

School environmental changes resulting from Arkansas legislation to combat childhood obesity

Martha M. Phillips, PhD, MPH, MBA

Arkansas Department of Health
Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health,
Univ. of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Project funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Co-Authors

James M. Raczynski, PhD

Delia West, PhD

LeaVonne Pulley, PhD

Zoran Bursac, PhD

C. Heath Gauss, MS

Victoria Evans, MPH

Amanda Philyaw Perez, MPH

Brooke E.E. Montgomery, MPH

Jada Walker, MEd

Rebekah Craig

Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health,
Univ. of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Arkansas Act 1220 of 2003

To address childhood obesity in Arkansas

1. Annual BMI measurements for all school children & report to parents
2. Restricted access to vending machines in elementary schools
3. State-wide Child Health Advisory Committee with prescribed membership and specific charge to examine future policies
4. Establishment of Local Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committees in every school district
5. Public reporting of vending revenues
6. Hiring of Community Health Promotion Specialists to provide technical assistance to schools

Act 1220 Evaluation Timeline

-----2004----- -----2005----- -----2006-----

Spring Fall Spring Fall Spring Fall

Baseline
Data
Collection

Year 1
Follow-up
Data
Collection

Year 2
Follow-up
Data
Collection

Research Question

- What changes have occurred in school environments after the passage of Arkansas Act 1220 of 2003?

