

June 16, 2023

The Honorable Al Muratsuchi
Chair, Assembly Education Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 5610
Sacramento, CA 94249

The Honorable Corey Jackson
Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: SB 348 (Skinner), Nutritious School Meals for Every California Student - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Muratsuchi and Chairman Jackson,

On behalf of San Diego Hunger Coalition and the Healthy School Meals for All California Coalition comprised of 121 organizations representing physicians, youth and families, public health experts, agriculture, philanthropy, food aid distributors, communities of color, science and research, and faith leaders, we are writing in support of Senate Bill 348 (Skinner) and providing nutritious school meals for every California student.

Every student deserves the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive – and California must lead by ensuring our kids have access to nutritious food, every single day of school, and during summer breaks.

A diet high in added sugar and sodium increases the risk of many health problems for children, including diabetes, digestive issues, and a heightened risk of heart attack and stroke. Nutritional standards guiding added sugar content in school meals do not currently exist in California, and the insufficient time children have to eat at school encourages students to choose foods higher in sugar, fat, and salt. The combination of limited nutritious meal options, inadequate time to eat in school, and acute summertime hunger undermines the physical health and learning potential of California kids.

SB 348 (Skinner) will improve child nutrition by:

- Ensuring that public school students who are served free meals through California's new universal school meal program are served meals that meet added sugar and sodium standards recommended by leading child health experts
- Identifying the best options for adequate time to eat at school through California Department of Education (CDE) issued guidance



- Supporting schools' ability to meet the universal school meal mandate, even on half-days
- Allowing a second entrée to be served to children when nutritionally appropriate
- Requiring the state to maximize newly available federal Summer EBT child nutrition benefits and build upon the federal program to prevent childhood hunger during the summer.

According to pediatricians and numerous studies, giving students access to higher-quality meals at school – and providing them with adequate time to choose and consume those meals – is linked with better overall health and improved performance in the classroom, including benefits to memory and concentration.

California made history in 2021, becoming the first state in the nation to codify the right of every student to two meals per day at school, regardless of economic background. With our abundance of freshly grown food, California must now lead the nation by ensuring those meals contain the nutrition our children need to succeed in the classroom and beyond. It is for these reasons that we are proud to support SB 348.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anahid Brakke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Anahid Brakke
President & CEO