

**From:** [christy\\_sweany@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:christy_sweany@everyactioncustom.com) on behalf of [Christina Sweany](#)  
**To:** [JCSS Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** April 11 Hearing - Supportive testimony for HB 2019  
**Date:** Friday, April 12, 2019 10:49:39 AM

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Dear Joint Committee on Student success,

Good evening-

I am grateful to be here & I thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of Universal Access to School Meals and Breakfast After the Bell.

My name is Christina Sweany. I have lived in Oregon for 19 years. I am employed part-time with Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization as an elementary school Food Pantry Coordinator & Educator, and I work full-time as a mother to our 6 year old daughter. She attends kindergarten at a public school in NE Portland.

Our family is fortunate to attend a school that is currently a CEP school. CEP stands for Community Eligibility Provision, which means that meals are served to all students at no charge & without applications.

Every morning I walk our daughter into school at 8:30am, where I see families greeting each other & students picking up their breakfasts. And then I observe a classroom of approximately 20 adorable, rambunctious, squirmy kindergartners sitting down to start their school day by eating together, talking together, and (usually) laughing together.

And I think that's awesome.

And I think it's beautiful.

And I think how much of a positive impact that breakfast & then the free lunch at 11:30 is going to have on each & every student and staff person and volunteer in that entire school.

But I also observe A LOT of students every morning standing next to the 'No Thank You' table (the spot where you can put unopened food you don't want).

I observe those students waiting & then grabbing packages of food as they are set down. And I wonder if those kids ate dinner the night before. Do they have nutritious food options, or ANY food options, at their homes. And I think to myself, 'Thank goodness they're providing universal access to meals at this school. No questions asked. No forms to be filled out & verified. No stigma to be suffered.'

Universal access to meals in our schools across Oregon has the potential to help all of our students thrive. Universal school meals have been shown to improve school attendance, graduation rates, & students' physical & mental health. These meals build community, cohesiveness, & strength across our state.

I hope you will support Oregon kids by voting yes on the Student Success Act. I look forward to watching the State of Oregon be a leader in our country for Hunger-Free Schools.

Thank you again for this opportunity and for all you do.

Sincerely,  
Christina Sweany  
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