



Position Paper

For five years, House File 2467, an act relating to school meal debt, has allowed every Iowa student undeniable access to breakfast and lunch at school. We celebrate this policy support for students.

Thank you! But the meals provided cost money that in many cases cannot be recovered by the non-profit school foodservice account, an enterprise fund.

Legislative Actions:

- PROGRESS TOWARDS HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL: HF 575, HF 363
 - Pass HF 575: a \$1,540,922 (FY23 fiscal estimate) investment (\$66.99 per student) by Iowans to eliminate the reduced price copay, allowing an additional 23,000 students to eat at school without any payment from their families. Passing HF 575 reduces the barriers to feed students, supports a welcoming lunchroom environment, & reduces administrative burden: win, win, win!
 - Create and pass a bill that allows us to provide breakfast to all Iowa students at school without a cost to families.
 - Pass HF 363: allowing all Iowa students to enjoy two Buy American compliant, hot, safe school meals with no strings attached. It is not just students from low income families that struggle to pay for school meals. This impacts all income brackets.
 - Please join our Iowa Healthy School Meals for All Coalition.
- GROW THE LOCAL AGRICULTURE ECONOMY: HF 363
 - Pass HF 363: supports students and gives any Iowan, and immediate neighbors to Iowa, an excellent opportunity to contribute to school meals in Iowa. School meals include fruit, vegetables (dark green, red/orange, starchy, legumes), grains, meat, and milk. We grow these in Iowa. Let's grow more, grow year round, and process more of these in Iowa. Consistent meal participation and startup funding is needed for stakeholders to plan their investments to allow this system to grow.
- LISTEN TO YOUR HEART AND YOUR HEAD, AND TRUST YOUR GUT.
 - Put yourself in our shoes: if you were hired to invest your knowledge, time and energy in preparing excellent, nutritious meals for students at school, is it right for school nutrition professionals to be debt collectors? To categorize what a student pays for meals based on their family's income level? To have to discreetly tell students they don't have enough money, here's a note for mom and dad to send money. What about students that don't have enough money, don't have a lunch to bring to school, and don't go through the lunch line? With this structure, there will always be students that don't qualify for a price reduction and can't afford to pay. We're moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, and care providers just like you. Our gut tells us: this isn't right.

Thank you for serving Iowans!

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