



## **Toolkit: Organizing in your community to end McTeacher's Nights**

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### **How to use this toolkit**

Thank you for downloading this toolkit! Whether you've taken action with us already and told McDonald's to stop McTeacher's Nights, spoken with one of our organizers one-on-one, or stumbled across this on our website, we're glad you're here. People like you are exactly who we need to transform the food system and kick junk food marketing and fast food corporations out of our schools.

This toolkit is designed to give you the materials you need to introduce and pass a resolution calling for an end to McTeacher's Nights in your local education community. You can pass a resolution through your local or state teachers union, move your Parent Teacher Association to stop McTeacher's Nights, or even organize your district Board of Education to pass a policy stopping the practice—the most binding and enforceable way to stop McDonald's marketing in schools.

We are here to support you on questions, advice, additional materials, and anything else! Just email [Info@CorporateAccountability.org](mailto:Info@CorporateAccountability.org) or call 617-695-2525 and ask to speak with an organizer on our food campaign. We're happy to walk you through the toolkit, fill in the gaps, and help you make a winning plan.

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## 1. Why McTeacher's Nights?

Corporate Accountability's food campaign demands that McDonald's and other giant food corporations end their abuses from seed to plate. We organize to champion children's health, support workers' rights, and protect the environment. We know a more sustainable food system is both necessary and possible, and you can play an active role in creating it.

McDonald's is at the rotten core of our broken food system: No entity has done more to shape today's industrial agriculture system. And its empire is built on marketing to kids—and to communities of color in particular.

In fact, for the last 50 years, McDonald's predatory marketing to children has manufactured unparalleled demand for its burgers, fries, and soda. From McTeacher's Nights to Happy Meals, McDonald's aggressive, targeted marketing undermines and circumvents parental authority.

At McTeacher's Nights, McDonald's recruits teachers to "work" behind the counter at local stores, serving junk food to their students to raise money for their often systemically underfunded schools. In the process, McTeacher's Nights often displace McDonald's own workers who depend on the income from these shifts. Teachers themselves are put in an awful position. If they participate in McTeacher's Nights, they are leveraging their authority and popularity with students to promote a junk food brand. On the other hand, if they refuse to participate, they may be seen as undermining a school fundraiser.

These events are designed to give students and families the impression that junk food has teachers' stamp of approval. They undermine the valuable work that parents, teachers, and administrators do to promote healthy habits for children.

The kicker? Schools often keep as little as 10 percent of the evening's earnings—while McDonald's gets the kind of marketing money can't buy. Meanwhile, children and communities, particularly communities of color, are saddled with the health consequences.

That's why, in partnership with educators, teachers unions, allied organizations, and members like you, Corporate Accountability is organizing to end McTeacher's Nights.

In fact, since we launched this call in 2015, more than 30,000 people and over 50 teachers unions have demanded an end to McTeacher's Nights. The California Federation of Teachers, which represents more than 120,000 education employees across the state, passed a resolution to end the practice. And Los Angeles Unified School District—the second-largest school district in the U.S.—became the first in the nation to pass a policy stopping McTeacher's Nights.

In 2018, educator and former McDonald's store manager Karlana Kulseth attended McDonald's annual shareholders' meeting to directly speak with the corporation's executives about McTeacher's Nights. Afterwards, she said, "My message is clear: Stop taking advantage of children and their families. Stop taking advantage of educators and the community. Stop utilizing this abusive practice of 'fundraising' through free labor that results in high profits."

Now it's your turn. Every teachers union and school district that joins this campaign builds visibility and pressure on McDonald's, toward an end to McTeacher's Nights once and for all. Together, we can protect countless future generations from the epidemic of diet-related disease, and create the opportunity for a truly nourishing, sustainable food system to take root.

## 2. Steps for passing a Stop McTeacher's Nights resolution

Step 1: Determine the organization or institution you will engage to pass the resolution.

- This could be your local or state teachers union, your local PTA or PTO, your school board or district Board of Education, or something else. Give us a call and we'll help you brainstorm and decide what makes sense in your community.

Step 2: Power map leaders of your identified partner organization or institution to determine the best strategy to pass a resolution to stop McTeacher's Nights.

(What is "power mapping"? See Section 3).

- You may already have access to some members of the institution. If so, get started reaching out to them right away. If not, take this step to figure out how you can best reach them.
- Find a champion. Based on your research and outreach, identify the best person to introduce and champion the resolution (meaning they'll partner with you to pass it and organize support from their peers). For example, in the case of unions or PTAs, a board member can often bring the resolution forward at a monthly meeting of the board.
- Follow the steps in Section 3 to brainstorm tactics to move your target institution to pass the resolution.

Step 3: Organize!

