

# SB 348



**Healthy School  
Meals for All**

California Senate Bill 348

## Healthy School Meals for All

***“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*

### A Vision for the Next Generation

Every student deserves the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive. SB 348 (Skinner) puts California students on the path to classroom success and lifelong health by providing them with meal options at school that contain less added sugar and less salt; and ensuring no student is too hungry to learn by providing access to meals on half days, and during summer breaks.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an important reminder that millions of students rely on school meals as their main source of food; and the end of pandemic-era emergency food assistance has left countless families unable to adequately feed their children. Providing fresh and healthy meal 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.

### 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 organizations representing doctors, public health experts, agriculture, food aid distribution, communities of color, faith leaders, and legislative champions for children’s health are uniting behind a proposal to invest in the next generation of California’s leaders by ensuring the two daily meals public school students have access to are nutritious.

***“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



Nutrition standards guiding added sugar levels in school meals do not currently exist, meaning a lack of safeguards for our children's health. The American Academy of Pediatrics says eating foods with lower levels of added sugar and salt is linked with improved classroom performance and overall health. **SB 348 protects our children's health by setting the best standards in the nation for lower added-sugar and salt in school meals.**



Long lunch lines leave California students with an average of just 15 minutes to eat – with some school districts reporting as little as six minutes. Studies show that when students don't have enough time to eat they tend to choose foods higher in sugar and salt, throw away unfinished food, and leave the cafeteria hungry. **SB 348 aims to identify the best ways to give students adequate time to eat.**



Food insecurity remains high among Black, Latino, and Asian-American families. The end of pandemic food assistance has created more hunger among children experiencing the highest rates of poverty and health inequities. For many of these children, school meals may be the only food they consume in a day. **SB 348 curbs hunger by maximizing federally funded child nutrition benefits to provide free school meals in the summer and on half days of school.**



California farms make our state one of the largest suppliers of fresh agricultural products in the world; and with our bounty of fresh-grown food – California *should* have the nation's healthiest children. **SB 348 shifts school meals away from processed foods in favor of more freshly prepared meals that come from local farms. Improving public school nutrition is good for students, good for California farmers, and good for our state's economy.**

## A Strong Coalition

