Against Marketing in U.S. Public Schools

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Presented June 2011

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# Table of Contents

1. **Problem** ......................................................................................................................... 4

2. **Background** ..................................................................................................................... 5
   - Product Sales .................................................................................................................... 5
   - Direct Marketing .............................................................................................................. 6
   - The Case of Channel One ............................................................................................... 7
   - Market Research and Niche Marketing .......................................................................... 7
   - Indirect Marketing ........................................................................................................... 8
   - Advertising’s Influence on Children ............................................................................. 9
   - Current Regulations ....................................................................................................... 10
   - Efforts Related to Ending Marketing in Schools ............................................................. 11
   - Summary ......................................................................................................................... 11

3. **Arguments in Favor of In-School Marketing** ............................................................... 12
   - Education is Important ................................................................................................. 12
   - Children are Not Responsible for Their Own Education ............................................. 13
   - Autonomy of Children ................................................................................................. 13
   - Parents Have Ultimate Authority ................................................................................ 14
   - Commercialism is Everywhere .................................................................................... 16
   - Advertising as a Teaching Tool .................................................................................... 16
   - More Control .................................................................................................................. 18
   - Utilitarian Approach .................................................................................................... 19
   - Summary ......................................................................................................................... 20

4. **Refuting the Proponents’ Arguments** ......................................................................... 21

5. **Arguments Against In-School Marketing** .................................................................. 24
   - Health and Psychological Problems ............................................................................. 24
   - Allowing Marketing in Schools Gives Control to Non-educators ............................... 25
   - The Vulnerability of Children and the Integrity of Public Schools ............................ 26
   - Children Unable to Understand They Are Being Marketed To ................................... 28
   - Social function of Schools ............................................................................................ 30
   - Confinement of Children and a Parent’s Loss of Control ........................................... 31
Balancing Key Values. .................................................................33

6. Conclusion .............................................................................35

7. References .............................................................................38
1. Problem

Ethics is almost always called into question when it comes to the field of marketing, now more than ever, as advertisers are intensifying their efforts at marketing to children. Children are being increasingly targeted by marketers for many reasons. Much of a child’s appeal as a customer comes from the fact that their money is entirely disposable and their young age makes them good candidates for long term product loyalty. One physical area in which they are being marketed to is public schools, especially in the United States of America. A major reason for this is that public schools are the victim of major budget cuts resulting from the recession. Due to the great influence that schools and representatives of schools (teachers, administrators, etc.) possess, it needs to be determined if marketing within schools compromises the integrity of said schools. Students may be negatively affected by this practice, but at the same time, they need the additional financial support that advertising revenue can bring to schools. Assessment of this situation must be done to determine whether or not marketing within schools should be allowed to continue. I will argue that marketing should be prohibited at public schools in the U.S.
2. Background

Advertising and marketing within public schools in the United States has become increasingly common in the last ten years\(^1\). Schools have been targeted for many reasons which include large groups of a targeted demographic in a controlled environment, the ability to create product loyalty at a young age, and the capacity to increase sales.\(^2\) Companies see children as an opportunity to create a relationship with a future consumer, and that is why they are targeted in schools. The age group within schools is very lucrative, as 57 billion dollars (USD) are spent by teenagers in the United States of America every year, and they also influence an additional 200 billion dollars spent by families.

To illustrate the situation of advertising occurring in schools today, I will reveal different ways that businesses get their marketing messages to children in schools, both directly and indirectly. I will give specific examples used in schools, and how some business have created in-school advertising as its own market, while also discussing its impact on children. Lastly, I will outline current regulations for this kind of marketing, and what is being done about it by parents and associations.

Product Sales

High fat snack foods, fast food, and soft drinks are often sold within schools or through the use of an in-school program. One example in which product sales are being used as a marketing practice in U.S. schools is to offer a cash or credit rebate program. Programs such as these give cash or equipment to school in exchange and in proportion to the amount of store receipts or coupons collected from the school; this is often done through cereal box tops or food product labels.\(^3\) These practices are used in hope of building shopper loyalty.\(^4\) For example, Piggly Wiggly offers to donate money to a school in return for sales receipts that come from the school community.\(^5\) Fundraising programs also bolster the sales of products by companies reaching out to schools and letting children sell certain products (such as candy, pizza, cookie dough, etc.), and giving a small percent of the profits to the school or school club. All of these examples are in addition to the sale of certain food or beverages at a

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\(^1\) Story and French 2004, p. 5
\(^3\) Story and French 2004, p. 4
\(^4\) Molnar and Garcia 2006, p. 78
\(^5\) Stark 2001, p. 59
school, in which the school (or school district) benefits monetarily from signing an exclusionary contract to only sell a certain brand on campus.

**Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing is a type of advertising in which the audience is directly reached; the message is straight to the point. This can include channels such as email, television and radio commercials, flyers, and internet ads. Food products are advertised both directly and indirectly and are the most prevalent form of commercial activity in schools. Some examples of direct advertising that currently exist within U.S. public schools are corporate logos on athletic scoreboards, sponsorship banners in gyms, advertisements within school newspapers and yearbooks, free textbook covers with ads, and screen-saver advertisements on school computers which include brands of soft drinks and food. Traditional methods of advertising are still being used, but companies are expanding the visibility of their brand names and penetrating the school more and more. For example, there are now food products advertised on warm-up suits for athletes, and throughout school buses.

The product most frequently advertised is food, especially soft drinks. Many soft drink companies obtain exclusive contracts with schools to sell their products; often it includes a contingent allowing advertising of their products. This occurs in 35% schools with such contracts, and specifies the permission to directly advertise within the walls of school; 43% of schools with these contracts allow the companies to advertise on school grounds, outside of school buildings, or on playing fields. Moreover, many schools frequently advertise fast food in addition to the 20% of U.S. high schools providing their product in school. Contracts with these companies often include stipulations for exclusive promotion rights; an example of such promotion is putting the company name and/or logo on school equipment and facilities. This was illustrated in a survey done by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) in 2000, in which information was provided by 171 U.S. school districts, which included 345 public high schools. The results showed that 24% of the schools surveyed had contracts with a fast food or beverage company that allowed sole advertising promotion rights. A report from the GAO found that most common and

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6 Story and French 2004, p. 5  
7 Ibid, p. 5  
8 Ibid, p. 5  
9 Ibid, p. 5  
10 Ibid, p. 5
noticeable direct advertising in schools are for soft drink products and corporate names and logos on scoreboards.\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{The Case of Channel One}

Creativity has been key to the new ways in which companies advertise within schools. This is especially true in the case of Channel One. Channel One is a daily 12 minute program about current events that is shown in approximately 12,000 U.S. middle and high schools; this amounts to about 38\% of middle and high schools in the U.S. Included in this program is 2 minutes of commercials; products such as soft drinks and high fat snack foods are advertised. Schools have an incentive to show this program because if they do, they receive free video equipment. They are given around $17,000 worth of free televisions and satellite dish equipment.\textsuperscript{12} A study was done by Brand and Greenberg about Channel One, in order to discover how influential it is towards the children who watch it. They did so by examining purchase attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. During a one-month period, 70\% of the 45 commercials shown on Channel One were for food, which included products such as fast foods, soft drinks, chips, and candy. This survey shows evidence that advertising in schools is successful at changing attitudes towards products, as children view advertised products in a more positive light in comparison to competitors which are not advertised in schools. Moreover, students exposed to Channel One were more likely to have intentions to buy the products advertised when compared to students who did not watch Channel One.\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{Market Research and Niche Marketing Companies}

Companies are also collecting demographic information from schools by providing campuses with products in exchange for information. One such instance of this comes from ZapMe!, a company which gives schools free computer labs, and in return they collect demographic information based on the browser history of children in those schools.\textsuperscript{14} In addition to collecting this information, they also require schools to display certain banner ads on the computers, which are targeted to the ages of children using the computer labs.