- Create a draft of a resolution (see the samples in Section 5) with all of the specifics of your local education community. Make sure you share this draft with your identified partner institution.
- Build grassroots support for your resolution. See Sections 6, 7, and 8 for tools like sample calling scripts, email templates, visual aids, and a letter to the editor training.

Step 4: Follow up, follow up ... and follow up.

- As the old adage says, 90 percent of organizing is follow-up. These days, many people don't respond to emails or voicemails—not because they don't care or aren't interested, but just because they are busy! Don't be deterred by a lack of response; pick up the phone and follow up.
  - For example, if you ask someone to call their board of education member's office, follow up with them a few days later to ensure they've done it.
- Depending on the institution's process, the resolution might need to be approved by vote at a hearing or meeting. Keep abreast of where the resolution is in the process, and organize community members to take supportive actions like testifying in favor of the resolution at a hearing.

Step 5: Celebrate and amplify your victory!

- Let us know when you win! (See info below.) We'll help raise media visibility, and our members and activists across the country will help keep the heat on McDonald's.
- Amplify your victory through letters to the editor from community members, tailored messages for the media, and letters to McDonald's franchisees from leaders of the institution.
  - See samples and trainings for these actions in Sections 7 and 9.

Step 6: Escalate.

- If your local teachers union passed a resolution to stop McTeacher's Nights, work with them to get support from the state union, or to pass a policy through the school district. Every victory builds a foundation for the next one, so let's keep the pressure on until McDonald's is out of schools once and for all!

We're here to support you throughout the process. Give us a call at 617-695-2525 or email [Info@CorporateAccountability.org](mailto:Info@CorporateAccountability.org) anytime.

### 3. Power mapping an institution or public figure

Power mapping is a helpful exercise to learn more about a decision-maker, decipher who has influence over them, and identify ways to engage with those people to ultimately move them to support a resolution or policy. The core idea is to identify who has the decision-making power for your school board, teachers union, PTA, etc., and figure out how you can reach them effectively.

#### How to power map

- 1) **Identify your key institutional influencer:** the person who has the power to make the decision that will win your campaign.
  - a) For a resolution to stop McTeacher's Nights, this will likely be a leader (or leaders) of your town or state's teachers union, the local PTA, the board of education, or other decision-making body in your education system.
- 2) **Research who has influence over your institutional decision-maker.** Be a creative researcher. Think about the constituencies this person is accountable to. For elected officials, look for their donors, committees they serve on, other appointments they hold, their past voting records, political endorsers, institutions, media outlets that the decision-maker reads, family, organizations that also work in education, etc.
  - a) To learn more about their network and influencers: Check OpenSecrets.org, LittleSis.org, and their LinkedIn.
  - b) To learn more about the issues they focus on and groups they work with: Check social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter), local news coverage, and official union/PTA/school board website.
- 3) **Evaluate those people/organizations** based on how influential they are and how much of a priority they are to your influencer.
  - Who on your list are most influential to your influencer?
  - Who are likely to be with us and who likely against us? Who or what groups are the most influential to them?
- 4) **Decide who to organize** from your list above, considering who's most influential and who you have access to.
  - a) Also consider: Who could we gain access to and move to be on our side? (If you aren't sure, **be bold!** You may be surprised who says yes.)
- 5) **Finally, develop your campaign strategies and tactics.** Create these based on who you need to move, the best avenues for influence, and your ability to accomplish them. Sample tactics include:
  - a) Get 20 phone calls and emails into your decision-maker's office from concerned parents, students, teachers, and their other supporters.
  - b) Build a coalition of groups (like parent or student organizations) most influential to your decision-maker and create a joint public letter.
  - c) Garner media visibility for the campaign through letters to the editor and other opinion/editorial pieces in local papers authored by influential people, if your decision-maker is concerned about their public image.
  - d) Hold a few delegation meetings between your decision-maker and representatives from groups that endorsed and support them.

- e) Coordinate a social media campaign tagging your identified decision-maker and asking them to support the resolution.
- f) Something(s) else!

You can also brainstorm with a few friends or members of your circle to determine the best tactics and get other perspectives. And of course, we're always ready to support you.

#### 4. Stop McTeacher's Nights talking points

Use these to help you talk to your community and with decision-makers about why you're calling for an end to McTeacher's Nights.

**McTeacher's Nights are a thinly veiled marketing tactic that exploits the student-teacher relationship solely to benefit the corporation.**

- At McTeacher's Nights, McDonald's exploits school funding gaps by having teachers "work" behind the counters of a local McDonald's in exchange for a small percentage of the night's proceeds. McDonald's leans on teachers and schools to recruit students and families to attend the events where trusted teachers serve students burgers, fries, and soda under the ill-deserved guise of charity.
- McTeacher's Nights put teachers in a terrible position. Teachers see the results of the systemic underfunding of our public schools firsthand, and are among the first in their school community to initiate fundraising events to support their students. If they participate in McTeacher's Nights, they are leveraging their authority and popularity with students, endorsing a junk food brand, and selling students on unhealthy food. On the other hand, if they refuse to participate, they may be accused of undermining a school fundraiser.

