

It's time for Ohio to close the gap.



"I can teach a student without a pencil, desk, or textbook.
I cannot teach a student who is hungry."

The problem:

Hunger exists in every school district.

1 in 5 kids in Ohio experience hunger. And 1 in 3 Children experiencing hunger don't qualify for free school meals. School meals are one of the farthest-reaching anti-hunger programs for children, yet many are still left behind, including:



Families who struggle to meet basic needs.

A family of four earning just above \$55,500--far below of a living wage-- does not qualify for free school meals.



Students who qualify, but fall through the cracks.

Stigma inhibits participation, especially when students are afraid to be labeled "poor" for participating in school meal programs.



Some schools with significant need unable to offer free meals to all.

Some high poverty schools in Ohio qualify for Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), but are unable to participate, often due to financial barriers.

The policy solution:

Healthy School Meals **for All.**

Child hunger is a solvable problem. Ohio can help end child hunger by investing in school meals, supplementing the federal reimbursement we already receive through the National School Lunch Program. This policy will:

- **Provide breakfast and lunch at no cost for all students every day at school**
- **Ensure nutritious meals for students, including improvements in farm to school partnerships**
- **Maximize federal funding by fully leveraging existing federal provisions**

— **67% of Ohio voters support Healthy School Meals for All** —

Impact and Benefits

Impact

Providing school meals to all students would benefit students and schools across Ohio



Over 2,000 Schools
newly able to provide free meals for all.

1.3 million more students
would attend schools that provide school meals for all students.

Benefits

Levels the playing field for kids and families

- Reduces child hunger
- Eliminates stigma
- Provides financial relief to families

Supports child health and education

- improved educational outcomes, including increased test scores, improved academic attendance, and increased graduation rates.

Invests in Ohio's economy

- Builds capacity for farm-to-school
- Improves school nutrition finances



**Saves families
\$150.00 per child
per month on
groceries**



**Ensures every child
access to at least
one healthy meal
per day**



**Invests in local
farms and local
fresh foods**

Visit HungerFreeSchoolsOH.org



This policy is endorsed by a broad collective of over 55 anti-hunger, education, food, nutrition, health, and business organizations and associations committed to ensuring all students have access to school meals at no cost. See the full list at: <https://hungerfreeschoolsoh.org/who-we-are>