More attention is being focused on advertising to schools, as there are now organizations created with the sole purpose of creating more entry points to advertising in schools. One such company is US Cover Concepts, which has been a division of Marvel

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, p. 5
\textsuperscript{12} Stark 2001, p. 62
\textsuperscript{13} Story and French 2004, p. 4
\textsuperscript{14} Stark 2001, p. 59
\end{flushright}
Entertainment since purchased in 2004. On their homepage, they state that they are the largest resource for free classroom materials in the U.S. Cover Concepts distributes items such as book covers, educational comics, teacher’s guides, posters, bookmarks, locker posters, stickers, bookmarks, coloring sheets, folders, incentive programs, and samples. The products distributed to the school carry a company’s name or corporate logo. Their website claims that they reach 30 million children within grades kindergarten through high school, 1.2 million children in daycare center amount of schools, 5 million children in libraries, and 750,000 children in summer camps worldwide. McDonalds, Pepsi, Gatorade, Frito Lay, General Mills, Hershey, Keebler, Kellogg’s, M&M’s, Mars, Kraft/Nabisco, Wrigley and State Fair Corn Dogs have been listed on their home page as being advertisers for Cover Concepts.

However, Cover Concepts are not the only company in the business of creating advertisements within schools through the distribution of free materials. Tooned-In Menu Team is a company from Los Angeles similar to Cover Concepts in that it distributes free product (in this case, menus for school cafeterias), in exchange for being able to market within the school. These free printed menus have ads for products such as Pillsbury cookies or Pokemon. These are only two examples of many.

**Indirect Marketing**

Indirect marketing can take many forms, but essentially it is advertising in which the audience receives the message in a roundabout way; typically, people do not at first understand that it is advertising, or the media is not presented as such. Companies are becoming more persistent with their marketing strategies in school and presenting advertising by making it a part of teaching material. Many schools use corporate-sponsored educational material, which show a company’s product in a positive light, and the number is only growing. They are used to promote the brand of the sponsor, and sometimes come in the form of nutrition education kits, usually from trade associations, such as dairy, meat, egg, or sugar associations. For example, the American Egg Board has created curriculum material that promotes egg consumption in its “Incredible Journey from Hen to Home” which is

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15 The Jordan, Edmiston Group, Inc. 2004
16 “Free Stuff For Kids”, Cover Concepts
17 “Programs”, Cover Concepts
18 Story and French 2004, p. 7
19 Stark 2001, p. 59
20 Molnar 1998, p. 26
21 Story and French 2004, p. 4
distributed for free to schools. Atkins Nutritionals has made an agreement with the National Association of State Boards of Education and with the National Education Association. This company sells products based on the low-carbohydrate diet created by Dr. Atkins, and distributes nutrition material to children.\(^\text{22}\) Fitness education materials and fitness mascots have been sent to schools by PepsiCo and McDonald’s, respectively; both of which have been named as contributors to increasing childhood obesity rates. In addition, many companies, especially fast food vendors, offer incentive programs. Examples are Pizza Hut’s Book-It program and McDonald’s McSpellit Club. These programs encourage children to read more or improve their classroom skills in some way, and reward them with fast food. Attendance is also an area where incentive programs are being used in some schools, as attendance rate is monitored by the No Child Left Behind program.\(^\text{23}\) This program is created by the U.S. government to ensure that students are not being shuffled to the next grade level without fully comprehending the curriculum. Corporations also give grants or gifts to school, in the hope that they will generate goodwill for their brand. One example of this would be a company sponsoring a school sports team.

\textit{Advertising’s Influence on Children}

The effectiveness of advertising is in part due to the fact that researchers and psychologists are paid to give their knowledge and expertise, which is used in the marketing process in order to make it more effective. Hiring psychologists gives advertisers information about emotional needs, social needs, and the development of children at different ages. Through examining the behavior of children, as well as their dreams, fantasy lives, and art work, companies are given an insight into the minds of children, which influences marketing strategies when reaching young people. Some psychologists have tried to make the American Psychological Association declare this practice as unethical. Psychologist Allen D. Kanner, an associate faculty member Wright Institute (a clinical psychology training program), has said that “advertising is a massive, multi-million dollar project that’s having an enormous impact on child development…the sheer volume of advertising is growing rapidly and invading new areas of childhood, like our school.”\(^\text{24}\) The American Psychological Association (APA) did not specifically address this topic in their current Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (effective as of June 1, 2010). It can be assumed that

\(^{22}\) Molnar and Garcia 2006, p. 79  
\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 78  
\(^{24}\) Clay 2000, p. 52
they have not made a statement about this practice because psychologists disagree on the issue; some believe that it is unconstitutional to limit how professionals can earn their living, which is why they do not support creating a standard about it. The APA has also reported that research has found a strong connection between the rising amount of advertising for non-nutritious foods and the rate of childhood obesity.

**Current Regulations**

In the U.S., advertising targeted towards children is hardly ever regulated, and when done so, is mostly self-regulation. In 2000, the U.S. General Accounting Office tried to identify state laws, regulations, and policies concerning commercial activity within public schools, but discovered that they were not comprehensive and greatly varied between school districts. Most of the restrictions about product sales were only directed at fundraising activities, and they did not find any regulations concerning market research activities.

Two examples of regulatory organizations are the Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the National Council of Better Business Bureaus. CARU was created in 1974 for the sole purpose of self-regulating the children’s sector of the advertising industry. It was born from an alliance of the foremost advertising trade associations in order to encourage responsible advertising towards children. Their main objective is to review and evaluate all media directed towards children, including online privacy practices. If they find something they believe is inappropriate, such as misleading material or advertising that does not adhere to their guidelines, they try to get the companies to voluntarily change it. However, even CARU’s director admitted that because their guidelines have no legal authority, they have no actual power. All CARU is able to do is publish their findings in hope of giving companies bad publicity to encourage those who do not follow the recommendations they try to enforce to follow their guidelines. Currently, there are laws in place in order to protect children online, under the Child Online Protection Act, passed in 1998. There are also laws regulating the amount of time allotted to advertising during children’s programming.

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25 Ibid. p. 52
26 Wilcox, et al. 2009, p. 6
27 United States General Accounting Office 2000, p. 4
28 Children’s Advertising Review Unit 2008
29 Fried 2006, p. 137
30 Curran, Catherine M., and Jef I. Richards 2000, p. 147
Efforts Related to Ending Marketing in Schools

There are some attempts to restrict advertising to children, especially in schools. One organization in the forefront of this movement is the Campaign for Commercial-Free Childhood.31 In 2010, they helped parents32 in San Diego to petition the school board to vote against advertising in schools, and were successful in their efforts.33 Also, a number of schools and states no longer permit the selling of sodas or foods that are high in fat on campus. This is true for Seattle, Washington’s school board, in District of Columbia, and in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. However, some marketers have found loopholes. Even in schools where soda is banned, vending machines selling sodas are merely set on timers so as not to operate during school hours, but are on exactly before and after.34 A bill to ban soda and junk food within schools was delayed by Coca-Cola and PepsiCo in Connecticut. This was done through an extensive lobbying campaign, which used union beverage truck drivers, school coaches, and school boards.

Summary

Children are being marketed to in several channels in U.S. public schools, both in a direct manner, and through indirect media. Commercialism is now a common part of schools because many schools are struggling financially due to budget cuts. This makes advertising messages a prominent part of children’s lives on campus. Unhealthy food and beverages are both made available and appealing to students due to business partnerships formed with schools. Most marketing activity is not regulated, and those who attempt to do so are unable to. Many parents have spoken out against advertising within schools, because children’s dietary and purchase habits are being transformed because of its high effectiveness.

