

Twelve Recommendations For Public School Food and Cafeterias

July, 2008

Dear school superintendents and school principals: The following recommendations from the Rethinkers grow directly from our values. Please respect our values and we'll respect yours.

We value our dignity and our health.

- **Recommendation 1: No more sporks!** Give public school students knives, forks and spoons. Short term: supply biodegradable utensils. Long term: buy dishwashing equipment and give us metal utensils.
- **Recommendation 2: Buy fresh, tasty food.** Give us as little highly processed food as possible. Keep preservatives, chemicals, and highly sweetened items to a minimum.

We value our local economy, our local culture, and the diversity of our beliefs.

- **Recommendation 3: Buy fresh food from local farmers, fishermen, and shrimpers.** We can have healthier food and keep our local economy strong at the same time. Fuel prices make transporting food around the country and world more expensive every week.
- **Recommendation 4: Present even more local dishes on the school menu.** We love our New Orleans and Louisiana food. The ingredients can be bought fresh locally – shrimp, meat, okra, tomatoes, rice.
- **Recommendation 5: Present tasty, healthy food alternatives for vegetarians.** Some of us cannot eat meat because of our religious convictions. Others are vegetarians for personal reasons.

We value our earth.

- **Recommendation 6: No more Styrofoam trays!** Short term, give us biodegradable trays. Long term, buy real trays or plates and wash them in dishwashers after each meal.
- **Recommendation 7. Future school designs should include outdoor vegetable gardens.** Students need to grow fresh food and taste what they grow. Part of our education is learning that things taste better when they come right from the ground and not from a can.
- **Recommendation 8: Use leftover food to make compost for school gardens.**

We value beauty, comfort, cleanliness and our time together outside of class.

- **Recommendation 9: Design cafeterias that you adults would like to eat in yourselves.** Give us light, comfortable chairs, murals on the walls, outdoor eating space. Check out our Rethink “21st century green cafeteria design!
- **Recommendation 10: Install sinks so we can wash our hands before eating.**
- **Recommendation 11. Enough lunch time to enjoy our food and our friends.** No more herding students into the cafeteria, standing in long lines, and eating with the time leftover. Our time eating is as important as our time in class.
- **Recommendation 12: No more silent lunches for any reason. Don’t tie punishment to food and cafeterias.**