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MIDDLETOWN REGION

Students To See More Healthful A.M. Menu

■ **Fat-Filled, Corn-Syrup-Laden Treats Are Out; Whole-Grain Muffins, Fruit And Cereal Are In**

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By DANIELA ALTIMARI, Courant Staff Writer

MIDDLETOWN -- Gone are the muffins, the French toast sticks and the pastries filled with jelly and showered with confectionary sugar.

The city school system has revised its breakfast menu, and those fat-filled, corn-syrup-laden treats are being replaced with whole-grain English muffins, fresh fruit, low-fat cheese sticks, nutritious cereals and various hot entrees.

"There will be more daily, healthy choices," said food and nutrition manager Lisa Melaven.

The new breakfast offerings, which will be available to all students attending city schools, are just one of the changes Middletown school children will see when they return Aug. 30. There will also be new healthful snack options, a switch to 2 percent milk and a broader selection of salads and wraps at the secondary schools.

The changes are in line with new state and federal laws governing school nutrition. Melaven worked with a Middlesex Hospital dietitian to come up with the new menus.

They were helped with an increased selection of healthful choices offered by food service providers. "The manufacturers out there - the Nabisco people, the Keebler people, the Lays people - are very much onboard," Melaven said.

Bielefield School has been focusing on better

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nutrition for several years. The school launched a pilot program at the start of the 2005-06 academic year that will now be expanded to include the entire district, said Principal Renata Lantos. Each school will adapt the district's nutrition policy to meet the specific needs of its students.

A big emphasis at Bielefield has been portion control. Lantos doesn't believe any food should be off limits - in small doses, even ice cream is permitted. "It's fine to have ice cream, but a little one, not a super-sized one," she said.

Conversely, even healthful choices such as walnuts or Fig Newton cookies shouldn't be overdone. "Portions are the big thing," she said.

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