31 Molnar 2010, p. 11
32 In this paper, parents refer the guardians of the child(ren)/those who raise the child(ren), not necessarily the biological parents
33 Spagat 2010
34 Molnar and Garcia 2006, p. 81
3. Arguments In Favor Of In-School Marketing

Education is Important

The budgets for public education are being increasingly decreased, especially at a state level. Teachers are being laid off, class room sizes are increasing, and old classroom equipment are left broken. Art and music programs are being cut, and students are losing viable outlets to express themselves. Along with budget cuts, textbook prices are increasing, as well as technology needed in the classroom. Education is a priority for our children for several reasons; they are the generation of the future. It greatly influences the people we turn out to be as it impacts not only our knowledge, but critical thinking and social skills as well. Due to education being so important, schools should take any resources possible in order to ensure that children receive it. Without the additional revenue from advertising, schools may be forced to offer substandard education to our children. Children have a great amount of potential, and society has the responsibility to make certain that they fulfill this potential in order to ensure a good life for the future generations. The more educated a person is the more opportunities are afforded to them. Prohibiting schools to enter into contracts with companies that allow for marketing and advertising on schools grounds hinders their prospective academic aptitude. Education is too important to not give all resources possible, for it influences people’s decision-making skills and their perspective on the world, and life in general. It is a basic requirement in order to have a decent life prospect in these times, where one must have at least a bachelor’s degree in order to have the opportunity to find a job that pays more than minimum wage. School is much more than acquiring knowledge of the alphabet, math, etc., but has a strong impact on our social lives as well. Everyone should have a right to an education because of these things, and to not give the best possible resources towards a child’s education is to take away some of that right. The public school system was created, in part, due to the belief that all children have the right to an education, regardless of class level, ethnic background, etc. Education is the foundation to advancing mankind, and therefore is too important to prohibit any funds given to improve it.

If children do not have proper equipment, they are not able to learn. The school environment is an important one, and revenue from advertising can only improve upon the situation. Due to advertising contracts, children can have access to newer technologies,

35 Khadaroo and Paulson 2010
36 Winner and Hetland 2007
37 Consumers Union’s Education Services Department 1993
newer books, and a suitable teacher/student ratio. Without the money brought from advertising, children may be in crowded classroom, which is not conducive to learning.

**Children are Not Responsible for Their Own Education**

Children are not the keeper of their own education, as they have no possible means to control it. They do not pay taxes, which funds public education, and are therefore not capable of being responsible for their schooling. Minors are able to acquire work permits (although laws vary state to state)\(^{38}\), meaning that they do pay state taxes which fund the education system; however, this is not relevant to the argument for it does not change the fact that they cannot have a say in public education because they are not of voting age. It may be argued that if children pay taxes that fund public goods, they deserve to have a say, but this is beside the point.

Studies have shown that larger fiscal resources do lead to better academic performance by students.\(^{39}\) This can be seen by comparing schools that have been allocated more resources with those who have not. It allows for better learning facilities, more teachers, and more school materials. As children do not have the ability to allot the amount of resources given to or ensure the quality of their education, those who are able to, such as taxpayers or other members of society, should do so. Advertising in schools is a way to give schools more resources, and therefore those who have the ability to increase educational funding in this way, should do so.

**Autonomy of Children**

Advertisements should be allowed in school, for they offer children an opportunity to exercise their autonomy. Amy Mullin argues that young children (3-8 years of age) are capable of local autonomy (as opposed to global), meaning that they are capable of autonomy in some areas, but are incapable in other ways because they do not have enough information and experience needed to make good decisions.\(^{40}\) Local autonomy is not synonymous with independence, but instead means that a person is self-governing in that they are able to make their own choices and have intentions to their actions connected to these choices; it also allows room for other values being prioritized above it.\(^{41}\) Focus on young children is important, as older children (10 years and older) are sometimes at least considered to have

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\(^{38}\) U.S. Department of Labor  
\(^{39}\) Jimenez-Castellanos 2010, p. 364  
\(^{40}\) Mullin 2007, p. 536  
\(^{41}\) Ibid, p. 537
partial autonomy, while younger children are usually not accepted as possible any autonomy.\textsuperscript{42} Many children at the young age of 3 show consistency and confidence in what they care about and are able to express themselves, and by 8 years have significant reasoning skills. Since young children are developed with their social, emotional, and imaginative skills, as well as confidence in their ability to choose their penchant for things, it deserves some respect.\textsuperscript{43} Allowing marketing within schools gives children more opportunities to make their own choices, and as they are capable of doing so, it should be allowed.

Advertisements are instrumental in this activity, as they offer the opportunity to showcase a product that children may have a predilection for. Prohibiting marketing in schools only takes away a chance for children to exercise their local autonomy. It is parents who chime in about advertising at school, yet reports of children protesting this activity is not common, which shows either an indifference or approval on their part. The opinions of children matter because they are the ones spending much of their time at school, not the parents. Furthermore, although it is compulsory for them to stay in school, it is not forced on them to focus on direct advertisement. Children will only pay attention to direct advertisements if it interests them, and even young children are able to decide what they would like to look at, as they have the ability to act with intentions according to what they like.

\textit{Parents Have Ultimate Authority}

Most products advertised in school are for food or beverages\textsuperscript{44}, however, choosing to like certain brands of these products will not harm the child - indulging in them will. Children do have the possibility of influencing familial buying behavior, but only if the parents allow it. For the most part, children, especially young children, do not have access to any money of their own, unless given to them by parents. Therefore, there is no necessary connection to marketing within schools and health problems from products advertised in school. Marketing should be allowed within schools because it cannot directly harm a child’s health. Advertising can make a product appealing to someone, but it cannot literally force a person to consume the product. This is why advertising can only be a contributing factor to any deterioration of a child’s health, but does not actually cause the harm. It can amplify other factors, while not being the sole cause of nutritional problems. Parents should be accountable for the health of their child, and as such, need to monitor influencing factors about the diet.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[42] Ibid, p. 536
\item[43] Mullin 2007, p. 547
\item[44] Story and French 2004, p. 5
\end{footnotes}
and lifestyle of their children. Parents are responsible for the food and beverages consumed by their children, for even if they are not actually feeding their children, they are responsible for what edible products are purchased for them and by them. As for children who are able to earn their own money, until they are adults, parents still have the authority to determine what their children can and cannot have. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the parents not only to ensure their children are getting adequate nutrition, but to inform them about what they believe is a proper diet. They must explain to their child why products advertised or sold in schools may or may not be suitable, and ensure, if they care to do so, that advertisements are not the only source of information the child receives about products marketed to them not only at school, but in general.

It is not the responsibility of the advertisers to make sure that children are given more information about the topics advertised; parents need to be made accountable as well. Advertisements at school can serve as a segue into discussion about diet, shopping habits, and lifestyle choices. Promotional material in schools give parents another opportunity to discuss shopping, and what requirements they should have when purchasing certain products. This is of course contingent upon the type of relationships parents have with their children, and their parenting styles.

Parents have authority over their children in this way because of the nature of the parent-child relationship. Part of this relationship includes a parental duty, where parents are responsible for encouraging what is best for a child. Also, authority of a parent allows them to make certain demands from a child, as long as “they are not unreasonable, abusive, or harmful to the child or her important long term interests.” The discretion of a parent allows them to decide how best to carry out their duty. This relationship includes a fiduciary duty on the part of the parents to their children, as children do not have the full capabilities of a parent. Even in the case that a child has decent reasoning skills, as is typical of most adolescents, parents still have authority; it is not merely cognitive capabilities that separate children from their parents, if at all. Children are submissive to their parents in some ways, for they do not have the ability to equate to their parent’s moral standing. This inequality is why parents must be responsible for their children and owe them moral concern and consideration. As adults, parents are moral agents, and children have not yet acquired all aspects of moral agency. Lack of some aspects of moral agency comes from the fact that

45 Adults as seen in the eyes of the law; an emancipated child would be considered an adult
46 Macedo 2010
47 Noggle 2002, p. 97
children are not yet consistent in their moral selves, as their preferences are in a constant state of change, and they have not yet internalized moral norms essential to harmonious interaction with other moral agents. However, this does not mean children lack any aspects of agency, for they can act with intention and pursue goals; however this only amounts to simple agency.

