



Citywide Education Council for District 75



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Resolution in Support of Free and Healthy School Lunch for All NYC Public School Students

WHEREAS, federal law allows New York City to make healthy school lunches universally free for every public school student; and

WHEREAS, New York City is not taking advantage of the great opportunity in making healthy school lunches universally free for every public school student; and

WHEREAS, the need for universally free school lunches is clear; and

WHEREAS, one in every four New York City children lives in a home that lacks enough food; and

WHEREAS, the consequences of childhood hunger are dire: hunger negatively impacts children's learning and health; and

WHEREAS, school meals are a critical tool in the fight against hunger; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, 250,000 out of 780,000 students eligible for free or reduced price meals did not participate in the subsidized school lunch program. Many more students are above income eligibility for free or reduced priced lunch, yet are in families that are struggling to make ends meet. Additionally, currently, 81% of elementary school students eat school lunch; it drops to 61% in middle school; and 38% in high school; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of students in New York City public schools do not participate in federally funded school lunch due to the program's poverty stigma. Many of these students, especially as they get older, go without eating school lunch for fear of being labeled poor by their peers, with long-lasting health and educational consequences. If more students participated, more nutritious choices could be offered, and the stigma would be eliminated. An astonishing 68 percent of New York City's 1.1 million public school children have family incomes low enough to be eligible for free school lunch (below \$26,000 for a household of three). Seventy five percent have incomes that qualify them for either free or reduced priced meals; and

WHEREAS, some income-eligible children are not enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program because their parents do not submit the paperwork. Many of these parents are concerned about sharing personal financial information, or do not know about the program; and

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WHEREAS, making lunch universally free to all students eliminates all of these barriers and ensures all New York City public school children have access to a healthy lunch; and

WHEREAS, students must be well-nourished to learn; and

WHEREAS, currently, the city spends an additional \$6.25 million a year so that all 177,000 students in the sixth through eighth grades qualify for free breakfast and lunch without requiring parents to certify that their income is 130 percent of the \$30,615 poverty level for a family of four; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Fariña indicated that free lunches will only be offered to the stand alone middle school students; and

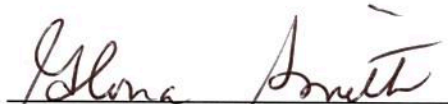
WHEREAS, by expanding the program, advocates seek to eliminate the shame and embarrassment that keep many children who qualify for the free or reduced-price lunches from receiving them; and

WHEREAS, Citywide Education Council for District 75 believes that New York City should take advantage of all the federal options available to provide free meals, and that the city should make the small investment needed so that no student has to pay for a meal; and

BE IT RESOLVED that Citywide Education Council for District 75 wants to ensure that more children eat healthy school meals by making them free for all, regardless of income; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Citywide Education Council for District 75 calls upon Mayor de Blasio to make school lunch free for all students irrespective of the income levels of their parents.

Unanimously passed by the members of the Citywide Education Council for District 75
on Wednesday, December 21, 2016



Gloria Smith, President



Celia Green, Vice President

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