



REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT 19

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RSU 19 Board of Education Resolution Supporting Universal School Meals

WHEREAS, the outbreak of the coronavirus disease COVID-19 exposed and exacerbated the impacts of poverty on Maine's children; and

WHEREAS, the majority of Maine students obtain over half of their daily calories while in school; and

WHEREAS, the RSU 19 board has a moral obligation to ensure all students have access to nutritious foods in schools; and

WHEREAS, food insecurity negatively impacts a child's ability to learn, and develop physically, mentally, and emotionally; and

WHEREAS, these negative impacts have high costs for the students suffering from food insecurity, other students who cohabitate the classroom, staff, and community members; costs involving achievement gaps, behavioral issues, and others; and

WHEREAS, all of these costs add up not only morally but include tangible, substantial, financial costs to local taxpayers including residents and business owners; including tens of thousands of dollars related to school nutrition staff time, school meal debt, behavior referrals, and staffing; and

WHEREAS, the issues arising from student food insecurity create long-term, society-wide costs, in the millions of dollars in Maine, associated with poor impulse control, poor learning results, achievement gaps, poor health outcomes, crime, and employment; and

WHEREAS, one of the main responsibilities of a school board is advocating for policies that benefit all children, as outlined in the Maine School Board Association Handbook,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the RSU 19 Board of Directors supports the passage by the Maine Legislature and Executive of LD 1679 An Act to Address Student Hunger Through Expanding Access to Free School Meals, ensuring all Maine students have universal, free access to school meals to ensure the health, development, and achievement of students, educators, and our communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RSU 19 Board of Directors asks lawmakers and the Governor to consider the immediate relief such a policy could provide to students and local taxpayers already suffering before the pandemic, and now facing an increase in that suffering; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to our Governor, and to the leadership and all members of the Maine Legislature representing the

families in our District, as well as members of Maine's Delegation to the United States House of Representatives and Senate.

ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the Regional School Unit 19, Penobscot and Somerset Counties, Maine, at the open public meeting thereof, held this *11th* day of May, 2021.

ATTEST: Board of Directors:



Michael Hammer, Secretary to the Board