



Education, Business and Community Leaders to Focus on Reducing Hunger and Improving Kids' Learning at Nov. 15 Strategy Exchange

Minneapolis (Nov. 11, 2016) –

Experts and studies have shown that hunger affects how children perform and behave in the classroom. Yet, when parents, educators and policymakers address the educational achievement gap, nutrition seldom enters the conversation.

With that in mind, Hunger Impact Partners is joining forces with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Cargill Foundation to present a “Strategy Exchange,” focused on the connection between food insecurity and academic performance, increasing school meals participation and feeding more hungry kids. The one-day exchange, on Nov. 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., will be at Cargill Headquarters 15407 McGinty Rd. W., in Wayzata.

It will feature educational leaders, federal nutrition officials, school principals and business and community leaders. Lt. Gov. Tina Smith will speak at lunch, and other speakers include Ed Graff, Superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools, and Daron Korte, Assistant Commissioner at MDE.

“Hungry kids simply don’t learn as well as kids who have a healthy and nutritious diet,” Minnesota Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius says. “Child nutrition programs can feed children in need three meals a day, plus snacks – all year round and often for free. Getting students access to these programs is how we can make sure they have the fuel they need to be ready to learn.”

Hunger Impact Partners, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit, has the tools to help communities to do that. “We know from data that child nutrition programs are underutilized for a variety of reasons,” said Ellie Lucas, CEO of Hunger Impact Partners. “Our proprietary Child Nutrition Index can help schools, community organizations and nutrition experts zero in on their biggest needs and opportunities to increase participation. We know these programs can be financially sustainable when combined with grants designed to launch or expand their participation.”

Lucas noted that school districts throughout the state—both urban and rural—can realize significant reimbursement revenue to sustain these meal programs. “We want to partner with these districts to make that happen,” she added, “Kids should only be hungry to learn.”

The statistics about hunger among children in Minnesota and across the country are compelling:

- 1 in 6 children in Minnesota live in food insecure households.
- About 40 percent of Minnesota children – almost half a million kids — are eligible for nutrition programs – with more than half of them in the Twin Cities metro counties.
- About 40 percent of school breakfasts available to low-income children are served in Minnesota schools. Growing up in poverty is one of the greatest threats to healthy development of children. When kids go to school hungry, they can’t focus on learning.
- 73 percent of teachers nationally teach kids who come to school hungry.
- 87 percent of principals nationally see hungry kids in their schools once a week.



- A hungry child is twice as likely to repeat a grade and three times as likely to be suspended.
- Children who receive nutrition assistance before age 5 are healthier and more likely to graduate high school.

For more information about summer meals, watch this video: <https://hungerimpactpartners.org/videos/>

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About Division of Nutrition, Health, and Youth Development, MN Dept. of Education

The division administers U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child Nutrition programs that provide healthy food to children and adults. These programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Afterschool Meals Program (AFSM), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Special Milk Program (SMP) and USDA Foods Program. www.education.state.mn.us

About Cargill

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About Hunger Impact Partners

Hunger Impact Partners (HIP) is a nonprofit organization focused on nourishing children so they get a healthy start to life to support their academic performance and health outcomes. As a national model of collective impact for large-scale social change, HIP collaborates across sectors and communities to support and connect hungry kids with nutrition programs, including school breakfasts, after-school snacks and suppers, summer feeding programs and WIC, the federal supplemental nutrition program for pregnant women and their children. Started in 2015, HIP is the legacy organization of the Hunger-Free Minnesota campaign, which added 70 million new meals to Minnesota's emergency food system in approximately four years.