



Partners for a  
Hunger-Free Oregon  
*Ending hunger before it begins.*

## **HB 2545: Eliminating the School Lunch Co-pay**

*Expanding access to a nutritious lunch for 30,000 Oregon students*

### **Building Stronger Communities**

We all want to live in an Oregon where kids' talents are nurtured, their health is protected, and they have a strong foundation for launching their dreams.

Nutrition is the fuel that kids need to succeed in school and in life. Studies show that nourishing food fuels kids' ability to pay attention in class and learn. Good nutrition not only gives kids a healthy start in life, it paves the way for a lifetime of good health. Connecting more Oregon kids to nutritious lunch is the foundation for improving students' academic success.



Photo: USDA School Lunch, September 7, 2012

For Oregon families, having trouble affording essentials - like food, a roof over their heads and doctor's visits - the reduced price lunch charge is a barrier, keeping kids from getting the nutrition they need for strong minds and bodies.

*"Charging low-income children for lunch is a burden on families and schools. I've heard from parents who make unbelievable sacrifices to pay the lunch bill and school staff who agonize over holding back healthy meals from students they know need it."*

- Annie Kirschner, Program Director  
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon

### **Connecting More Kids to Nutrition**

- 1 in 4 kids is at risk for hunger in Oregon
- More than 30,000 Oregonian kids qualify for reduced-price school lunches
- For a family with two kids, the lunch co-pay can add up to \$17 a month. As the month wears on, participation in the program drops, showing the burden

Models of Success - In 2009, the Legislature eliminated the co-pay for reduced price breakfast, and participation increased. Other states that also removed the co-pay increased participation.

A Smart Investment - Eliminating the reduced price lunch co-pay will cost around \$2.56 million biannually. This investment has a high rate of return: a healthy, well-educated future workforce and leaders.

*For more information contact: Patti Whitney-Wise • 503-595-5501 • patti@oregonhunger.org*