Methods

- Surveys

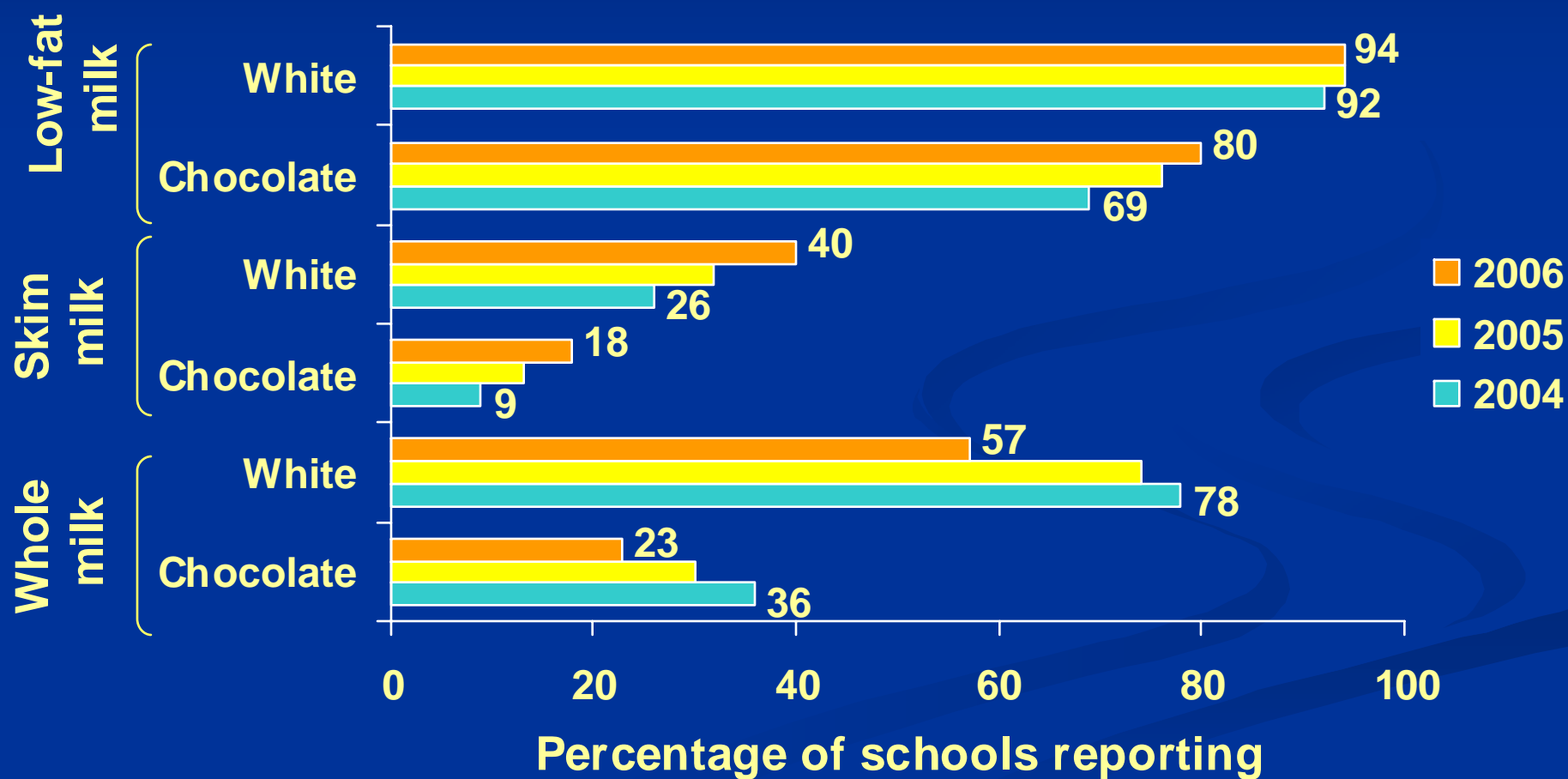
- Principals

- N=1 109; 76% response (2006); n=842

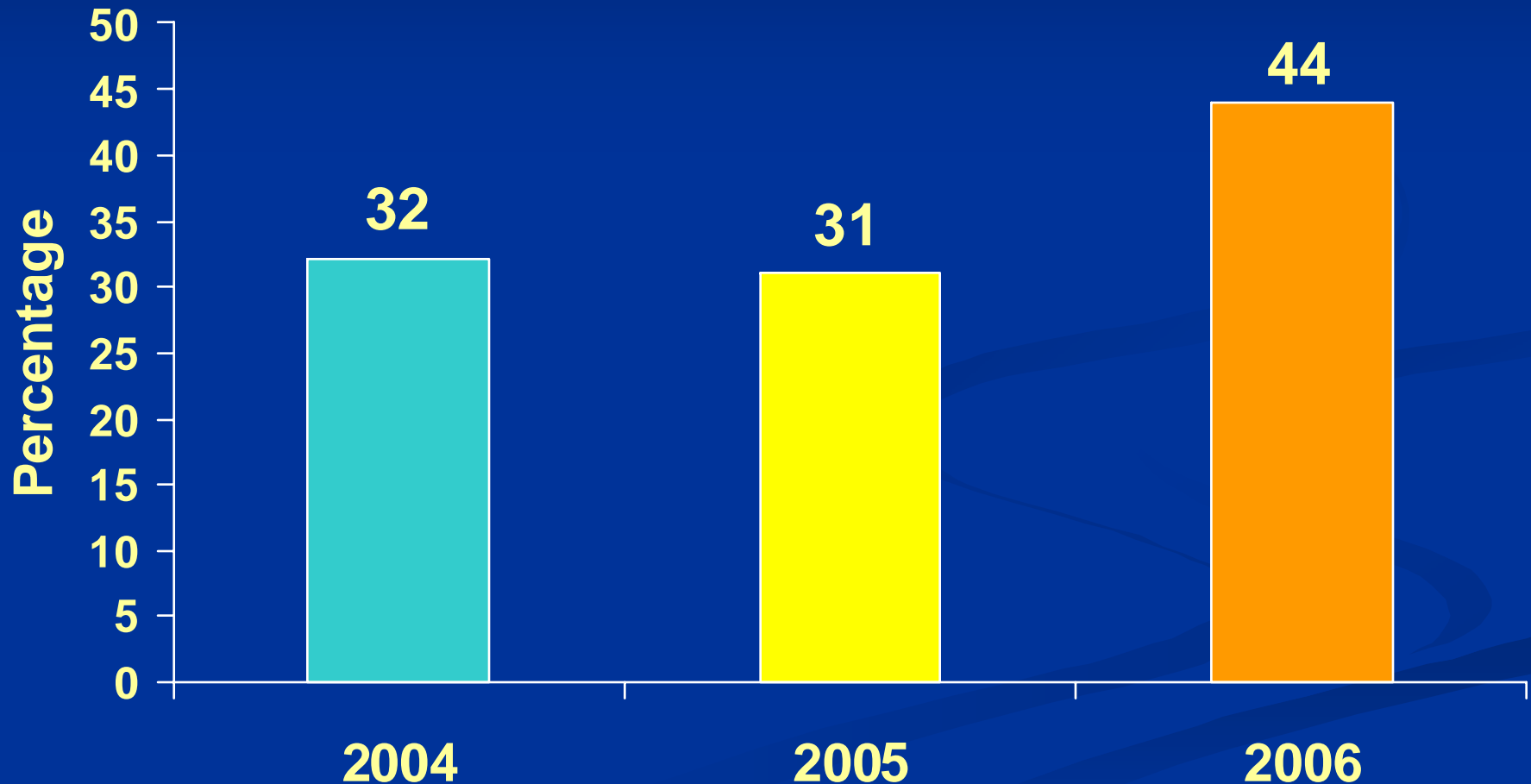
- School district superintendents

