

ANNC 20
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**ANNUAL NATIONAL
CONFERENCE**

JULY 9-11, 2023



REACH HIGHER

DENVER, COLORADO



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Building Momentum for Free School Meals for All

Speakers



Alexis Bylander
Food Research & Action Center



Michelle Frey
USDA

Panelists



Nicole Melia
*Great Valley School District
Pennsylvania*



Sarah Coughlin Carroll
*Braintree Public Schools
Massachusetts*



Shannon Solomon
*Aurora Public Schools
Colorado*



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Affiliation or Financial Disclosure

All speakers have nothing to Disclose



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Food Research & Action Center

- National anti-hunger organization advocating on behalf of the federal nutrition programs
- www.frac.org

Benefits of Free School Meals for All

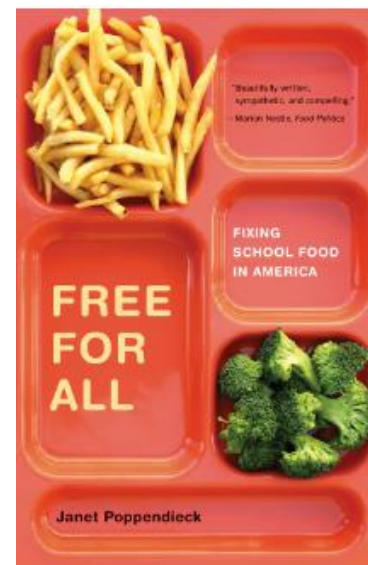
- Ensure all students are hunger-free and ready to learn
- Reduce stigma
- End unpaid school meal debt
- Ease administrative burdens
- Supportive innovative service models
- Advance racial equity



Photo Credit: Fulton County Schools

This is not a new issue

- Dr. Poppendieck's book is a history of school nutrition in the U.S.
- There have been calls for free school meals since at least the 1940s



This Pandemic Changed the Landscape

- COVID-19 highlighted the critical role that school meals play for children
- Free school meals for all students during the pandemic served as a trial run for a free school meals for all policy



Purchased AP photo

FRAC Polling Shows Public Support



63%

of voters nationwide support legislation that would make free school meals permanently available to all students.



In the news

Free School Meals: When the Feds Step Back, States Step Up

School meals should remain free for all children — today and always

States Are Fighting to Bring Back Free School Meals

Three Pathways

State legislation- each state, one at a time

Federal legislation- all states, all at once

Incremental expansion at state or fed level

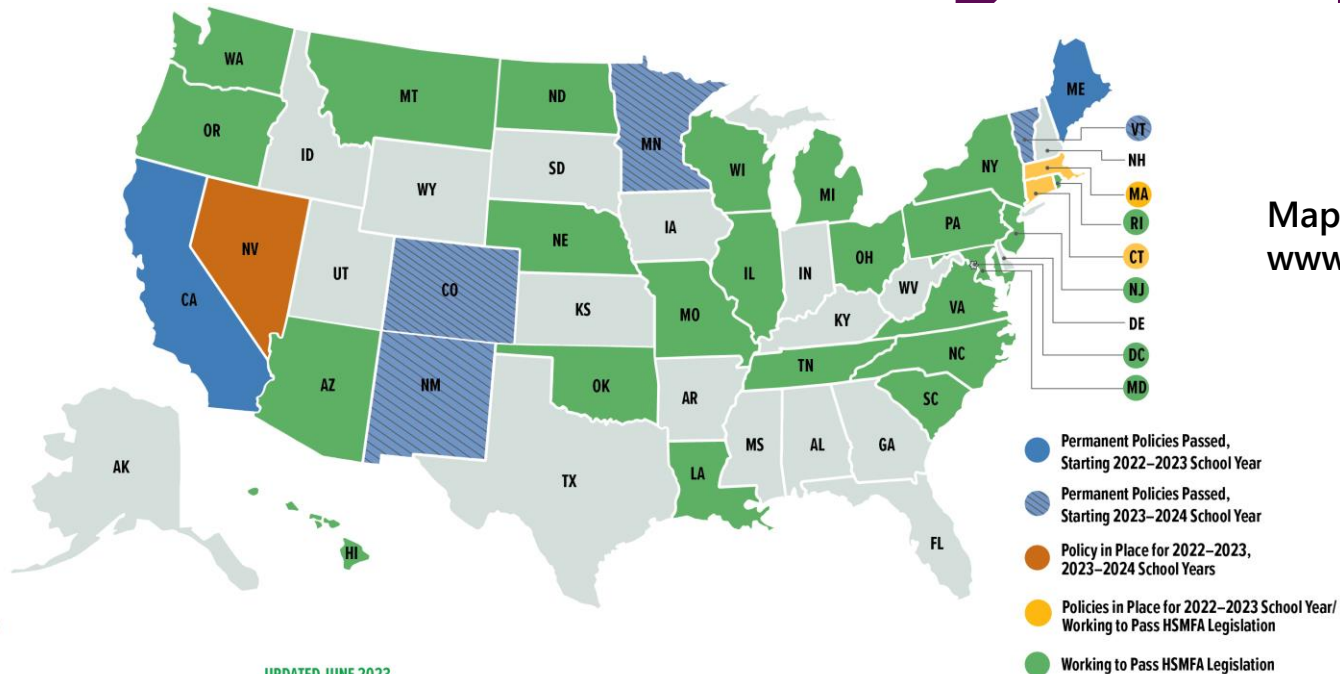


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State Legislation

State Action is Leading the Way



UPDATED JUNE 2023

Map image available at
www.FreeSchoolMealsforAll.org

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz signs free school meals bill into law



FOOD FOR THOUGHT: FREE MEALS FOR ALL NEW MEXICO STUDENTS



How do free school meal bills pass?