**McTeacher's Nights often deny McDonald's workers direly needed shifts, and give little back to schools.**

- At many McTeacher's Nights, a number of McDonald's employees are told they cannot work that night shift because educators are volunteering their time to do their jobs<sup>1</sup>.
  - Denying workers direly needed shifts and wages is part of a broader set of abusive labor practices from McDonald's.
    - McDonald's pays workers poverty wages and denies workers the right to unionize.
    - McDonald's workers often rely on government assistance programs like food stamps simply to survive.
    - In May of 2018, 10 female workers filed sexual harassment lawsuits against McDonald's<sup>2</sup>.
- McTeacher's Nights operate under the guise of charity but give only a small percentage of nightly proceeds to participating schools.
  - Schools typically receive only 15 to 20 percent of the proceeds on average, often amounting to only \$1-2 per student<sup>3</sup>. At times schools receive as little as 10 percent of the proceeds<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.corporateaccountability.org/blog/educator-karlana-kulseth-mcdonalds-shareholders-meeting/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mcdonalds-sexual-harassment-eeoc/workers-hit-mcdonalds-with-new-sexual-harassment-claims-idUSKCN1IN2W2>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.eatdrinkpolitics.com/2013/10/29/clowning-around-with-charity-how-mcdonalds-exploits-philanthropy-and-targets-children/>

<sup>4</sup> Multiple instances tracked including: <https://www.facebook.com/HuntersGreenElementary/photos/a.622459107786939/1161857860513725/?type=3&theater>; ; <https://www.cross-countiesconnect.com/2018/01/a-night-at-the-golden-arches/> (accessed October 11, 2018)

- While McDonald's receives free labor and the kind of marketing money can't buy, schools receive a comparatively negligible amount of money. And students and their families end up footing the bill of diet-related diseases.

**Marketing junk food in schools directly undermines the work of teachers working in the best interest of their students, especially when this marketing of junk food is having a devastating impact on children's health, driving an epidemic of diet-related diseases.**

- The current generation of children may be the first with a shorter life expectancy than its parents, as a direct result of diet<sup>5</sup>.

**[YOUR TOWN] can join more than 50 teachers unions and school districts that are leading the largest public call to date for McDonald's to end McTeacher's Nights.**

- Education institutions that are calling on McDonald's to end McTeacher's Nights can be found [here](#).

## FAQs

### **How common are McTeacher's Nights?**

- Corporate Accountability and the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood have tracked more than 1000 instances over the past few years, but it is estimated that more than 1000 McTeacher's Nights occur per year at McDonald's corporate-owned stores alone.*

### **Don't schools need these fundraisers?**

- First and foremost, we should fully fund public education. McTeacher's Nights and other junk food fundraisers are symptoms of a system where corporations exploit school funding shortfalls to promote their brands. It's exploitation, not charity. Moreover, McTeacher's Nights are extremely poor fundraisers. Schools typically receive only 15 to 20 percent of the proceeds from the night. Schools could do much better with tried and true alternatives that promote individual schools' parent, student, and teacher organizations.*

### **Why McTeacher's Nights/McDonald's? Don't other corporations host such fundraisers?**

- Not only is McDonald's the most prolific marketer of fast food to children, but it is one of the few corporations that actively recruits educators to "work" behind the counter, exploiting the trust students place in their teachers in order to sell and promote its junk food to their students and students' families. This is unconscionable and it needs to stop.*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmsr043743#t=article> (accessed October 11, 2018)

## 5. Sample resolution to Stop McTeacher's Nights

Whereas all people have the right to access healthy, nourishing food,

Whereas [UNION/PTA/SCHOOL BOARD] has a strong interest in protecting and promoting the health of our students, and fostering environments that nurture and nourish our children,

Whereas an escalating epidemic of chronic diet-related diseases increasingly threatens the health of children,

Whereas corporations like McDonald's and Coca-Cola that sell processed foods and beverages high in sugar, salt, and fat directly contribute to the rise in diet-related diseases by spending billions of dollars on marketing these products,

Whereas children are uniquely susceptible to corporate marketing because their brains are still developing, they do not understand the persuasive intent of marketing, and they cannot differentiate it from other messages,

Whereas the American Academy of Pediatrics believes "advertising directed toward children is inherently deceptive and exploits children under age eight,"

Whereas partnerships between junk food corporations and health and education institutions erode public health by giving these brands an undeserved association with health and wellness,

Whereas junk food marketing in schools is particularly harmful because children are a captive audience,

Whereas the marketing of McDonald's-style junk food in schools has eroded the school food environment and teaches children the wrong lessons about nutrition,

Whereas it is wrong to exploit trusted institutions like schools and the student-teacher relationship to market junk food to children,

Whereas a growing movement of educators, parents, and health professionals are demanding an end to McDonald's exploitative marketing tactics including McTeacher's Nights.

