

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing on behalf of AFT-Oregon. We are a labor federation representing workplace unions across the state in early learning, K-12 schools, and across our state's college and university landscape. Our 28 unions represent over 18,000 essential staff, instructors, faculty, and employees who support our students and advocate for the public good. **AFT-Oregon supports SB 1581: School Meals for All.**

AFT-Oregon has endorsed and supported hunger free schools and universal lunch for years. This session is no different. SB 1581 ensures that every student can access breakfast and lunch at school at no cost, regardless of income. This is a critical step to addressing hunger during an affordability crisis and ensuring that students can focus on learning rather than worrying about food.

I am especially encouraged that SB 1581 makes breakfast accessible after the start of the school day, recognizing that many students arrive late due to transportation barriers or family work schedules. Allowing breakfast to be served in the classroom and counted as instructional time ensures students are nourished without losing valuable learning time.

The bill also reduces administrative burdens for schools by eliminating meal applications, income verification, and unpaid meal debt collection. Just as importantly, it protects students from stigma and meal shaming, helping create school environments rooted in dignity, equity, and inclusion.

AFT-Oregon's members work as K12 classified staff, as well as many of our members being parents to students themselves. Research and lived experience consistently show that when students have reliable access to nutritious food, schools see improved attendance, fewer disciplinary incidents, and stronger academic outcomes. SB 1581 is a smart investment in Oregon's students and our future.

With only a small number of schools remaining before Oregon becomes a Hunger-Free Schools state, I urge you to vote **YES** on SB 1581 and ensure that no child in Oregon goes hungry at school.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Thank you,



Harper Haverkamp, PhD

AFT-Oregon