

March 13, 2023

To: House Committee on Education

From: Dr. Andy Saultz, Professor of Educational Policy

Re: Support of HB 3030

Hello,

The purpose of this letter is to communicate my support for HB 3030, which creates a Healthy School Meals for All Task Force. I have worked as a high school teacher, a school board member, and now as a professor of educational policy. I study how to make schools more equitable.

As a researcher, I know that it is difficult to isolate the effects of specific policies in public education because of the challenges of creating experimental conditions. With healthy schools for all, we have what is called a natural experiment due to policy change. The federal government, through COVID relief funds, expanded the school lunch program to allow for all kids to get free healthy meals in the 2021-2022 school year. As a result, we were able to isolate the effects of this policy by comparing outcomes before and after the policy change.

Healthy schools for all improved school attendance, lowered discipline rates, decreased child hunger, and improved academic outcomes. In short, this policy was incredibly effective at improving the lives for kids.

Schools are uniquely situated to build a more nutritious, healthy community. I urge you to support HB 3030 and to find ways to expand our school food programs to all kids. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can provide any additional information or help in any way.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Saultz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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