



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT FROM JENNIFER MARTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW YORK SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

***“This Budget Deal Means That Thousands of New York Children
Could Go Hungry or Undernourished”***

“The recently passed New York State budget ignored the needs of thousands of New York families who, facing rising inflation, are going to be forced to make decisions about paying their bills or paying for their children to get healthy meals.

By not funding [Healthy School Meals for All](#), 2,000 New York schools and 800,000 New York students will lose access to free meals at school. That’s beyond irresponsible in these difficult times. We think New Yorkers need to know that this budget deal means that thousands of New York children could go hungry or undernourished.

NYSNA and 300 other state education associations, anti-hunger groups, child nutrition advocates, and school districts urged state legislators and Gov. Hochul to include the Healthy School Meals for All proposal in the FY2023 state budget but their voices – and those of New York’s schoolchildren – were ignored.

We will keep the pressure on our state and federal elected leaders to solve this crisis and to feed our children.”

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Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic schools across the nation have offered meals to students at no cost, ensuring they have access to a healthy breakfast and lunch each school day, even when remote learning was in place. However, federal waivers that gave schools the ability to do so are set to expire in June and the federal government has failed to extend the waivers or provide additional funding.

School meals are among the most effective anti-hunger programs and are proven to reduce food insecurity; improve mental and physical health; support students’ ability to thrive academically; and bolster education, health, and economic equity. In schools with universal meals, students had improved results on standardized tests, attention and learning retention, and overall tardiness. Participation in school nutrition programs also

have been shown to result in decreased rates of mental illness, depression, disruptive behavior, and obesity, and improved rates of overall behavioral health. Free meals for all also reduce stigmas related to free or reduced-price meals.

About the New York School Nutrition Association:

The New York School Nutrition Association is a cohesive group of school nutrition employees, managers, directors, registered dietitians, nutritionists, and industry members in New York State committed to ensuring that all students have access to healthy meals. NYSNA provides information, services, and continuing education to school nutrition and food service professionals in New York State. For more information:

<https://www.nyschoolnutrition.org/>

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