

NEWS RELEASE

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School Meals 4 All CT Coalition Calls for Funding of Meals at Connecticut Schools for All Students

(Hartford, CT) – School Meals 4 All CT, a coalition of nearly two dozen food, hunger, school and health nonprofits, today called on Governor Lamont and the General Assembly to approve state funding to resume access to school meals for all students in grades K-12 that until late 2022, had been funded by federal pandemic dollars.

The coalition (*full list below*) is seeking immediate funding for the current school year, and for an appropriation in the FY24 and FY25 budgets to continue to provide meals in the upcoming school years.

“One in eight children suffer from hunger. Some qualify for free meals; others come from families whose income is too high to qualify, but still cannot afford school meals. Hungry kids can’t learn,” Lucy Nolan, Policy Director for End Hunger CT!, said. “No-cost school meals for all students provides nutritional, but also ends the stigma that comes with subsidies, lessens the administrative burden on schools and relieves the financial stress on families.”

Nolan, whose organization is leading the coalition effort, said the state spent about \$30 million in federal funds in the first months of the FY24 school year, and expects to need \$35-\$50 million to provide meals through the end of this year.

With the state budget surplus projected to be \$1 billion in the coming fiscal year, and even higher over the following two years, the state has the funds to pay for school meals for all students.

Federal funding, launched during the coronavirus pandemic, was not renewed by Congress and ran out in November and December of last year, depending on the school district. With the loss of funding, school districts have returned to the state’s meal funding programs

(more)

Currently in Connecticut, a family of four qualifies for no-cost meals if their pre-tax income is less than \$36,075. A family of four can qualify for reduced cost meals if they earn less than \$51,338.

“The state’s income requirements for no-cost and reduced-cost meals were already outdated, but in the current economy with double-digit inflation, families across the state are struggling more than ever to make ends meet,” Nolan added. “Providing meals for all of our students is highly effective in providing nutrition and helping all of our children focus on education and learning.”

The School Meals 4 All CT coalition includes the following organizations:

Agudath Israel of America	Opportunity Knocks for Middletown’s Young Children
American Academy of Pediatrics, CT Chapter	Person to Person
American Heart Association	School Nutrition Association of CT (SNACT)
Common Ground	Tory Hill
CT Association of School-based Health Centers	Tusk Philanthropies
CT Food System Alliance	United Way of Connecticut
CT Foodshare	
CT/RI YMCA Partnership	
End Hunger CT!	
Farm Institute New England	
Farm to School Collaborative	
Foodcorps	
Food Research and Action Center	
Foodshed Network of Greenwich	
Hispanic Federation	
Middlesex Coalition for Children	
New Britain Roots	