



This week, Gov. Andrew Cuomo released his new “No Student Goes Hungry Program,” a five-point proposal to ensure that New York students are able to get the nutrition they need to succeed.

The following is a joint statement from New York Hunger Solutions, Share Our Strength, Tusk/Montgomery Philanthropies and the New York School Nutrition Association.

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STATEMENT: We thank Governor Cuomo for his leadership and support in the fight to end childhood hunger in New York. The policies outlined in his new “No Student Goes Hungry Program” have the power to affect the lives of thousands of students across our state.

Nearly 1 million New York children grow up in families that struggle with hunger. This hunger takes a profound toll on their health, academic achievement, and ability to reach their full potential. For these kids, school breakfast is critical. The traditional method of serving the meal before the school day starts, however, can be inaccessible to many children. As a result, today only a fraction of the students who may need this meal are eating it.

Governor Cuomo’s plan would boost school breakfast participation by requiring schools where 70% of students qualify for free or reduced meals to serve breakfast “after the bell,” making breakfast as accessible as lunch because it is served during the school day. Combined with policies to expand the Farm-To-School program and improve meal quality, this plan will help students of all ages, backgrounds and financial situations get the healthy meals they need to succeed. Eating a school breakfast has been demonstrated to improve test scores, reduce absenteeism, and improve classroom behavior.

The proposal would make New York a national “farm to school” leader by offering an incentive to schools to purchase local, NY products. This proposal will expand school children’s access to healthy New York food while bolstering the state’s agricultural economy by providing school nutrition programs with an increased reimbursement.

Increased access to fresh food in schools has been found to have a positive impact in lowering child obesity rates, which promotes healthier families and communities. This in turn has a positive impact on student’s mental health with improved social skills and self-esteem and an improved work ethic. Additionally, when students eat healthier and on a regular basis their academic performance increases with better attendance rates, improved behavior and concentration and higher test scores.

Connecting kids to the meals they need isn’t just the right thing to do; it’s also the smart thing to do. Increasing participation in school breakfast makes economic sense, bringing new, untapped federal dollars into schools and supporting local economies by driving new purchases of locally sourced food and new employment opportunities. It also protects and supports current investments in our school systems, because we know that kids can’t be hungry to learn if they’re just plain hungry.

The “No Student Goes Hungry Program” is good for our students and good for our state. We look forward to working with the legislature in the months ahead to make this proposal a reality, building a model for success that can act as a blueprint for states across the nation looking to end childhood hunger.”