

SB 348

Nutritious School Meals for Every California Student

“ SB 348 will ensure that California’s school meals are nutritious and that California is a national leader in the fight against diabetes.” – Sen. Nancy Skinner, Author of SB 348

Our Vision for the Next Generation

With our abundance of fresh-grown, nutritious food, California should have the nation’s most well-fed children. Senate Bill 348 (Skinner) would ensure every school-aged child has access to two healthy meals every day, regardless of where they live or their family’s income; increase student access to lower-added sugar and sodium meal options; and provide students with adequate time to eat at school.

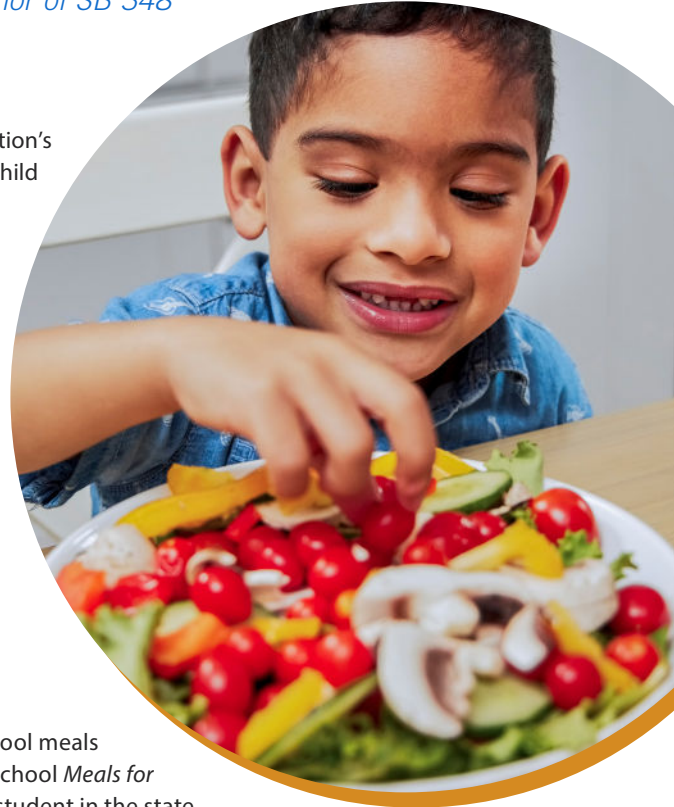
The COVID-19 pandemic was an important reminder that millions of low-income students rely on school meals as a main source of food. Providing fresh and nutritious options in the cafeteria will go a long way towards fighting food insecurity, while improving education and health outcomes in California’s most diverse and under-resourced communities.

By setting new guidelines for added sugar and sodium content in school meals, SB 348 would put California at the forefront of a national movement to give students the opportunity to choose school meal options with less sugar, sodium, and reduced processed additives – and more freshly prepared with the nutrients they require to grow, learn, and thrive.

Building on California’s Success

In 2021, California became the first state in the nation to establish a universal school meals program. Initially proposed in Senate Bill 364 (Skinner), the landmark California School Meals for All program was codified through the Budget Act of 2021. As a result, every K-12 student in the state now has the right not only to a free education, but also to two meals every day at school free of charge.

Now, a coalition of public health experts, educators, and legislative champions for children’s health are uniting behind a proposal to invest in the next generation of California’s leaders by reducing added sugar and sodium in school meals, and providing students with adequate time to sit and enjoy these meals during school.



The Problem



Food insecurity remains high among Black, Latinx, and Asian-American families. For many children in communities of color, who experience the highest rates of poverty and significant disparities in health outcomes, access to fresh and nutrient-rich foods is critical – and school meals may be the only food they consume in a day.



Nutrition standards guiding sugar levels in school meals do not currently exist, meaning no safeguards for our children’s health. A high intake of added sugars among children – 25 grams or more per day – is not only associated with poor health outcomes, but also poor behavioral outcomes and reduced memory capacity, both of which impact a child’s ability to learn and thrive.






Insufficient time to eat at school encourages students to choose foods higher in sugar, fat, and salt. Long lines and short meal times severely limit students’ ability to consume their meal – leaving them unable to meet their nutritional needs or choose food options with low nutritional value.

“As physicians, we know how important it is for kids to have access to meals that promote their health, development, and education. SB 348 is key to nurturing healthy bodies and strong minds for generations to come.”

– California Medical Association

SB 348: A Win for Our Kids

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SB 348 conforms nutrition standards for California’s public school meals to the American Academy of Pediatrics’ recommendation that children consume no more than 25 grams of added sugar per day. Pediatricians and nutritionists say that access to higher-quality school meals that encourage students to consume less than 25 grams of added sugar per day is linked with improved performance in the classroom, including benefits to memory and concentration.
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SB 348 provides every student – regardless of their race, where they live, or their family’s income – with at least two nutritious meals with reduced added sugar and sodium to support their learning and development.
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SB 348 ensures students have adequate time to eat at school. *Studies show* that providing children with adequate time to eat improves their impulse control and working memory, which translates to greater success in the classroom.



A Strong Coalition