**Resolved** that [UNION/PTA/SCHOOL BOARD] publicly denounces the "McTeacher's Nights" marketing program that McDonald's uses to promote its brand and make teachers "work" in their stores at a "fundraiser."

**Resolved** that [UNION/PTA/SCHOOL BOARD LEADERSHIP] will write a letter to local McDonald's franchisees and McDonald's CEO demanding a swift and immediate end to this exploitative marketing program.

**[For teachers unions] Resolved** that [UNION] will stand with teachers' unions across the country including the National Education Association (NEA) and more than 50 state and local affiliates of NEA and the American Federation of Teachers in stopping the exploitative advertising tactics and support publicly the campaign to Stop McTeacher's Nights.

**Further Resolved** that [UNION] will urge our state and national affiliates to follow suit and pass similar policies stopping McTeacher's Nights.



**[For School Districts] Resolved** that [SCHOOL BOARD] will direct all principals, educators, PTAs and affiliate staff to cease all participation in McTeacher's Nights.

## 6. Sample materials for outreach to decision-makers

Grassroots support from a decision-maker's constituents makes a big impact, particularly on local campaigns. These sample materials can help you get started organizing support to move a local decision-maker to become a champion to stop McTeacher's Nights.

Ask your friends, colleagues, and network to each send an email like the one below. You can fill in the DECISION-MAKER'S NAME sections with school board member Smith, PTA President Smith, Union President Smith, or whomever you have chosen as your identified decision-maker, community leader, or influencer.

Tip: If you're part of any listservs or email groups, ask the group to send out an email to everyone on the list, asking them to take the action.

You can also ask folks to call the office of your decision-maker or community leader. Leaders in elected positions like school board members and PTA leadership often give more weight to phone calls than emails, especially from constituents. (Make sure you add in the specifics of the resolution or policy, including its official number if it has already been introduced.)

### Sample email

Subject: Stop junk food marketing in [YOUR TOWN]

[DECISION-MAKER'S NAME],

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I live in \_\_\_\_\_. I am writing because I care about the health of our district's children, and because [YOUR TOWN] is in a position right now to end a particularly egregious form of fast-food marketing to kids: junk food marketing in schools.

We are in the midst of a diet-related health crisis, one that increasingly affects our children. Fast food corporations like McDonald's exploit children's vulnerabilities through sophisticated marketing tactics designed to turn them into potentially lifelong customers at a young age. This harmful marketing is driving an epidemic of childhood obesity and diet-related diseases like Type 2 diabetes, which disproportionately affects Black and brown children.

At so-called "McTeacher's Nights," McDonald's has teachers work behind the counter at a local McDonald's, serving burgers, fries, and soda to students and their families for a paltry percentage of profits from the night. Not only is it wrong to exploit teachers' authority and popularity to lure kids to McDonald's, but events like McTeacher's Nights are also poor fundraisers, with schools often receiving as little as 10 percent of the proceeds of a given night.

[You can insert a paragraph here about why this is important to your town specifically.]

**I urge you to support the resolution to end McTeacher's Nights and harmful junk food marketing sponsorships in [YOUR TOWN'S] schools.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Best,

YOUR NAME

### **Sample phone call**

*Tip: Encourage folks to speak from the heart and add their own reasons why they support an end to McTeacher's Nights.*

Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I live at \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling today because I care about the health of children in [YOUR TOWN'S] schools, and I know [DECISION-MAKER'S NAME] does too. I'm urging [DECISION-MAKER'S NAME] to protect our children's health and put an end to harmful junk food marketing tactics in our schools, like so-called "McTeacher's Nights." At McTeacher's Nights, McDonald's has teachers work behind the counter selling its harmful fast food to students and students' families. That's just wrong!

I'm calling to ask [DECISION-MAKER'S NAME] to support [RESOLUTION/POLICY NUMBER], demanding an end to McTeacher's Nights. Our district's students and families look forward to your leadership on this crucial issue.

## 7. Writing a letter to the editor

Letters to the editor (LTEs) of your local newspaper are a great way to raise the visibility of critical issues and upcoming or recent events, and educate members of your own community. They're also important to local elected officials, who monitor them to see what issues their community members are concerned about.

You can use LTEs to raise visibility and publicly encourage a decision-maker to support the resolution in your town. Or, you can use LTEs to amplify a victory!

