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February 16, 2024

Mayor Eric L. Adams
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I am disheartened to learn that the administration is balancing the budget at the expense of the health and wellness of our public school students. The budget cuts have left school lunch options unpalatable and lacking adequate nutrition. Regardless of the financial constraints on the City, allowing our children to go hungry is unacceptable.

Students face food insecurity and rely on these meals to support their nutritional needs. Insufficient nutrition harms a child's memory, concentration, motor skills, and their overall mood. It is well-documented that hunger hampers students' academic performance.

While student complaints about the quality of school lunches may seem clichéd, reports indicate that recent changes to the menu have left students choosing to starve. As any parent knows, students are not yet old enough to make informed decisions. As their entrusted caretakers, we must provide options that balance their nutritional needs with their often-picky palate. If that is the goal, the food options miss their mark.

These cost-saving changes are seemingly being done without guidance or nutritional consideration. In just the menu for high schools, it is clear there is inadequate protein to meet a child's growing needs. The options offered do not encourage thriving development, let alone sustain students throughout a school day.

As a public school mother, I'm appalled by the substandard quality of food being served to our children. The attached pictures further illustrate this concern. Let's not forget—our children's health and nutritional needs are as vital as their academic ones. NYC Public Schools must step up and give equal importance to both. The thought of our children going hungry is beyond unacceptable. I urge you to take immediate action to improve the quality of school meals. It's not just a request, it's a necessity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Iwen Chu'.

Iwen Chu
NYS Senator

cc: David C. Banks, NYC Public Schools Chancellor

