



## **Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.™**

The Minnesota School Nutrition Association (MSNA) is deeply committed to the nutritional health and well-being of children and recognizes the importance of healthy food for growth and student achievement. Therefore, MSNA endorses the following positions for 2017.

### **HF 1217 (Rep. Deb Kiel) & SF 1038 (Sen. Bill Weber)**

#### **Increase School Lunch Reimbursement by 5 cents**

- The top priority of MSNA members is an increase in school lunch aid. Specifically, MSNA supports a 5 cent increase in school lunch aid from 12.5 cents to 17.5 cents per lunch.
- Minnesota's last increase in state reimbursement for all lunches served occurred in 2013 and increased the reimbursement from 12 cents to 12.5 cents.
- In 2014 Minnesota increased payments for the 'reduced price' category of lunches served so those students are able to eat lunch for free.
- The school lunch program faces a significant financial challenge. The cost of food, increased regulations, and the cost of compliance make it increasingly difficult to cover the cost of a school lunch through the current combination of student payments, federal funding and state funding.
- The gap between the cost of producing a school lunch and the revenues received is now 47 cents for every lunch served. This is a 3 cent increase over the previous fiscal year.
- New federal requirements to serve more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains have made school lunches more costly to produce.
- Increased state funding will help offset some of the increased cost and help ensure that every child has access to a healthy school lunch at an affordable price.

## **School Breakfast**

MSNA supports expanding free school breakfast beyond kindergarten.

- The 2014 Legislature made school breakfast free for kindergarteners. MSNA supports expanding free school breakfast to additional grade levels.
- Numerous studies have documented the educational benefits of school breakfast. Students who eat school breakfast show increased academic achievement and improved behavior, are more attentive, and visit the school nurse less frequently.

## **Farm to School**

MSNA supports measures to encourage schools to purchase locally grown agricultural products.

- MSNA supports funding provided through the Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation (AGRI) program to advance Farm to School programs.
- Farm to school facilitates education about nutrition, food, and agriculture in and out of the classroom, and helps to support local economies by supporting local farms.

## **Unpaid Meals & Angel Accounts**

MSNA supports individual and community efforts to help buy-down unpaid school meal debt.

- Students whose families are at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Guideline eat lunch for free.