

PRIME CONSULTING

IDFA International Dairy Foods Association

Flavored Milk in Schools: What the Evidence Shows

School-based evaluations show that removing flavored milk reduces milk consumption, increases waste and makes it harder for students to get essential nutrients.

Students Drink Less Milk

In the peer-reviewed Nutrition Today study, milk consumption declined 37% when flavored options were removed, driven by a 26% drop in milk selected and an 11-point increase in waste.

The Decline is Consistent

Every district in the study experienced declines in milk consumption when flavors were unavailable, with consumption declines ranging from 18% to 43%.

Consumption Does Not Rebound

Milk consumption did not recover in Year 2 after flavored milk restrictions or eliminations.

What happens when flavored milk is removed?

Remove flavored milk → Fewer Students Choose Milk → More Milk Is Wasted → Lower Intake of Key Nutrients



Milk provides nutrients students need. Replacing them is not simple.

- Milk contributes important nutrients, including Calcium, Vitamin D, Potassium, Protein, Vitamin A, Phosphorus.
- Replacing these nutrients is difficult. Research shows that replacing the nutrients lost from reduced milk intake would require broader menu replanning, not minor substitutions.

Today's flavored milk has changed.

- Added sugar levels are down nearly 60% since 2006.
- 37 school milk processors committed to flavored milk options with fewer than 10 grams of added sugar per serving by SY 2025/26, and 100% met the commitment.

BOTTOM LINE

Flavored milk is a practical way to help students consume milk and its essential nutrients while schools continue to offer products with lower added sugar. Additional evaluations showed similar directionality: Ten self-studies of flavored milk elimination all saw declines, with a straight average sales change of -36%.

Sources: Prime Consulting review of school-based evaluations; Nutrition Today, May/June 2013; Journal of the American Dietetic Association, Oct. 20, 2009; Prime Consulting Group Annual School Surveys 2006–2025.