

# Defining the lunch menu

## Skipping fruits and vegetables at lunch will hurt your wallet

### Fast Facts:

- Cost \$11 billion to implement
- Costs \$3.2 billion a year to maintain
- Irrelevant to any profits the cafeteria or administration may obtain
- 67 percent of parents think school cafeterias are not to blame for childhood obesity
- Before the policy, 63 percent of parents thought school lunches were sufficiently nutritious

Statistics courtesy of Gallup, Inc.  
<http://www.gallup.com/>

by **mark maas**  
*opinion editor*

**A**t Southwest, as well as around the entire country, the White House has begun requiring all schools to define what a meal plan is. Starting this year, all students who order food from the school cafeteria will be required to include fruits and vegetables in their meal if they want to receive a significant discount on their purchase.

In theory, this would make meals healthier for the average student, but there's a catch: this policy, created and developed by none other than First Lady **Michelle Obama**, has cost, according to an article from the New York Times, 11 billion taxpayer dollars to implement.

Essentially, students are going to throw their fruits and vegetables into the nearest trash can, simply to save a few dollars. Such a policy must be revoked for the greater good of the national financial budget, for in reality it is up to our parents and their teachings to determine whether we eat well or not. Healthy eating is all good, obviously, but should the government be spending a fortune for something that will likely have little to no influence?

Many students will be buying fruits for their own healthy lifestyles, regardless of whether this policy is in place or not. However, other students will be taking fruits and vegetables exclusively to get the meal discount, leading to a waste of valuable resources and government funds.

Kitchen manager **Willie Brown** keeps track of everything there is to know about the cafeteria.

"Not a lot of fruits are discarded," Brown said. "They are rewashed and sold the next day. For vegetables, there are maybe a couple of pounds per day that get thrown away from the salad bar."

Even with this recycling system in place, fruits will eventually accumulate over time, forcing the cafeteria staff to throw out fruits if too many of them are saved.

Senior **Rachel Price** buys her meals from the cafeteria every day.



Photos by Morgan Vietti

"I don't know if [the new policy] is going to work." Price said. "I normally get fruits anyway. I think some students will embrace it, but some will just throw away the fruit."

Junior **Devon Penrod** is yet another student who agrees with the majority.

"The new policy will only cause students to throw their fruits and vegetables away," Penrod said. "It will not make them healthier; it will make them more wasteful."

Many of us have jobs, meaning that we will be

paying for this policy to continue through taxes. Let's make our citizens healthier, not our trash cans. Contact the White House at [www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact) or your local politician to protest this unnecessary waste of the money we all pay for. Johnson county's congressman, Rep. **Kevin Yoder** can be contacted at [yoder.house.gov/contact-me/](http://yoder.house.gov/contact-me/). All of us can do our part to help the national debt, it's just a matter of typing an e-mail.

