

Submitter: Michelle Lin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1581
Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education
Committee,

I live in Portland, Oregon and am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 1581: School Meals for All.

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.

As a child of financially insecure immigrant parents, I relied on low-cost, affordable school meals through high school. My parents struggled financially my entire childhood and these school meals were extremely helpful to keep me and my siblings fed, while they were under-resourced not just financially, but also with time, due to working essentially 24/7 working in a struggling motel as the caretakers with almost no other staff.

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.

Respectfully,
Michelle Lin
Portland, Oregon
Community Member and food banker