Dear Council Member/Mayor/Chancellor (send to all three!)

Limiting added sugars in children’s diet is an important public health target. The 2015 US Department of Agriculture Dietary Guidelines recommend that added sugars make up no more than 10% of daily calories, and the American Heart Association recently released a scientific statement recommending children and adolescents consume less than 25 grams of added sugars. Reducing intake to these low levels is an extremely ambitious goal, as youth consume an average of 80 grams of day of added sugars.

We believe that flavored milk should not be served in schools for a variety of reasons. Even one serving of flavored milk that meets the Institute of Medicine’s recommended limit of 10 g added sugars; it represents 40% of a child’s daily allowance.

In addition, research suggests that children learn how sweet a food is supposed to taste during childhood, and early exposure to sweetened water predicts a preference for sweetened water later in life. Therefore, an additional argument against introducing flavored milk in kindergarten and serving it daily in school is that it may reinforce children’s preferences for sweet beverages as a category, and interfere with creating a social norm of drinking water and plain milk.

For these reasons, we believe it is time for New York City to remove sweetened milk from its menus. The NYC Department of Health itself has [launched a campaign](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/neighborhood-health/healthy-schools-toolkit.page) to remove sweetened milk from schools. They even have a template letter for parents to use to beg their school food managers to remove it. They also include this request on their Healthy Eating section: “**Promote Healthy Eating:** Start by removing chocolate milk from your school menu to reduce the amount of sugar children consume daily. Serve plain (unflavored) 1% or skim milk instead.” We have two city agencies battling one issue.

For OFNS to serve a food that the DOH is campaigning against makes little (read: no) sense. This year, San Francisco officially banned chocolate milk, starting in elementary and middle schools this fall and expanding to high schools in the spring. Officials tested the idea in five schools over the past school year and found that in two, there was no decrease in the number of milk cartons kids put on their trays, and there was only a slight dip in the other three.

For those who say removal of the sweetened milk may cause nutrient deficit, I point you to a [Rudd Center Research](http://uconnruddcenter.org/files/Pdfs/Student%20Acceptance%20of%20Plain%20Milk%20study.pdf) on this issue which found acceptance of plain milk increases significantly two years after flavored milk is removed from school cafeterias.

We write with the knowledge that our goal is to feed hungry children and ensure they are well fed.

Sincerely,

PARENT