



Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.™

VT House Agriculture Committee, February 23, 2023

School Nutrition Association of Vermont (SNA-VT)

Harley Sterling, President

H.165 -Universal School Meals and Local Purchasing Incentive Grant Program

Dear Representatives,

We are writing to express our sincere gratitude for your support of Universal School Meals (USM) and the VT Local Purchasing Incentive Grant Program (LPI), and to urge you to **please pass H.165 leaving the bill as is for now.**

Separately, please recommend in your budget memo \$500,000 in base funding for the Local Purchasing Incentive for FY2024.

As School Nutrition Directors, we are committed to seeing every student in VT schools have access to universal breakfast and lunch everyday, and we believe that making the funding source for USM permanent, off the top of the ed fund, is the first step toward ensuring our school nutrition programs have the consistency they need to continue purchasing more locally grown food, and getting it on the trays of students throughout the state.

We are thrilled with the success of the LPI during the first two years of implementation, and we see exciting developments, collaborations, and partnerships happening between school districts and food producers, and distributors throughout VT. We fully expect more School Food Authorities will meet the LPI goal of 15% next year, and that the partnerships between VT farms and our schools will continue to grow.

As we look to the future, SNA-VT is excited to work with this committee to fine-tune improvements to the LPI, but right now, ensuring USM for our students, and passing H.165 is the essential first step toward a future where VT food is served to VT kids in schools, everyday.

Sincerely,

School Nutrition Association of Vermont directors.