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# Horne pressuring districts to ban high school junk food

**'Voluntary' effort follows lawmakers' failure to enact law**

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PHOENIX — Unable to get legislative action, state School Superintendent Tom Horne launched efforts Thursday to pressure individual school districts to ban junk food in high schools.

Horne unveiled "voluntary" nutrition standards for high schools which, if adopted, would rid campuses of vending machine staples like potato chips, candy and sodas.

But Horne said the real goal is to get parents who are worried about what their high schoolers are eating to demand school board members adopt the standards.

Horne's standards are nothing new in Tucson.

As part of the No Child Left Behind Act, the federal government required every school district in the country to shape up its nutrition standards for all K-12 students by July 1, 2006, as a way to encourage healthier lifestyles in an increasingly obese nation.

The federal mandate banned homemade food on campus and vending machines were marked for extreme makeovers, too, losing greasy chips and sugary drinks in favor of bottled water and granola bars. And "food as reward," such as ice cream socials or pizza parties, also was banned.

The federal government only made guidelines for schools to follow, so the Arizona School Boards Association sent a draft policy to every district. Some districts, such as Amphitheater and Sunnyside, approved that policy with little change. Others adjusted some of the language.

Lawmakers agreed two years ago to ban junk food at elementary, middle and junior high schools. But they balked at extending that to high school amid intense lobbying by soda and vending machine interests.

Horne's proposal essentially mirrors the standards used for the lower grades.

Foods sold could have no more than 35 percent of their total calories from fat, with a 10 percent limit on saturated fats and trans-fatty acids combined.

Total sugar could not exceed 35 percent of the weight of the item. And it would have to have at least 1 gram of fiber, though that does not apply to liquids.

Horne said he sees this as a way around a recalcitrant Legislature.

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