### How to write a letter to the editor

- 1) Find out how to submit letters to the editor to your local paper.
  - Usually it's via a simple form on the paper's webpage or an email to the editor.
- 2) Keep it short (150-175 words maximum).
- 3) Make only one main point.
- 4) Personalize it.
  - For instance, mention your role as a parent or teacher, your role in your community, or simply why you care about the issue.
- 5) LTEs more often get published when they're responding explicitly to a previously published article in the news outlet you're submitting to. (For instance, you could cite a recent story about your school system, McDonald's, or junk food.)
- 6) End your letter with a call to action (e.g., calling on your target to pass a resolution to stop McTeacher's Nights).
- 7) Include your name, address, email address, and phone number below the letter.
- 8) Call the paper to confirm that they received your letter, asking when it's likely to be printed (best done one day after you submit your letter).
- 9) Monitor your news outlet until your letter is printed, and email a copy of it to us at Corporate Accountability: [Info@CorporateAccountability.org](mailto:Info@CorporateAccountability.org).

## 8. Organizing materials

# Stop McTeacher's Nights!



Students and activists deliver petitions calling for an end to McTeacher's Nights at McDonald's annual shareholders' meeting.

## It's time to end marketing in schools

### WHAT ARE MCTEACHER'S NIGHTS?

"McTeacher's Nights" are a marketing tool for McDonald's that are masqueraded as fundraisers for schools. McDonald's has teachers and school administrators "work" for free behind McDonald's store counters. They serve burgers, fries, and sugary drinks to their students and their students' families. As a result, often McDonald's workers are denied much-needed shift hours. McDonald's contributes only a small percentage of the events' proceeds to schools—as little as \$1 per student.

These events are part of a comprehensive marketing strategy that McDonald's has developed to target children in schools, as well as part of its abusive labor practices that keep workers in poverty.

McTeacher's Nights take place in communities across the country. Corporate Accountability and Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood have documented

more than 1,000 McTeacher's Night events in more than 40 states since 2013. We believe this is just the tip of the iceberg.

### WHAT'S WRONG WITH MCTEACHER'S NIGHTS?

During McTeacher's Nights, McDonald's exploits cash-strapped schools to market its brand and its fast food to children, while denying workers direly needed shifts. The events encourage students to eat junk food, undermining the hard work that parents, teachers, and administrators do to promote healthy habits for children.

And at McTeacher's Nights, McDonald's workers are often denied much-needed shifts—and wages—when educators are brought in for the night. It's all part of McDonald's abusive labor practices. Many workers need every shift they can get because the corporation pays poverty wages, denies them the right to unionize, and gives them irregular hours through last-minute shift scheduling. And the abuse is not just economic: in May 2018, ten women in nine different cities filed sexual harassment lawsuits against McDonald's.



More than 50 teachers unions, representing millions of educators from around the country, are calling on McDonald's to end McTeacher's Nights.

### WHO IS ORGANIZING TO END MCTEACHER'S NIGHTS?

Hundreds of thousands of people and organizations are sending a strong message to McDonald's: End McTeacher's Nights. They include: The National Education Association, more than 50 state and local teachers unions across the United States; and more than 30,000 individual educators, school nurses, parents, health advocates, and concerned community members across the country. To see a full list of teachers unions and advocacy organizations that oppose McTeacher's Nights, see our open letter to McDonald's CEO Steve Easterbrook at [www.bit.ly/mctletter](http://www.bit.ly/mctletter).

### WHO HAS SIGNED?



... and more than 50 state and local teacher unions!

### HEALTHY SCHOOL FUNDRAISER ALTERNATIVES

There are many alternatives to junk food fundraisers that don't jeopardize kids' health or displace workers. Here are just a few options that are more fun for students and educators—and they often bring in more resources for schools:

- **Hold a school carnival:** While a well-executed carnival will take some time and planning, the benefits are many: building school spirit, helping students develop skills, and successful fundraising.
- **Host a trivia or quiz night:** With a charming emcee (you know, that teacher) and great questions, a trivia night can be an easy and fun fundraiser. Charge admission at the door and offer a prize for the winning team.
- **Hold a plant sale:** Talk to local nurseries about donations.
- **Host a fun run:** Raise money while encouraging physical activity.
- **Hold a craft sale:** Have crafts donated, or even better, sell what kids make.
- **Host a students vs. teachers basketball or baseball game:** Charge admission for students and families.

### MORE RESOURCES:

Sweet Deals: School Fundraising Can Be Healthy and Profitable (Center for Science in the Public Interest).

Healthy Fundraising Success Stories (Center for Science in the Public Interest).

Promote Good Health While Raising Money for Schools (PEW Charitable Trusts).

Best Practices for Healthy School Fundraisers (USDA).





