

1 in 5 Vermont children live in families that can't always afford to put food on the table

Kids who struggle with hunger face real barriers to growing up healthy and succeeding in school ● ● ● ● ●

They are at a greater risk for:

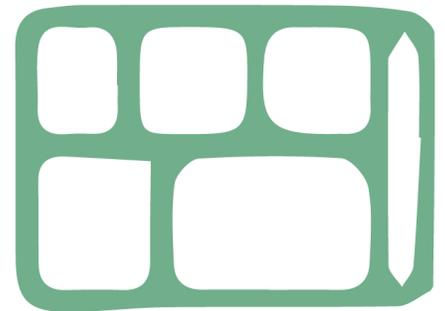
- Poor quality diets and nutrient deficiencies
- Chronic illnesses and increased hospital visits
- Cognitive, physical and emotional delays
- Lack of school readiness
- Increased, aggression, depression, and hyperactive behavior
- Diminished academic achievement
- Earning low wages as adults, perpetuating the cycle of food insecurity and poverty



Eating school meals decreases these barriers ● ● ●

School Meals have been proven to boost:

- Diet quality and nutrient intake
- Overall child health and development
- Classroom behavior and social interactions with peers
- Attendance rates
- Test scores
- The ability to focus, learn, and succeed in school



WHEN A SCHOOL PROVIDES UNIVERSAL MEALS, MORE LOW-INCOME STUDENTS EAT HEALTHY SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND LUNCH EVERY DAY!

