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Date: February 24, 2025  
To: House Education Committee  
From: Parasa Chanramy, COSA  
Subject: Testimony in Support of [House Bill 3435](#)

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Good Afternoon, Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee:

For the record, my name is Parasa Chanramy with the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators.

We are part of the School Meals for All Coalition speaking in support of House Bill 3435. This bill will be critical to ensuring that all students in Oregon are able to access meals in school, regardless of family income or zip code.

Oregon is so close to becoming the next state to offer universal school meals. Currently, 94% of our public schools offer meals at no-cost to students and their families. This bill, along with the additional investments, will help bring us to the finish line.

HB 3435 will help: i) support and streamline access to school meals (for example, expanding Breakfast After the Bell); ii) maximize federal reimbursements; iii) address school meal debt; and iv) purchase and upgrade school equipment for preparing school meals.

As we work to expand Community Eligibility Provision efforts, we will also work to ensure that this expansion does not have an unintended impact on [At-Risk Afterschool Meals and Snacks](#), [Summer Food Service Programs](#), and other programs where the schedule may vary, such as, career and technical education programs, alternative programs, and half day programs.

In addition to this bill, we also strongly support current service level funding for our [existing School Meals Initiative](#) within the Student Success Act (\$124 million for the 2025-27 biennium).

School meals matter and make a difference for students, families, and school communities.

For reference, I have gathered examples from school districts in your legislative districts sharing the impact access to school meals has had on students (see next two pages).

Thank you again for your time today. We urge you to vote YES on House Bill 3435.



## **Oregon School District Examples**

**Canby School District:** “The ability to feed all of our children breakfast and lunch in Canby School District through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is transformative. For many children in our care, school is the only place they receive a guaranteed well-balanced meal. To date this year, we have served 30,000 more meals for children during breakfast (an increase of 71%) and 46,000 more meals for children at lunch (an increase of 37%). This commitment removes financial barriers for families and provides an important opportunity to fuel young brains and reinforce learning.”

**Crow-Applegate-Lorane School District:** “At Crow-Applegate-Lorane, free school meals ensure that all 300 of our students, regardless of their family's financial situation, have access to the nutrition they need to focus and succeed in the classroom. By providing meals to every child, we eliminate the stigma and processing burden that can come with free or reduced-price programs, allowing students to feel a sense of belonging rather than worry about affordability. When all students share the same meals, it strengthens school culture, fosters community, and supports a positive learning environment.”

**Creswell School District:** “At Creswell, our schools' poverty levels are typically 40-45% and providing school meals has been instrumental in ensuring all students have access to nutritious food, enhancing their ability to focus and succeed academically. The program has positively impacted our community by supporting students' health and well-being.”

**David Douglas School District:** “In David Douglas, we know that free meals for all students produces positive outcomes for students physical health, academic success and emotional wellbeing. Students that have access to free meals at school, increase their daily consumption of fruits and vegetables and have a more varied diet. We also know that when all students are offered free meals there is a reduced stigma on students who may have a lower economic status than their peers. Currently, our district receives a free reimbursement rate for all our students. This is a federal payment. Last year we received increased reimbursement rates through the state Community Eligibility and Expanded Income Group programs, but with our new 100% CEP agreement we no longer receive those payments. We have seen that universal meals do increase participation. The most recent change would be for Arthur Academy and Community Transition Program as they were not covered under the CEP program until the 2024-25 school year. All of our other schools have been CEP for 3 years (including this school year).”



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## **Oregon School District Examples, Cont'd**

**Klamath Falls City School District:** “School meals are essential for students in the Klamath Falls City School District because they provide the nutrition needed for academic success, focus, and overall well-being. We prepare fresh meals made from recipes developed by a team of chefs. For many students, school meals are their most consistent source of healthy food, helping to reduce hunger and improve energy levels throughout the day. Ensuring access to nutritious meals supports equity in education, allowing every child the opportunity to learn and thrive.”

**North Clackamas School District:** “At North Clackamas School District, access to no-cost school meals is essential for eliminating barriers to learning and ensuring every child can focus on their education rather than hunger. By removing the stigma associated with no-cost meals and ensuring all students have access to nutritious food, we create more inclusive learning environments where every child has the opportunity to thrive. Universal meals also remove a financial stressor from families struggling to make ends meet. Since moving to no-cost meals for all students in North Clackamas School District this school year, 1,200 more students are eating school lunch and 380 more students are eating breakfast each day than the prior year when many students were charged for meals.”

**Reynolds School District:** “At Reynolds, we’ve seen firsthand how offering free meals to all students removes barriers, improves concentration, and supports overall well-being. Through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program, we can ensure that all students have access to nutritious meals at no cost, eliminating stigma and reducing food insecurity. When students have reliable access to meals, they can stay engaged in the classroom and focus on their education.”

**Salem-Keizer Public Schools:** “The SKPS Food and Nutrition Services team agrees with the content of Bill 3435 and would continue to support free/no-cost meals for students in our school district regardless of familial income. Free meals for students district-wide have allowed the barrier of family income to no longer dictate a student’s ability to receive a healthy meal each day. No longer charging families for meals allows our students and their families to no longer worry about if or when a student might eat next. Some families rely on school meals to feed their children. In some instances, school is the only place students have a chance to eat. Removing the stigma of free or reduced-price meals and the process of applying for them significantly lowers the stress of families who need extra support. The ability to provide free meals to students has relieved the financial and mental strain on families and has relieved the strain on the district teams needing to process any free/reduced-price meal applications.”