



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gov. Wolf Announces Universal Free Breakfast Program for 1.7 Million Pennsylvania School Children

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf announced his \$21.5 million plan to provide universal free school breakfast for 1.7 million students across the commonwealth this school year.

“It is completely unacceptable for a child to start the day hungry,” said Gov. Wolf. “I’m taking hunger off the table for Pennsylvania kids by creating the Universal Free Breakfast Program. Regardless of whether or not they qualify for free or reduced meals normally, every student enrolled in public or private schools will have the opportunity to feed their belly before they feed their mind this school year.”

The Universal Free Breakfast Program will go into effect on October 1, 2022 and run through the end of the 2022-23 school year. More than 1.7 million Pennsylvania children enrolled in public schools, intermediate units, charter schools, career and technology schools, and child care institutions that participate in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs will benefit from this state-funded program. The \$21.5 million program is funded with prior year funding from the School Food Services General Fund appropriation. Interested schools that do not currently participate in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs can find [information for applying](#) on the Department of Education’s website.

“We commend Gov. Wolf and the Administration for their dedication to a hunger-free Pennsylvania. Universal free school breakfast across Pennsylvania helps to ensure every student will start their day with a healthy, nutritious meal,” said School Nutrition Association of Pennsylvania Communications Chair Melissa Froehlich. “Research supports that a well-nourished child who starts the day with breakfast is more likely to be at school, has improved concentration and is more willing to participate in the classroom. Universal free breakfast for all students in Pennsylvania will strengthen child nutrition programs and address equity and stigma around school breakfast so that more children will have access to nutritious meals and set our students up for success in the classroom.”

From March 2020 through the 2021-22 school year, students were afforded free meals from school as a result of waivers approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For two years, nearly 1 million students have eaten for free each year. Comparing the 2018-19 school year, when free breakfast was not universal, to 2021-22, when school was fully in-person and

breakfast was universally free, breakfast consumption increased by nearly 16%. That is 16% of Pennsylvania children that would start their day hungry this year—and that is a number that Gov. Wolf would not accept.

“As a parent and grandparent myself, I know that there is nothing more important than our kids,” added Gov. Wolf. “This investment in free school breakfast for all is an investment in a better, healthier, happier life for our kids now and in the years to come.”

Senator Lindsey Williams, Senate Educate Committee Chair and advocate for childhood nutrition, commended Gov. Wolf’s Universal School Breakfast Program.

“It takes a village to tackle an issue as important and impactful as food security for our children. Keeping students fed, nourished, and ready to learn is vital to their health and education,” said Sen. Williams. “These investments in school meals relieve the pressure on our families as grocery prices rise and ensure that all students can access nutritious food without shame or stigma. I’m grateful for all of the work being done to keep students from going hungry.”

Gov. Wolf has served for two terms as a leader consistently at work for the people of Pennsylvania. Learn more about how his [Priorities for Pennsylvania](#) have fueled the commonwealth’s comeback, leaving Pennsylvania in a much better place than when he arrived.

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