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**High Schools Cap Pop Sales:  
Naperville District Joins the Trend**

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If high school students at Naperville Community Unit School District 203 want to slurp down soft drinks and sugary beverages from vending machines next year, they'll have to stay after school.

The school district's board voted recently to institute a pop ban in an effort to promote more nutritional choices and curb the growing bulge of student waistlines.

But suburban districts have been tailoring soda-pop embargoes to their communities, where school buildings double as public gathering spots for everything from sporting events to homeowner meetings. District 203's ban prevents students from buying soda pop only during school hours. Vending machines will be open after school.

In the last two years, large urban school districts nationwide have completely cut the sugary drinks from their buildings, opting instead for fruit juices, milk and water.

Chicago Public Schools joined the pack this spring, choosing not to renew its five-year contract with Coca-Cola. Vending machines filled with Snapple juices, sports drinks and water are slated to be installed in each of the district's more than 600 schools by the beginning of next year.

Once the Chicago district makes the transition, there will be "no pop machines in any buildings at all," district spokesman Mike Vaughn said.

But many suburban districts are choosing to allow soft drink sales from the end of the school day. As a result, students in extracurricular activities have been able to buy pop.

Suburban administrators say cutting soda pop during school hours helps to curb consumption and trains students to make better dietary decisions.

"I felt that the line was really during the [day] when they are really required to be at the school," District 203 Supt. Alan Leis said.

District 203 is banning the sale of drinks with high fructose corn syrup, which includes sports drinks. Soda pop is not sold in the district's junior high and elementary school buildings.

Some suburban districts are eliminating carbonated drinks from their buildings because keeping them for other activities sends a mixed message to students.

"It's too difficult to try to pick out times that are appropriate," said John Mirretti, assistant principal of Shepard Middle School in Deerfield. "We figured it would be much easier to eliminate it totally."

It's been nearly two years since the Lake County school instituted a pop ban, along with a junk-food ban. As a result, vending revenues have dropped sharply. Pupils can buy anything from baked pita chips to banana yogurt smoothies from an organic-food vending machine.

Administrators at Diamond Lake School District 76 in Mundelein say they aren't concerned about dips in vending profits. They believe the lessons in nutrition are part of a balanced education.

"It's certainly worth the small amount of financial sacrifice that we're making," Supt. Roger Prosis said. "If we can help students develop healthy habits then they win in the short and long run."

West Aurora School District 129 officials say getting rid of soda pop machines is not an option, given the frequency of Park District meetings, homeowner association gatherings and events held by local universities in the district's 17 schools.

The pop dispensers have remained in buildings primarily for adult use, said Tom Hammond, District 129's chief operations officer.

"Obviously it's something for beyond the school day," he said. "During those hours the machines are on."