

Submitter: Lance McMurphy
On Behalf Of: Redmond School District
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1581

Chair Frederick, Vice-chair Weber, and members of the committee,

Apologies for technical difficulties in providing this verbally this morning. My name is Lance McMurphy. I'm the Director of Nutrition Services for Redmond School District. As an operator, my mornings are often hectic and, like so many others, I'm here in support of Senate Bill 1581. It sounds like all of my talking points have already been addressed, but I wanted to be sure they were reiterated from my perspective.

We serve roughly 7500 students in 15 buildings and we're in the middle of our second school year of providing no-cost meals to all students. Standard, income-based school meal benefit issuance not only created social stigma and equity concerns, but also a significant administrative burden. It also inadvertently caused an indirect negative financial impact on school districts' general funds. In my opinion, returning to that model would be disastrous for Child Nutrition Programs, schools, and communities across our State.

While a 90% claiming percentage can be financially viable, the danger is in creating a system where programs are constantly reacting instead of planning. Moving to 100% reimbursement makes a very meaningful difference - not only supporting higher food quality, but also enabling the District to offer living wages that help retain skilled Child Nutrition staff, while also supporting capital improvements and all kinds of other contingencies that arise in food service operations.

Our children's education does not start and stop at the classroom door. We've been fortunate to develop Food, Nutrition, and Sustainability educational opportunities that our classrooms may not have the capacity to provide. These experiences teach students where food comes from, how it affects their health, and how their choices connect to the environment. These are foundational lessons that benefit all Oregonians.

Finally, when school meals are available to all students, participation increases, access improves, and, perhaps most importantly, children who need these resources the most are far more likely to receive them. This has a profound impact on student wellbeing and readiness to learn.

This bill strengthens a proven investment. It supports students, schools, and communities across our state, and I urge your support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.