



WHAT'S ON Your PLATE?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are over 1,700 public schools in New York City, making it the largest system of public schools in the United States to put food on the plates of students. **SchoolFood**, the supplier of food to NYC schools, serves about 850,000 meals every school day and offers specific menu choices, such as the Alternative Food Program.

What is the Alternative Food Program? Who decides what food is on the menu? How can you influence the food choices at school?

CUP and Community Food Action at New Settlement Apartments collaborated with Teaching Artist Elma Relihan and students from CMSP 327 to get the scoop on the Alternative Food Program. Students got out of the classroom and into the cafeteria, surveying community members and interviewing key decision makers on the Alternative Food Program. This poster is a guide to what students discovered.



Photo by second largest food buyer after the U.S. Military.

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

The **Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010** required public schools to follow strict nutritional standards and to create a **centralized menu**, meaning SchoolFood makes the menu decisions for all NYC schools rather than individual schools creating their own unique menus.

To provide some choice, **3 menus** are offered to every school:

Regular

Vegetarian

ALTERNATIVE

A salad bar, express cold or hot lunch, and options for students with food restrictions are included with each menu choice.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

"If the students at the school aren't familiar with the food, or don't want to eat it, then how successful can a menu be?"

Diana Cimino Food Policy Coordinator, New York City Humane Society

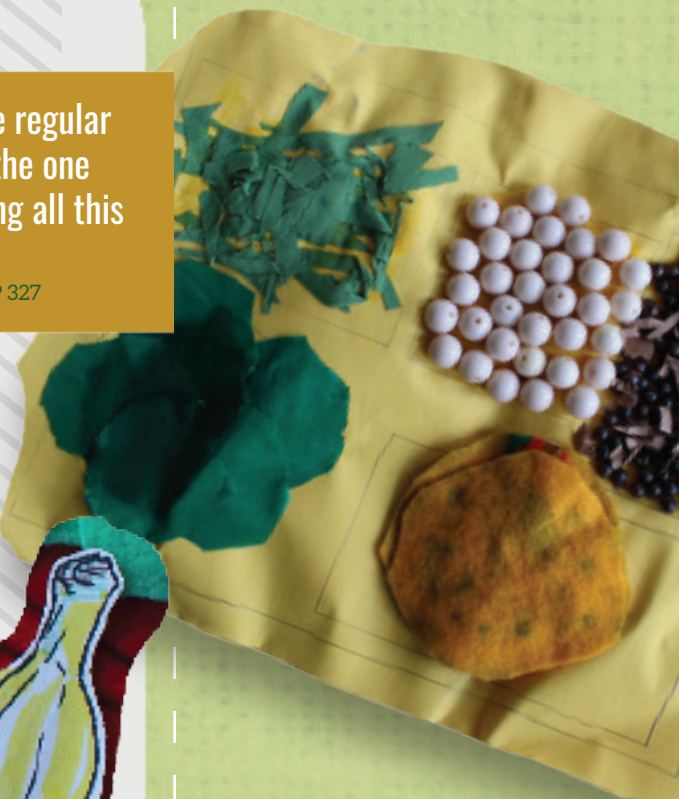
"I personally enjoy the regular menu because that's the one I've been used to eating all this time."

Ashley Felix Student, CMSP 327

"The root of the problem might not be what they're serving in schools, but what we're used to eating as a community that is really unhealthy and causing obesity. There might need to be a bigger shift of change, and school food is just the start of it."

Maria De La Santos Student, CMSP 327

"People are frustrated that the food isn't tailored to what the families and the students actually want to eat."



WHAT DO SCHOOLS THINK?

Since 2011, over **140 schools** have chosen to switch from the regular to the **alternative menu**.

All 3 menus cost the same price, so why such a small change?

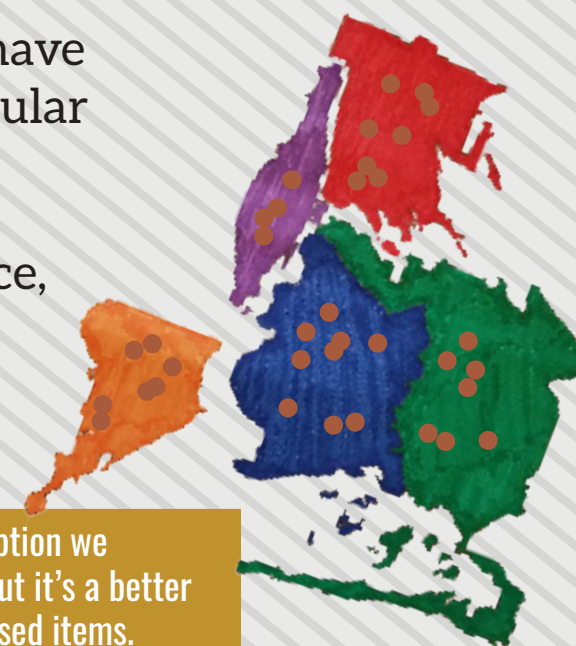
- NYC schools with the alternative menu

"Right now the alternative menu is the best option we have at the moment. It might not be perfect but it's a better choice. It's healthier and there's fewer processed items. Nutrition in school is extremely important, especially if school is your primary source for food."

Diana Cimino Food Policy Coordinator, New York City Humane Society

"The food that is served at schools teaches people what is good to eat, both in taste and in nutrition."

Alexandre Ricci Principal, CMSP 327



WHAT IS ALTERNATIVE?