**McDONALD'S:**  
**We're**

**#NotLovinIt**

***Stop McTeacher's Nights!***



**CEO Easterbrook,**

**McTeacher's Nights exploit cash-strapped schools and abuse the trust between students and teachers, all for mere pennies on the dollar for the schools. Teachers want to teach, not hawk junk food to their students and their students' families. Already, more than 50 teachers unions, representing over three million educators, have called for an end to McTeacher's Nights. And last year the second-largest school district in the country, Los Angeles Unified School District, banned the events.**

**Enough is enough. Millions of educators have made it clear that McDonald's has no place in our schools. You must heed this call and end all marketing in schools once and for all, starting with McTeacher's Nights.**

| Name | Phone | Email | Yes, I want to take action! |
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| Name | Phone | Email | Yes, I want to take action! |
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## 9. Amplification materials

Congrats! You passed your resolution. It's time to celebrate and amplify. Social media is a great way to get the word out that the resolution passed and educate more people about McTeacher's Nights. But McDonald's executives may not get the message from social media alone, so it's important to let them know about this victory from a leader of the institution that passed the resolution itself. Raising the visibility of wins like this and getting the message in front of McDonald's executives both encourages more institutions to pass similar resolutions and chips away at McDonald's stranglehold on schools.

Below are some tools to help spread the word and make sure McDonald's gets the message: Stop McTeacher's Nights! You'll find sample social media posts, and sample letters to McDonald's CEO and to PTAs and school presidents in your district that teachers unions can use once they pass the resolution. As always, reach out to us at 617-695-2525 or [info@CorporateAccountability.org](mailto:info@CorporateAccountability.org) for more ways to amplify.

### Social media

Sample tweets:

Victory: .@[UNION NAME] is taking action for children's health and rejecting McTeacher's Nights! #StopMcTeachersNights

.@[UNIONNAME] just joined the more than 50 unions and 30,000 people calling for an end to McDonald's predatory marketing practice of #McTeachersNights!

Wake up call to @McDonalds to stop marketing to students: @[UNIONNAME] voted to protect kids' health and #StopMcTeachersNights! [LINK to LTE, any media coverage]

Sample Facebook posts:

Did you know McDonald's is using teachers to lure children into their restaurants? McTeacher's Nights, where teachers "work" behind the counter, is a marketing ploy disguised as a school fundraiser. That's why we've joined a growing call demanding that McDonald's end this practice and passed a resolution stopping McTeacher's Nights in [TOWN/DISTRICT]. Check it out! [Link to LTE, any media coverage, the resolution language itself]

### Sample letter to McDonald's from institution

[Institution letterhead]

[Month Day, Year]

Steve Easterbrook  
CEO  
McDonald's  
1045 W Randolph Street  
Chicago, IL 60607

Dear CEO Steve Easterbrook:

On behalf of the [UNION/GROUP] and the more than [insert NUMBER of educators/parents/community members (SELECT ONE)] we represent, I am writing to demand you end the promotion of McTeacher's Nights in [LOCATION (can be state, town, municipality, etc.)].

As [EDUCATORS/PARENTS/SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS], nothing matters more to us than the lives of our students. Yet across the country and in [insert LOCATION], McDonald's is exploiting our schools and teachers to market its unhealthy fare to children. Of the many tactics you use to target children in schools, perhaps none is more egregious than McTeacher's Nights, where teachers are asked to work behind the counter of local McDonald's stores and sell fast food to their own students and students' families.

On this [DATE], the [UNION/GROUP] passed a resolution denouncing these thinly-veiled marketing events. Here are some of the critical reasons why:

1. **We are in the midst of a health crisis, one that increasingly affects our children.**  
The predatory marketing of fast food to children is driving an epidemic of childhood obesity and diet-related diseases like Type 2 diabetes, which disproportionately affects Black and brown children.
2. **It is wrong to exploit teachers' authority and popularity to lure kids to McDonald's.**  
As educators, we know how impressionable children are and how important it is to care for children and teach them the right lessons from a young age. When McDonald's makes teachers "work" behind store counters, it sends the wrong message, and exploits the trust between teachers and students to promote junk food.
3. **McTeacher's Nights are ineffective fundraisers.** They often raise as little as \$1 per student. Schools receive as little as 10 percent of the proceeds of an event, while McDonald's pockets the rest.

Educators should not have to choose between school resources today and the health of students tomorrow. By passing this resolution, the full membership of [UNION/GROUP] expresses a united position opposing McTeacher's Nights. We have urged our members to reject McTeacher's Nights if approached in their schools and to engage their principals and parent-teacher associations about the negative consequences of these events. We join millions of educators, parents and health professionals in demanding an end to this egregious practice.

Simply put, it is inappropriate for McDonald's corporate, its franchisees, and operators to continue exploiting our teachers for marketing gain. Mr. Easterbrook, we insist that in your capacity as CEO, you immediately retire the "McTeacher's Nights" promotional event within [insert LOCATION]. We further request that you provide written communication of this new policy to all franchisees and operators within [insert LOCATION].