- N = 252; 78% response (2006); n=196

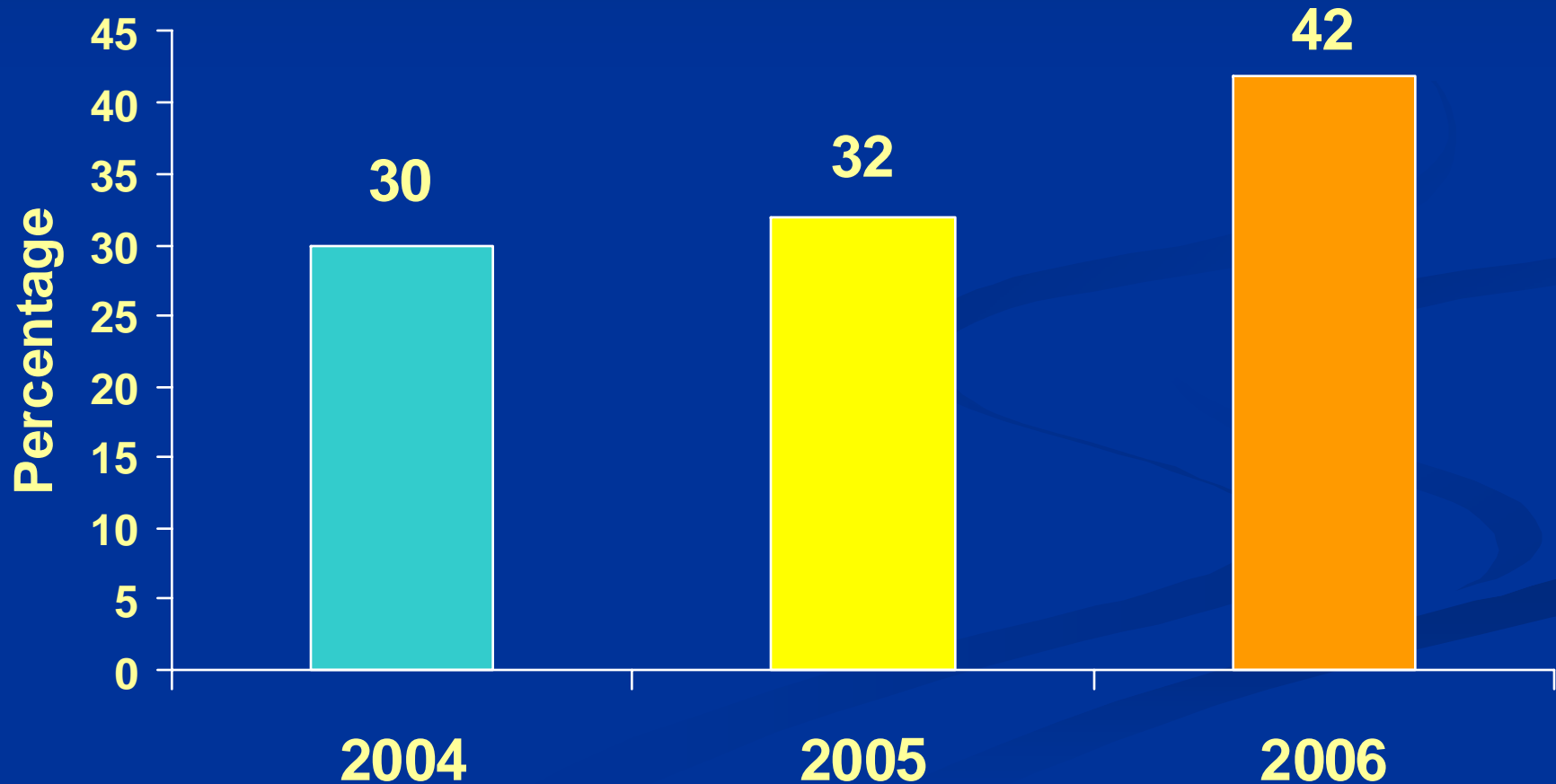
Schools are offering healthier and fewer unhealthy beverages in cafeterias