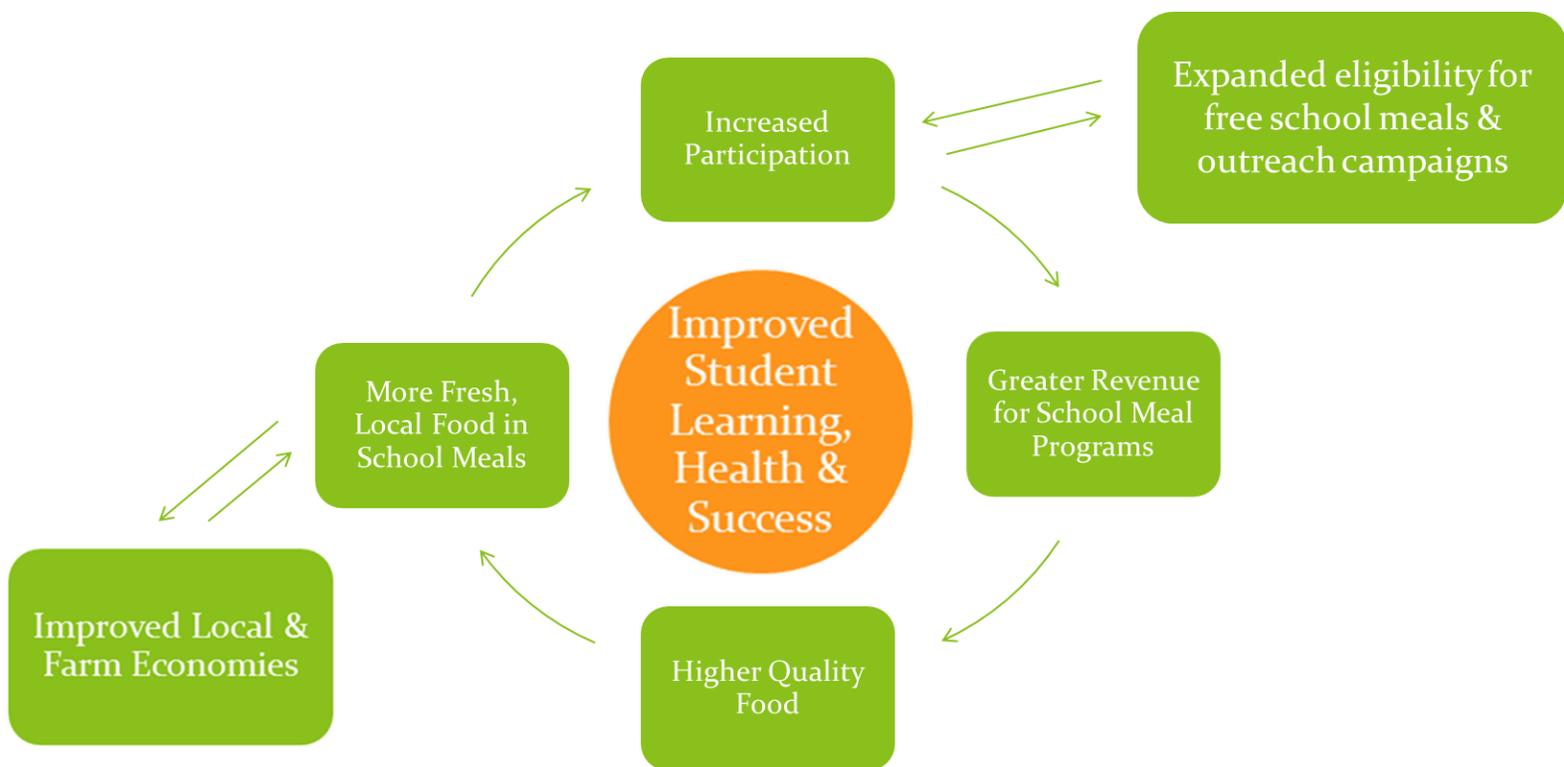
Academic Sources Available Upon Request

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Faye Conte & Anore Horton | April 6, 2016



The Farm To School—School Meal Program “Virtuous Cycle”

Improve Child Nutrition, Reduce Child Hunger
& Strengthen Local Economies



- Adding fresh, local foods, and making meals universal whenever possible, improves school meal quality and student participation.
- Increased participation means school meal programs have more resources for purchasing and processing local food.
- Strong school meal programs ensure that no student goes hungry.
- Farm to school and universal meals mean all kids get better nutrition and learn to love new foods—creating localvores for life.
- Local farmers get new orders, improving farm viability and Vermont’s economy.

Strengthen Farm to School Grants
Expand Universal School Meals
Grow Local School Food Purchasing



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Kids Eat Up Universal School Meals!

Based on interviews with Universal School Meals schools, this is what we know:

- 51 out of 52 schools report that their meal program finances have improved using Universal Meals.
- Statewide, student participation increased an average of 10% in schools providing universal meals —some schools have increased participation by more than 40%!
- 100% of school principals and food service managers said that trying to collect unpaid meal debt from parents was the “worst part” of their jobs.



Spotlight On: Eden Central School

- *Participation in school lunch increased by 16%*
- *Participation in school breakfast increased by 19%*
- *The school food service program is now in the black and has hired a new employee and purchased needed equipment.*
- *The State of Vermont saves \$780 each year from the Agency of Education's budget because they no longer need to reimburse Eden Central school \$.40 for each reduced price lunch and \$.30 for each reduced price breakfast served.*



WHAT ARE SCHOOL STAFF AROUND VERMONT SAYING?

“Students know if they have a bill, and they feel bad—you can see it. Universal meals makes for a lot happier environment. It gives kids the opportunity to be kids without the pressure of being financially strapped or stigmatized.”

~Eden Central School

“This program is having a positive financial impact. We are better off than if we hadn't done it.”

~Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union

“I got a lot of calls of gratitude from parents. It's an opportunity to give back to the community. It has had an immediate positive impact. Every school that can, should take advantage of it.”

~Brighton Elementary School

“Universal Meals has allowed the school to offer virtually limitless fruits & vegetables of many kinds. All are fresh, and we've been able to support more local farms and farmers. It's amazing!”

~Barre City Elementary & Middle School

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SCHOOL MEAL MODELS IN VERMONT

TRADITIONAL

- Students are segregated by income into three categories: free, reduced and full pay. This determines how much their families pay for a school meal.
- Most families must turn in a school meal application to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
- Thanks to legislative action in 2008 & 2013, the state of Vermont covers the reduced-price fee on behalf of families.
 - Breakfast: \$.30/meal
 - Lunch: \$.40/meal
- Schools receive a reimbursement from the USDA for each meal they serve.
- Reimbursement rates are dependent on the three categories of meals.
- In most cases, the reimbursement rate and price paid by families or the State does not cover the cost of the meal.
- Many families cannot afford the full-pay price and run up debts with the school.
- Many school meal programs operate in a deficit, which is passed on to taxpayers in the school budget process.
- Not all students in need eat school meals: there is a high level of stigma around eating free meals and many students in need don't qualify for the free meals.

