

## PLANT-BASED LUNCH OPTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**An act to amend the education law, in relation to requiring public schools to offer plant-based food options in food service.**

<b><u>A.1834</u> Assembly Member Rajkumar</b>	<b><u>S.2689</u> Senator Hoylman-Sigal</b>
<b>Co-Sponsors:</b> Epstein, Woerner, Paulin, Reyes, Taylor, Glick, Seawright, Hyndman, Fall, Sayegh, Williams, Weprin, Stern, Simon, Jackson, Kelles, McMahon, Rosenthal, Dinowitz, De Los Santos, Bores, Raga, Levenberg, Simone, Shimsky, Hevesi, Colton, Clark, Shrestha	<b>Co-Sponsors:</b> BRISPORT, BROUK, CLEARE, GOUNARDES, HARCKHAM, JACKSON, KAVANAGH, LIU, MYRIE, RIVERA, SEPULVEDA, SERRANO, SKOUFIS
<b>REFERRED TO: EDUCATION, A/M Benedetto, Chair</b>	<b>REFERRED TO: EDUCATION, Senator Mayer, Chair</b>



*High School Students in Buffalo enjoy taste testing scratch-made vegan burgers with Coalition for Healthy School Food in Buffalo*



*Student enjoys vegan meal in NYC*

*Plant-based (vegan) options are healthy for all students, not just vegans, and offering them in schools encourages the development of healthy eating habits at an early age. NYS grown Dry Beans, Vegetables, Grains & Fruits and NYS made tofu can be used in School Lunches to Create Plant-Based Entrees. There are also many manufactured items which can be used by schools that are not able to do scratch cooking.*

### Cost Neutral or Cost Savings...Can Support New York State Farms...

**NYS's 2 Largest School Districts (NYC & Buffalo) Offer Vegan Options – IF there was a problem with cost, they, and the others who do it, would not be able to.**

**Delicious...Healthy...Better for Children...Better for the Environment...Better for Animals**

#### BACKGROUND:

- Research shows that the more plant-based foods a person eats, the lower their risk of overweight/obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, and Alzheimer's disease.
  - Research also shows that overweight/obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure can be successfully reversed with a low-fat plant-based diet.
  - **Many schools already offer plant-based entrees, which already fit into the food budget. If plant-based entrees cost more, all the schools that already offer plant-based entrees would not be able to do so.**
  - According to research published in the Journal of Science, significantly reducing the consumption of animal products is the single biggest action an individual can take to address climate change.
  - NYC schools began offering at least two cold plant-based entrées every day and a plant-based hot entrée every Friday in all 1800 schools. They also allow schools to opt in to a fully vegetarian menu. The vegetarian menu costs less to produce than the standard menu.
  - Schools want students to participate in the meal program. If students want to eat healthy, why wouldn't a school want to support them? Students who consume more plant-based foods will have a stronger immune system which helps them stay healthy and therefore miss school less often.
- Images and health statistics from Coalition for Healthy School Food \* [www.healthyschoolfood.org](http://www.healthyschoolfood.org)**

**Our Children's Health is at Risk... Plant-Powered Options Help Them Practice What We Teach**

## STATISTICS:

- 40% of children and teens and 74% of adults are overweight or obese.
- 50% of children between the ages of 2 – 15 already have fatty streaks in their arteries, literally early-stage heart disease.
- Children as young as 8 years old are being prescribed cholesterol and blood pressure-lowering drugs.
- Type 2 diabetes, formerly called “adult-onset”, is becoming increasingly more common in school-age children.
- 33% of all US children will end up with type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives. 40 – 53% of African American and Latino children will get type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives... if their diets don't dramatically change.
- 35% of cancer deaths are caused by diet. Processed meats are “Group 1, carcinogenic to humans”, according to the World Health Organization. Classified processed meats include deli meats, sausage, bacon, hot dogs, and pepperoni. While NYC has removed processed meat from their menus, most schools around NYS continue to serve them.
- Research funded by the National Cancer Institute shows that milk and dairy products may be associated with an increased risk for breast cancer and prostate cancer. Red and processed meat and eggs are associated with an increased risk of prostate cancer.

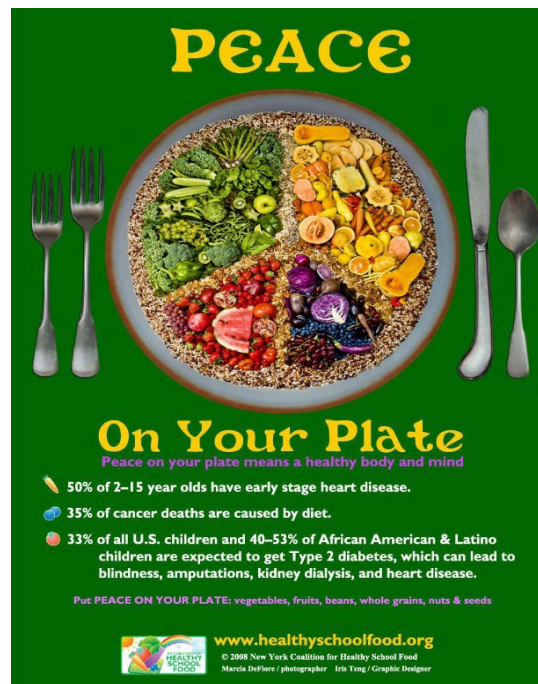
## SUMMARY OF BILL

- Require that every public school shall offer a plant-based food option as an alternative to meals or snacks upon a student or parent's request.
- Require the school to respond in a reasonable manner and time to requests made under this section.
- Defines "plant-based food option" as free of animal products and, as relates to the meat/meat alternative portion of a meal, as recognized by the US Department of Agriculture; and defines "animal product" as meat, poultry, seafood, dairy, eggs, honey, and any derivative thereof. Diet is a major component of child development. Providing a PBD option upon student or parent request ensures respect for children's dietary, religious, or ethical needs. This legislation would **not** mandate schools to fully change menus for all students but rather provide PBD for any students who request or whose parental relations request PBD.
- Require schools to consult with school district nutrition advisory committees established in section 918 of Education Law where applicable.



Brooklyn students create a Happy Face with pita bread, hummus and veggies. Hummus offered daily in NYC cafeterias.

**All 1800 schools in NYC serve plant-based (vegan) meals on Fridays (they do offer a cheese option as well for students who do not want to eat the vegan meal, and cow's milk is offered at each meal).**



- ❖ New York City and Ithaca public schools already offer at least one plant-based meat alternate per day.
- ❖ New York City offers schools the option of a completely vegetarian menu.
- ❖ Ithaca menus plant-based hot entrees at least one time per week and at least two cold plant-based options per day.



Students proudly display a sign with a few of their favorite plant-based foods.

- ❖ Plant-Based Options result in better attendance, grades, and behavior!
- ❖ Many schools in New York State already offer plant-based options.