

Testimony to the Ohio House Education Committee
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Amherst Exempted Village Schools
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Good afternoon Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the committee. My name is Deanne Kelbley, and I am the Nutrition Services Supervisor at Amherst Exempted Village Schools in Lorain County. By training, I am a registered, licensed dietitian and School Nutrition Specialist. Every day, I see firsthand how essential school meals are for our students - not just as a convenience, but as a necessity.

For many children, school breakfast and lunch are the only consistent, nutritious meals they receive. I have seen students rush into the cafeteria on Monday mornings, having barely eaten all weekend. I have seen kids quietly save part of their lunch to bring home for a sibling. No child should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from, especially when they are expected to focus, learn, and grow.

No-cost school meals would eliminate stigma, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure that every child gets the nutrition they need to succeed. Governor DeWine's budget takes an important step in the right direction, but we must go further. Investing less than 1% of the proposed state budget for school meals is an investment in our children's education, health, and future.

I urge the committee to fund school meals for all in the budget. Thank you.

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