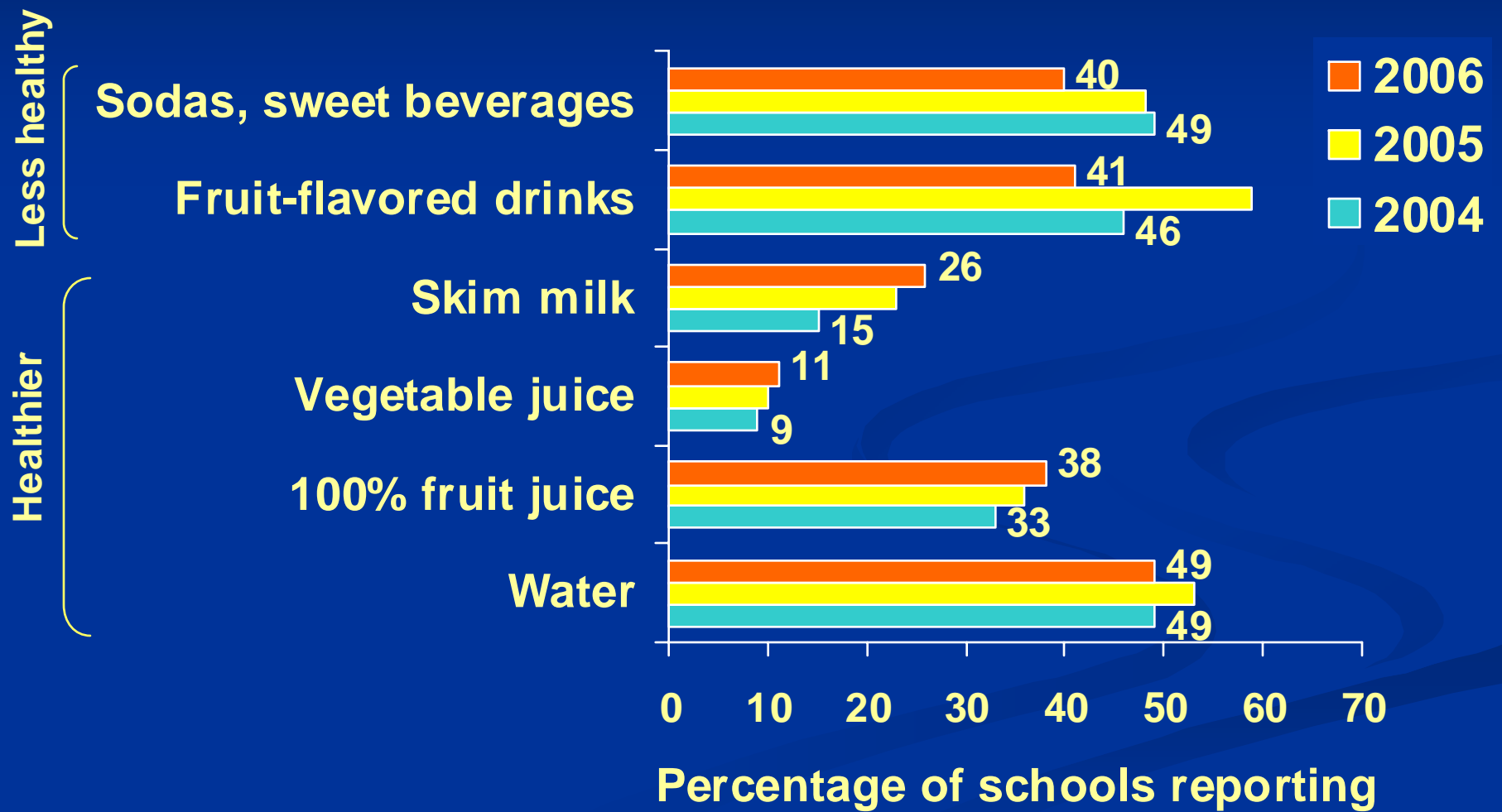
Schools are prohibiting use of physical activity as punishment in non-PE classes



