the Pittsburgh area. Focusing especially on communities that are dealing with economic and safety issues, he says, “An oven is like a campfire, and people are drawn to the fire, where good conversation and socialization are certain.” Werner also told a “Pittsburgh Post-Gazette” reporter when the Braddock oven opened in 2008: “I see a need for community ovens in neighborhoods similar to Braddock...communities that need an assist in bringing the neighborhood together.”

The ovens would also serve a recycling function in the community, since nearly all the materials are discards from razed buildings, so the ovens can be constructed cheaply. This summer, there is a waiting list in Braddock for classes on how to use the oven.



WHITE HOUSE GARDEN Students from Washington, D.C.’s Bancroft and Kimball Elementary schools help Michelle Obama at last fall’s harvest of the White House vegetable garden. Mrs. Obama uses fresh, homegrown produce from the most famous backyard in the world as a powerful visual backdrop for her “Let’s Move!” campaign to end childhood obesity in the United States within a generation. Among the goals set by a task force she convened is to hold food manufacturers and restaurant chains

accountable for the poor nutritional quality of foods they market to children. This spring, an alliance of food manufacturers responded with a pledge to introduce more healthy food items and to cut portion sizes and calories in existing products. The task force also calls for government agencies to direct healthier foods into school meal programs, require more physical education and related activities in the school day, and provide pregnant women with better prenatal care. For more information: www.letsmove.gov



Joshua Burnett, Grow Pittsburgh

HOW DOES YOUR SCHOOLYARD GARDEN GROW?

Three enthusiastic farmers from the third-grade class of Faison Primary School in Pittsburgh's Homewood neighborhood work as a team planting bell peppers, ground cherries and zinnias in a planting session last year. The class project, in which the children tended their plants, harvested them and cooked the vegetables for a shared meal, is based on the wildly popular seed-to-table learning model developed by chef and author Alice Waters. She is an architect of the culinary movement calling for cooking only with the freshest seasonal ingredients that are produced sustainably and locally. The Edible Schoolyard project now involves four city schools in a collaboration with the Pittsburgh Public Schools and healthy-clean-fair food economy advocate Grow Pittsburgh. *For more information: www.growpittsburgh.org/projects*



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8- TO 18-YEAR-OLDS SPEND AN AVERAGE OF 50 HOURS PER WEEK WITH VIDEO GAMES, TELEVISION AND COMPUTERS

*U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin's
Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation, 2010*

Ziggy





h Q&A: BRIAN SNYDER

Brian Snyder's post-college education—a master's degree from Harvard in theological studies and another from the University of Massachusetts in business administration—might seem odd preparation for his job as executive director of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture. But a theologian's vision and a business manager's eye for value have been essential for his work at a statewide nonprofit that is the chief nurturer for local farming and sustainable agriculture. In the nearly a decade that Snyder has headed PASA, membership has grown from 1,000 to 6,000, making it one of the largest organizations of its type in the country. In responding to a few foodie policy questions, Brian drew on his PASA work and his experience with operating a small Centre Hall farm with his wife, Paula, and daughters Kerry and Kayla.

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Q: Sustainably produced and locally grown is the sizzling-hot lifestyle topic—from the Food Network channel to best-selling books to high-end restaurants. How does Pennsylvania measure up against demand for a strong network of local farms practicing sustainable agriculture?

A: Without question, Pennsylvania is in better shape on this score than most other states in the country. Keep in mind that we already have a tremendous number of farms—more than 60,000—that are much smaller on average than in other big agricultural states. Between 2002 and 2009, we went from being 10th in the country in total organic production to third. When you measure farm-direct sales to consumers on a per-acre basis, we are actually far ahead of California, which otherwise ranks first in total sales. Credit for this goes primarily to two very different populations: Amish and Mennonite farmers who have always generated their own local economies, and hip residents of Pennsylvania's major metros who are demanding more local and sustainable food systems.

Q: A lot of your work has been directed toward putting an end to the practice of “food anonymity.” What is it, and why is it so bad?

A: It starts very subtly. Maybe a farmer puts his/her products on a truck with products from other farms, bound for the big city. While farmers might save time and reduce costs this way, if the food loses its identity altogether, we've lost a vital link between farmers and consumers that instills accountability and good decision-making on both sides of the transaction. If you follow the path of anonymity and “efficiency” out even further . . . food becomes less reliable, as with the many food-safety scares we've experienced in recent years. Production can quickly become less viable from an economic point of view for any but the largest of farms. In the end, totally anonymous food is a disaster for everyone involved, and our national food policy should steer us in a better direction. This challenge can be met in a variety of ways—like using local brand development (as with Buy Fresh Buy Local) or cooperative business practices among a relatively small number of farms working together.

Q: Many grocery shoppers run away from any foods marked “organic” or “locally grown,” believing that they are always more expensive. Isn't this generally true?

A: No, not at all, though the experience right there on the spot may often be, “Gee, this stuff costs more.” Fact is, consumers who understand the concept of “value” as opposed to mere price are already attuned to the difference between buying stuff to eat and making an investment in their communities, which is essentially the choice they would be making in this case. Locally grown, organic or sustainable food is a better value than most food bought through conventional channels. Think about food being fully loaded with otherwise externalized costs for damage to roads, the environment and human health. The conclusion is likely to be that organic and local is much cheaper in the long run.

Q: PASA has partnered with Food Alliance to help implement a trusted, independent certification system that establishes a set of quality standards for farms and food facilities. How popular is the voluntary program?

A: Food Alliance certification is increasing in popularity pretty quickly, though it'll take time and commitment on our part for it to really take root in this part of the country. The public needs to understand that the “how” of their food is as important as the “where.” It's really already happening, with increased concern for things like farm workers' rights and animal welfare.

Q: What would be your one big wish that could be fulfilled to help PASA with its work in the state this year?

A: I'd like to see a robust conversation about agriculture occur in this year's elections. One of the biggest challenges we face is that politicians avoid talking about farming and food systems because they're uncomfortable with the topic. But this is one of the great controversies of our time: How shall food be produced and from whence should it come? Any candidate for statewide office would be taking a big risk, but also would be right on the money to assert that Pennsylvania can and should be the leading state in terms of assuring residents a safe, affordable and sustainably produced supply of food from our own farmers' hands. Heck, this objective wouldn't even be hard to achieve if it weren't for the tremendous resources out there that are normally directed toward its defeat.