Stand alone bills (ex. Minnesota)



One part of larger budget bill (ex. California)



Ballot measure (ex. Colorado)

Components of Legislation

- Core component:
 - State funding to cover costs between federal reimbursements and the cost of free school meals for all students
- Other possible components:
 - State funding for staff training, equipment, local food procurement, wages, technical assistance, evaluation etc.



Photo Credit: Fulton County Schools



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STATE HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL CAMPAIGNS

ANTI-HUNGER, EDUCATION, AND CHILD ADVOCATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE CALLING FOR THEIR STATE TO IMPLEMENT HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL. CHECK OUT THEIR CAMPAIGN WEBSITES HERE.

CALIFORNIA
COLORADO
CONNECTICUT
MAINE
MARYLAND
MASSACHUSETTS
MINNESOTA

NEW YORK
NORTH CAROLINA
OHIO
PENNSYLVANIA
RHODE ISLAND
VERMONT
WISCONSIN

School nutrition staff are key partners

- Join statewide coalitions
- Testify at legislative hearings
- Write letters to the editor
- Identify additional community champions (parents, students, administrators...)
- Share information, stories and photos about the great things happening in school food (i.e. quality meals, innovative practices, engaged staff etc.)
- Tell policymakers what your districts need to be successful (i.e. equipment, training, partnerships, resources etc.)

Types of Coalition Members

Anti-hunger advocacy organizations

State School Nutrition Association chapters

PTAs

Unions

Teachers

Health care organizations

Child advocacy organizations

Farm to school groups

The list goes on and on!



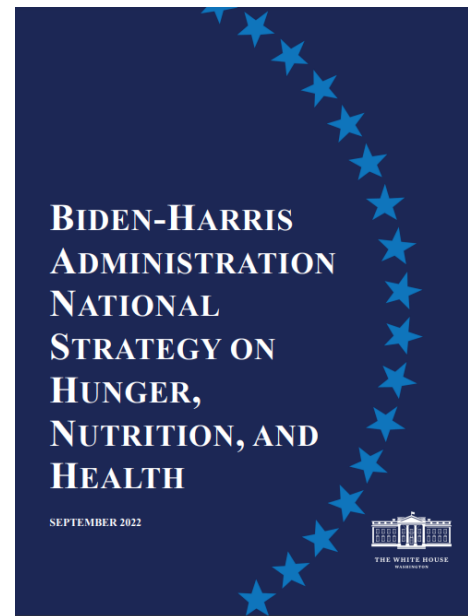
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Federal Legislation

White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health

- Advance a pathway to free healthy school meals for all.
- The Biden-Harris Administration will take a major first step by working with Congress to expand access to healthy, free school meals for 9 million more children by 2032. Anti-hunger advocacy organizations



Universal School Meals Program Act



17 Senate cosponsors



81 House cosponsors



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National Healthy School Meals for All Coalition

The time for nationwide Healthy School Meals for All is now.





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Incremental Expansion

Incremental Expansion

- **Expand the Community Eligibility Provision**
 - Lower the participation threshold
 - Increase the multiplier
 - Make CEP statewide an option

www.FreeSchoolMealsforAll.org

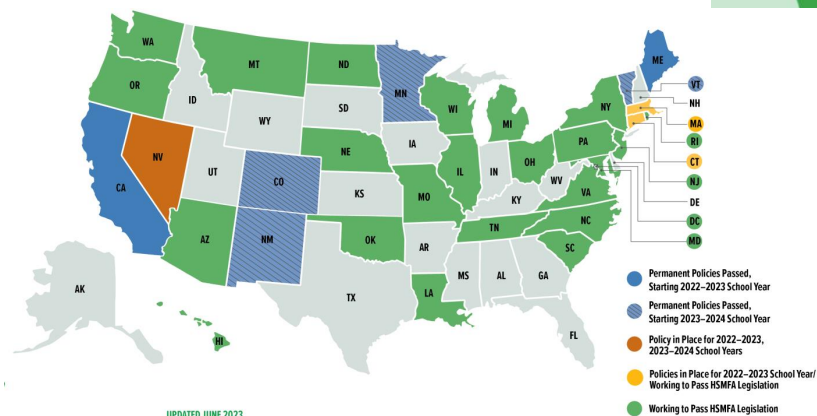


FRAC
Food Research & Action Center

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RAISE YOUR HAND for Healthy School Meals for All

 TWEET YOUR SUPPORT. #SchoolMeals4All



UPDATED JUNE 2023



State Healthy School Meals for All Legislative Chart

THE LATEST UPDATES ON STATE HSM4A CAMPAIGNS!

DOWNLOAD NOW!

Key Takeaways



Free school meals for all is the future for school food, supporting nutrition and academic achievement



States are leading the way on passage and implementation



Nationwide free school meals are needed so all children, regardless of where they live, have the nutrition they need to learn and thrive



School nutrition staff play a critical role in advocacy efforts



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USDA Support of Healthy School Meals for All

Michelle Frey
Branch Chief, School Meals Policy Division
Child Nutrition Programs, Food & Nutrition
Service

USDA Support

- **Community Eligibility Provision**
 - Proposed Rule published March 2023 to lower eligibility threshold from 40% to 25%
 - Final Rule expected to be published during SY 2023-24
- **FY 2024 Budget Proposal**
- **With FRAC, convened meetings with HSMFA States**

Pennsylvania



Massachusetts



Colorado



Pennsylvania



Massachusetts



Colorado



Pennsylvania



Massachusetts



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