

SARAH FINGER MCDONALD, PhD  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
House District 16  
Corvallis & Adair Village



## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 5, 2025

Oregon Senate Committee on Education

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Committee,

My name is Representative Sarah Finger McDonald from House District 16. I am a parent, former school board member and am in strong support of SB 1581: School Meals for All.

Universal access to breakfast and lunch ensures that every student can start the school day nourished. Hunger does not stop at the classroom door. Students who miss meals are more likely to struggle with concentration, behavior, and attendance.

Offering free meals to all students is one of the most effective tools we have to reduce child hunger and malnutrition. Universal meals remove stigma and administrative barriers that prevent eligible families from participating. When meals are available to every student, participation increases and nutrition outcomes improve. SB 1581 also strengthens this approach by maximizing federal reimbursements and aligning school meals with updated federal nutrition standards, ensuring students receive healthy, balanced food.

This policy also provides meaningful relief to working parents and families. With the rising cost of food, housing, and childcare, free school meals help families stretch their budgets and reduce daily stress. Parents can rely on their children receiving two nutritious meals each school day without navigating complex eligibility paperwork or worrying about their child being singled out. SB 1581 offers predictability, dignity, and peace of mind to families across Oregon.

Lastly, because of the cuts to SNAP benefits, more Oregon families are struggling with providing food for their children. This policy can help families that recently lost SNAP benefits to keep their children fed.

I urge the committee to support SB 1581.

Sincerely,

State Representative

Representative Sarah Finger McDonald