



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Hinchey Leads Push for Universal School Meals

MICHELLE HINCHEY March 1, 2023



**ALBANY, NY** – Senator Michelle Hinchey rallied alongside the [Healthy School Meals For All NY Kids Coalition](#) today at the Capitol to call for the inclusion of her bill ([S1678A](#)) to permanently fund free breakfast and lunch for all New York public school students in the FY2024 State Budget. The Healthy School Meals For All program is supported by a coalition of over 250 organizations, including New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the New York Farm Bureau (NYFB), and nearly [90 percent](#) of New Yorkers support the policy.

“Healthy food is a form of healthcare, and it's time for New York to be a leader in addressing child hunger in our schools,” **Senator Michelle Hinchey said.** “Free universal school meals is a

proven model of success that will help us ensure no child is left behind, no matter where they live or their family's ability to pay. I'm proud of the far-reaching coalition of supporters Assemblymember González-Rojas and I have built for universal school meals. We will continue fighting for this program until every student in New York is guaranteed free, healthy breakfast and lunch as a permanent part of their school day."

Funding universal free school meals in New York would ensure all students are well-nourished, no matter where they live, and save families an estimated \$140 on groceries per child each month. In Hinchey's district alone, the program would help nearly 17,000 students gain access to healthy meals at school.

One in seven children in New York experiences hunger, which can hinder a child's ability to focus in school and their mental and physical health. The current means-tested school meal programs leave many behind, including families who do not qualify for free school meals but are struggling to make ends meet and students who qualify but do not participate due to stigma and administrative barriers. Healthy School Meals for All is a proven policy implemented in states across the country — including Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont — that directly addresses childhood hunger and has been shown to improve student outcomes.

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