



April 10, 2017

Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Universal free school lunch

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

On behalf of the students and families of Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island, we renew our urgent call to fully fund universal free healthy school lunch for every New York City district school student for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18). There are few, if any, line items in the budget that can do so much for so many at such a small cost.

The schools that offer universal free lunch see an increased participation rate across all grade levels, including a 15 percent difference in high school, a 20 percent difference in middle schools, and a 10 percent difference in elementary schools. These numbers represent a significant decrease in students going hungry during the school day. An expansion of that program to all district schools would have an immeasurably positive impact on students, families, and school staff. Students would, over time, feel less stigmatized by universal free lunch and would be able to study without hunger. Families would feel an immediate impact by not having to pay for lunch, or worry whether their child was receiving the proper nutrition they need, and school staff would not have to spend valuable time trying to collect and account for student payments. A healthy, nutritious school lunch improves academic performance, helps prevent obesity and improve student health, and promotes a healthier, more positive lifestyle beyond the school cafeteria.

As elected officials, we continually discuss the problems of hunger, bullying, and the economic challenges facing families every day. Universal free school lunch cannot, by itself, solve these issues, but it can have a significant impact on all of them immediately. That fact alone should

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make this program a priority for any government. Additionally, since much of the funding is expected to come from the federal government, the costs to New York City would be a miniscule fraction of the New York City Department of Education's (DOE) budget. There is no reason to delay another year. Please include universal free school lunch in this year's budget.

Should you have any questions, please reach out to our offices.

Sincerely,



Eric L. Adams
Brooklyn Borough President



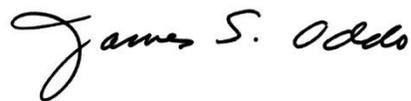
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Melinda Katz
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