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**Schools Expel Channel One; New Policy Also Limits Ads,
Logos**

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Disavowing its earlier flirtation with corporations catering to young consumers, the Seattle School Board voted yesterday to kick Channel One out of the schools and tone down the advertising on Coca-Cola vending machines. Although the commercialism policy the board adopted isn't as strong as some advocates had hoped, it places tough new limits on the kinds of advertising and logos that may be displayed on school property.

The action followed vigorous grass-roots lobbying spearheaded by the Citizens' Campaign for Commercial-Free Schools.

The School Board rejected amendments introduced by Michael Preston that would have toughened the new policy and procedures. But Preston, whose 20-year tenure on the board ended yesterday, called the final product "a good first step" toward protecting students from marketers.

The policy:

- Phases out Channel One news broadcasts in middle schools and high schools by the end of the 2004-05 school year.
- Prohibits advertising on scoreboards, reader boards and school buildings, and discourages advertising in privately operated school buses.
- Allows commercial logos of limited size for "product or sponsor identification purposes" but not for advertising.
- Specifies that although commercial logos of limited size can be used on vending-machine facades, the machines cannot feature blatant advertising.

School-related nonprofit organizations such as the Parent Teacher Student Association were exempted from the restrictions.

Anti-commercialism activists were disappointed the board didn't take a harder line on logos. The board rejected proposals by Preston to ban logos that recognize corporate sponsors of school programs, such as the Seattle Sonics logo on elementary reading materials.

Some of the sharpest exchanges were between the two retiring board members, Preston and eight-year veteran Don Nielsen. While Preston advocated tougher restrictions, Nielsen wanted to leave more decisions in the hands of school principals and their staffs.

Nielsen cast the only vote against the six pages of procedures, and Preston cast the only vote against the one-sentence policy, which he viewed as watered down.

The modified statement says board policy is to "discourage commercial advertising" on district property. The original aimed to "prohibit commercial advertising targeted at children."

Brita Butler-Wall, who built the Citizens' Campaign for Commercial-Free Schools into a potent lobbying force since she co-founded it in 1997, said yesterday's action is a dramatic shift. "Five years ago they were seeking advertising, so they've come a long way."

Several board members said they favor future action to improve the nutritional value of foods sold in schools. "Even just looking at some of the meals in the high schools, I go, 'Oh, my God, I can't believe what they're eating,' " said board member Jan Kumasaka.

The new commercialism policy follows years of controversy that began in 1996, when the school district turned to advertising and private partnerships as revenue sources in difficult financial times. The School Board that year adopted a policy that welcomed advertising, but in the face of citizen opposition rescinded the policy several months later.

Since then, the district has allowed advertising-laden Channel One news in 15 middle schools and high schools, and the School Board in 1998 approved an exclusive, five-year soft-drink contract with Coca-Cola. Those policies have drawn criticism that the schools allow commercialism.

Channel One, owned by media giant Primedia, provides televisions, videocassette recorders and cable to schools that agree to show the 12-minute Channel One News throughout the school each day. Each broadcast contains two minutes of youth-oriented advertising.

Tim Sheehan, a teacher who uses the equipment to teach video production to 300 students a year at Whitman Middle School, yesterday asked the School Board not to jeopardize that program.

Board members intend to replace Channel One equipment with funds from a buildings, technology and athletics levy that goes before voters in 2004.

District administrators are negotiating with Coca-Cola to replace the lighted vending-machine displays that feature huge images of Coke products. The district's logistics chief, Steve Nielsen, told the board the district will have to pay \$250 for each machine on which the façade is changed.

But Coca-Cola spokesman Bob Phillips earlier this week said the change will cost the district nothing. "We pay for it," he said. Coke sales generated \$330,000 for student activities at 20 schools last year. The top drink sellers, Ballard, Franklin and Garfield high schools, earned \$35,888, \$35,215 and \$33,765, respectively.