

# 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](https://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>