

Hi, my name is Kia Seidlinger, I am a parent who currently has a child in enrolled in the Grand Forks school district as well as an educator currently working in Head Start.

I feel free lunches should be funded to every child enrolled in school. When the school districts looks at a parent's/parents' income they look at gross pay not net pay. For many families the difference between gross pay and net pay differers greatly. The difference could be due to many things such as the families health, vision and dental insurance being deducted from the parent's paycheck as well as garnishments, child support, and of course all the tax deductions. Therefore a parent's/parents' net pay is significantly less than then their gross pay. Which also means a family may fall below the poverty line once all deductions are taken out of paychecks. The cost of living has gone up immensely. By the time bills are paid for the household many families are are in the negative. Many families can not afford school lunches everyday. It is not fair to the child they do not get to eat because their parents can not afford it.

Food is one of the basic needs of any human being. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, physiology needs is at the base of the pyramid. Physiology needs includes FOOD, water, sleep, and shelter. Why should children or any human be denied food? Many children who do not have money in their lunch accounts to eat do not eat at all that day. In some of public schools the child may be given a sandwich and a milk if they do not have money in their lunch account. What child wants to be singled out that they do not have money for lunch? If a child does not have money in their account they are not provided breakfast if any kind. For many children, the school meals may be the only nutritional meals they receive in a day.

A child being singled out for not having money to eat only hurts their self esteem and causes more issues and feeling of being different than they were already feeling. Our children have enough stress and anxiety, why add to it? Children's academic performance, social regulation, and over all behavior is improved when provided nutritional food. As adults, it is our job to help the children not cause more stress and anxiety.

Thank you for considering to vote in favor of HB 1491 and HB 1494.