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your full compliance with our request, and we hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert YOUR SIGNATURE]

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert YOUR TITLE]

### **Sample letter to PTA/school principal from teachers union**

[Institution letterhead]

[Month Day, Year]

[Recipient Name]

[Title]

[School Name]

[Street Address]

[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear [PTA LEADERSHIP/SCHOOL PRINCIPAL]:

We understand that as parents, educators, and community members of [PTA NAME] you value and prioritize the health and well-being of our students and work every day to make [SCHOOL DISTRICT] better. And as educators in [UNION], nothing matters more to us than the lives of our students. Yet across the country and in [LOCATION], fast food and soda corporations are using our schools for predatory marketing practices aimed at our children.

That's why [UNION/DISTRICT] is proud to join in solidarity with the more than fifty education organizations across the country in rejecting one of McDonald's most exploitative marketing schemes: McTeacher's Nights.

On [DATE], the [UNION/DISTRICT] passed a resolution to reject McTeacher's Nights. Billed as "fundraising events," McDonald's enlists teachers and school administrators to wear branded T-shirts and work behind the counter, serving McDonald's fast food to students. While McDonald's gets free labor and the kind of marketing money can't buy, children are left footing the bill for a lifetime of diet-related diseases.

Here are a few of the reasons we have decided to speak out against McTeacher's Nights:

1. **The predatory marketing of fast food to children is driving an epidemic of childhood obesity and diet-related diseases like Type 2 diabetes.** From putting playgrounds in stores to inventing one of the most recognizable corporate mascots in the world—Ronald McDonald—McDonald's has done more than any other junk food corporation to hook children on products high in fat, salt, and sugar. Like Big Tobacco, McDonald's marketing is driving a public health crisis—one that increasingly affects children.

2. **McTeacher's Nights exploit teachers.** It is wrong for corporations to use teachers to market to children. As educators, we know how impressionable children are, and how important it is to care for children and teach them the right lessons from a young age. When McDonald's enlists teachers to "work" behind store counters, it sends the wrong message. The corporation exploits the trust between teachers and students to promote its junk food.
3. **McTeacher's Nights are ineffective fundraisers.** Not only are McTeacher's Nights harmful for children's health, they are also poor fundraisers. McTeacher's Nights often raise as little as \$1 per student, a ridiculously small amount compared to the time teachers must spend participating and recruiting their students to attend.

It is wrong to exploit cash-strapped schools by essentially turning teachers into temp workers for McDonald's—a corporation notorious for miring its own workers in poverty.

McDonald's thinks it can exploit teachers' trust with their students, but we refuse to be complicit in McDonald's scheme. We urge you to reject McTeacher's Nights, refuse to host events if franchise owners approach you with these predatory marketing tactics disguised as charity, and educate your members about the harmful impacts of such junk food fundraisers on our children and community.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. We can also provide you with a list of healthy, alternative fundraisers that do not require teachers to market junk food to children.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert YOUR SIGNATURE]

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert YOUR TITLE]

## **SCHOOL MARKETING POLICY CHECKLIST**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The corporations that make up the food and beverage industry continue to target schools as venues in which to market their brands and products to children. Despite progress in recent years restricting junk food marketing to children through schools, the practice remains common because many school districts lack strong regulations, and because corporations exploit loopholes in the policies that exist. Among the most common and egregious practices are so-called “fundraisers” like McTeacher’s Nights, in which McDonald’s exploits school funding shortfalls to make teachers promote its brand and products—directly selling McDonald’s to their students. School districts can protect their students by passing strong policies that restrict marketing to kids and close the loopholes that corporations exploit to target children. Below are the elements necessary to ensure a strong policy.<sup>i</sup>

### **POLICY CHECKLIST**

- ☐ Does the policy prohibit advertising, promotion, and sponsorship by corporations that market, sell, or produce unhealthy foods and beverages?
- ☐ Does the policy prohibit advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of unhealthy foods and beverages and any associated brands?
- ☐ Does the policy to prohibit advertising, promotion, and sponsorship include the prohibition of branded fundraising?
- ☐ Does the policy apply to all schools and school personnel at all times (during and outside of school hours) and in all locations (on- and off-campus)?