A child’s limited agency gives their parents certain responsibility and duty to them, which means they are the party accountable when it comes to their child’s health, choices, and influence. Parents have the ultimate decisions about the lifestyles of their children, and since advertising does not cause any direct harm to a child it is permissible for it to exist within schools.

**Commercialism is Everywhere**
The concern over advertising in schools is great; however, advertisements have become a fact of life. The entire world is saturated in marketing messages, from bus stops to television commercials to billboards, etc. Children are extremely familiar with being marketed to, as they are targeted in advertisements in most other parts of their lives. Therefore, schools should not be expected to be any different from the real world, and allowed to have marketing on school grounds as well. Marketing within schools is not the problem, as children are prepared for exposure to advertising. However, the choice of the products promoted may be a problem, but this does not encourage the prohibition of marketing within schools. It only points to the possibility that there should be limitations on what products shows allow to be advertised on campus or the duty of a parent to educate their children about proper nutrition. Schools reflecting society is positive, as it prepares students for life outside of school. There is a belief that schools teach much more than writing and math skills, but about life as well. If schools are to help children learn their place in the world, and how our society works, then there is no reason for advertising to be prohibited.

**Advertising as a Teaching Tool**
Not only can marketing in schools be used for teaching in obvious ways such as sponsoring teaching materials like textbooks, videos, and fitness equipment, but it can serve to teach lessons in itself. Advertising should be allowed in schools because it gives an opportunity to explore important themes and concepts from the curriculum, and comprehension and mastery of subjects is important in school. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that their students
understand the state educational standards, and this can be accomplished more effectively by using sponsored materials. These materials can provide instruction in an engaging manner through the use of marketing; one example would be by using well-known characters (comic or otherwise) to get the point across.

Although people are worried that corporate-sponsored materials will have some kind of bias, and will try to sell a product or a lifestyle, the advantage of using these materials is much more important than whether or not a child decides he or she wants to buy a product because of materials distributed by a company. The goal of school is to get an education, and if these materials are a valuable teaching tool and enable better comprehension of a concept or subject, then it should be permissible for companies to distribute them. Education is a child’s greatest priority, and that is what should be preserved. If anything, everyone can agree that education is important for our children, now and in the future. Without sponsored materials, children may have very little resources to learn from. Increased public funds for education do not seem possible in the near future, and with budget cuts, schools are not able to secure as much educational material as before. There is no financial cost to receive sponsored material, and students can benefit from it. Learning and comprehension should be the only concern in this situation. Even if material contains some type of advertising, this is no different from publications available in everyday life. Magazines (including those aimed at children) come with advertisements. Children’s television programming always shows commercials, even if the program is educational. Advertisements are a part of life, and they are what keep much of today’s culture running – newspapers, television, etc. Although some parents may be concerned that indirect advertising is more intrusive, it is simply a sign of the times. Companies have had partnerships with schools for a while now, for example, by paying to have their business promoted in yearbooks or school newspapers; now, advertising is evolving because technology and society is evolving.

Teacher accountability is an important factor in this situation, as they are morally required to ensure that their students comprehend the curriculum. They have a responsibility to their students to see them do well, and in some situations, corporate-sponsored materials can make this possible because it is engaging for students. Accountability to students by teachers seems to be an intuitive concept, however, Wagner has made claims to show why this is a moral matter. First, he states that obligations are characterized by social customs and moral and legal institutions of a society, and that these are incurred by people due to their

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responsibility for acts, decisions or matters which involve others.49 People who choose to be teachers have assumed a role that carries responsibilities in society’s expectations of them. This is why teachers are accountable for the acts they do or problems they ignore in their jobs. The actions that teachers are responsible for also “determine the various interpersonal and agency relationships they entail.” Different ways that teachers can be accountable for ensuring the education of their students is answering to others, for instance their superiors or the parents of students, but the most efficient way this is assessed is through standardized tests. In order to increase these scores, which are tangible proof that a child has comprehended a subject, sponsored materials must be allowed for use in the classroom. Providing fun material makes learning fun, which is a way that teachers can fulfill their duty.

Furthermore, incentive programs sponsored by companies are an example of how allowing marketing within schools is positive when it comes to helping educational attainment. Programs that reward students for their efforts, such as reading a certain number of books, or earning a certain grade on tests, have proven to work.50 Taking these away would be wrong, as it encourages students to learn and make them excited about school.

There is no reason that the advertising in school cannot both help students in some ways, and also serve the interests of the advertiser; it is not one or the other. Some companies have told their advertisers that they are only allowed to promote products related to nutrition, health, and wellness.51 This means that students are being surrounded by messages that are positive, and can have a constructive impact on their life and habits.

More Control

It is a fact of life that U.S. society and culture is saturated with messages from advertisers. However, marketing messages in schools are more controlled, for contracts are not forced onto school administrators, they are agreed upon. Decision-makers in school have the opportunity to turn down business partnerships if they do not find it to be a suitable fit, or if they do not want their students exposed to certain content or products. Marketing within a school environment is safer, because administrators act as a barrier to inappropriate companies. Decision-makers in school have the ability to only choose companies they feel comfortable endorsing, or have products they believe in. This is especially true considering the rise of marketing within schools, which means administrators have many more options to

49 Wagner 1989, p. 79
50 Bates 1979, p. 573
51 Macedo 2010
choose from. Parents can be assured that advertisements are appropriate because school administrators, who have taken on a role that makes them accountable for educational decisions, are responsible for approving them. The school has more control of messages given to students within an academic environment than parents have when outside their home. This means administrators can choose “fair” advertisements, meaning that children can understand the intention behind them and that they are not deceived. Also, they can determine which products are promoted, for the security of the students. This means that children can be protected from unhealthy influences, for educators serve as a filter. Furthermore, parents are taxpayers who can lobby to their local governments to the school if they are truly upset with the kind of content that is chosen to be in schools. For schools, advertising is part of a means to an important end-education, and advertising within schools gives administrators the ability to provide this. More and more companies are seeking ways to advertise within schools, which means that school administrators have the ability to be more particular about advertisements. This gives them some power in the situation, and puts them on a level playing field with companies who wish to promote their products in school. Schools are not the victims of advertisers; they are given a unique opportunity to better their resources, which in turn, gives children an advantage they would not otherwise have.

**Utilitarian Approach**

Free marketing maximizes preference satisfaction, and therefore it should be allowed in schools. Children spend much of their waking hours in school, for a great part of the year. The average student spends almost 7 hours at school, around 180 days a year. Compulsory education makes access to certain demographics very restricted. By creating partnerships, advertisers have an opportunity to reach the market their products are geared towards. It is impossible to sell products if your target market is not aware that it exists, or of its features and benefits. Some products can even be beneficial to children, such as interactive learning tools, or food products created for youth. Prohibiting the marketing of youth products in schools unfairly punishes companies who seek to meet the needs and wants of children. “Marketing is human activity directed at satisfying need and wants through exchange process.” It tends to be fundamentally utilitarian, and from this approach free marketing it is ethical; this common approach is recalled by Nantel and Weeks who use a simplified concept of utilitarianism, their definition being “an action is only ethical if it maximizes the

52 U.S. Department of Education 2001-2002
53 Nantel and Weeks 1996, p. 12
The main goal in any kind of marketing is to satisfy the customer, and because it generally achieves the maximization of positive outcomes for the largest amount of people while also minimizing the negative consequences to the largest number, it is considered to be morally acceptable. Advertising in schools does this because it helps to keep schools running, which in turn educates children. Providing products in schools such as snacks and beverages and the act of promoting it helps to sate their desire for it, while at the same time accomplishing a greater good by helping to give them a better education. From the increased profits schools will have from allowing companies to market to children on schools grounds, they are able to provide better technology, newer books, and smaller classroom sizes. However, this utilitarian perspective of marketing is just a comment on marketing as a general practice.

