



January 24, 2023  
House Education Finance Committee

Dear Chair Youakim and Committee Members,

On behalf of Children's Minnesota, I am writing in support of HF 5 which provides no cost breakfast and lunch to all Minnesota students. By creating Hunger-Free Schools we can make Minnesota's education system more equitable and set up all students to achieve their highest potential.

Children's Minnesota is the state's largest pediatric health care system. We serve an incredibly diverse patient population and 46 percent of our patients are insured through Medicaid. Because of the diversity of patients we see, we know the unique and varied challenges Minnesota children face. Many lack the basic supports they need to thrive, such as safe and stable housing, access to high quality childcare and adequate access to healthy food.

Proper nutrition is fundamental to every aspect of a child's health and wellbeing. Today, 1 in 8 Minnesota children is food-insecure, with Black and Latino families disproportionately impacted. Missing meals and experiencing hunger can impair a child's development and academic achievement. Studies have shown that children who experience food insecurity are more likely to struggle in school, have increased absenteeism and experience behavioral and mental health challenges like anxiety and depression. Students that have access the food they need, when they need it are healthier and can focus on learning, not hunger.

At Children's Minnesota, our vision is to be every family's essential partner in raising healthier children. As the kid experts in our community, it is our goal to improve the health and wellbeing of kids in our state. We urge your support for HF5, which will ensure Minnesota students have access to the nourishment they need to be successful in school.

Sincerely,

Amanda Jansen, MPP  
Director of Public Policy  
Children's Minnesota