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Childhood obesity bill: Keep school choices healthy for kids

By **Other Voices**

December 13, 2009, 3:37AM

"A weighty issue parents must face" questioned Senate Bill 210 and whether schools should have a role in fighting childhood obesity. Yes, parents have a responsibility to provide nutritious food and encourage exercise at home. But they can't control what happens at school. So schools also must provide an environment conducive to learning with nutritious food and physical activity.

At best, a public health campaign targeted to parents would reinforce what parents already know. More often, the problem is that unhealthy foods are easier to get and more affordable, especially for struggling families. More parental education won't change that. S.B. 210 would help by increasing the availability of nutritious foods and limiting junk food in schools.

Similarly, body mass index screenings might not tell parents much they don't already know about their children's risks for obesity. But they would provide valuable information for health officials to monitor student health----

Wendy Feinn *Cleveland*

Feinn is a policy and planning associate for public policy and advocacy at The Center for Community Solutions.

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