

January 27, 2026

To: Chair Erickson and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Government Efficiency

Re: Please oppose SB 387

I am a Kansas taxpayer, public school parent, and mother of 4 whose heart clenches every time I shop for groceries, knowing how many parents struggle to afford the food they need to feed their children, I respectfully ask you to oppose SB 387.

I understand the desire to ensure that resources are deployed to greatest possible effect, so that Kansas can achieve important outcomes with efficient use of public resources. I believe SB387 moves in the wrong direction, however, as it is hard to think of a much more efficient use of our public dollars than streamlined provision of school meals, given the strong association of improved child nutrition with better student healthⁱ and academic achievementⁱⁱ for life success and community thriving. Kids doing well is the true goal of education, school nutrition is key to achieving that aim, and the most efficient way to deliver school meals is through community eligibility (CEP). Importantly, CEP has been found in multiple independent analyses to be an efficient way to deliver nutrition to students at risk of hunger.ⁱⁱⁱ It is used today by some Kansas school districts to encourage participation by families who might otherwise be deterred by onerous and stigmatizing procedures. CEP keeps schools' administrative costs low—efficiency in action—while delivering nutritious food to children who need it. These are Kansas children, sitting beside other Kansas kids in their classrooms, and all kids do better when every student can focus on learning and effectively manage their behavior^{iv}, without the distraction of their growling stomachs. Research has even found that *all* families' grocery bills can be reduced by CEP effects, as local economies adjust to the impacts of greater federal nutrition investments.^v I urge the Committee to look elsewhere for government efficiencies and oppose SB 387. Keeping administrative costs of school meals low is already an admirable example. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to Kansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melinda K. Lewis".

Melinda Lewis
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Prairie Village, KS 66208

ⁱ Cohen, J. F. W., Hecht, A. A., McLoughlin, G. M., Turner, L., & Schwartz, M. B. (2021). Universal School Meals and Associations with Student Participation, Attendance, Academic Performance, Diet Quality, Food Security, and Body Mass Index: A Systematic Review. *Nutrients*, 13(3), 911.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13030911>

ⁱⁱ Frisvold, D. E. (2015). Nutrition and cognitive achievement: an evaluation of the School Breakfast Program. *Journal of Public Economics*, 124, 91–104.; Hartline-Grafton, H. (2016). Research Shows that the School Nutrition Standards Improve the School Nutrition Environment and Student Outcomes. Washington, DC: Food Research & Action Center.; Hinrichs, P. (2010). The effects of the National School Lunch Program on education and health. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 29(3), 479–505.; Murphy, J. M. (2007). Breakfast and learning: an updated review. *Journal of Current Nutrition and Food Science*, 1, 3–36

ⁱⁱⁱ Long, M. W., Marple, K., & Andreyeva, T. (2021). Universal Free Meals Associated with Lower Meal Costs While Maintaining Nutritional Quality. *Nutrients*, 13(2), 670. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13020670>

^{iv} Gordon, N. E., & Ruffini, K. J. (2018). School nutrition and student discipline: effects of schoolwide free meals. NBER Working Paper, 24986.

^v Jessie Handbury and Sarah Moshary, "School Food Policy Affects Everyone: Retail Responses to the National School Lunch Program," NBER Working Paper 29384 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3386/w29384>.