UNIVERSAL (53 Schools)

- Students are no longer segregated by income: all students receive free meals, regardless of income.
- Families do not need to turn in school meal applications.
- Administrative burden is eased: schools no longer need to distribute, collect, calculate family income, approve or deny, and verify school meal applications.
- Administrators no longer jeopardize their relationship with parents by chasing school meal debts.
- The state of Vermont no longer pays the reduced price fee, saving the state money.
- More students eat nutritious complete school meals: participation rates increase
- Stigma in the cafeteria is eliminated.

53 VERMONT SCHOOLS, SERVING OVER 11,000 STUDENTS, CURRENTLY PROVIDE UNIVERSAL MEALS

Barre City Supervisory Union

Barre City Elementary & Middle School

Burlington School District

C.P. Smith Elementary School
Essential Early Education Center
Hunt Middle School
Integrated Arts Academy
J.J. Flynn Elementary School
ONTOP/Horizon School
Sustainability Academy*

Caledonia Central Supervisory Union

Walden School*

Caledonia North Supervisor Union

Sutton Village School

Essex-Caledonia Supervisory Union

Concord Graded & High School
Lunenburg & Gilman Schools

Franklin Central Supervisory Union

St. Albans City Elementary School*

Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union

Berkshire Elementary School
Enosburg Elementary School
Richford Elementary School
Richford Jr./Sr. High School

Grand Isle Supervisory Union

Alburg Community Education Center*
Isle La Motte School*

Lamoille North Supervisory Union

Eden Central School
Johnson Elementary School

North Country Supervisory Union

Brighton Elementary School
Charleston Elementary School
Coventry Village School
Lowell School
Holland Elementary School
Newport City Elementary School*
Troy Elementary School*

Orange East Supervisory Union

Waits River Valley USD

Orleans Central Supervisory Union

Albany Community School*
Barton Graded School
Brownington Central School
Irasburg Village School
Orleans Elementary School

Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union*

Lakeview Union School*
Wolcott Elementary School

Rutland City School District

Northeast Primary School
Northwest Elementary School
Rutland Intermediate School
Rutland Middle School

Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union

Bennington Elementary School*
Molly Stark School
Monument Elementary School
Mt. Anthony Middle School*
Mt. Anthony Union High School
Pownal Elementary School
Shaftsbury Elementary School
Woodford Hollow School

Washington Northeast Supervisory Union

Twinfield Union School (P2)*

Windham Southwest Supervisory Union

Readsboro Elementary

Winooski School District*

Winooski Elementary
Winooski Middle School
Winooski High School

*Recipients of Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets Farm to School Grants

26 Vermont schools, serving over 4,600 students, are either definitely or highly likely eligible to provide universal meals, but need assistance to get there. Of these, 21 have direct certification rates of 40–50%

Addison–Rutland Supervisory Union

Benson Village School (45.8%)
Fair Haven Graded School (46.2%)

Bennington–Rutland Supervisory Union

Currier Memorial School (46.2%)

Essex–Caledonia Supervisory Union

Guildhall Elementary (45.5%)

Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union

Montgomery Elementary (42.7%)

Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union

Swanton Elementary (39.5%)

Hartford Town School District

White River School (44.6%)

North Country Supervisory Union

Jay/Westfield Joint School (40%)*

Orange Southwest Supervisory Union

Randolph Elementary (38.9%)*

Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union

Craftsbury Elementary (41.9%)*

Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union

Neshobe Elementary (51.7%)
Sudbury Country School (44.8%)
Whiting School (64.5%)

Rutland South Supervisory Union

Tinmouth Elementary (46.7%)*

Springfield School District

Elm Hill School (48.3%)
Riverside Middle School (44.7%)
Union Street School (39.7%)

St. Johnsbury School District

The St. Johnsbury School (50.4%)*

Windham Central Supervisory Union

Jamaica Village School (40+ %)

Windham Northeast Supervisory Union

Athens Grafton School (39.1%)
Central Elementary (52.2%)

Windham Southeast Supervisory Union

Academy School (40+ %)*
Green Street School (50+ %)*
Guilford Central School (40+ %)
Oak Grove School (50+ %)*
Putney Central School (40%)*

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