Summary
Education lays the foundation for the people we turn out to be, and in many ways it determines our lives, which is why it is so important. Marketing in schools helps to accomplish the goals of education by supporting it monetarily. It also gives children an opportunity to exercise their local autonomy. Advertising in school cannot be responsible for negative nutrition habits, as it is unable to force certain choices on a person. All resources possible should go towards education, and marketing in schools is able to accomplish this. Children see advertising in every other part of their lives, and this makes them prepared when it appears on school campuses.

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54 Ibid, p. 13
4. Refuting the Proponents’ Arguments

It is stated many times that advertising in schools is beneficial because it can fund education, acting as a resource in a time where schools are struggling financially. Although it is true that education is important and high valued in society, it is also true that there are other resources available in order to support and fund it. Public education is supported by taxes, which means it is possible to increase taxes in order to increase funds for it. Although this is unpleasant, it is important to realize that there are other resources available.

In response to the autonomy of children, the way this term is described is not meaningful. Although Mullin states that young children are capable of local autonomy, this term does not carry much weight. Autonomy is more than just having the ability to create your own preferences and act on them, but to do so in an informed and rational way - a point that is not made clear. Even if children are capable of local autonomy, this does not depend on them being able to act on their preferences based on exposure to advertisements. If advertising is so prevalent (a point which made by the proponents) then there are other channels of media available to children to make these kinds of decisions. It does not create a reason that advertising should be permitted in schools. Also, the point is made that children will only pay attention to direct advertisements if it interests them; however, if advertising is part of the lesson, as in the case of corporate-sponsored materials, this makes the marketing message impossible to ignore.

As for the argument that parents are the ultimate authority of their children, while it may be true that parents have final say in purchases because they make them, this does not mean that advertisements are not a negative influence. If children are in possession of money, it has come from their parents, meaning they are still the decision-makers, as they choose when it is appropriate to distribute it. The distinction between contributing factor and direct cause is not important; the fact that there are any negative consequences means that marketing should not occur within school. Regardless of marketing not being the direct cause, it still has a negative effect; it would be different if it was neutral, however this is not the case. Studies have shown that there is a proven connection between advertising for non-nutritious foods, which is the most common type of advertising in schools, and the increase in childhood obesity.

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55 Mullin 2007, p. 536
56 Wilcox, et al. 2009, p. 6
The claim is made that commercialism is everywhere, which is true, but its prevalence does not mean that it is automatically acceptable to have in a school setting. If anything, it poses as a distraction to students, which is inconsistent with the assertion that education is important.

As for advertising being a teaching tool, this claim is very weak as it has been proven that most corporate-sponsored materials do not follow guidelines regarding content and are not reviewed, while textbooks are. Although incentive programs may lead to better test scores or involvement in schools, this teaches students that they need an extrinsic motivator in order to learn or be excited about learning. They will come to expect a reward from participating in classroom activities, instead of being internally motivated to accomplish things or appreciating the value of education.

In regard to the argument that claims marketing in schools is better than advertising outside of the school setting, while marketing in an educational setting may be better for children in comparison to advertisements directed toward them outside of school, this does not make it acceptable. Although messages in school are more filtered, due to the fact that they are specifically chosen by school administrators, this does not serve as an argument for its continued existence. Instead, it merely states that these messages may be more appropriate, or less bad. Other ways of increasing revenue should be explored in order to keep the integrity of the public education system.

In reply to utilitarian approach to marketing, this conflicts with the argument that parents are ultimately responsible for the lifestyles of their children. It states that marketing is created in order to make people aware of certain goods or services in order to satisfy their wants and needs—however, it is also argued that parents ultimately have a moral responsibility for this. If this is the case, marketing is not needed in schools, where children are exposed to them, but to their parents. Furthermore, determining whether or not an act is ethical by seeing if the greatest number of positive repercussions for the greatest number of people (which is the definition used) occurs is entirely too simplified, and does not create inherent moral worth. Furthermore, it is the positive consequences that are important, not the number of them; one specific good consequence might outweigh several others that are not as important. Marketing was defined by the proponents as satisfying needs and wants through an exchange process, however, the way the wants are satisfied must also be examined.

57 Consumers Union's Education Services Department 1993
Although the majority of people want gas to drive their cars, this does not necessarily mean that satisfying this is ethical. Even in a more simple case where people want sugar, and marketing helps to satisfy this want by making a consumer aware of a product, the product can cause problems such as dental harms. Although the gustatory need is satisfied, this can cause a problem medically. Only short-term consequences are considered in this utilitarian definition of marketing.

Approaching marketing in schools from a deontological perspective can help achieve better standards for this activity. If marketers stop concentrating only on short term customer satisfaction, it can reduce the problems this brings for consumers and society in general. Selling products that satisfies a need is not truly beneficial for the customer and society if that product harms the customer in some way. This is true when companies try to sell high-fat snack foods and sugary drinks to young children, which is why not all products should be allowed to be promoted within schools. Consumption of these products can create significant health problems, and should therefore be prohibited from being advertised within schools.

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58 Nantel and Weeks 1996, p. 13
5. Arguments Against In-School Marketing

**Health and Psychological Problems**

The pervasiveness and influence of marketing within U.S. public schools is greatly affecting children, and is wrong due to the possible negative consequences that come with it. Specifically, advertisements within schools are mostly dangerous in situations where soft drinks and high fat foods are promoted. These advertisements encourage an unhealthy lifestyle, and are especially potent because harmful habits are created at a young age and continue into their adult lives.\(^{59}\) The selling of branded products at school and advertising existing within school walls implies that the school is endorsing that product, which makes students more inclined to trust or purchase products from these companies. This can create life-long eating habits, which is dangerous considering the lack of nutrition and excess of fat and sugar in many of the products sold (often in vending machines or in school cafeterias) and advertised within schools.

Not only do these increase the risk for obesity, but dental caries as well.\(^{60}\) The obesity rate has doubled for children ages six to eleven and tripled for the age bracket of twelve to nineteen years.\(^{61}\) This is in part because less than 20% of adolescents fulfills dietary recommendations for fruit and vegetables, and do not follow guidelines for fat intake. Negative changes in behavior stem from the promotion of these kinds of foods, which is why marketing of such products should be prohibited in schools.

Displaying advertisements in public schools, either directly or indirectly, can be harmful to a child’s self-esteem. Low self-esteem in young people comes with many negative behaviors including, but not limited to, depression, eating disorders, failing to respond to social influence, and difficulty forming and sustaining successful close relationships.\(^{62}\) Making products appealing through advertisements can make a product seem “cool” or desirable to children, and alienate those who do not and/or cannot have the product. Promoting goods or services in schools creates an atmosphere of materialism, and a child may feel like he or she cannot measure up to their peers who have the ability or the permission to purchase such products by their parents. This can make a child feel like they do not have as much worth as others at school, causing low self-esteem. When children compare themselves to their peers, and do not feel that they measure up, they feel badly about

\(^{59}\) Castillo 2010  
\(^{60}\) American Public Health Association Policy 2003  
\(^{61}\) Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center 2010  
\(^{62}\) Emler 2001, p. 59
A relationship between self-esteem and educational attainment has been proven; low self-esteem can amplify factors that already have a negative effect on academic achievement, such as degree of parental support. This means there is not only psychological damage, but that students also struggle academically. Materialism is promoted through advertising because marketing is designed to make a potential consumer want to buy things, and that they would be better off with the promoted products, despite the fact that it may not be essential to own. In school, students are surrounded by their peers, and encouraging the purchase of a product is especially harmful in the case of unhealthy foods, because the pressure to conform can make a child indulge in a nutritionally lacking diet. Although inequality in possessions may already be a problem in schools where children come from many different socioeconomic backgrounds, schools allowing the promotion of certain products can heighten this feeling by indirectly endorsing certain brands. Schools should not allow advertising to occur on campus, so as to put the student body on a more equal level, and to not cause additional self-esteem problems.

