



Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.™

2021 Issue Paper

Support Federal Universal Meals

Through the extension of federal waivers during the COVID-19 pandemic, free school breakfast, lunch, summer meals and afterschool meals have offered a lifeline for families struggling with economic uncertainty or the challenges of balancing work and distance learning.

These programs, proven to fuel student success and combat child hunger and obesity, will be critical to our nation's recovery. To support the health and achievement of America's students and ensure the financial sustainability of school meal programs, the Minnesota School Nutrition Association calls on Minnesota state officials, and our legislature to urge Congress to:

Permanently expand the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to offer all students meals at no charge as an integral part of the educational experience.

Specifically, we call on the Minnesota State Legislature to pass a resolution calling on Congress to take action to permanently expand the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to offer all students meals at no charge.

Federal Universal Meals will:

- Provide all students equal access to school breakfast and lunch and eliminate any stigma or barriers for students to benefit from these meals.
- Nutritious school meals are proven to support learning, improve attendance and classroom behavior and contribute to overall health and wellness.
- Ensure no child goes hungry during the school day or accrues unpaid meal debt, a burden on families and school district budgets.
- Eliminate the costly, time-consuming meal application and verification process, and streamline paperwork and reporting requirements for parents and school personnel.
- Have little impact on the federal budget as the CBO estimates a \$4 billion annual cost to accomplish universal lunch and breakfast nation-wide.