

Middle School Argumentative Essay

Chocolate Milk at School?

Do you prefer chocolate or strawberry milk to regular milk? If so, you need to be aware that some educators and health experts want to stop school cafeterias from providing chocolate or other-flavored milk to students. The article "Chocolate Milk in School Cafeterias?" explains that this group of people are concerned that the extra sugar added to chocolate milk, or other flavored milk, is unhealthy. While excess sugar is certainly unhealthy, I think it would be unwise to take chocolate milk out of cafeterias. The result of taking chocolate, or other flavored milk, out of the cafeterias would be worse than the little bit of extra sugar kids consume.

Kids who buy the lunches in the cafeteria have very few choices. In my elementary school, there might be a choice between two main dishes, two vegetables, and two kinds of milk. That makes for a very limited lunch! In middle school we have more choices, but they include potato chips, cookies, donuts and other snack foods. In fact, I know plenty of kids who buy nothing but junk food for lunch, but even kids who are trying to eat a well-balanced diet still have just a few choices. It seems to me that choosing milk, any kind of milk, is better than choosing soda or other sugary drinks. Kids who bring their lunches often need to buy a beverage to go with it. These kids could choose to bring a sugary drink instead of buying milk. Giving them a variety of great-tasting milks seems like a smart way to get them to make a healthy choice.

It is true that the sugar kids eat is a big concern. According to the American Heart Association, more than two thirds of American children are overweight to the point of obesity. Sugar is one of the causes. Strawberry-flavored milk has 27 grams of sugar, and that is about the same as a coke. People who are fighting to pull chocolate milk out of cafeterias think that that means drinking flavored milk is just like drinking a soft drink or eating candy. But that is not so. Milk, whether white, chocolate, or strawberry, contains calcium, vitamin D, and protein, which are all necessary for growing kids. In addition, milk has many other vitamins and minerals that kids need. In fact, only five percent of the total added sugar in kids' diets is from flavored milk! Not only that, but one study showed that drinking flavored milk did not make kids any more overweight than other kids. On the other hand, soft drinks are artificial and offer nothing nutritional, and candy is almost all sugar. Even so, no one would argue that strawberry milk is the same as a lollipop!

Even though nutritionists and other experts don't agree on this issue, it seems clear that it is better for kids to drink milk of any kind rather than to not drink milk at all. Taking flavored milk out of the cafeteria almost guarantees that there will be many students who will go through each day with no milk at all. Many parents claim that their kids will not drink white milk, even if it is the only kind offered. Their kids would rather go without, and going without milk means going without the wonderful benefits of milk. I know many kids who hate white milk, but like chocolate or strawberry milk very much. Even with the sugar concerns, it is better to have some of the benefits of milk, rather than none. Even experts from both the American Heart Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics also think it is better for kids to drink flavored milk than no milk at all. They agree that the benefits of flavored milk outweigh its

disadvantages. I think school officials need to listen to the experts, the parents and the students and continue to serve milk in school cafeterias. The benefits of drinking milk clearly outweigh the drawbacks. Keep the milks in the schools so that students will be able to make choices and still get the calcium and vitamins they need.