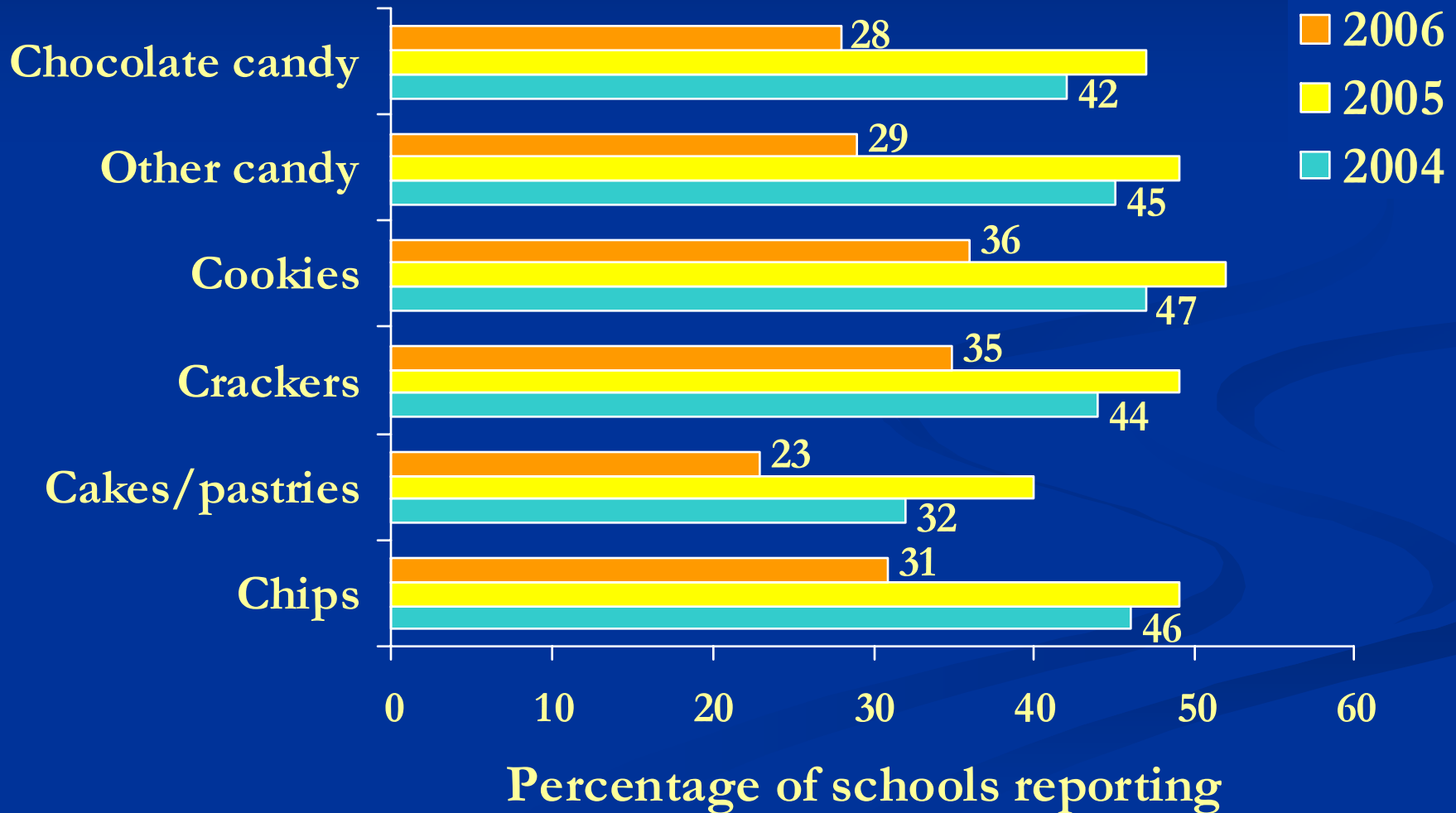
More school districts are requiring 30 minutes/day or more of recess for elementary school students