**Allowing Marketing in Schools Gives Control to Non-educators**

Non-educators have an especially strong role in the case of corporate-sponsored material, which allows for the possibility of violating the integrity of schools. This is unethical as they are not trained in education, which is seen in the materials distributed to children with no academic substance. These products are doing much more selling than teaching.

Allowing non-educators a role in the academic environment is worrying due to the content they can produce and distribute. Corporate-sponsored education materials are also distressing in that they are not reviewed and this allows it to be subjective, while also not fostering critical thinking. Although guidelines for materials sponsored by businesses were created in 1982 by the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals, most do not follow them. After a random review of 18 examples of these materials done by the Consumers Union, they found only one of these to actually follow said guidelines. These materials do not give students an opportunity to widen their academic horizons as they carry an obvious bias, which is inappropriate for schools. The role of a school is to serve as a place where children can learn

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63 Parker, et. al., p. 240  
64 Emler 2001, p. 25  
65 Consumers Union’s Education Services Department 1993  
66 Ibid.  
67 Ibid.  
68 Molnar and Garcia, p. 81  
69 Consumers Union’s Education Services Department 1993
and increase their knowledge, and should not have their decisions influenced by outside entities. The argument that schools should be free of interference will be addressed later in this chapter.

*The Vulnerability of Children and the Integrity of Public Schools*

Children are vulnerable due to their youth and naiveté; as stated earlier, many young children are unable to discern the intent and bias in advertisements. This is particularly troubling considering that corporate-sponsored materials are now commonplace. For example, a lesson plan for second to fourth graders (approximately ages 6-9) in form of a *Fantastic Four* comic was given to schools by Marvel Enterprises. This comic book was designed to promote self-esteem; however this is not all it promoted. The new *Fantastic Four* movie was about to come out, so this “lesson plan” served as advertisement for their film as well.\(^{70}\) This corporate-sponsored material served as brand awareness to a new demographic for Marvel. Examples such as this show that material of this kind is partly inappropriate, as any material distributed within school under the guise of teaching should contain only educational content, for the sole reason that children are mandated to attend school is to learn— not to be shaped into consumers. Although proper self-esteem is important for children to learn about, it is possible to do so without the aid of marketing materials. Children turn to school not only to learn about technicalities of subjects, such as math, but about life as well. One obvious example of this is with literature presented to students, for they are given not only to expand vocabulary and writing skills, but to teach life lessons. The effectiveness of these advertisements is enhanced due to the endorsement from the teacher. Due to the susceptibility of children, and their trust in their school, it is the job of teachers to explain that their students are being advertised to, although this is not currently mandated. Especially in the case of school-sponsored materials, children may not understand that the school is not the direct source. This is especially important due to the faith children put in their schools. Although commercialization in schools can benefit students in that they receive money, equipment, etc., it comes at a cost. With corporations spending so much to promote their brands and products in school and contributing in such a large part to school’s budget, it is possible for them to gain control of the educational agenda. This is a current concern for parents, as highlighted in Stark’s article from his description of Consumers Union’s and

\(^{70}\) Molnar and Garcia 2006, p. 80
Oakland’s Center for Commercial Free Public Education’s criticism.\textsuperscript{71} Allowing the ceding of control is wrong for many reasons, but in part due to the fact that these entities are non-teachers, and have no experience in the educational world. Ceding control of schools compromises its effectiveness in teaching because people without experience in academia and instruction are given authority. Business has no place interfering with educational material in elementary, middle, and high schools, for these children are not only at impressionable ages, but are in kind of a sanctuary when in the confines of school. The interest of business is only to serve its own commercial purpose, and the integrity of school is too important to allow any entity that does not have education as its main priority play a role in its operation. Schools serve as a sanctuary for children because they are in an environment that they feel is safe. For example, teachers and other school personnel are required to ensure that no bullying activity occurs, and if it does, it is their job to remedy the situation.\textsuperscript{72} However, this is just a safe haven in the physical sense, children also feel safe because with teachers there is a trust relationship. Children understand that it is the job of teachers to educate and inform them, so they feel they can rely on them. The curriculum and operation of schools should not be put in the hands of the business world due to the possibility that it will fail to help students fulfill the academic standards for their grade levels, and that students may give up valuable classroom time to serve the interests of commercialism. Also, this possibility has shown to be true through the analysis of many examples of sponsored materials, such as teaching videos, guidebooks, posters, contests, etc., the Consumers Union found that many of these programs contained information that was incomplete, incorrect, and/or misleading.\textsuperscript{73} This wrong information was often presented to promote the sponsors, and in most cases, teachers have great difficulty determining inaccuracy.\textsuperscript{74} Commercialism that is given under the guise of education is especially wrong when companies do not put in the effort or time to ensure that their product has true academic value.

Although technically a school’s purpose is to educate children, the school has a social value much more than this. Parents trust that information given to their children in schools is morally responsible. Children should not have to pay for learning by being exposed to advertisements; the public school system is founded in order to ensure that all children receive an education, and can do so without direct monetary cost. Using corporate-sponsored materials in the classroom comes with a cost, which violates the integrity of public

\textsuperscript{71} Stark 2001, p. 60  
\textsuperscript{72} United State Department of Education 2010, pp. 1-9  
\textsuperscript{73} Consumers Union’s Education Department 1993  
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
schools. This coupled with the fact that the educational worth of these materials is often “low to zero”\textsuperscript{75}, meaning that they have low academic worth for children, and therefore serve no real purpose in the classroom except to serve the interest of the advertisers and to waste children’s valuable time at school points to the view that they should be banned.

Companies who choose to advertise in schools have selfish motives - to convince students to buy their products. From a deontological approach, doing so is to violate the duty of nonmalfeasance. This means this action is interpreted as immoral because it does not adhere to this duty. Nonmalfeasance is an obligation here because negative consequences can follow; in this case, it is health and psychological problems stemming from nutrition and self-esteem problems created by these advertisements. Education should be protected with a duty of nonmalfeasance because it is too important to compromise. John Baron and Mark Spranca state that protected values are those that are too important to compromise, and cannot be traded with other values, especially economic values.\textsuperscript{76} The idea of these rules about action come from the values supported by deontology; here, the rule would be to protect education. To be willing to make a tradeoff, in this case, the cost of classroom time spent on advertising for monetary resources, is to not remain fully committed to education, as it takes away time from children. Baron and Spranca admit that these values are hardly ever able to be satisfied, and that this is especially hard for institutions such as government agencies.\textsuperscript{77} The problem here is that the protected value, education, conflicts with itself in this case. Education is traded for advertising revenue, but the advertising revenue also serves as a resource for education. However, other revenue may be found for education, in such a form where it does not have to sacrifice itself - it is too important. Furthermore, the tradeoff between advertising and education comes with the additional consequences of health and psychological problems (violating the duty of nonmalfeasance), which is why it should be prohibited in schools.

\textit{Children Unable To Understand They Are Being Marketed To}

Protection is also important because some children, especially the younger set, may not understand that they are being marketed to. This is important because the purpose of marketing is to persuade people to not only buy products, but to lead a certain lifestyle. Although marketers famously deny that they are unable to create a “need” in people, it is very

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} Baron and Spranca 1997, p. 1
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 1
true that they can generate wants and desires. Marketing to children is wrong because they are not responsible for their own needs as the submissive party in the parent-child relationship. Decisions concerning food are the responsibility of the parents, and marketing in schools takes part of this power away from them as it can contradict what they attempt to teach their children. Parents are not involved in this process, and are therefore not able to truly approve or disagree about this activity; this is especially true when more subtle forms of advertising are used. From promotions of soft drinks and snacks, children desire certain food products, often unaware why they do so, and without comprehending proper nutrition. It matters that children do not understand they are being marketed to because they are susceptible to these messages and as so, we need to care for them until they are responsible enough to. This is especially true within schools, as students trust their teachers and the school environment.

