

UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS SERVE UP MANY BENEFITS

Since 2014, Hunger Free Vermont has helped nearly 25% of Vermont public schools, serving over 16,000 students, take the money out of school meals. Now the results of a two-year study by researchers from the University of Vermont are in! They show that when all students receive breakfast and lunch at no charge, and when no kid is singled out for needing "free school lunch," students and schools experience extraordinary benefits!



83%

of staff at participating schools agree that universal school meals

MAKE STUDENTS MORE READY TO LEARN.



92%

would recommend universal school meals to other schools.

98%

of staff at these schools agree that universal school meals have

REDUCED FINANCIAL STRESS ON STUDENTS AND FAMILIES.

81%



of staff agree that with the universal school meals program, **DIFFERENCES IN FAMILY INCOME ARE LESS VISIBLE.** And as a result 72% agree that it has produced an **IMPROVED SOCIAL CLIMATE.**



Universal school meals – Every student. Every meal. Every school day.

NO STUDENT SHOULD LEARN WHAT HUNGER FEELS LIKE AT SCHOOL.

Learning is the student's responsibility—making sure they have what they need to learn is our responsibility. All students need good nutrition to learn well.



83%

of staff at Vermont universal meals schools agree that universal school meals have reduced stress on administrators related to family financing.

64%

agree that the school is able to purchase more locally grown or produced food.



Eating is now on a level playing field. All children are welcome . . . School meals are 'cool.' Eating healthy is 'cool,' and children try more things.
—Vermont School Principal

62%

of nurses at Vermont universal meals schools say that since universal meals began they need to give less food to students outside of meal times.

52%

of nurses at Vermont universal meals schools agree that since beginning universal meals, students' stress levels have declined.



I have seen that there is less hunger, missed meals, and stress on parents about affording meals at school. All of these have a positive impact on child, learning, families and health.”
—Vermont School Nurse

“Students know they have meals at school and parents become aware of attendance because the meals are available. With students in school, teachers are able to teach. Students become better academically and also learn to adjust to social situations better.”

—Vermont School Principal



*Information in this handout is from a 2016-2017 research study conducted by the University of Vermont's Department of Education with principals, nurses, paraeducators, counselors, business managers, and meal program staff from 67 Vermont schools currently providing universal meals.