

Submitter: Marcia Hunter

On Behalf Of:

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I am a retired middle school teacher. I was in the classroom for 36 years. During many of those years, free lunch was provided only to a select few, kids who were identified as "poor" and were singled out at the cafeteria with a special protocol. How embarrassing. Many students went hungry instead of setting themselves up for ridicule (this was MIDDLE SCHOOL, after all).

Another issue I encountered often was the "10 am slump," the time when the hunger hit kids who had been sent to school without breakfast. Our nurse dealt with frequent morning headaches by asking first if a child had eaten today; if not, she had a ready supply of healthy snack items and sent kids back to class with a full belly and a bottle of water. No aspirin or calls home needed!

All this is to say that kids who are not fed a healthy breakfast and lunch are not able to learn. It is a basic need that schools should address, as basic as pencils and paper. No country as rich as ours should have hungry children. Did you know that in France all school children are fed a multiple-course noon meal, made with fresh, healthy food? We should not skimp on this essential need.

Thank you.