The key reason why advertising to children is not acceptable due to their inability to understand that they are being advertised to is that it takes advantage of someone. Evaluation of this ability has shown, in several studies, that children under 8 years old are simply unable to comprehend an advertisement’s intention. Instead, children believe what they hear and learn from advertisements to be factual statements. Still, children older than 8 years are often unable to discern that messages coming from advertisement are biased, even if they can determine that that it is trying to sell a product. If children cannot understand whether or not a message is biased, it inhibits them from forming their own opinion of a product. This is because they believe that messages of puffery are indeed facts, when instead they are statements created only to sell the product, and not actual reality. Taking away the ability for a person to choose free from manipulation is wrong, and this is why advertising messages should not be put in the classroom, especially for younger children. Giving children advertising material that they cannot understand is essentially deceiving them purposely.

Not only does marketing within schools take advantage of the children, but marketers are exploiting public schools due to their neediness stemming from budget cuts. Without funds on the side of school administrators, they are unable to be as particular about the kind of business partnerships they make, for they have little or no power for negotiation. This is especially hard for schools that lack imperative equipment or materials, as they feel pressure to accept contracts which allow for invasive advertising.

78 Hudson, Simon, David Hudson and John Peloza 2007, p. 291
79 Ibid., p. 291
Social Function of Schools

Schools have a social function beyond teaching students, more than education; it is known as a wholesome place, a sanctuary for the innocent. This sentiment is expressed by Michael Walzer, who states “schools fill an intermediate space between family and society, and they also fill an intermediate time between infancy and adulthood…education distributes to individuals not only their futures but their presents as well.”

Schools should be a safe zone where children can learn free from outside influence because of the large impact it has on their life, especially during their formative years. This is to ensure that the best interests of the children are being served, that children are able to learn free from manipulation. The environment they learn in is as important as what is being taught, because it determines not only how well a child learns, but who they become. Michael Walzer believes that social goods are divided into different distributive spheres (and should not be lumped together as primary goods). A distributive sphere has two characteristics, that the distribution of a good, in this case, education, be directed by a distributive principle other than free exchange. The second characteristic is that distribution of a good (education) should not be determined by the way other goods are distributed in society; in particular, money and power. By principle of public education, it is distributed equally, and without cost, which satisfies Walzer’s two requirements. This is also the reason that advertisement has no place in the education system, by becoming education’s monetary resource, the distribution of education is depending on the power of the business sector. Companies have power in schools because education is relying on its money for its continuing existence, although it should not have to because it is a distributive sphere in itself. Also, Walzer believes that justice is based on social meaning and determines its normative status, which applies in this case. He described schools as having importance for many reasons, a significant one being that “they provide a context, not the only one, but by far the most important one, for the development of critical understanding and for the production, as well as the reproduction, of social critics.” This is why the public school system stands apart from different institutions, and therefore should be treated differently. Society deems education to be important, and also the school environment, and the reasons and ways in which it is valued should determine whether or not outside parties can interfere. In the case of marketing in schools, businesses are trying to serve their own agenda, but school is not valued in this way, and therefore it should be prohibited.

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80 Walzer 1983, p. 198
81 Immordino-Yan 2011, p. 98
82 Martens 2009, p. 3
83 Walzer 1983, p. 198
Channel One is shown to heavily influence the students who watch it; this is not because they see Channel One as reliable, but because they trust any information, media, etc. that comes from the school because they trust in it. Schools are not just for learning, they are influential in lives, seen as having a kind of integrity that comes from the fact that school is where people learn much about their role in society, and how to think critically. It is the place where most children learn about social relationships, and where they learn to have patriotism for the U.S. All of these things are cherished, and they are only a small part of why school has its own value. This is especially seen in the way that children recite the Pledge of Allegiance every morning. The social role includes this, and much more, which is why it should not be interfered upon by advertising. When entering into business partnerships with companies, schools are relinquishing a part of what makes them valuable. However, the role that school plays in the lives of children is too important for it to lose its autonomy. Control is ceded to these companies in the form of time in classrooms, and also when school administrators and teachers are not the only one sending messages to children. It is not possible for children to fully become social critics when advertising messages are being forced at them. Within the moratorium that a school provides for them, they will most likely believe these messages to be both true and important.

*Confinement of Children and a Parent's Loss of Control*

Children are confined to schools, meaning that they are not merely subjected to marketing, but, rather, indoctrination. Freedom of children is greatly restricted by advertising in schools because they have no choice but to be exposed to it. Although marketing is becoming increasingly pervasive, people usually have the ability to step away from it. If they do not care for television commercials, they can turn off the television, if they dislike advertisements shown in magazines, they can choose not to read them; however, when children are attending school, they are in environments they cannot leave. In the case of marketing within schools, children do not have a choice as to whether or not they are exposed; they are a captive audience. This is one point that further shows the need to protect them, and analyze the promotions allowed in schools, and the products that are being promoted. Exposure to advertisements should not be mandatory in order to receive education, a public good. Parents already pay for this with their tax dollars, and this should be the only requirement in order for their children to receive it.

The freedom of children is infringed upon by marketing in schools because they are manipulated by these advertisements to believe that a certain lifestyle is the right way to
choose to live, instead of being able to make their own decisions. Children are influenced by the indirect endorsement of schools, which they trust, and by the appealing nature of marketing materials. This is especially when children are younger than eight years old, as mentioned before, they cannot understand that advertisements are trying to sell and promote a product, and takes the information as factual. This inhibits their ability to perceive the world free from manipulation and outside influence.

In the case of advertising in schools, children are the inferior moral party, as they have less opportunity to fulfill their own rights or the rights of others. Their ability to act is being constrained because they are being influenced by biased material, which is what advertising essentially is. In trying to sell a product, marketers are making a claim that their product should be chosen because it is better in some aspect, whether it be price, quality, or value. By calling that kind of attention to its product or service, advertisements are inherently stating that other products in the same class do not measure up for some reason. The right for companies to market within schools is overridden by the right of children to learn free from manipulative influences on their lifestyle, the right to a fair education. To constrain children in an environment filled with advertising is to take away their negative liberty, as they are unable to leave school grounds. Students are legally required to remain in school until they graduate or turn 18 years old. As minors, they are unable to change the law which states they must remain in school, and educational environment is far too important to compromise. Unless emancipated, children do not have many rights, especially not in making their own decisions. Children are also restrained by their relationship with their parents, who have control of their advertisement consumption at home. Parents are able to turn off the television if they feel their children should not be exposed to certain messages, they can switch radio stations if they do not feel comfortable with the product that is being sold within earshot of their children. This freedom is not available to parents as the situation stands now – although parents try to make their voices heard, they are not the ultimate decision-makers when it comes to schools signing contracts allowing for marketing on their grounds. As parents, adults have the authority over their children to determine the kind of life they leave. This is especially true due to the dependent nature of children, as they turn to their parents for not only food and shelter, but for moral guidance. However, they have no control in this situation, which is not fair to them, as it can counter their ability to work as effective parents. This means we must ensure that marketing for products harmful to a child’s health cannot be displayed in schools. Parents have no choice but to send their children to school, it is legally required of them, and this is why exposing their children to
advertisements is inescapable. Although any advertising within schools is not acceptable, it is not right to deny educational facilities of extra funding in a time of such great need. Direct advertising does nothing to provide education to the students, it only lends itself to the self-serving needs of companies to promote their brands and products.

