New York School Nutrition Association letter to the legislature.

Despite advocacy efforts, Healthy Meals for All NY Kids – a proposal that would establish and fund a permanent, statewide program across all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to ensure students have access to a healthy breakfast and lunch each day – has not been included in any of the preliminary budget proposals. In response, the New York School Nutrition Association has spearheaded a statement on our State Leaders’ failure to include Healthy Meals for All NY Kids in the preliminary budget proposals.

On a national level, Congress has failed to include the extension of school meal waivers in the appropriations bill released last week. These federal waivers that currently allow all NY schools to offer free meals to all students are set to expire in June 2022. This means without further action, nearly 2,000 schools and 800,000 students across our state will lose access to free school meals for all in the 2022-2023 school year. New York State has maximized every federal option and there are still students who will be left behind.