### **RESOURCES**

- National Education Policy Center’s “Policy and Statutory Responses to Advertising and Marketing in Schools,”<sup>iii</sup> and “Promoting Consumption in School: Health Threats Associated with Schoolhouse Commercialism.”<sup>iii</sup>
- Corporate Accountability’s “Slowing Down Fast Food: A policy guide for healthier kids and families.”<sup>iv</sup>
- The Los Angeles Unified School District has strong Sponsorship Guidelines.<sup>v</sup>
- Minnesota workbook on developing a local school wellness policy.<sup>vi</sup>
- The State School Health Policy Database contains a list of laws and policies from all states on student health topics.<sup>vii</sup>
- The Center for Science in the Public Interest on supporting healthier snacks and beverage rules.<sup>viii</sup>

## **SCHOOL MARKETING POLICY: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS**

1. **The policy should prohibit advertising, promotion, and sponsorship by corporations that market, sell, or produce unhealthy foods and beverages.**

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <u>Rationale</u>       | The sponsor and the product are inexorably connected. For example, when McDonald’s promotes an event for a school district, and the school district responds, “Thanks to McDonald’s for the support,” McDonald’s products--such as Big Macs and its fries--are also promoted. By prohibiting advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of and by corporations like McDonald’s whose products are harmful, the school district avoids both helping McDonald’s to healthwash its brand and sending students the wrong message about health. |
| <u>Sample language</u> | “The District will not seek or accept advertising, promotion, or sponsorship from or by corporations that market, sell, or produce products that may be   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | harmful to children including, but not limited to, tobacco, alcohol, firearms, gambling, or high-fat and calorie-dense foods and drinks.” |
|--|---|

2. **The policy should (1) recognize that advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of a brand promotes products under that brand, and (2) prohibit any advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of brands associated with unhealthy foods and beverages.**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <u>Rationale</u>       | Corporations sidestep product marketing restrictions by promoting their brands rather than their products. In fact, studies have shown that fast food corporations often use brand promotions like toy giveaways, tie-ins to popular movies, and mascots to market to children rather than the food itself. <sup>ix</sup> But at the end of the day, the majority of McDonald’s sales still come from its staple products, so when a child enters a store, it is to order burgers and fries, not fruit and a salad. The best way to protect students is to restrict not only the marketing of unhealthy products but also of <i>brands</i> . |
| <u>Sample language</u> | “Because advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of a brand promote its associated products, any marketing of brands related to unhealthy foods and beverages is prohibited.”  |

3. **The policy should make clear that prohibiting advertising, promotion, and sponsorship includes the prohibition of branded fundraising of foods or beverages and their related brands.**

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <u>Rationale</u>       | A significant percentage of marketing in schools is disguised as “business partnerships with schools.” <sup>x</sup> In fact, corporations exploit school budget shortfalls by positioning partnerships and branded fundraising as solutions to increase sources of school funding. In doing so, the corporations gain an additional avenue through which to market to children. <sup>xi</sup> |
| <u>Sample language</u> | “The District will not seek or accept business partnerships for sponsorship, including branded fundraisers, from corporations that market, sell, or produce products that may be harmful to children including, but not limited to, tobacco, alcohol, firearms, gambling, or high-fat and calorie-dense foods and drinks.” <sup>xii</sup>   |

4. **The policy should extend to all schools and school personnel, at all times and in any location, in interactions and communications with students.**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <u>Rationale</u>       | Some school districts’ policies specify that fundraising rules apply only during school hours and on school premises. This leaves loopholes through which otherwise prohibited promotion and sponsorship, including branded fundraising, can take place. For example, one of the most egregious forms of marketing known as McTeacher’s Nights take place off-campus and outside of normal school hours. |
| <u>Sample language</u> | “The prohibition of advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of unhealthy foods and beverages and their related brands applies to all District personnel in their communications and interactions with students, on and off of school grounds and during and outside of school hours.”  |

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<sup>i</sup> This draft policy guide does not constitute legal advice and must be tailored to circumstances for specific use. Any action on the basis of this document should be taken in consultation with a legal professional.

<sup>ii</sup> <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/policy-and-statutory>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/schoolhouse-commercialism-2012>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.corporateaccountability.org/resources/slowing-down-fast-food-a-policy-guide-for-healthier-kids-and-families/>

<sup>v</sup> <http://my.lausd.net/webcenter/wccproxy/d?dID=38749>

<sup>vi</sup> [http://www.minneapolisnmn.gov/www/groups/public/@health/documents/webcontent/convert\\_253931.pdf](http://www.minneapolisnmn.gov/www/groups/public/@health/documents/webcontent/convert_253931.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> [http://www.nasbe.org/healthy\\_schools/hs/](http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/)

<sup>viii</sup> <https://cspinet.org/protecting-our-health/nutrition/healthy-school-snacks>

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/articles-and-news/2013/08/fast-food-television-ads-use-toys--movies-to-target-kids.html>;

[https://www.cspinet.org/resource/food-marketing-children-fact-](https://www.cspinet.org/resource/food-marketing-children-fact-sheet)

[sheet](https://www.cspinet.org/resource/food-marketing-children-fact-sheet); <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4359675/>; <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/brands-increase-fast-food-marketing-kids>

<sup>x</sup> <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/business-partnerships-with-schools>

<sup>xi</sup> <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/schoolhouse-commercialism-2012>

<sup>xii</sup> <http://my.lausd.net/webcenter/wccproxy/d?dID=38749>