Legislation Details (With Text)

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12/31/2017	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 432

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to offer gluten-free meal options for students at all New York City public schools.

By Council Members Treyger, Chin, Constantinides, Dromm, Koo, Levin and Ulrich

Whereas, The New York City Department of Education (DOE) is the largest public school system in the United States (U.S.) serving approximately 1.1 million students; and

Whereas, Accordingly, the DOE is responsible for protecting the health and safety of all students in its charge; and

Whereas, DOE's Office of School Food, known as "SchoolFood," has taken a number of steps to improve the health and nutrition of school meals and to expand access to more students in recent years; and

Whereas, SchoolFood also offers a number of different menus, including hot and cold lunch menus, vegetarian lunch menus, and Special Needs lunch menus to accommodate the needs of medically certified students with disabilities; and

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Whereas, The needs of some students, however, are not adequately met by SchoolFood menu options at present; and

Whereas, In particular, dietary needs of students afflicted with celiac disease are not currently addressed by SchoolFood; and

Whereas, According to the Celiac Disease Foundation (CDF), it is estimated that as many as 1 in 100 Americans, or about 1% of the population, is affected by celiac disease, which could mean as many as 11,000 students in City public schools; and

Whereas, Celiac disease is a hereditary autoimmune disorder where the ingestion of gluten (a protein found in wheat, rye and barley) leads to damage in the small intestine; and

Whereas, Celiac disease can develop at any age after people start eating foods or ingesting medicines that contain gluten; and

Whereas, According to CDF, left untreated, celiac disease can lead to additional serious health problems, including other autoimmune disorders like Type I diabetes and multiple sclerosis (MS), dermatitis herpetiformis (an itchy skin rash), anemia, osteoporosis, infertility and miscarriage, neurological conditions like epilepsy and migraines, short stature, and intestinal cancers; and

Whereas, Currently, the only treatment for celiac disease is lifelong adherence to a strict gluten-free diet; and

Whereas, A gluten-free diet excludes foods made with grains such as wheat, barley, rye and triticale (a cross between wheat and rye), as well as those processed or mixed with gluten-containing grains, additives or preservatives; and

Whereas, Many gluten-free food options are widely available at present, including bread, cereal and other foods made with corn, rice, soy or other gluten-free grain; and

Whereas, To safeguard the health of students affected by celiac disease, a wide variety of gluten-free menu options should be offered to students at all grade levels in all schools; now, therefore, be it

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Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to offer gluten-free meal options for students at all New York City public schools.

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JA
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