



November 2, 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We want to bring to your attention an upcoming challenge our school district is facing, which will impact the availability of milk for our students. This issue arises from a national problem within the supply chain of cardboard packaging for half-pint milk cartons, and it is essential for us to communicate this situation transparently.

Our milk supplier recently informed us by November 3 they are likely to run out of milk to provide to our school district. This stems from the shortage of cardboard packaging, not from the milk itself. We understand this may be puzzling, as you will continue to see milk on grocery store shelves. This issue is unique to school districts nationwide who use half-pint milk containers.

The national cardboard packaging shortage is a result of several complex factors, including disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic and increased demand for packaging materials, particularly in the e-commerce sector. While milk is still available in stores, the packaging we require for our half-pint cartons is becoming increasingly scarce, and we must adapt to this challenge.

We are actively working with our other suppliers to develop a plan that minimizes the impact on our students. Unfortunately, we cannot avoid the reality that our school district will run out of half-pint cartons of milk to serve. The duration of this disruption is uncertain but could range up to several months.

Our plan to minimize disruption while still providing good nutrition to our students includes:

- **ECEAP** classrooms: will continue to offer milk by transitioning to gallon sized containers.
- **All schools**: will continue to offer milk at BREAKFAST, transitioning to shelf stable milk at all sites. Soy milk will continue to be offered as milk alternate.
- **Elementary & middle schools**: Juice and 8oz bottles of water will be available at LUNCH. Juice will be considered a beverage and will NOT contribute towards fruit component. (Juice is not currently offered on the menu.)
- **High schools**: Juice and 8oz bottles of water will be available at LUNCH. Students may select both items. Juice may contribute towards fruit component (which is current practice).

We understand this situation may raise questions and concerns, and we are committed to keeping you informed every step of the way. Please visit the FAQs on our website for more information.

Thank you for your continued support, we ask for your understanding and patience as we navigate this challenge.

Sincerely,  
Everett Public Schools  
Food & Nutrition Services