



December 10, 2020

Chair Davnie, Chair Nelson, and education committee members:

Minnesota needs accurate data at the state level to target funding equitably. Schools have faced many unique challenges this year, grappling with barriers to implementing standard procedures, including gathering accurate information on free and reduced-price lunch eligibility. We are strongly supportive of the proposed one-time policy changes that can a) help secure the most accurate student count possible, and b) prevent sudden fluctuations in school funding due to COVID-19 irregularities.

We support proposed legislation that would expand the free-and-reduced priced lunch application to January 4, 2021 for the fall 2020 count. In this unprecedented school year, extending the deadline gives students, families, and districts a longer timeline for ensuring that their FRPL counts are accurate and reflective of the current student population that they are serving. This not only gives more time to secure information from families but allows for a better reflection of actual student count and new family needs, knowing that some schools may have seen an initial decline in enrollment and family incomes have fallen due to COVID-19. Taking the time to get a more accurate FRPL count will help ensure that schools that serve larger populations of students from low-income families do not miss out on much-needed resources, like compensatory funding, so that schools can equitably serve and meet the needs of their students.

We believe these changes are reasonable and, because of the short-term nature of the legislation, maintain flexibility for the future Legislature. Thinking long-term, we hope policymakers will adopt more structural reforms to Minnesota's various funding streams to ensure that our school spending prioritizes historically underserved students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JC" with a flourish.

Josh Crosson  
Executive Director, EdAllies