



Pushback: What to Expect and How to Power Through

At some point in your food education journey, you will encounter people who do not believe or understand the critical importance of food literacy education being a part of children's schooling. Some people are afraid of asking schools to take on more responsibility. Others believe food is a personal choice and should be left for parents to decide and still others are skeptical that education can make a difference.

Whatever the reason, it is vital that school wellness champions not be discouraged when meeting resistance to this work. **It is important to listen and acknowledge resistance and to try to understand its genesis.** Some key steps for managing pushback include:

Listen to understand why certain people (or groups) are not responding to or supporting your efforts. *Reasons for lack of buy-in include:*

- Needing more information
- Feeling disconnected from the initiative – ensure that your programs are inclusive and culturally sensitive.
 - Do you require: language translation, outreach for working parents, communication with guardians apart from parents, outreach to non-traditional members of the school staff – school safety, crossing guards, etc.

Strategies for gaining support:

- ➔ **Identify your key supporters.** Connect with likeminded parents. It is usually easy to find folks who believe in this work. With permission from the school, consider posting a table with flyers and information about food literacy efforts. During pick up or drop off, gather names, chat with potential helpmates.
- ➔ **Promote success stories.** If the PTA is amenable, consider creating a wellness bulletin board to celebrate faculty, parents, teachers, classrooms and students who are doing great work.
- ➔ **Start small but celebrate big:** Go after the low hanging fruit. What can you do to make a difference? Eliminate chocolate milk from lunch or apple juice from snack? Create a water challenge. See which classroom can drink the most water and fill the bucket? Whatever your goal, make sure to highlight your success so that all school members can catch the enthusiasm and excitement.
- ➔ **Get the word out:** Write an article for a school newsletter, use our FF flyers or posters to promote an activity, ask the PTO or PTA to announce participation at meetings, write an article for a local press or media outlet, write letters to elected school or local officials, contact local radio or T.V. stations to feature a story.