

1% CHOCOLATE MILK in Schools



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will allow all schools to offer low-fat (1%) flavored milk in school lunches, breakfast and Smart Snacks for the 2018-2019 school year without first obtaining a special exemption. This flexibility will also be allowed for children 6 years and older in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Special Milk Program.¹

A *survey conducted with over 300 schools that implemented 1% flavored milk in the 2017-2018 school year found that:

- Students in 73% of the schools liked 1% flavored milk better
- 58% of schools saw an increase in milk sold
- 82% of schools reported that it was easy/very easy to accommodate 1% flavored milk within the calorie maximums for their menus
- 79% of schools reported that it was easy/very easy to include the cost within their financial bottom line
- Nearly a third of schools saw an increase in average daily participation in meal programs, and so received additional federal reimbursements

Before the 2012 Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, 1% flavored milk was the most frequently offered variety by school districts.¹ Since 2012, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the USDA states that it has observed “a decline in milk consumption during lunch among NSLP participants from SY 2004-2005,” and adds that this occurred among “elementary, middle, and high school students.” USDA recognizes that “schools need the flexibility to offer additional milk options to ensure children receive the nutrients provided by milk.”^{1,2,3}

Restoring 1% flavored milk could have several additional impacts:

- **Average daily participation (ADP) could increase**
It has been shown that improving students’ milk experience can increase ADP.⁴ While the research involved interventions other than a change in fat level (e.g., additional flavors, merchandising, packaging and serving temperature), it did demonstrate that the student milk experience can, in some situations, be powerful enough to attract more students into the cafeteria.
- **School milk consumption may increase**
Milk’s unique nutrient package can be difficult to replace in a healthy eating pattern,⁵ so options that might promote adequate milk consumption could increase the likelihood of nutrient adequacy and help close the gap among student’s consumption of nutrients.⁶
- **Schools will have additional choices**
A school district may choose to continue offering fat-free varieties, may decide to switch to low-fat flavored or offer both low-fat and fat-free flavored milk as well as unflavored. In all cases, schools will have an option which they previously lacked.



Please contact your **Local Dairy Council** for additional information.

<https://www.nationaldairycouncil.org/our-story#FindYourLocalDairyCouncilAnchor>

References

1. USDA FNS Child Nutrition Programs: Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements, **82 Fed. Reg. 56703** (November 20, 2017).
2. Kline A. School Meal Flexibilities for School Year 2017-2018. USDA FNS Memo Code SP 32-2017. May 22, 2017. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/school-meal-flexibilities-sy-2017-18>.
3. Nicklas TA, O’Neil CE, Fulgoni VL 3rd. The nutritional role of flavored and white milk in the diets of children. *J Sch Health*. 2013 Oct;83(10):728-33.
4. National Dairy Council and School Nutrition Association. The School Milk Pilot Test. Beverage Marketing Corporation for National Dairy Council and School Nutrition Association. 2002.
5. Fulgoni III et al. *Nutr Res* 2011;31:759-65
6. Murphy MM, Douglass JS, Johnson RK, Spence LA. Drinking flavored or plain milk is positively associated with nutrient intake and is not associated with adverse effects on weight status in US children and adolescents. *J Am Diet Assoc* 2008;108:631-639.

*Survey conducted by the National Dairy Council represented 317 schools in 8 states reaching over 200,000 students.

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