



November 28, 2010

Mr. T. Willard Fair, Chairman  
State Board of Education  
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 1520  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Chairman Fair:

I want to start off by thanking you and your fellow Board Members of the Florida Board of Education for your service to the citizens of this State. Our system of government functions so effectively because of Floridians answering the call to serve and for that I want to express my gratitude.

Recently I was elected to serve as the next Commissioner of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). I am excited about this opportunity to champion programs and policies that improve the quality of life for Florida's citizens. One such area that I look forward to tackling is ensuring that Florida's students have better nutrition options to reduce obesity and related long-term health risks. This is a topic your Board has discussed recently for possible policy recommendations. However, instead of looking at the entire nutrition intake of students, you have chosen to focus only on the nutrition content in beverages served in Florida schools. It is my belief that any nutrition improvement plan needs to be certain that students are receiving the best possible nutrition package, in concert with total wellness initiatives, to allow them to reach their optimum achievement potential. I believe in this approach so much that I campaigned on doing what other states have done, and that is transferring the school feeding programs into FDACS, with a goal of improved nutrition and the development of better lifelong eating habits. First steps would be to take a comprehensive look at current school foodservice offerings, rather than making individual product recommendations that do not address the broader health picture. This comprehensive approach will need time to develop and I would appreciate your Board considering delaying any plans to address just a single component of the nutrition factors and instead allow time for a complete approach to building a healthier generation of Florida students.

I look forward to working with you and your fellow Board members on this important issue. I know that by working together we will develop a system that will set our students on a healthier lifestyle. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me and again, thank you for your service to the school children of the State of Florida.

Sincerely,

Adam H. Putnam,  
Commissioner-Elect

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

cc: Florida Board of Education Members