The **alternative menu** contains less processed food than the regular menu. **Processed food** is any food that has been deliberately changed before it's made available for people to eat, ranging from a frozen bag of vegetables to cookies.

	Regular Menu	ALTERNATIVE MENU
Monday	Chicken Sliders + Chips	Chicken Dumplings + Vegetable Fried Rice
Tuesday	Beef Cheeseburger	Turkey Burger
Wednesday	Cheesy Beef Tacos	Black Bean Quesadilla
Thursday	Cheese Steak	Italian Turkey Wrap
Friday	Cheese Pizza	Cheese Pizza



Nutritional standards are followed per week, not per meal.



SCHOOL FOOD CHALLENGE

Cost: The maximum cost of a meal is **\$1.30**.

Time: It takes almost **2 years** to get a new food item on a menu, from recipe development to cost analysis.

Nutritional Standards: See a full list of school nutritional standards at fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals.

Prohibited Ingredients: NYC adds additional food standards for school food. See a full list of prohibited ingredients at schoolfoodnyc.org/resources/NYCPROHIBITEDITEMLIST.pdf.

Centralized Menu: NYC schools must choose from one of the 3 menu options. View all food menus at schoolfoodnyc.org/schoolfood/MenusDailyDisplay.aspx.



"If most of the food is thrown away, how is that being cost effective? If you don't like the taste of it, you're not going to eat it or get the nutrition."

Jasmine Estrella Student, CMSP 327



How can you influence what food is served?

GET INVOLVED!

"There's always power in united voices and people standing up for themselves. That is how you create change."

Alexandre Ricci Principal, CMSP 327

Create a **survey** to find out what your community thinks about school food and the different menu choices.

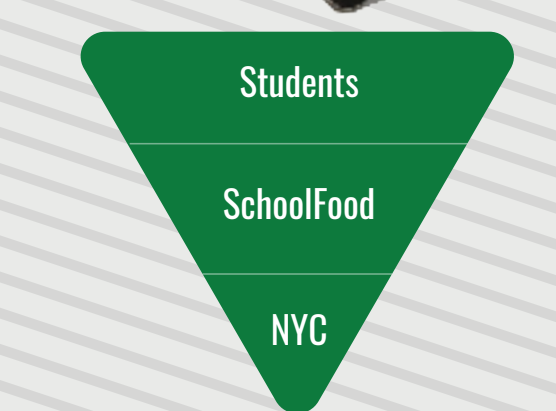
Organize people with the same opinion to create power in numbers.

The menu served at your school is chosen by the principal. Let your **principal** know what menu you think is right for your school!

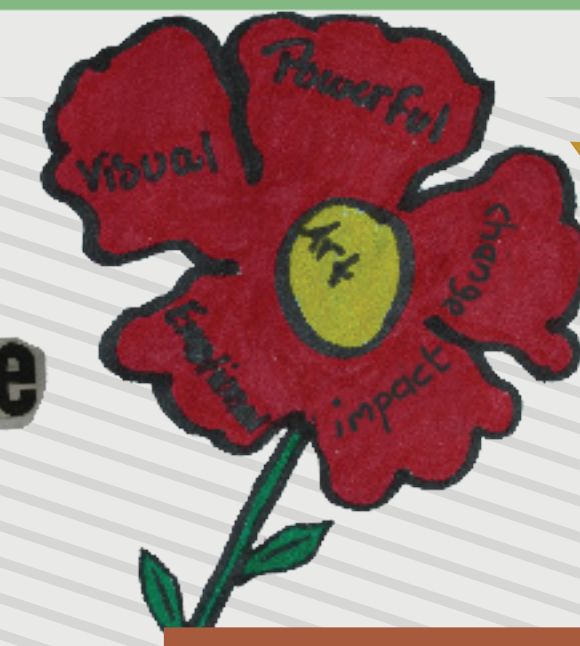


Write a review of your school food on the app **SchoolFood Feed Your Mind**.

Send your food menu suggestions to schoolfoodnyc.org/public/contact_form.aspx.



Contact the **Chancellor** at schools.nyc.gov/ContactDOE/ChancellorMessage.htm.



"If students get together and organize to say 'This isn't good enough for us. We want change,' then SchoolFood will have an incentive to listen because students are the one's that they're serving. It's a powerful idea."

Diana Cimino Food Policy Coordinator, New York City Humane Society

"Giving students a voice can help make the school food better."

Alexandre Ricci Principal, CMSP 327

"There is a limited amount of power that I have to change what's being served in the cafeteria. The Mayor chooses the Chancellor who basically decides who will be in charge of SchoolFoods."





CUP

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities.

City Studies are CUP's project-based in-class and afterschool programs that use design and art as tools to research the city.

To learn more about CUP, visit welcometoCUP.org.

CUP

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THANKS TO OUR INTERVIEWEES

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CMSP 327

The Comprehensive Model School Project (CMSP 327) is a 6th to 12th grade New York City Public school of over 700 students with the belief that all students can and will learn.

PRINCIPAL

Alixandre Ricci

STUDENTS

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COMMUNITY FOOD ACTION

Community Food Action at New Settlement Apartments advances community wellbeing in the Mt. Eden neighborhood of the Bronx by embedding holistic education around food issues into local institutions, developing community leadership, and integrating healthful, sustainably sourced, and fairly produced food into the environment.

NEW SETTLEMENT APARTMENTS

Director of Community Food Action: Taisy Conk

Director of Community-School Partnerships: Vivian Vazquez

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Council on the Arts

