

Pretty Politico.com 08/31/2009

Changing Tastes

In the aftermath of the controversial school lunch [ad campaign](#), I am reflecting about the political nature of school lunches and the potential for something as quotidian as lunchtime to be a transformative space.

Through my experiences working with youth, I have learned that one surefire way to win a student's heart is through their stomach. When I plan programs, I try to offer foods that captivate the interest of students because of its gastronomic quality and the (social, cultural, historical, and even political) narrative related to the food. It works *every time*, and helps us to lure students to educational events in droves.

I was reminded of the importance of food when I noticed that my friend Sonal blogged on Change.org today about an innovative, sustainable and progressive culinary and lifestyle program offered at Aveson Global Leadership Academy in Los Angeles, CA. Aveson Academy's **cutting-edge approach** is refreshing and important because it serves as a positive and successful example for other schools across the country.

Food is political. What we consume, where we buy our food, and the laborers who harvest/package/and dispose of our food are all connected to our larger socio-political landscape. It is important that young people learn at an early age about the meaning of food in our lives beyond its nutritional content. I'm excited about Aveson 's model, and hope that other institutions find ways to use food to drive discourse about cultural and racial diversity, the environment, labor, and beyond. *We are what we eat*, after all.