

Theresa Utton-Jerman

Subject: Remarks for Budget Hearing related to Universal School Meals

Please support a new Agency of Education position within the Child Nutrition Program so that schools that want to transition to universal school meals will have the support they need to do so.

We know that students who are well fed learn better. We know that students who are not anxious about where their next meal is coming from learn better. We know that students who are not stigmatized because of how they access healthy food in our schools learn better.

In Short, we know that Universal School Meals can make Vermont schools better in numerous ways:

- 1) Reduced or eliminated stigma, as the financial barrier of paying for school meals is eliminated;
- 2) Less paperwork for school nutrition staff;
- 3) More streamlined meal service operations;
- 4) Less unpaid meal debt;
- 5) More partnership opportunities with local farmers who can provide fresh and healthy food; and
- 6) Fewer students turned away due to inability to pay.

Please support efforts to make school meals universal in our state. Doing so will help our students and their families.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely
Ed Sunday-Winters
Greensboro, VT
02/08/2021