



# LEWISTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## **Testimony of Alisa Roman, Maine School Nutrition Association President and Director of Nutrition and Transportation Lewiston Public Schools**

### **In Support of LD 655**

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Alisa Roman I am a resident of Winthrop and the President of the Maine School Nutrition Association serving members of the State of Maine, and the Director of Nutrition and Transportation for Lewiston Public Schools.

Today, I'm submitting testimony in support of LD 655. I want to thank the bill sponsors for your commitment to addressing childhood hunger in Maine.

Lewiston Public Schools has an enrollment close to 5,500 students. In a normal year 80% of these students participate in the Nutrition departments services. Our High School alone serves 1100 students' lunch daily in an hour. I have done the math in my head many times and the equation for success of service is simple. You need to have workers to feed the students, lines to put them in and time to get them through the word most used is wayfinding.

In a district the size of mine I often compare lunch to a large stadium all getting up at a sporting event to go to the concessions and back to the game before the next round. There are a lot of things happening during the "lunch break" a teacher catches up with a student on an assignment, a student uses the restroom and then there is the decision process of what to eat for lunch. I know as a parent that it takes my family of four approximately five minutes to order food when we are in a fast food situation and at least ten minutes to decide in a sit down restaurant.

In Lewiston in the elementary we give our students 20 min to eat. The timer starts from when the student is the classroom. A line is formed and students are marched single file to the cafeteria. The line stops when a student's behavior warrants or a shoe is tied. The students then join the line in the cafeteria to get their food. I have timed our nutrition workers to be able to get a single student through the line in 2-3 minutes. By the time a student sits they have from 3-8 minutes to eat a tray full of food. When the time is up the food hits the trash.

I have watched students only eat the soft foods like applesauce and pudding and avoid crunchy foods due to lost teeth and the fact that it just takes too long to chew.

By mandating the students have 30 min to eat schedules we be adapted and creative ways to engage with food can be developed. Students will not feel rushed and the garbage can will not be as full. Students who eat fast can be offered alternatives to this service. And I suspect there will be a little less tummy issues in the nurse's office.

Please give our children the time to eat their meals.

I hope you too can support LD 655. If you have any further questions please feel free to reach out to me.

*Alisa Roman*

President Maine School Nutrition Association  
Director of Nutrition and Transportation Lewiston Public Schools