**Balancing Key Values**

School personnel need to weigh both the costs and benefits when entering into business partnerships to ensure that the extra revenue is worth any negative consequences. In most cases, the short term benefits are not worth the long term costs, but it does not seem that school decision-makers are thinking in a long term frame of mind, which needs to be remedied. Many times, the problem with marketing in schools is that it pits health of students against their education. This is seen by the implementation of incentive programs, which have increased their attractiveness due to the U.S. Program of No Child Left Behind. This program ensures that children are not moved up, in grades or subject levels until they have proven their mental acuity with tests, to ensure they fully comprehend the material. Incentive programs are beneficial in that they have the ability to raise test scores; however, they are negative in that they encourage a diet of fast food. This is true in the case of Pizza Hut’s reading program, and McDonald’s spelling program. In situations such as these, it is important to analyze if the costs outweigh the benefits. In the case of signing exclusive contracts with beverage companies, children are being encouraged to drink sugary beverages, and schools are believed to earn extra revenue. However, these contracts are not proven to be very lucrative. School administrators have reported that their schools did not actually receive any income from commercial activities such as these. There are costs other than money that must be considered when it comes to marketing activity in schools. For example, when showing Channel One, teachers are losing time to present their own material to their class in order to watch Channel One’s programming. Usually, agreements made with schools by Channel One require showing the program to 90% of the school on 90% of school days. Although the program is only 12 minutes, it amounts to an hour of class every week not being dedicated to specific grade level requirements. Even though the program may update children on current events, this can be done by teachers, who can incorporate what they deem relevant into their existing lessons. These same events can be explained to children using a

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84 Molnar and Garcia 2006, p. 78
85 Ibid., p. 81
86 Ibid., p. 81
87 Stark 2001, p. 62
channel that does not require mandatory commercials. Time can be better spent in other ways, especially when teachers simply do not have time to carry out their lesson plan fully because they are mandated to shown Channel One in their class. Advertisements distract students from learning, which is why it has no place in the classroom. It is not fair to students to take away valuable time that has been designated and promised to them for their education. Any time or resources devoted to commercial activities instead of their schooling compromises their future and their ability to fulfill their potential.

As for beverage and high-in-fat snack food companies advertising and selling their products in school, the cost to the children is their health and nutrition. Schools needs to be more discriminating about the kind of marketing allowed at their schools, for revenue that will supply the money for one school year can impact children for the rest of their lives.

In the case of materials sponsored by fast food restaurants and unhealthy food products, it can undermine what teachers tell students about how to eat healthily. For example, Krispy Kreme (a doughnut company) had a promotion in schools in which they gave students a free doughnut for every A grade a student earned. This teaches children bad values, that they should be externally motivated in order to accomplish things.

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88 Molnar and Garcia 2006, p. 80
6. Conclusion

Schools forming business partnerships that allow for in-school marketing provides a predicament because advertising is traded for classroom time, while simultaneously being an economic resource for education. Marketing to children who are unable to understand that advertising messages are biased is manipulation. Unfortunately, the issue of how to increase funds for public education is not black and white. However, a middle ground can be found. Although it seems unfair to disallow any and all marketing and advertising on school grounds, a proper compromise can be made. Especially in the case of the current recession, additional funding is needed for schools to properly educate our children. Although increasing taxes is an option to create additional funding for schools, tax rates are already high in the U.S. and unlikely to be received well by the general public. In the meantime, marketing activity in schools can be limited through generating money through other channels such as fundraising or asking for donations from the local community. One major concern about marketing in schools is that unhealthy food and drinks are being advertised to young children, but this particular problem can be solved by enacting guidelines for schools to follow, either legal or otherwise, in the case of accepting money or other goods in exchange for the opportunity to market to children on school grounds. Although this does not escape the safe haven argument, it is a step in the right direction. Hopefully in the future schools will have enough monetary resources to ensure that they do not need additional revenue from marketing agreements, but until then it is important to better upon the current situation while still ensuring resources for education. In the case of food, schools should only allow companies to advertise food and drink products that follow the national dietary guidelines and recommendations. Legal regulation is needed because we should not just accept corporate-sponsored material and create agreements with corporations to advertise and sell products in school without considering the possible consequences. Also, for marketing that comes in the form of sponsored-materials, these products should be reviewed by an academic panel for educational substance, and bias. Current regulation is not powerful enough because this kind of marketing is only monitored through self-regulation organizations, which trade associations usually form in order to avoid real legislation. Materials that do not help to further the comprehension of the curriculum, and does not relate to the class’s syllabus will not be accepted. Not only should the educational worth be examined, but the type of lifestyles the products or brand promote, particularly in the case of the food industry, should also be analyzed to ensure that national guidelines concerning
health are endorsed. Children usually trust messages that come from their schools, and the school should feel confident in endorsing those messages. Even though the material does not come directly from the school, the fact that the school allows for its distribution and uses it as a teaching tool in classrooms implies that the school approves of the materials. This is why sponsored material should just not be taken freely and blindly, for it welcomes the possibility of having a negative impact on children. Furthermore, the influence and effect of advertisements in school should be continuously monitored to determine the attitudes and beliefs of students concerning advertised products and lifestyle choices. If a school is vastly under-budget, and simply cannot operate without the help of commercial activity, efforts should be made to ensure that students keep healthy dietary habits to off-set any negative influences. Schools should offer the best education possible, and corporate-sponsored materials may not always do this. Schools are required to review textbooks before selecting them,\textsuperscript{89} and sponsored materials should be given the same consideration. There are no reasons that standards should be forgotten simply because equipment is not paid for with money. Free materials deserve the same, if not more, attention than paid-for ones; there is a reason they are free, and that reason may not always be beneficial to children. Furthermore, parents need to have the ability to voice their opinions and be heard. Currently, school boards make the decisions, and although parents may protest, they have no true power in this situation. With marketing towards children being included at school, a place they do not often share with their parents, their caretakers deserve to have their opinion known and some influence with the decisions.

Incentive programs are good in that they encourage children to learn, however, it is not appropriate to reward them with unhealthy foods. Also, it teaches children to be extrinsically motivated. Instead, if incentive programs are truly needed, children should be rewarded with things such as books, extra computer time, extra recess time, etc. Companies can still sponsor such items; for example, a company could pay for books to be used as an incentive, or reward a class with high test scores with playground equipment. Efforts such as these will teach children that learning is its own reward. To achieve this, schools can propose a code of ethics that the companies must adhere to in order to obtain a business partnership.

Money is not the educator of children, and is not the only answer to giving students the resources they need for a good education. It has been seen time and again that the

\textsuperscript{89} Consumers Union's Education Services Department 1993
relationship between spending is weak when it comes to school improvement.\textsuperscript{90} We need to place more importance on instructional approaches, proper leadership, and an atmosphere conducive to learning. Ethics has a place in marketing, especially when concerning children, because it impacts their lives.\textsuperscript{91} Also, if a school is in need of revenue and decides that creating business partnerships that allow for advertising within school in any form, teachers need to discuss this with their students. Teachers should be required to educate students about advertising and to help them develop critical thinking skills not only when it comes to subjects in the required curriculum, but about marketing. Children need to know that there are other options available than the brands shown and promoted within school, they should be encouraged to make healthy choices when it comes to diet – this is especially important when food and beverage advertisements or endorsements are displayed on campus in any form. They should be informed of puffery, so that they do not take copy from advertisements as facts. Also, laws should be in place so that teachers can keep this privilege. It is possible for teachers to educate children about advertising tactics without specifically disparaging the brands who pay to be promoted at schools (to do so would be unethical).

Regulation should help to improve upon the negative consequences of marketing in schools, coupled with active parents and teachers who initiate discussion. Although public schools not having to make business partnerships would be ideal, it is not feasible in the current financial atmosphere to do so without risking quality and standard of education.

\textsuperscript{90} Grubb, W. Norton, and Rebecca Allen 2010, p. 121
\textsuperscript{91} Nantel and Weeks 1996, p. 15
7. References


United States Department of Education, Dear Colleague letter, 26 Oct. 2010


