



## Resolution in Support of SB180 and HB180 - School Meals for All

**WHEREAS**, the past few years have highlighted just how much families rely on school meals to keep their children fed; and

**WHEREAS**, offering universal school meals benefits all students and their parents, teachers, and schools; multiple studies show that students with access to free breakfast have improved attendance rates, better attendance in school, improved participation rates, fewer behavioral incidents, lower suspension rates, and better health outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, since Pennsylvania continued providing one free breakfast daily to all students through the 2022 - 2023 school year, Renaissance Academy Charter School has seen an almost 75% increase in breakfasts served daily as compared to pre-pandemic participation rates; and

**WHEREAS**, universal school meals reduce financial stress and work for students, families, and schools. Parents should not be required to do burdensome paperwork to prove they need free meals, and schools should not be turned into debt collectors when families can't pay; and

**WHEREAS**, if a family with one child in the school district paid to eat breakfast and lunch every day in Renaissance Academy Charter School, they would be paying an average of \$26.00 a week or \$950.00 a school year. With universal school meals, that money is able to be spent on other essentials or spent in the community, thus helping local businesses thrive; and

**WHEREAS**, if the state passed and implemented the Pennsylvania Universal School Meals Act and continued to cover the cost of free breakfast and began covering the cost of free lunch, it would provide much-needed financial relief for families, communities, and school districts. In Renaissance Academy Charter School, this would look like more than \$1,045,000.00 that could be returned to the local economy; and

**WHEREAS**, without legislative action, at the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, once again only students with a family income of 185% of the poverty level or below will qualify for free or reduced school breakfast and lunch. For example, a family of four must be living on \$36,075 or less to be eligible for free school meals. Additionally, because of rising supply chain costs, some schools have been forced to raise meal prices, meaning that families who were paying for meals before will now pay even more; and

**WHEREAS**, distributing and collecting applications for free and reduced-price meals, certifying students for the proper school meals fee categories based on parental income, verifying a subset of applications to comply with federal requirements, and assigning and reporting each meal served to the correct reimbursement category are complex processes that absorb the time of principals and teachers as well as school food service staff, time that could be better spent on education; and

**NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED** that the Renaissance Academy Charter School Board of Trustees fully supports School Meals for All (SB180 and HB180) so that all kids throughout the state of Pennsylvania can receive the food they need to be successful in school and further work to remove the stigma that has always existed in the school meals program.

**MAY IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Renaissance Academy Charter School Board of Trustee calls upon our elected officials to support these efforts by passing resolutions at the local level, co-sponsoring legislation at the state level, and advocating for kids across the state to access the healthy food they need during the school day.

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Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

Signed,

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School Board President

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School Board Officer