

January 23, 2023

Minnesota House Education Finance and Policy Committee
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155



Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the House Education Finance and Policy Committee,

As the coalition behind the Hunger-Free Schools campaign, we are writing today to express support of HF5, which would provide no cost breakfast and lunch to all students in Minnesota. By ensuring that all schools in our state are Hunger-Free Schools, we can eliminate hunger in Minnesota's classrooms; eliminate stigma from the lunchroom; and reduce the paperwork strain that burdens Minnesotan families and schools.

In Minnesota, 1 in 4 food-insecure kids comes from a household whose income disqualifies them from accessing free or reduced-cost meals at school. For a state that prides itself in being an exceptional place to raise a family, this is unacceptable.

School breakfast and lunch can account for more than half of a child's daily calories, providing sustenance that they may not have reliable access to at home. School meals also help establish lifelong healthy eating habits, and can reduce the likelihood of chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease developing later in life. Studies also show that school meal participation lessens the achievement gap and allows students to focus on what really matters when they're at school – learning.

Providing free school meals to all students is an investment in Minnesota's future. It supports student success, working parents, teachers and nutrition staff, and strengthens our state's foundation for a solid and sustainable future. We urge you to support HF5, which would provide today's students the support they need to grow into Minnesota's business leaders, parents, and legislators of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Better Health
Allina Health
American Diabetes Association
Appetite for Change
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
Cargill
Children's Minnesota
EdAllies
Education Minnesota
Every Meal
Food Research and Action Center
General Mills
Hunger Solutions Minnesota
Land Stewardship Project

Land O'Lakes
Local Public Health Association
MAZON
Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid
Minnesota Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics
Minnesota Business Coalition for Racial Equity
Minnesota Farmers Union
Minnesota School Social Workers Association
Multicultural Autism Action Network
Second Harvest Heartland
SEIU 284
Share Our Strength
The Food Group
Youthprise

