

UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS

Status

Signed Into Law

Bill

Chapter 28, Acts of 2023

Free Universal School Meals

The FY24 budget requires schools to make available school meals to all students free of charge, making this pandemic era program permanent.

Highlights

- 1 The FY24 Budget included \$171.5 million to require public schools to make available school meals to all students free of charge.
- 2 The FY24 budget also made universal free school meals permanent.
- 3 This program is supported by Fair Share dollars. Fair Share is a surtax of four per cent on annual income above \$1 million used specifically to improve the state's education and transportation sectors.
- 4 In July 2024, the Healey-Driscoll administration released data from the first year of state-funded universal free school meals. The data showed a major increase in participation in comparison to the 2018-2019 school year.
 - 12.2 million more lunches were served
 - 61,500 more students ate lunch every school day
 - 9 million more breakfasts were served
 - 43,400 more students ate breakfast every school day



“ Making school meals free for students in Massachusetts will keep our young people focused on learning and provide financial relief for families who will save hundreds of dollars per student every year. It's a proud moment for me—and for our entire Commonwealth—to know that our students and their families will have one less thing to think about before heading out the door for class every morning

– Senate President Karen E. Spilka

