



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1313

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education's Office of School Food to increase the health of food options in school lunches and breakfasts by implementing the recommendations of the Brooklyn Food Coalition's "Roadmap for Healthy, Sustainable School Food."

By Council Members Lander, Brewer, Barron, Comrie, Eugene, Ferreras, James, Koo, Levin, Mendez, Palma, Vann, Williams, Wills, Rodriguez, Dromm, Rivera, Mark-Viverito, Nelson, Vacca, Greenfield, Vallone and Lappin

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

Whereas, DOE's Office of School Food, known as "SchoolFood," is the largest school food service provider in the United States, providing over 860,000 total meals each day to students in over 1,600 locations including City public elementary, middle, special education, high schools, charter and some non-public schools; and

Whereas, In recent years, SchoolFood has taken a number of steps to improve the health and nutrition of school meals and to expand access to more students; and

Whereas, SchoolFood serves breakfast free of charge to all students and has instituted breakfast-in-the-classroom programs in 271 schools; and

Whereas, In 2004, SchoolFood hired an executive chef to introduce new recipes and to reformulate popular menu items to make them healthier and more enticing to students; and

Whereas, DOE has also made significant investments in kitchen and cafeteria infrastructure in recent years, including the installation of more than 600 salad bars in schools throughout the City; and

Whereas, Additionally, SchoolFood has piloted several programs, such as the State-funded Fresh Fruit

and Vegetable Program, in a small number of City schools; and

Whereas, Another initiative, “Garden to Café” was started by SchoolFood and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension, GreenThumb, and more than 20 community-based organizations; and

Whereas, The goals of “Garden to Café” are to promote vegetarian options, connect students to local food and farming, increase awareness of school gardening, and provide opportunities to integrate school gardening and school lunch; and

Whereas, According to the DOE, SchoolFood has also reduced sodium, fat and cholesterol content in meals served; and

Whereas, In addition, SchoolFood has replaced white flour pasta with whole grain pasta, replaced whole milk with fat free and low fat milk varieties and has included more fresh fruits and vegetables in school meals; and

Whereas, Despite these improvements, critics note that school meals still contain too many “processed” food items, such as breaded chicken nuggets, as well as foods that contain less healthy ingredients, including high fructose corn syrup, artificial coloring and saturated fats, such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches; and, Whereas, In December 2010, a new federal law, the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (“the Act”), was passed which would improve the nutrition of school meals; and

Whereas, Among other things, the Act provides additional funding to schools that meet updated nutritional standards for federally-subsidized lunches, helps communities establish local farm to school networks and builds on efforts by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to improve the nutritional quality of commodity foods that schools receive from USDA and use in their breakfast and lunch programs; and

Whereas, A number of the Act’s provisions, such as the development of new nutritional standards and

the increase in federal meal reimbursement, will not go into effect before the 2012-2013 school year at the earliest; and

Whereas, New York City's 1.1 million public school students should not have to wait for those federal changes to take effect before having access to healthier food options in school meals; and

Whereas, The Brooklyn Food Coalition recently issued its "Roadmap for Healthy, Sustainable School Food;" and

Whereas, The Roadmap calls for progressive measures to increase the local sourcing of school food, such as purchasing 10 percent of food locally, expansion of the "Garden to Café" program, and increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables for snacks; and

Whereas, The Roadmap calls for improving the wholesomeness of foods served by improving access to salad bars, offering at least one fresh fruit daily, ensuring that vegetables served are fresh and that 60 percent of meals offered are from unprocessed ingredients, offering only whole grain products, ensuring access to pure water and eliminating sweetened milk, and adopting meatless meals at least once a week; and

Whereas, The Roadmap calls for integrating this food program into school curricula and building on the work of existing school wellness committees to help guide this initiative and make it work in each participating school; and

Whereas, The Roadmap also calls for reducing the food and packaging waste stream through more effective recycling, composting, and by working towards the elimination of polystyrene foam trays; and

Whereas, The Roadmap calls for mandating public access to ingredient lists and items purchased; and

Whereas, The Roadmap calls for removing vending machines and all "competitive" foods in elementary and middle schools, and for providing only healthy choices in any vending machines in high schools; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education's Office of School Food to increase the health of food options in school lunches and breakfasts by

implementing the recommendations of the Brooklyn Food Coalition’s “Roadmap for Healthy, Sustainable School Food.”

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