Dear Principal Llanes:

I have been a strong supporter of Bartow Middle School for many years. I am concerned, however, by the school’s recent decision to place soda machines in the cafeteria. I do not believe that schools should encourage students to buy and drink soda.

First, soda is not a healthful drink. Most 12-ounce cans of soda contain about 10 teaspoonfuls of sugar. Nutrition expert Michael Jacobson says, “Soda pop is junk.” He points out in his book *Liquid Candy* that the sugar in soft drinks can lead to many problems, including obesity and tooth decay. In addition, soda contains absolutely no vitamins or minerals. Students who drink soda instead of milk or juice are missing out on vital nutrients.

Encouraging students to make healthy choices about nutrition is more important than ever. Students today are more overweight than they have ever been. In 1963, only 15 percent of American children and teenagers were overweight. That number is now between 31 and 37 percent. Clearly, students do not need more fattening drinks with no nutritional value. In fact, students now drink twice as much soda as they do milk. Twenty years ago, students drank twice as much milk as they do today. Consequently, many teenagers are now suffering from a lack of calcium. This affects bone growth and quality. Students’ participation in extracurricular activities is also affected. Furthermore, studies show that lack of calcium makes bones more prone to fractures and increases the risk of bone disease later in life. Clearly, our young people do not need the empty calories from soda, but they do need the nutrients from healthful drinks.

Giving students the option of buying soda at school encourages poor nutrition. My daughter is in the seventh grade at Bartow Middle School. Even though I have stressed the importance of good nutrition, she tells me that she often buys soda at school instead of milk. She says her friends do the same. Without the soda machines in the cafeteria, these students would be choosing milk, juice, or water, all healthier options than soda.

Besides the health aspects of this issue, I am concerned about our students being bombarded by free advertising. Soda machines, with their brightly colored logos, are free billboards in the cafeteria. Would we let a popular shoe manufacturer put up a billboard in the school? It is not the school’s place to advertise, but that is exactly what the school does by approving these machines. Taxpayers give free and continuous advertising to a product that, in many ways, is unhealthful.

I realize that the school earns a large profit from these machines. However, we should not compromise our young people’s health for the sake of a dollar. Please remove the soda machines from the cafeteria so that Bartow Middle School can be a place that educates students in positive, healthful ways.

Sincerely,

Kiera Saunders

**Comprehension**

**Directions**

Answer the following questions about the excerpt from the letter.

\_\_\_\_ 1. Which of the following is consistent with the author’s viewpoint?

1. Schools should promote physical education.
2. Students make poor choices about nutrition.
3. Bartow Middle School needs to offer better nutrition.
4. Soda machines do not belong in school cafeterias.

\_\_\_\_ 2. Why does the author mention her daughter in the article?

1. to make an emotional appeal
2. to identify the issue
3. to make an appeal to pity
4. to show student support on the issue

\_\_\_\_ 3. Why does the author include Michael Jacobson as a source?

1. to persuade others using exaggeration
2. to show support from other parents
3. to provide an expert opinion as evidence
4. to encourage others to read his book

\_\_\_\_ 4. How can you tell that this passage is persuasive?

1. It is written in the form of a letter to someone is charge.
2. It is only one person’s point of view.
3. It uses examples that illustrate important ideas.
4. It offers an opinion and supports it with reasons and evidence.

\_\_\_\_ 5. The statements about profits are an example of which persuasive technique?

1. testimonial
2. counterargument
3. bandwagon
4. transfer

\_\_\_\_ 6. Which statement would *best* summarize the argument?

1. Students are overweight today due to choices middle schools are making.
2. Nutrients are vital to student success at Bartow Middle School.
3. Soda machines promote an unhealthy lifestyle.
4. Profits should not outweigh student health.

\_\_\_\_ 7. Ms. Saunders’ inclusion of loaded language in lines 26 and 27 make the reader believe she is—

1. unemotional
2. unrealistic
3. unreasonable
4. unappreciated

\_\_\_\_ 8. Which of the following facts would a reader most want to verify in order to support the author’s claim?

1. “Studies show that lack of calcium..” lines 17 - 18
2. “That number is now between 31 and 37 percent.”
3. “Twenty years ago, students drank twice as much milk.”
4. “In 1963, only 15% of American children..” lines 11 - 12

\_\_\_\_ 9. The rhetorical question in lines 28 and 29 is meant to—

1. reflect on advertising techniques
2. call attention to taxes
3. provide an explanation
4. restate the obvious idea

\_\_\_\_ 10. Which of the following is a generalization?

1. Without the soda machines in the cafeteria, these students would be choosing milk, juice, or water, all healthier options than soda.
2. First, soda is not a healthful drink.
3. Clearly, our young people do not need the empty calories from soda, but they do need the nutrients from healthful drinks.
4. She says her friends do the same.

\_\_\_\_ 11. Using what you know about prefixes and context clues, what is the correct meaning of the word “extracurricular” in paragraph 3?

1. outside
2. beyond the class
3. away from curry
4. not physical

\_\_\_\_ 12. What is the correct meaning of the word “positive” in the last line of the letter?

1. certain
2. valuable
3. definite
4. greater than zero

**Extended Response**

**Directions**

Answer the question on a separate sheet of paper.

13. How effective is Ms. Saunder’s argument? Use information from letter to explain your answer.

Answer the following questions about the advertisement.

\_\_\_\_ 14. The intended message of the advertisement is to—

1. promote drinking milk.
2. discourage eating almonds.
3. suggest an increase in calcium.
4. encourage drinking chocolate milk.

\_\_\_\_ 15. The advertisement’s publication date suggests the information—

1. is reliable.
2. reveals a bias.
3. needs to be checked.
4. is the last of the year.

**Extended Response**

**Directions**

Answer the question on a separate sheet of paper.

16. How do the formatting choices affect your understanding of the advertisement? Use examples from the ad to support your answer.