

March 23, 2023

The Honorable Josh Newman
Chair, Senate Education Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 348 (Skinner) Nutritious School Meals for Every California Student - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Newman:

Common Sense supports SB 348 (Skinner), which would ensure that public school students who are served free meals through California's new universal school meal program are served meals that meet sugar and sodium standards recommended by leading child health experts.

Since 2009, [Common Sense Education](#) has offered free, research-backed, and award-winning resources for students, teachers, and school communities. We're working at every level to build a more healthy, equitable, and empowering future for all kids from youth mental health to safe technology use to child well being. We believe that every school student deserves the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive – and California must lead by ensuring our kids have access to nutritious food.

With our abundance of freshly grown food, California must now lead the nation by ensuring those meals contain the nutrients our children need to succeed in the classroom and beyond. A diet high in added sugar and sodium content increases the risk of many health problems for children: diabetes, digestive issues, and a heightened risk of heart attack and stroke. Nutrition standards guiding sugar and sodium levels in school meals do not currently exist in California, meaning there are currently no safeguards for our children's health; and the insufficient time children have to eat at school encourages students to choose foods higher in sugar, fat, and salt.

SB 348 (Skinner) will improve child nutrition by:

- Providing students with adequate time to eat at school through California Department of Education (CDE) issued guidance
- Supporting schools' ability to meet the universal school meal mandate, even on half-days
- Allowing a second entree to be served to children when nutritionally appropriate
- Requiring the state to maximize newly available federal Summer EBT child nutrition benefits and build upon the federal program to prevent childhood hunger during the summer.

For the above reasons, we respectfully request your "Aye" vote on SB 348.

Sincerely,



Kami Peer
State Policy Associate, Common Sense Media