

# **Governor's Budget Permanently Funds School Meals for All Minnesota Students**

***School meals for all leads to positive jumps in classroom performance, better attendance, and less food insecurity.***

**St. Paul, MN (Jan. 25, 2022)** — Today Minnesota Governor Walz released his budget for the 2022 legislative session – and it includes permanent funding for school meals for students statewide.

For the past two school years, federal pandemic relief funding has provided free school meals for all Minnesota students. This has allowed all schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program to offer free school meals, regardless of a student's financial status or geographic location. This aid is set to expire at the end of the current school year. Families across the state will be affected and more than half a million children face losing access to school meals.

“No child should be hungry, and prioritizing school meals is an important step for students' mental and physical wellbeing. I'm profoundly grateful to Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan for including school meals for all in their budget!” said Rep. Sydney Jordan, DFL. “I'm so happy that students and their families will no longer have to worry about learning on an empty stomach.”

When students have access to breakfast and lunch at school, research shows there is a positive correlation to better grades and attendance. Including school meals for all students also helps reduce food insecurity – an issue faced by families in every Minnesota county.

“This legislation will have a meaningful impact for students in every community throughout the state — urban, suburban and rural. It will ease stress on both families and schools and is critical in removing stigma around free and reduced lunch,” said Colleen Moriarty, executive director of Hunger Solutions Minnesota. “School meals for all puts our students on a level playing field for success in school.”

In addition to the co-sign of Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan, this effort is supported by a broad coalition of Minnesota businesses, nonprofits, health groups, and education and youth partners. Coalition members include: Allina Health, American Diabetes Association, Appetite for Change, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cargill, Children's Minnesota, Ed Allies, Education Minnesota, Every Meal, Food Research and Action Center, General Mills, Hunger Solutions Minnesota, MAZON, Minnesota Farmers Union, Minnesota Legal Aid, Minnesota School Social Workers Association, Second Harvest Heartland, Share Our Strength, The Food Group, Twin Cities Medical Society, and YouthPrise.

Learn more at [www.hungerfreeschoolsmn.org](http://www.hungerfreeschoolsmn.org).

**About Hunger-Free Schools Minnesota**

The Hunger-Free Schools campaign works to make school meals free for all students statewide. Led by [Hunger Solutions Minnesota](#) and [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota](#), we're a robust coalition of business and health care leaders, nonprofit and advocacy groups, and education and youth partners. Collectively, we're driven by the vision of no hungry students, more equitable schools, and a stronger, more resilient Minnesota.

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