The Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation recently distributed printed copies of their first edition of Iowa Ag Today to all elementary schools. The publication is targeted at the 4th and 5th grade level, however schools can determine what grade it would work best with. If you are interested in additional copies, please e-mail info@iowaagliteracy.org. There are a limited number left. Please take advantage of this great resource! Click here.

February is a time to celebrate the ones we love, but don’t forget to give your own heart some extra love during American Heart Month. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. Your heart is the key to your health today and tomorrow. Know our heart health numbers (blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels) and what they mean. Healthy food choices and an active lifestyle can have a big impact!

No more frozen pizza sales? No more cookie dough? No more Thin Mints®* cookies? Not necessarily. All fundraising activities that take place outside of school are exempt from Smart Snack Standards.

Sale of frozen pizza, cookie dough and other items preordered and distributed in a precooked state or in bulk quantities (multiple servings in a package) for consumption at home is not required to meet the standards and can be sold during the school day. For example, boxes of preordered Girl Scout cookies intended for consumption at home would not be subject to the standards. Click here.

Looking for some great ideas? Click here for ideas like a heart healthy exercise board, teacher heart attack and red smoothies.
Parent and Student Nutrition Class
Cedar Rapids CSD Food Service Director, Suzy Ketelsen, worked with her assistant, Amanda Brown and Diane Duncan-Goldsmith from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to hold a nutrition class at Taft Middle School during the school day where parents were invited to attend with their child. The class provided parents and students the opportunity to learn about the school meal nutrition standards, taste test some new menu items and give feedback on school meals. Some of the items featured included whole grain pizza and sweet potato salad. The class provided a great platform to discuss school meals and they plan to utilize the feedback by incorporating popular items taste tested into the menu. For more information: sketelsen@cr.k12.ia.us

Indianola Community Youth Foundation
Indianola Community Youth Foundation created banners to promote healthy eating habits and good character. The banners are rotated through the elementary school buildings and feature seniors who were nominated by their coaches as individuals who demonstrate excellent leadership skills and are great teammates. What an easy and cool idea! Other ideas include featuring members of band, choir, FFA, debate, student council and even teachers! Click here

Vegetable Anarchy
Molly Schintler is currently serving as a FoodCorps member with the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative. As a service member she works with K-12 graders teaching nutrition and garden education. She has written a blog about her experience teaching and how her goal to “change the world” in one school year has faced many moments of defeat. For anyone that has a passion for child wellness, take a minute to read her blog, “Vegetable Anarchy.” It provides a refreshing perspective on moving in the right direction!

“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.”
Robert Louis Stevenson

Upcoming Webinar Opportunities!

Let’s Get Physical! - Feb. 18 - 3:30-4:30
Engage brains with physical activity. Learn ideas for increasing physical activity for students before, during and after school. There is a growing body of evidence indicating that physical activity and fitness benefit BOTH health and academic achievement. This webinar will give examples and ideas for promoting physical activity opportunities. Click here to register!

Fresh Conversations - Feb. 25 - 2:00-3:00
Need a refresher on topics related to school breakfast, lunch, Smart Snacks and your Wellness Policy? This webinar is a great opportunity to learn more about recent memos, hear some fresh ideas to try at your school, and a convenient time to ask questions. Click here to register!
The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at
http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

It is the policy of the Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX, Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973), and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515-281-5295; or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, telephone number 312/730-1560, fax 312/730-1576, or email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.