

**Franklin Public Schools
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038**

Action Required

Subject: Resolution

Date: March 14, 2023

Dept: SC

Reason: Required Vote

Enclosure: yes

Recommendation:

Franklin School Committee Resolution Universal Free School Meals

I recommend support of the resolution for Universal Free School Meals as discussed.

Action Requested of the School Committee:

Majority vote of the School Committee is required.

Vote Tabulator

C. Bernstein: Y / N D. McNeill: Y / N

D. Callaghan: Y / N M. Whitmore: Y / N

Al Charles: Y / N D Spencer: Y / N

E Stokes: Y / N Action: _____

FRANKLIN SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION: UNIVERSAL FREE SCHOOL MEALS

TO: Governor Maura Healey
Senate President Karen Spilka
House Speaker Ronald Mariano
Joint Education Committee Chair Jason Lewis
Joint Education Committee Chair Denise Garlick
Education Secretary Patrick Tutwiler
Education Commissioner Jeffrey Riley

CC: Senator Rebecca Rausch
Representative Jeffrey Roy

WHEREAS, nearly 25% of food-insecure students in Massachusetts are not eligible for free and reduced meals under current federal guidelines;

WHEREAS, the number of children participating in school lunch in Massachusetts has increased by more than 50,000 daily since it was made universal and free in 2020;

WHEREAS, students who eat free and nutritious meals at school greatly reduce financial strain on family food budgets;

WHEREAS, not having to experience hunger at school allows children to thrive academically, physically, and emotionally, with fewer behavior and attention problems and lower rates of suspensions and excessive absences;

WHEREAS, lunches from the National School Lunch Program provide one-third or more of the recommended levels for key nutrients, with research showing that a well-nourished child is a better learner and participant in school;

WHEREAS, students who participate in school meals are more likely to eat fruits, vegetables and milk, establishing lifelong healthy eating habits with nutrient-dense foods that contribute to better health;

WHEREAS, free meals for all children helps end the stigma associated with need-based free and reduced lunches by eliminating lunch shaming when families have overdrawn accounts, and freeing districts from having to collect from families, which can result in resentment when we are trying to build stronger, more connected communities;

WHEREAS, the time and opportunity for society to make a lasting commitment to meet this core human need is now, as California, Colorado and Maine have recently made universal free school meals permanent and half of all other states are in active discussions to do so;

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that we call on state leaders and legislators to pass bills HD766/SD1013 to make universal free breakfast and lunch permanent in all public schools, with the state covering costs not covered by Federal funds and schools actively promoting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to families;

we further call for the immediate passage of a supplemental budget to fund universal free school meals for the remainder of the current school year, which will run out of funds this March without additional state action;

and finally we invite other local officials and School Committees to call on their state representatives to do the same.

Respectfully:

Franklin School Committee, Denise Spencer, Chair
Passed:

Resources

MA State Legislature: [Senate Bill SD1013](#) and identical [House Bill HD766](#), “An Act relative to universal school meals”

Project Bread: [the benefits of universal free school meals](#)

Project Bread: [School Meals For All campaign information](#)

Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center: [states that have passed universal free school meals \(so far\)](#)