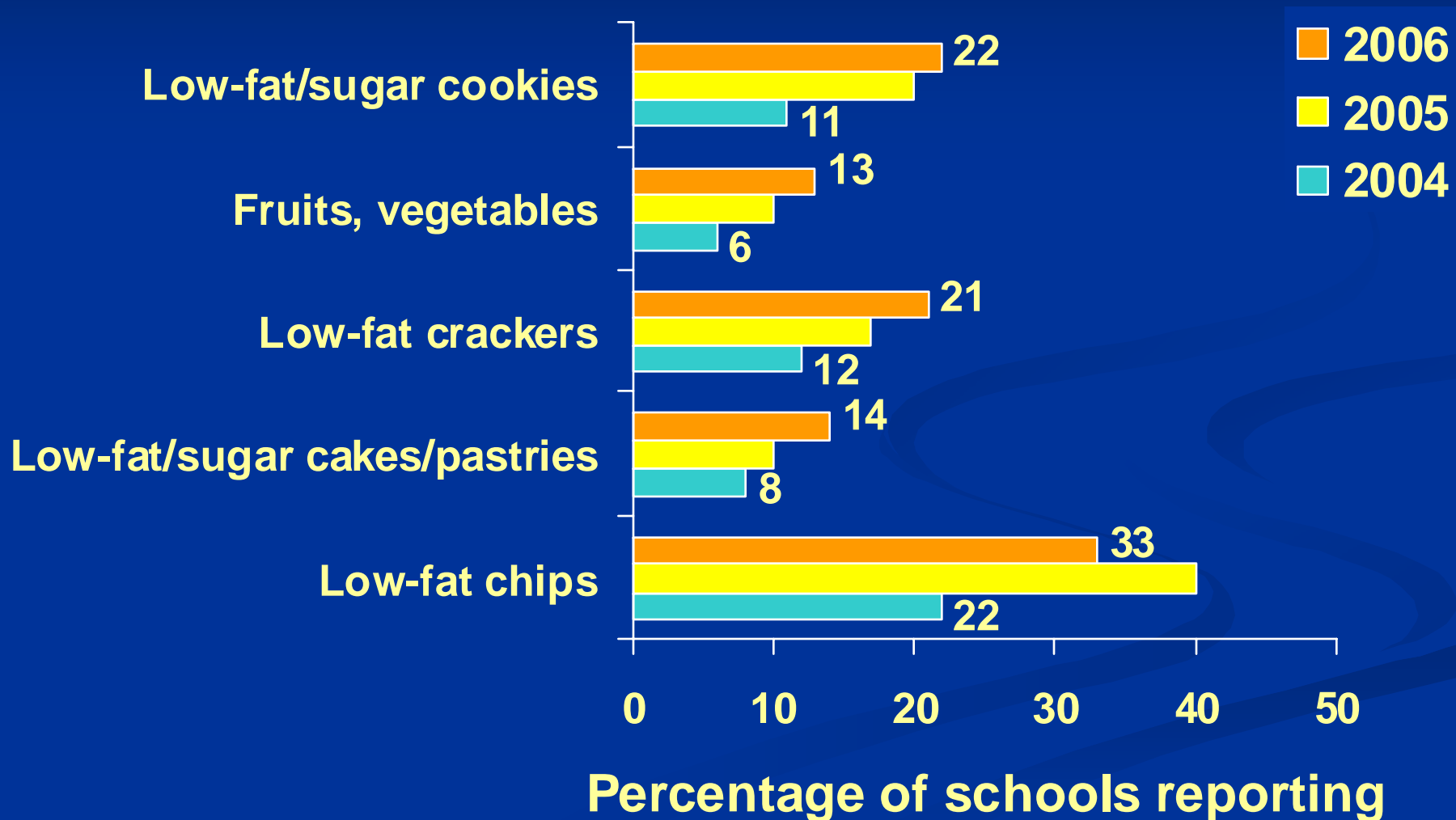
Beverage contents are shifting from unhealthy to more healthy



Contents of vending machines are changing



Schools are including more healthy alternatives in food vending machines



So who are these schools?

- All public schools fall under new rules and regulations of the Arkansas State Department of Education.
- Current findings mimic last year's reported findings.

Early adopters

Evans et. al (2006) reported:

- Elementary schools
- Larger schools

No significant differences by:

- Percentage free/reduced lunch eligibility
- Percentage minority students
- Academic status

Evans VL, Phillips MM, Gauss CH, Birdsong MC, Bursac Z, Raczynski JM. Who's first in line? Influencing student health through policy change. Presented APHA 2006

Conclusions

- Three years after passage of Act 1220, noteworthy changes are evident.
- Many school policy changes are making it easier for students to make healthy choices.

Act 1220 Evaluation Reports

<http://www.uams.edu/coph/reports>